

DISPATCHES

A Publication of The LifeFlight Foundation



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Cover Photo: "Lima Mike," LifeFlight's airplane, on the tarmac in Bangor.

Updates from the Flightdeck

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Dear Friends,

In our previous issue of Dispatches, we committed to three resolutions for 2024. The first one, which is the core of the LifeFlight mission, is to **continue to expand access to critical care and medical transport for patients across the state of Maine.**

We are delighted to report that five months in we have several exciting new developments toward that goal to share with you. Access and transport depend on four interrelated components — **our fleet, our team, our partners, and our infrastructure.** We are surging forward on all four fronts simultaneously.

Our Fleet

- The combination of Maine’s vast expanse, rugged landscape, challenging weather, rural population, and a fragile healthcare system demands an equally complex and deliberately designed medical transport fleet that connects Maine’s most ill and injured patients to the care they need.
- With help and support from U.S. Senators Angus King and Susan Collins, in late March we learned that our **\$1.92 million proposal for three specialized critical care ground ambulances** was included in the \$4,371,000 in

Congressionally Directed Spending to support rural healthcare and emergency medical services across Maine. Our ground transport program in Bangor, which launched late last year, is already filling a vital need. This funding will significantly enhance our existing program and allow us to expand the service to our bases in Lewiston and Sanford, which we plan to do by the end of the year.

- **We are moving forward with a plan to replace our 25-year-old airplane, “Lima Mike.”** Maine has the most complex and challenging aviation weather in the continental United States. Low visibility due to fog, slow moving storm systems, and icing conditions are common occurrences. There are many days where weather grounds the helicopter fleet, and the airplane is the only asset flying. The size of Maine itself poses another significant challenge. In addition to its weather capabilities, the airplane flies twice as fast as the helicopter and is more suitable for longer range transport. The new aircraft will also be configured with Maine in mind to utilize shorter runways than can be used by traditional medical aircraft.



Our Team

- Like many health care organizations, the pandemic had a dramatic effect on LifeFlight's staffing situation, with many clinicians and pilots either leaving the industry or opting for less demanding positions. For the past 18 months, we have made a concerted effort to bolster our national recruiting efforts to attract new staff and to strengthen our compensation package to retain existing staff. Our aviation team is nearly fully staffed, positions that we've struggled to fill in the past are now competitive with several qualified applicants, and some former crew members are returning to LifeFlight.
- We are also expanding our team to meet the growing demand for LifeFlight services. LifeFlight now employs more than 110 people, nearly all of whom live in and love Maine. These are solid jobs that contribute to Maine's economy.

Our Partners

- In January, we hired **Kyle Madigan** as the first Director of Client Relations. Kyle has quickly become acclimated to some of the unique challenges we face in providing critical care transport to the people of Maine and has gained important insights through his initial visits with teams at hospitals and EMS agencies. Kyle has also been tasked with reorganizing and reinvigorating our outreach, including Ground Safety Courses (GSC) and special events for providers. One week in the last month we received requests from four towns for a GSC, including the Lee Fire Department who

said, "We'd love to have this class as we've had LifeFlight assist us twice in the last five months".

- In late April we attended the Maine Governor's Conference on Tourism, where we made great connections that will help us better care for the 15.3 million people who come to Maine each year. Last year, 6% of our transports were for people "from away," many of whom assume that health care here is as readily available as it is where they live. We are working together with partners in the outdoor recreation and tourism space to think proactively about what we can do better and differently, as more visitors and Mainers continue to explore Maine's remote attractions.



Our Infrastructure

LifeFlight has always played a pivotal role in partnering with communities, airports, and hospitals to lead the way on improving and expanding Maine's aviation infrastructure. **A runway at a rural Maine airport is a critical health care access point, because LifeFlight can land an ICU there when needed.**

- We are working with hospitals and communities to rebuild or improve helipads and runways. We are making investments in additional weather stations, signage, deicing equipment, and other enhancements that will have immediate tangible benefits for LifeFlight patients, increasing the speed and reliability of LifeFlight's response when minutes matter.
- Using federal grant dollars, LifeFlight has become a national leader in the development of a comprehensive runway camera network to aid our pilots in performing their pre-flight safety assessments. Being able to see if a runway is plowed or get a real-time view of cloud cover is another way we enhance our reliability. LifeFlight, in partnership with the

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), made these cameras public to enhance aviation safety throughout the state. You can see them for yourself by visiting <https://weathercams.faa.gov>.

