



# InFlight

Spring 2019

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE  
FOR FRIENDS OF HEALTHNET  
AEROMEDICAL SERVICES, INC.

## A Meeting of Medical Minds in the Mountain State





# On the Cover

Critical care providers from across the nation learn new techniques at Camp ECHO at Pipestem Resort State Park.



# Customer Profile

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The Marion County Rescue Squad (MCRS) is a non-profit corporation founded in 1972 to serve the emergency medical and technical rescue needs of those in Marion County, West Virginia. MCRS has grown to a nearly 70-member squad with two stations (Fairmont-20 and Mannington-25) with as many as nine ambulances and two supervisors on duty. The organization offers ALS and BLS emergency response and transports, technical rescue services, and fire rehab to first responders on scenes and during extended scene times. The agency also offers CPR training with its very own instructor on site that holds classes monthly.

MCRS aids multiple community service events such as the Mannington Fair, Three Rivers Festival, Morgantown Marathon, and Fairmont State University football games. They remain active in the community throughout the year with efforts such as raising funds for breast cancer awareness and spreading holiday cheer to local hospitals and nursing homes. Recently, MCRS purchased a Virtual Distracted Driving Simulator to take to local high schools and community events to bring awareness to impaired and distracted driving.

The organization relies on HealthNet Aeromedical Services during emergencies, but also calls on the air medical crews to play an integral part in the mock crashes they organize at all three high schools in Marion County. This team effort truly shows what happens when MCRS crews are faced with a critical patient and how their agency utilizes medical helicopters. HealthNet Aeromedical Services provides educational classes to the department each year and employees look forward to attending them. This strong partnership allows MCRS to continue to provide excellent service to north-central West Virginia, no matter the situation. \*



Marion County Rescue Squad and HealthNet Aeromedical Services work together at a landing zone.

## Special Dates!

**National EMS Week: May 19-25**

### THEME DAYS:

- **Monday, May 20:** Education
- **Tuesday, May 21:** Safety Tuesday
- **Wednesday, May 22:** Emergency Medical Services for Children Day
- **Thursday, May 23:** Save-A-Life (CPR and Stop the Bleed)
- **Friday, May 24:** EMS Recognition Day



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# A Message From Our President/CEO

Two of the hallmarks of our program remain steady, solid growth and a commitment to maintaining an exceptional fleet of aircraft. From humble beginnings in the summer of 1986, HealthNet Aeromedical Services has evolved into a national leader, serving patients from ten bases strategically located throughout central Appalachia.

In those early days, our fleet was humble as well. Small, single engine helicopters were gradually replaced by larger aircraft and a stable of twin engine, instrument flight capable aircraft was assembled. As the years passed even these helicopters received upgrades and were replaced by newer models, keeping our overall fleet among the youngest in the critical care transport industry. That commitment continues today.

On March 7, 2019 I signed an agreement for the purchase of a new Airbus EC-145e model helicopter for our program. This new helicopter, to be delivered in the summer of 2020, reflects a \$7.3 million commitment to southern West Virginia by our program and Charleston Area Medical Center, one of our three owner academic medical centers. The aircraft will be assigned to our base in Beckley, West Virginia and will serve to upgrade that base from its existing Airbus EC-135 aircraft.

The new EC-145 will be the second such model utilized in our system. The first serves patients from our base in Morgantown, West Virginia. This model of aircraft is one of the largest utilized in helicopter EMS and allows our teams to transport the most complex of critical care and bariatric patients with all the equipment necessary to sustain life. Adding this capability in southern West Virginia is a game changer.

The work our teams do each day is important and it saves lives. One of our program's goals is to provide them all the necessary tools to succeed in their efforts. This is yet another example of



that commitment and reflects the belief our owner health systems hold that HealthNet Aeromedical Services is a critical component in our healthcare delivery system.

Our growth and continuous operational enhancements would not be possible without you. For you maintain confidence in our teams and program and rely on us when minutes matter for your patients who require a higher level of care. On behalf of our board of directors, thank you. \*

**Clinton V. Burley**  
HealthNet Aeromedical Services, Inc.  
President/CEO

# ECHO Across the Mountains

## Hundreds of Medical Professionals Attend Critical Care Conference in West Virginia

**H**ealthNet Aeromedical Services' Flight Nurse Glenn Sutphin has attended dozens of emergency medical conferences during his 27-year career, but there's one that kept drawing him back.

