



# InFlight

Spring 2021

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



## Celebrating Those Who Care for Our Communities

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

Since 1974, one week each year has been set aside as National Emergency Medical Services Week. This is an opportunity to highlight the importance of high-quality, high-performance delivery of emergency care in every corner of our country.

EMS is tough work, and it is getting tougher. Fewer persons are choosing to pursue a career in EMS and even fewer are serving as volunteers in local communities. While the workload and expectations placed on those who do serve rises, the complexities of simply being an EMS provider increase as well. If this was not understood before the pandemic, it certainly is front and center now.

Over the past fifteen months, EMS providers stepped up and continued to care for patients during the most challenging of times. At their own peril, these heroes walked into closed environments to care for and then transport persons ill from COVID-19. Many of those providers themselves became ill. Across the HealthNet Aeromedical Services' response area some of these providers who were our friends lost their lives. Such a steep price to pay to care for others. Its humbling.

Beginning May 16, we will see National EMS Week activities take place in so many communities. If you learn of one, please take a moment to stop by, meet the providers and send along a thank you. These are special people. They are giving people and what they give is themselves for the benefit of their neighbors. Their skill, knowledge and acumen combine to save lives.

I am so appreciative of those individuals who serve in emergency medical services roles and partner with our teams daily to serve the most critically ill and injured patients out there. We function as one cohesive team and because of their collective efforts those whom they care for often get to see their family again. They get to enjoy life's milestones, vacations and perhaps Sunday dinners around the table. The chair isn't empty. It's full. And it's full because local EMS providers are there when minutes truly matter, and that's worth celebrating.

To our partners in EMS, and on behalf of HealthNet Aeromedical Service's owner health systems and board of directors, thank you for the caring you provide to others.

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This Is EMS: Caring for Our Communities

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# Team Member Spotlight

Bruce Champ,  
CFRN, CEN, EMT-P  
Flight Nurse

When HealthNet Aeromedical Services' Moundsville, West Virginia base began operations in 2017, Flight Nurse Bruce Champ joined the program to serve patients in the Northern Panhandle and Ohio Valley.

"I've always loved flying. My dad had an airplane when I was young," said Champ. "I've progressed upward through my career so I could mesh my passion for flying and caring for patients."

His clinical journey began in 1983 as an EMT. After becoming a paramedic, he then moved on to nursing school and graduated in 2006. Bruce started his nursing career in the emergency department at Trinity Health System in Steubenville, Ohio and he remains a nurse there.

As evidenced by the growth of his career, Bruce enjoys a challenge and the opportunity to expand his knowledge base.

"We have a tight knit group at our base. When we return from a patient flight we discuss how things went and bounce ideas off each other," said Champ. "One regret I have is not becoming an intensive care nurse. They are exposed to so many different things. I often look to my fellow coworkers with that experience because they have a different outlook on how to treat patients."

Outside of work, Bruce enjoys traveling with his wife. The couple and their dogs especially enjoy the summer months and boating season when they can relax on the water.



# Customer Profile

White Sulphur Springs  
Emergency Medical Services, Inc.



White Sulphur Springs Emergency Medical Services, Inc. (WSSEMS) got its humble beginnings in 1959 when a group of volunteers established the White Sulphur Springs Rescue Squad in partnership with the White Sulphur Springs Volunteer Fire Department. They were gifted a retired hearse from Shanklin's Funeral Home to serve as their first ambulance. Since then it has grown and over the last several years the non-profit organization has expanded its coverage area to include nearly all of Greenbrier County in southern West Virginia.

More than 75 employees serve from three bases located in White Sulphur Springs, Frankford, and Rainelle, WV. Their fleet is made up of one Special Operations vehicle and 12 ALS equipped ambulances. Crews provide 911 service, Critical Care transport, and ALS and BLS emergent and non-emergent transport. The agency is a West Virginia Office of EMS Educational Institute able to provide basic and advanced training to EMS providers and also offers citizens training in CPR/First Aid and other classes such as Stop The Bleed.

White Sulphur Springs EMS began working closely with HealthNet Aeromedical Services when its Lewisburg, WV aircraft launched service in 2015. This team effort provides exceptional care and skill to those critically ill patients that need to be transported to a Level 1



facility when time is of the essence. WSSEMS also provides ground transportation for flight teams when inclement weather does not allow for air transport.

# Longtime Flight Paramedic Tom Reed Enters Retirement

Back in 1986, Tom Reed was working as a paramedic in Charleston, West Virginia when a new hospital-based air medical service began recruiting. He took a chance on that new program and now 35 years later, Reed is among only a handful of flight team members who have served at HealthNet Aeromedical Services since its inception.

“I remember my first days quite clearly. There was a sense of fear and excitement all mixed into one ball of anxiety,” said Reed. “As soon as you got in the air, that all went away. You focus in on what you are there for. That’s taking care of patients.”

Even after more than three decades as a flight paramedic, his drive to care for patients hasn’t diminished. So, making the decision to retire and give up his ability to make a difference in the lives of others has been an emotional one.

“In EMS, you experience moments where you see a patient’s heart rhythm normalized or blood pressure improving because of the care you rendered. That is an emotional satisfaction that is so unique,” said Reed.

Through the years, Tom has learned many things beyond medicine as he accepted roles in public relations, safety, and education. While the completion of 5,504 patient flights is a great achievement, his impact on the program has had a far greater reach.

“I was at the base recently and someone asked, ‘How many of you have been trained by Tom?’ Almost everyone raised a hand. You don’t realize the impact you’ve had on people. It was beautiful,” he said.



Tom credits his faith and coworkers, who have become more like family, for helping him cope with the demands and stress of his job for so long. He’s ready to pass the torch to the next generation, with a few words of advice.

“As a man ready to turn 65, you would think you can’t teach an old dog new tricks. That is not true. If you want to stay here, you’d better be willing to adapt to changes.”

While he’s hanging up his flight suit, Tom’s days of hard work are far from over. He’ll be kept busy working on his farm in Fayette County, West Virginia.

From all of us here at HealthNet Aeromedical Services, we wish Tom a happy and healthy retirement. His legacy will certainly inspire our team members for years to come.

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## Welcome to the Board of Directors!

Michael Mullins, FACHE, has been appointed to the HealthNet Aeromedical Services Board of Directors representing Cabell Huntington Hospital.

“We are pleased to welcome Mr. Mullins to the Board of Directors,” said Clinton Burley, president and CEO of HealthNet Aeromedical Services. “His vast knowledge and executive experience in the healthcare space will serve the statewide critical care transport system well.”

In 2019, Mullins accepted the position of President and Chief Executive Officer for Mountain Health Network bringing more than 30 years of hospital leadership experience to our region.

Mullins is a retired Captain of the Medical Service Corps, United States Naval Reserves, where he served for 28 years including in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. He holds a master’s degree in healthcare administration from Trinity University, San Antonio, and a bachelor’s degree in political science from University of Texas at El Paso. He is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