- Finally, LifeFlight and the FAA are making huge enhancements to the flight route system. These allow helicopters to fly using only instrumentation at altitudes of several thousand feet in the same way and with the same air traffic control safety as a commercial airliner at 40,000 feet. The first of these enhanced flight routes is being certified between Bangor and Bar Harbor, with many more to come.

One thing that all of these components have in common is YOU. Your support makes our work possible.

We hope this issue provides insights and information that you find valuable. We'd love to hear your comments, ideas, and questions. And if you learn something new, please tell your family and friends. We want more people in Maine to know about LifeFlight before they need us.



Sincerely,



Joe Kellner, CEO
LifeFlight of Maine



Kate O'Halloran, Executive Director
The LifeFlight Foundation



FORGING STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS IN EMS



This past winter, LifeFlight of Maine launched a significant new initiative to bolster its relationships with hospitals, first responders, emergency medical services (EMS) agencies, 911 centers, and other stakeholders that rely on LifeFlight to deliver critical care quickly and reliably for patients facing a life-threatening medical emergency. This initiative is already making an impact and improving Maine’s EMS system.

*Photo by flight nurse
Veronica Marzonie.*

Responding with the appropriate level of care as quickly as possible relies on collaboration and coordination among partners. These include local police and fire departments, ambulance services, hospitals, healthcare systems, state and federal agencies, and independent nonprofits like LifeFlight of Maine — there are more than 300 licensed EMS agencies in the state, according to Maine EMS which issues those licenses. LifeFlight interfaces with its partners on every single one of the nearly 2,500 patient transports it completes each year. It now has an initiative dedicated to improving coordination with LifeFlight’s EMS and hospital partners, along with a director to lead it.

In January, with support from The LifeFlight Foundation, LifeFlight of Maine hired Kyle Madigan as its first Director of Client Relations. Kyle has decades of experience as a flight nurse

and critical care provider, an educator, and an air medical program administrator. Most recently, he led the Dartmouth Hitchcock Advanced Response Team (DHART), LifeFlight’s peer service based in Lebanon, New Hampshire. He currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Association of Critical Care Transport, and he has previously held board positions with the Board Certification for Emergency Nurses, the Air & Surface Transport Nurses Association, and the Air Ambulance Patient Billing Advisory Committee of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Under Madigan’s leadership, LifeFlight is working to expand its outreach and education efforts across all 16 counties in Maine, as well as parts of New Hampshire along the Maine border, an area for which LifeFlight’s Sanford-based team often provides service.

This initiative has three components, all with the same objective: to ensure the people of Maine receive the best emergency medical care available and the fastest response possible by strengthening professional relationships between LifeFlight and its partners.

The first part of the new initiative is **increasing opportunities to present LifeFlight’s “Ground Safety and User Course,”** which trains EMS agencies to identify when a patient needs a LifeFlight transport, to make a transport request, to safely secure a landing zone, and to transfer the patient into LifeFlight’s care. Successful collaboration often begets more collaborations and better care for patients facing a medical

emergency. The Lee Fire Department, for example, which serves a town of fewer than one thousand residents, contacted Kyle about offering LifeFlight’s Ground Safety Course to its team after it had called LifeFlight for assistance twice in a five-month span. Lee was one of four departments that requested a Ground Safety Course in that same week. LifeFlight almost always sees an uptick in transport requests from communities in which it has recently taught its Ground Safety Course — interfacing is freshly rehearsed for both teams.

Secondly, in partnership with LifeFlight of Maine CEO Joe Kellner, Kyle is **working to bolster operational collaboration with Maine’s 36 hospitals.** The majority of calls to LifeFlight (90%) come from a hospital requesting to transfer an acutely ill patient to a facility that offers a higher level of care. This is a critically important service for Maine’s geographically dispersed system of community hospitals. The smooth, reliable, and rapid movement of these patients in a LifeFlight vehicle is vital both to the patient’s outcomes and to the capacity of the

emergency medical system statewide to ensure all patients can access the care they need. Kyle and Joe are traveling around the state to meet with leaders and clinicians in emergency departments and intensive care units to improve coordination and logistics for the care teams who interface with LifeFlight crews.



Kyle Madigan, Director of Client Relations

The third part of this new initiative is the **expansion of LifeFlight’s remote landing zones database.** Most hospitals in Maine have a permanent helipad. Most towns do not. LifeFlight has worked for more than a decade with local leaders, first responders, and private citizens to establish temporary helicopter landing zones in rural areas. LifeFlight maintains a database of

hundreds of temporary landing zones across Maine and parts of New Hampshire, which LifeFlight crews utilize to respond to medical emergencies. Many of these landing zones are a local ball field or parking lot. Others are simply a clearing deep in the Maine woods. By working with communities to expand this database, which is available both to LifeFlight and to 911 dispatchers statewide, LifeFlight is creating more critical healthcare access points across Maine.