"When my coworkers and I attended our first ECHO conference, we were amazed at the education offered and the dedication the group had to the air medical community," said Sutphin. "After attending my second conference, I told the organizers they needed to come to West Virginia. I came home and started talking to my leaders about bringing ECHO to West Virginia."

ECHO, which stands for Every Coast Helicopter Operations, provides free to low-cost education, high-quality training programs, crew member and program support, and networking opportunities to public safety aviation members around the world. The organization was created by flight crews as an opportunity to collaborate on safety, training, and come together to share ideas to become better clinicians and patient care providers.



The critical care panel featured doctors from around the country, including HealthNet Aeromedical Services' Medical Director Dr. Michael Peterson.



Above: HealthNet Aeromedical Services CEO & President Clinton Burley welcoming attendees to Camp ECHO in Pipestem, West Virginia.

Below: Flight Nurse Glenn Sutphin educating ECHO Future Flight Crew (FFC) members on treating burn patients. The FFC program offers support and education to individuals seeking a career in the air medical industry.



Glenn's persistence paid off. With support from HealthNet Aeromedical Services, the ECHO team selected Pipestem Resort State Park as the site for the 2019 Critical Care Conference. While the event is typically held in a metropolitan area, more than 400 air and ground medical providers made the trek to the mountain state in April for the conference dubbed Camp ECHO.

"From a medical standpoint, the rural venue added a unique flavor to the conference. Conversations typically revolve around bigger hospital-based programs in metro areas," said Sam Matta, ECHO HEMS Director. "There were several people talking about the struggles that more rural programs face. I think those are interesting topics we need to continue to focus on."

Conference workshops included emergency water egress from an aircraft simulator, advanced airway and mechanical ventilation techniques, prehospital ultrasound training, safety discussions from program safety officers throughout the industry, and updates on emergency care and treatment strategies of high acuity medical emergencies and traumatic injuries.

After each full day of education, attendees enjoyed social events like a 5K scavenger hunt, critical care trivia, and a performance from the bluegrass band Williamson Branch.

"What I love about ECHO is that it is truly homegrown. You have volunteers from the industry giving of themselves to help others," said Clinton Burley, CEO and President of HealthNet Aeromedical Services. "It is something this industry has sorely needed for a long time. I want to see ECHO grow and continue to find new ways to serve."

To learn more about ECHO's mission and the programs the organization offers, visit: [www.echoheliops.org](http://www.echoheliops.org) \*

# Cabell Huntington Hospital Using Entertainment Technology to Ease Patients

By Shawn Jordan, MBA, ABC  
Production & Media Relations Manager  
Cabell Huntington Hospital



“My first MRI I was shocked to realize I have extreme claustrophobia. I immediately thought I was suffocating,” said Monte Ward, senior vice president, chief financial officer and a patient at Cabell Huntington Hospital (CHH). “I wanted so badly to hit the panic button. I would take a deep breath, but quickly panic again.”

When it comes to getting a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) test, those feelings aren't uncommon. The Center for Diagnostic Imaging (CDI) estimates that during an MRI, four out of 10 patients express concern. An MRI Imaging scanner uses magnetism and radio waves to produce remarkably clear pictures of the inside of the head, spine or other body parts. Tests can be lengthy in time and require the patient remain still to capture the clearest quality images.

To help ease anxiety, patients can now watch a movie or listen to their favorite music using the state-of-the-art Cinemavision MRI-compatible entertainment system during their test.

“Patients forget about their surroundings as they watch a DVD, TV or listen to music,” said Stacy Davis, assistant director of Radiology at CHH. “Studies have shown that MRI entertainment helps soothe anxious

patients and minimize the claustrophobia that can disrupt exams. The result is often faster and more accurate exams and less time-consuming re-scans—leading to better and faster diagnoses.”

The Cinemavision system delivers sharp, realistic audio-video entertainment. Patients can bring their favorite DVD or CD or choose from a variety of options in Radiology.

Isaiah McGlothlin, 10, used Cinemavision during his second MRI at CHH. His comment after his test was, “This is crazy! Way better than the first time.”

The purchase of the Cinemavision entertainment system was made possible by a donation from Radiology, Inc. of West Virginia.

“As a father of five, I know what a challenge it can be to require a 9-year-old to remain still for an extended period of time,” said Peter Chirico, MD, Radiology Inc. “With the Cinemavision goggles, procedures becomes less risky and less costly by removing the need for anesthesia.”