In an emergency, a good plan and a strong system gives people their best chance on their worst day. Such plans take time to design and must be updated and reviewed regularly. New colleagues need to be trained and veteran providers reminded. At LifeFlight, we envision a future for Maine in which every hospital clinician is familiar with the services LifeFlight can offer their patients, every EMS provider knows when and how to call LifeFlight, and every community has a temporary helicopter landing zone plotted on a map. We are working diligently in 2024 to bring that vision to life.



For EMS and First Responders

GROUND SAFETY AND USER COURSE

LifeFlight’s Ground Safety and Users Course provides training to EMS and first responder agencies at no cost. It covers when to call LifeFlight, how to secure a safe landing zone, transferring the patient into LifeFlight’s care, and more...

LEARN MORE: [LIFEFLIGHTMAINE.ORG/GROUNDSAFETY](https://lifeflightmaine.org/groundsafety)



CROSS FOR LIFEFLIGHT

AUGUST 2024

Pick your mission.
Cross Maine.
Save lives.

LifeFlight of Maine flies more than 15,000 miles each month, delivering lifesaving care to someone facing critical injury or illness. For every single mile of every single mission, that patient is receiving the best medical care possible and the fastest transport available.

The Cross for LifeFlight makes these lifesaving missions possible.

We're not just logging miles—we're raising critical funds to keep LifeFlight of Maine in the air, equipped and ready to respond to calls for help every day and night of the year.

Every mile we cross and every dollar we raise ensures that the next person in Maine who faces a life-threatening medical emergency—a friend, a family member, a neighbor, a fellow Mainer, or a visitor coming here to explore—has access to advanced critical care with the speed of a helicopter. We're giving them their best chance on their worst day.

How many miles will you Cross for LifeFlight this August?



Paddle.

CROSS | CASCO BAY
AUGUST 1, 2024



Hike.

CROSS | BANGOR
AUGUST 15, 2024



Bike.

CROSS | KENNEBUNK
AUGUST 24, 2024



**PICK YOUR
OWN MISSION**
AUGUST 2024

REGISTER AT CROSSFORLIFEFLIGHT.ORG

Emergency Medicine Along the Path of Totality

How LifeFlight Provides a Critical Safety Net for Explorers of the Maine Outdoors

The Maine Turnpike Authority reported that approximately 30,000 motorists passed through the York toll plaza in a single day: Sunday, April 7, 2024, the day before the solar eclipse. That merely counts cars on Interstate 95 northbound, which is the largest but hardly the only road into Maine.

So many private planes landed at Greenville Municipal Airport that the airport closed one of its runways to park aircraft. Officials in Jackman estimated that about 10,000 people visited the area for the eclipse — Jackman has a population of 783.

The solar eclipse was an event comparable to Labor Day weekend in terms of highway traffic in southern Maine and with few precedents up north. Thousands of Mainers along the coast drove inland and northward to witness a once-in-a-generation celestial occurrence. While clouds covered parts of the path of totality in the Midwest, sunny skies in Maine enticed more last-minute visitors, bringing a welcome economic boon during mud season.

LifeFlight 1, the helicopter crew based in Bangor, beat the traffic to Houlton, strategically repositioning the asset closer to where a potential need might arise. A fourth helicopter crew was also brought online for the day (LifeFlight typically staffs three, in addition to its airplane crew). LifeFlight worked with local first-responders and emergency service agencies for months to prepare for any number of scenarios that could potentially have played out. Better to be prepared and not needed, than the alternative.



A LifeFlight helicopter sits on the helipad at Houlton Regional Hospital during the solar eclipse on April 8, 2024; photo by flight paramedic and assistant base manager Eric Mailman.

A solar eclipse is a rarity. Labor Day weekend traffic happens annually, as does the inflow of visitors to Maine throughout the year. The Maine Office of Tourism estimates that 15.3 million people visited Maine in 2023 — that's nearly twelve times the state's population. This is a multi-billion-dollar economic force. But with all those people visiting, especially for recreation in the more rural parts of Maine, medical emergencies are statistically assured. LifeFlight is an integral part of the system built to respond, and thus a critical partner to the tourism industry.

LifeFlight is a lifeline for people across Maine, but particularly for communities up north and down east. In 2023, LifeFlight transported 889 patients to Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center (EMMC) in Bangor, which is the nearest trauma center for the northern half of the state, as well as much of the midcoast and western mountains. LifeFlight is typically called to Rangeley, Bethel, and Carrabassett Valley several times each during the ski season. Patients come from snowmobile trails, summer camps, island getaways, coastal vacation destinations, and community hospitals. They are facing traumatic injuries sustained during adventures, but also other medical events like cardiac arrests and strokes.

LifeFlight creates access to lifesaving care, especially in rural areas. It works closely with its hospital and EMS partners, local first responders, ski patrols, park rangers, the Maine Warden Service, and other agencies to get patients the level of care they need as quickly as possible. **It supplements medical resources in smaller communities by bringing ICU-level equipment and clinicians to town with the speed of aircraft, turning helicopter landing zones and runways into healthcare access points.**

LifeFlight's clinicians are trained, experienced, and authorized to provide certain interventions that medical professionals in smaller hospitals may not have the experience for simply because circumstances rarely necessitate it. For example, intubating infants and small children is a challenging task performed in high-pressure situations. Thankfully, it is also relatively rare in community hospitals. LifeFlight's nurses and paramedics transport hundreds of pediatric patients annually, many of whom require advanced interventions



Flight paramedic Jillian Sheltra (left) and flight nurse Barrett Strout (right) watch the eclipse from the helipad at Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston; photo courtesy of Jillian Sheltra.



Watching the solar eclipse at Houlton Regional Hospital; photo courtesy of flight paramedic Eric Mailman.

and resuscitation. Clinicians at a sending facility often defer to the LifeFlight crew to perform these procedures before transferring the patient into a LifeFlight asset.

Medical emergencies do not discriminate between Mainers and those from away. Tourism is a tremendous economic driver in Maine, and the state's emergency medical system is called upon to care both for residents and visitors. For many of the most critically ill or injured people in Maine, LifeFlight is their last best chance.

On April 8, 2024, the system worked. Emergency medical resources, including LifeFlight of Maine, were available when called upon. Maine's EMS system was there for the people of Maine and all those who traveled to some of the most ruggedly beautiful parts of the state to experience an awe-inspiring three minutes and 18 seconds of darkness. The path of totality may not cut through Maine again in this era, but tourism shows no signs of slowing, and LifeFlight of Maine will continue to stand ready for every single person, whether they are here for a day, a week, or a lifetime.



Trusting the Strangers in the Helicopter

Sunny Dilley was two days old when she flew in a helicopter from Bar Harbor to Bangor. Angela, her mother, remembers watching from the passenger seat of a car in the hospital parking lot as the aircraft lifted off. The helicopter quickly disappeared into the distance, and the car pulled out onto the street heading in the same direction.

Every LifeFlight of Maine crew member will tell you what deep respect they feel for the patients who entrust them with their care. To have such trust placed in you is humbling. But little compares to the reverence elicited by the mothers who put their children in the hands of strangers in green flight suits and watch them fly away.

In Sunny's case, as in many of LifeFlight's neonatal and infant transports, there simply wasn't space in the helicopter for Angela to ride along. Sunny was tucked safely into an isolette, a specialized piece of medical equipment resembling an enclosed cradle that is temperature controlled and designed for providing ICU-level care during transport to the smallest patients. At her bedside in the back of the helicopter were two nurses from Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center's (EMMC) neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), who specialize in caring for infants, along with a LifeFlight critical care transport nurse. Sunny was receiving the best care available, and her mother had to trust the caregivers.



Sunny Dilley with her mother, Angela Rose Hall.



**Mount Desert Island
Hospital (Bar Harbor)
to Northern Light
Eastern Maine Medical
Center (Bangor)**

Captain Dustin Smiley
Flight Nurse Nate Bassett
NICU Nurse Paige Huggins
NICU Nurse Donna Bulger
Comms Spec Jason Sanford



Left: Sunny Dillee with her parents, Angela and Merlin, and her brother, Astro. Right: Sunny Dillee.
Photos courtesy of Angela Rose Hall.

Two days earlier, on March 22, 2023, Sunny had been born in her family's home in Bass Harbor. "My birth with Sunny went really well," Angela recalls. But as Sunny's skin began to develop a yellow hue, their midwife had advised them to take her to Mount Desert Island Hospital for further care. Jaundice is a relatively common diagnosis in newborns. It is caused by high levels of bilirubin, a yellowish pigment that is produced as red blood cells break down. In most cases, it resolves with limited medical intervention.