For more information about outpatient testing at Cabell Huntington Hospital, visit us on the web at [www.cabellhuntington.org](http://www.cabellhuntington.org) or call 304.526.2122. ■



Patients can now watch a movie or listen to their favorite music using the state-of-the-art Cinemavision MRI-compatible entertainment system during their test.

# RAPID Stroke Treatment at the CAMC Stroke Center

By Dale Witte  
Marketing & Public Affairs  
Charleston Area Medical Center

**W**hen someone suffers a stroke, every minute counts. Getting to a stroke center with a team that is specially trained to act quickly and equipped with the latest technology is critical to survival and recovery.

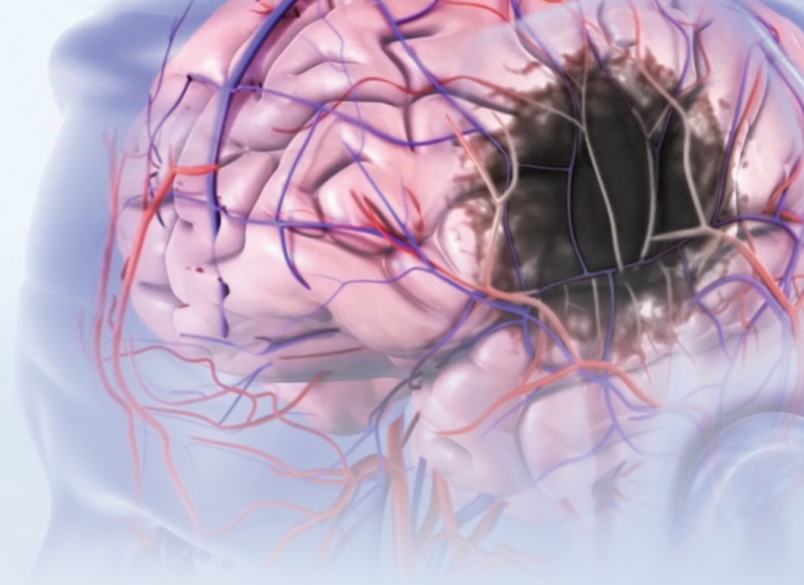
In addition to offering the clot-busting medication tPA and other life-saving measures, the Stroke Center at CAMC now offers patients in southern West Virginia access to the most advanced stroke-detecting technology.

In February, CAMC's stroke team began using software called RAPID on its CT scanners at General and Memorial hospitals.

RAPID software automatically analyzes CT scans of stroke patients to determine in minutes if the patient is a candidate for a procedure to remove a blood clot from an artery or vein.

"It's really exciting that we're using the latest advanced imaging to help triage patients that would appropriately respond to my interventions for stroke," said James Harman, DO.

As CAMC's only endovascular neurosurgeon, Harman uses tiny catheters and state-of-the-art imaging techniques to treat complex vascular diseases of the brain without open surgery. Instead, he performs surgery inside tiny, delicate blood vessels.



"These techniques can quickly open up blood vessels and get blood back to the brain in a very fast fashion that can lead to patients having a good recovery from their stroke," Harman said.

According to the American Stroke Association, nearly 800,000 people experience a new or recurrent stroke each year, which is when blood flow to an area of brain is cut off. The resulting lack of oxygen and glucose quickly kills brain tissue in the immediate vicinity until blood supply is restored. The key to optimal treatment is quick and accurate action.

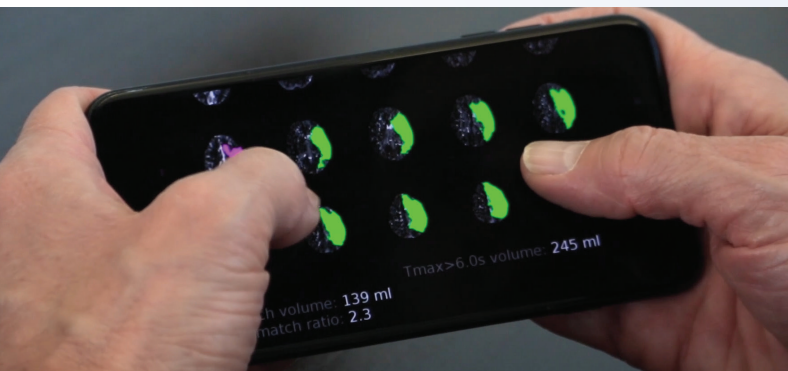
Harman and the team of neurologists, neurosurgeons, radiologists, emergency medicine physicians, pharmacists and medical rehabilitation specialists at the CAMC Stroke Center provide rapid, comprehensive evaluation and management of stroke to provide patients with the most advanced treatment options.

"To provide this service at CAMC where patients can quickly receive the most advanced treatments for stroke and brain aneurysms – you can't argue against having that so close to home," Harman said.

For more information, visit [camc.org/stroke](http://camc.org/stroke). ■

“These techniques can quickly open up blood vessels and get blood back to the brain in a very fast fashion that can lead to patients having a good recovery from their stroke.”

– James Harman, DO



Advanced imaging is critical in helping identify patients for the most effective stroke interventions. These image maps of the brain created by RAPID software are immediately available to doctors at CAMC via email on mobile devices helping doctors make quicker decisions on how best to treat stroke patients.



**Charleston Area  
Medical Center**

# WVU Heart and Vascular Institute uses ECMO to Save a Young Man's Life

By Angela Jones-Knopf  
Manager of Media Relations, Marketing and Communications  
WVU Medicine

**N**athan Ferguson, 23, of Bluefield, WV had never been seriously ill before and did not suspect anything serious when he developed a sore throat and cough, which left him on a couch at the oil rig in St. Clairsville, Ohio, where he worked.

Shortly after Ferguson texted his mom, Elaine, that he could not stop coughing, his coworkers returned from a safety meeting to find him unresponsive.

"One of the guys called 911, but the volunteer fire department couldn't find our rig because we were so far away from a main road," Ferguson said. "They decided they couldn't wait for an ambulance and put me in a truck to take me to the hospital. They drove through the gate because they knew things were serious."

When Ferguson arrived at Wheeling Hospital on Jan. 19, he was diagnosed with pneumonia and a form of strep that had caused his oxygen level to become dangerously low. Doctors were unable to increase it to more than 50 percent.

A member of the medical staff suggested that he might be a candidate for extracorporeal membrane oxygenation, or ECMO, a life support technique used in patients with life-threatening heart or lung problems.

Doctors placed Ferguson on ECMO before transferring him under the care of a HealthNet Aeromedical Services flight team to the WVU Heart and Vascular Institute for specialized care. Upon arrival, doctors adjusted his ECMO, adding support to his heart and allowing his body and brain to receive more oxygen. He quickly regained consciousness and was able to give his nurses a thumbs up.

"When they told me that Nathan had given a thumbs up, I knew he was going to be OK," Elaine Ferguson said. "That's just how Nathan is, making sure those around him know that he's OK."

Doctors at the WVU Heart and Vascular Institute, including Jeremiah Hayanga, M.D., M.P.H., director of the WVU Medicine ECMO program, worked to treat Ferguson's pneumonia and strep infection with antibiotics, making his condition improve rapidly.

"It was incredible how quickly he improved," Dr. Hayanga said. "We were able to have him out of bed and walking while he was still on ECMO. Most patients need to be on ECMO for about two weeks, but Nathan was only on it for five days."

Ferguson was in the hospital for a total of eight days before going home. He is now able to perform normal activities and return to work.

"I'm just grateful we have this kind of technology here at WVU Medicine," Ferguson said. "If I had been somewhere farther away, I wouldn't have made it. Everyone took such good care of me, and I wouldn't be here without them."



Ferguson's survival was due to the efforts of many people, including his coworkers on the oil rig and the clinical staff at Wheeling Hospital.

"Cases like this show that our outreach efforts are working," Hayanga said. "The staff at Wheeling Hospital were able to identify that Nathan was a candidate for ECMO, and they knew that the program was available here."

The ECMO program at WVU Medicine began in 2018. It is designated a Center of Excellence by the Extracorporeal Life Support Organization. The procedure has helped newborns with meconium aspiration syndrome, people waiting for heart or lung transplants, and patients with certain cardiac problems.

For more information on the WVU Heart and Vascular Institute, visit [www.wvumedicine.org/heart](http://www.wvumedicine.org/heart). ■



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**NATIONAL  
EMS WEEK**  
May 19-25

**EMS  STRONG**  
**BEYOND**  
**THE CALL**

The duties and stress that come with working in EMS extend way beyond the end of shift. From all of us at HealthNet Aeromedical Services, thank you for your dedication to saving lives and providing care to your communities. You are appreciated!

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