"When we arrived [at MDI Hospital], they did blood work," Angela said, "and they almost told us to go home." Angela and her husband, Merlin, decided to wait for the blood results. Soon, a doctor was explaining to them that Sunny's bilirubin levels were the highest they had ever seen. "The lab technician actually thought it was a mistake," Angela remembers. "At that point, we weren't really sure what was going on. Then I overheard the word 'LifeFlight.' Very quickly, people in helicopter suits showed up, and that's when I realized what was happening."

"That moment when Donna, Paige, and Nate (the LifeFlight and EMMC clinical team) showed up, there was a real difference in what was happening in the room," Angela said. "As parents we were in a state of panic. They were so calm and collected and in an almost meditative state and knew exactly what they needed to do."

"They didn't have to speak that many words to each

other at all," Angela continued. "That really sets the tone for establishing that trust and knowing that they are on top of it, and that things are going to be as okay as they can be right now."

Sunny was flown to Bangor, where she spent 14 days in the NICU at Eastern Maine Medical Center. With such elevated levels of bilirubin in her bloodstream, Sunny was at risk for tissue damage with potentially long-term effects. "There was no way of knowing how to proceed," Angela said. "Just a constant follow-up with every kind of doctor you can imagine."

By the time Sunny was discharged from the NICU, the irritation that had been visible in scans two weeks earlier had vanished, but the uncertainty about long-term effects continued, and still continues in some ways. Though, with each passing month Sunny is growing normally and concerns are fading away. There was uncertainty about her hearing, but her medical team now believes her hearing is normal. "She's a year old. She's crawling and pulling herself up, doing all the normal things that she should be doing" Angela said in a recent conversation. With a big, wide-eyed smile, Sunny is living up to her name.

As Angela shared her family's story, she confessed that hearing the sound of a helicopter still makes her emotional. "Looking back, I know how critical it all was," Angela remembers. "Bangor doesn't feel that far to me. The helicopter ride meant everything, and I know it saved her life. We couldn't have waited any extra minutes."





Remembering Linda Bean

LifeFlight of Maine mourns the loss of our friend and benefactor Linda Bean, who passed away in March 2024. “Linda was unique and irreplaceable. Her support of LifeFlight and healthcare access overall was emblematic of her deep affection for the people of Maine,” noted Tom Judge, founding executive director of LifeFlight. “She was a woman of action, who led and inspired the community of Port Clyde to make possible the addition of a third helicopter to LifeFlight’s fleet. Her generosity and spirit have impacted thousands of lives here in Maine.”

Linda was introduced to LifeFlight by Phyllis and Jamie Wyeth. Living on an island heightened Linda’s interest in access to emergency care. She became actively engaged after a tragic accident in Port Clyde highlighted the need for additional LifeFlight resources.

All of us at LifeFlight extend our deepest sympathies to Linda’s sister Diana, her sons, and her extended family in all of her businesses and projects.

Photo: Linda Bean standing in front of “Whiskey Mike,” also known as “the Lobster Chopper,” which LifeFlight purchased with the generous support of Ms. Bean.



LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT DAVID HUMM

David Humm is a member of the Board of Trustees of The LifeFlight Foundation and the LifeFlight of Maine Steering Committee.

How a recently retired management consultant from New Zealand came to serve in key leadership positions at both The LifeFlight Foundation and LifeFlight of Maine is not immediately intuitive, but the more you get to know David Humm, the more predetermined it seems.

The LifeFlight Foundation is overseen by a Board of Trustees, on which David currently serves as Treasurer, a member of the executive committee, and chair of the finance committee. He also represents the Foundation on LifeFlight of Maine's Steering Committee. Members of both boards volunteer their time and expertise to provide valuable oversight and input, as well as assume fiduciary responsibility for the governance of each entity. These are critical leadership roles at LifeFlight.

David was about 17 when he first learned to fly an airplane in Christchurch, New Zealand. Flying around Queenstown as a young adult reminds him more of Maine, though, specifically the mountainous terrain and fickle weather. "Having an understanding of some of the nuances of the air operations has been

helpful," David said in a recent conversation about his experience with LifeFlight.

Aviation remained mostly a hobby for David. It was his business career that took off, so to speak. He has lived and worked all over the world: New Zealand where he was born and raised; Australia; the United Kingdom; and the United States. He led a prominent adventure travel company based in New Zealand, where he oversaw operations, client relations, and financial management. When he moved to the U.S., he began working for the National Parks Conversation Association (NPCA) writing and reviewing business plans for 18 national forests in California. "It's a business like any other commercial business in many ways," David said. You have sources of funding, costs, and resources to manage. You can analyze that information and make projections about what it will take to sustain those resources over years or decades, he explained.

Based in Virginia's Shenandoah mountains, David brought his experience with the NPCA to Booz Allen Hamilton, a highly regarded consulting firm with offices around the globe. He consulted on projects

Photo: David Humm with his wife, Mary Humphrey, and a LifeFlight crew member at an event at their home in Pemaquid, July 2023.

in real estate, finance, and budget management for clients including the U.S. Air Force, NASA, the Bureau of Land Management, and numerous programs within the National Park Service.

Since retiring in 2022, David continues to spend the colder months in the Shenandoah mountains. His family comes to Pemaquid, Maine, for the summers, as his wife, Mary Humphrey, and her family have for generations. It's this connection to Maine that first brought David to LifeFlight. "Maine is a very special place to us. It's similar to New Zealand in many ways, culturally and geographically," David said. "And for Mary, it's a place she has spent time since she was a child." But it's his expertise in business analysis and fiscal sustainability that led to an invitation to join the Foundation board.

"David brings his business acumen, a keen and inquisitive eye for detail, and a deep appreciation for the mission to our board," said Kate O'Halloran, executive director of The LifeFlight Foundation. "We raise several million dollars each year at the Foundation. We have a responsibility to steward those funds carefully to ensure that LifeFlight has what it needs to care for the people of Maine. David understands what it takes to operate aircraft in Maine, and he understands what it takes to sustain an organization with an important public mission. His insights, experience, and dedication to LifeFlight are invaluable." In terms of raising funds and raising awareness, David is committed both as a board member and as a generous donor. "It is such a critical service to the state, and I hope that will continue to be recognized more and more," he said.

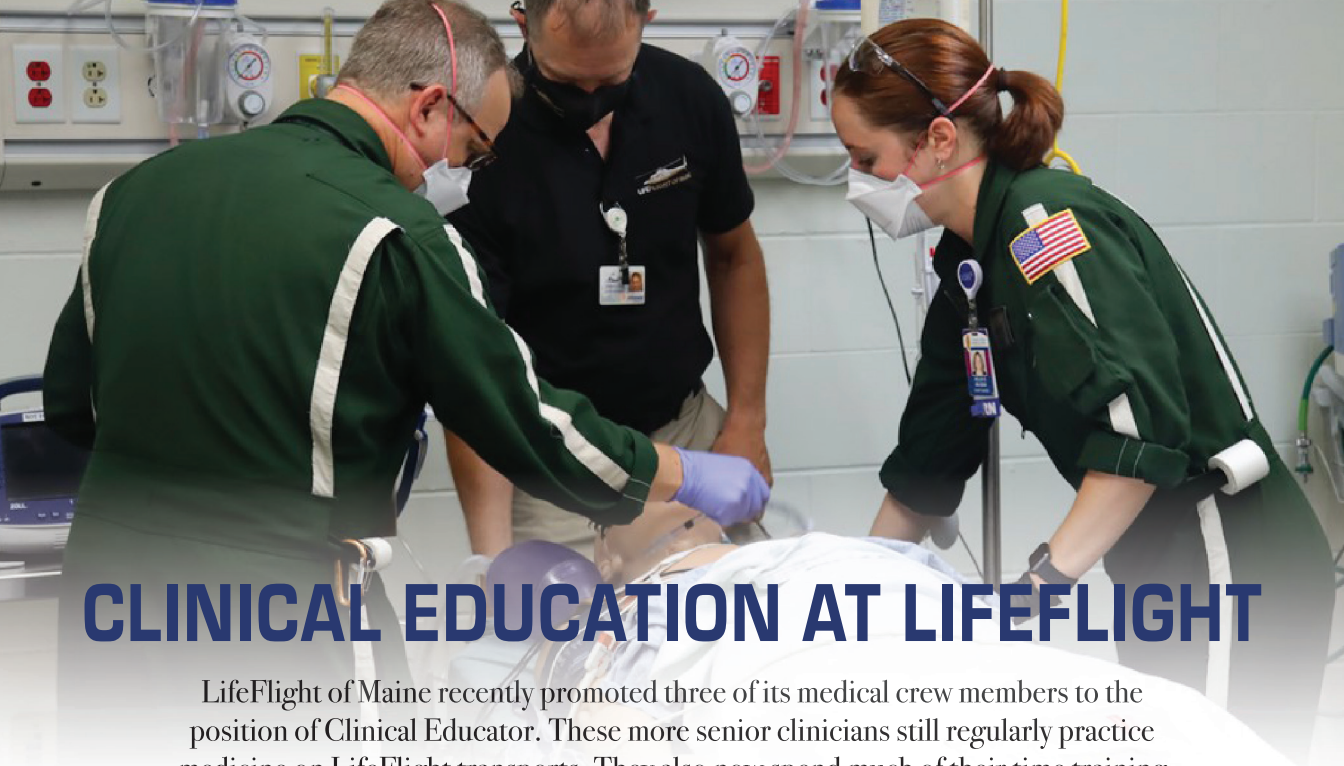
From the very beginning, LifeFlight of Maine was designed for Maine. As an organization, it was built to be reliable, financially accessible — no one should lose their house because they need an air medical transport — fiscally sustainable, and committed to its values and to the people of Maine. "Our commitment to providing care to everyone in Maine when they need it, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay, demands that we manage the resources and assets we have thoughtfully and responsibly," explained Joe Kellner, CEO of LifeFlight of Maine. "An enormous amount of trust is placed in us every single day by patients and families. We also benefit from the tremendous generosity of our donors to the Foundation. We work hard to be

worthy of the trust placed in our organization, which means we work to provide the best and swiftest care possible, as safely as possible, and as sustainably as possible. David gets that and lends his considerable expertise to that mission."

"LifeFlight is a public good," David said. "We have to step up," he added, referring to the increasing demand for LifeFlight's critical care and transport services. David will begin his second term as a board member for the Foundation this summer, and he is in his second year serving on the Steering Committee. "Boards need to be productive and efficient. I take that responsibility seriously," he said. The coming years are critical for LifeFlight as it rapidly expands its ground transport program and navigates the challenges facing the EMS and healthcare systems in Maine. Both boards are well served to have David influencing their decisions and guiding both organizations into the future.



David Humm and Mary Humphrey hiking in the Shenandoah mountains; photo courtesy of David Humm.



CLINICAL EDUCATION AT LIFEFLIGHT

LifeFlight of Maine recently promoted three of its medical crew members to the position of Clinical Educator. These more senior clinicians still regularly practice medicine on LifeFlight transports. They also now spend much of their time training newer crew members and sharing their expertise with EMS clinicians across Maine.

To say that LifeFlight of Maine's medical crew are among the best EMS clinicians in Maine is not hyperbolic. It's how the system was designed. The most experienced, dedicated, and highly skilled clinicians cannot be everywhere all the time for the most acutely ill patients — unless, of course, they can fly.

LifeFlight's role in Maine's EMS system is threefold. First, it provides the swiftest critical care transport possible, moving acutely ill and injured people from smaller community hospitals to major medical centers. Secondly, it brings ICU-level medicine to the point of need by delivering elite clinicians aided by the most advanced equipment to the patient's side. Thirdly, LifeFlight offers advanced clinical education both to its own medical team and to colleagues at EMS agencies around the state.

Nurses and paramedics come to LifeFlight with an array of experiences: some in trauma centers, emergency departments, or intensive care units; others in fire departments, EMS services, or the military. All have proven records of excellence as providers, and all receive further training from LifeFlight's clinical education team when they are hired.

LifeFlight clinicians spend multiple months going through on-the-job training in orientation. This

typically proceeds in four phases. The first involves mostly classroom instruction, simulation training, and observation shifts. By the final phase, the new clinician is treating patients in the aircraft under the supervision of a preceptor, who is a senior LifeFlight clinician.

During orientation, new medical crew members develop and are tested on the skills that fall within their expanded scope of practice as a LifeFlight clinician. These are what set LifeFlight clinicians apart. They gain advanced trauma skills. They learn to place arterial lines, which allow for more sophisticated patient monitoring. Skills such as these are typically only performed in a hospital, but LifeFlight can provide this care on an island or in a remote clearing deep in the woods.

Before clearing orientation, each new clinician must complete a minimum of six comprehensive high-fidelity simulations, which cover skills from basic to complex that could be required on a LifeFlight transport. These simulations are observed and reviewed by LifeFlight's medical directors, along with the Chief Clinical Officer and Clinical Educators. They verify that the new crew member meets LifeFlight's uncompromising standards for excellence before that clinician is cleared to care for patients. LifeFlight's education team turns great clinicians into elite critical care providers.

LifeFlight also offers training to clinicians at hospitals and in EMS departments around the state. These programs play a critical role in improving the skills of providers across Maine’s EMS system. Having highly skilled clinicians who have trained to work together at every stage of the chain of survival — the continuum of care that stretches from the very first responder on scene or in an emergency room, through LifeFlight, to the team at a major medical center — improves outcomes for critically ill and

injured patients.

Safely delivering the highest quality care to the people of Maine is LifeFlight’s top priority, bottom line, and operational objective. As a highly effective, mission-driven organization, LifeFlight is always challenging itself to improve. It’s baked into the culture. Clinical education is introduced to each medical crew member on their first day, and from there the learning never stops.

Meet Our Clinical Educators



Tom Gutow
Flight Nurse and Senior Clinical Educator

Tom joined the LifeFlight of Maine team as a flight nurse with the Bangor-based crews in 2018. While in that role, he assisted with LifeFlight education programs before being promoted to Senior Clinical Educator in 2023. In this role, Tom oversees all of

LifeFlight’s education initiatives — training for new LifeFlight clinical crew members, ongoing education for veteran LifeFlight clinicians, and education for clinicians, EMS personnel, and first responders across Maine.

Tom trained as a nurse at the University of Maine at Orono. He held nursing positions in the emergency department at Blue Hill Memorial Hospital, in the intensive care unit (ICU), emergency department, and pediatric intensive care unit at Maine Coast Memorial Hospital, and in the ICU at Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center.

Tom grew up in Michigan, and graduated from high school in Nashville, Tennessee, before moving to Connecticut for college. He spent the first part of his career as a chef, training and working in restaurants in both the United States and France. He moved to Castine, Maine, in 1996, where he has lived ever since with his wife, Amy, who is the registrar at Maine Maritime Academy. Tom is also involved in the Fire and Rescue Department in Castine.



Barrett Strout
Flight Nurse and Clinical Educator

Barrett Strout joined LifeFlight of Maine as a flight nurse with the Lewiston-based crew in 2019. He worked fulltime as a flight nurse, while also helping to coordinate and teach programs at LifeFlight for hospitals and EMS agencies. In 2024, he took on the role of Clinical Educator at LifeFlight. He now splits his time between leading LifeFlight’s education programs and treating patients during shifts as a flight nurse.

Barrett grew up in Warren, Maine. He earned two degrees from the University of New England, one in biological sciences and a second in nursing, which he completed in 2013. He has served for 20 years in the U.S. Army, where he received additional medical training. After returning from a military deployment in 2014, Barrett worked as a nurse in the emergency department at Maine General Medical Center in

Augusta. He gained additional experience as a nurse in the cardiothoracic intensive care unit (ICU) at Maine Medical Center in Portland before coming to LifeFlight.

Barrett currently lives in Augusta, and when he is not teaching or caring for patients, he spends his time golfing in the summers, skiing in the winters, or with his family at camp.



Patrick Underwood

Flight Paramedic and Clinical Educator

Patrick joined LifeFlight of Maine as a flight paramedic in 2016. With a background in EMS education, Patrick now splits his time between clinical shifts and leading LifeFlight's education programs as a clinical educator, helping to train new crew members and leading workshops offered by LifeFlight to EMS providers statewide.

Patrick grew up in Presque Isle and Fryeburg. He became a licensed emergency medical technician (EMT) working with Fryeburg Rescue while still a high school student at Fryeburg Academy. After graduating, he worked in the emergency department at Memorial Hospital in North Conway, New Hampshire, while earning his paramedic degree from Southern Maine Community College (SMCC). After becoming licensed as a paramedic and a firefighter, Patrick worked for the Fire and Rescue Department in Gorham.

Patrick earned his instructor coordinator license from Maine EMS and a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Southern Maine. He taught EMT classes at SMCC for several years. As his responsibilities grew, so did his love of teaching. He began teaching fulltime at SMCC as a simulation lab instructor, leading the effort to build the simulation lab, which is used across all the health sciences programs offered at SMCC.

Patrick lives in North Windham. When he is not on shift or in the classroom, he is spending time with his daughter or out on a lake ice fishing.



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Dispatches is a publication of The LifeFlight Foundation, which provides fundraising and public relations support to LifeFlight of Maine, the state's only air ambulance service.

The LifeFlight Foundation is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Tax Code. It is governed by an elected board of trustees who represent medical, business, legal, and educational fields throughout the state. The Foundation also supports the development and funding of Maine's major air medical needs, such as trauma training statewide; construction of hospital helipads; and installation of weather reporting, navigational, and communications systems.

The Foundation's office is located in Augusta, Maine. You can reach us at 207-230-7092 or by email at info@lifeflightmaine.org.

Donations are tax-deductible.

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LIFEFLIGHT OF MAINE

LifeFlight of Maine is a nonprofit, statewide critical care medical transport service jointly owned by Northern Light Health and Central Maine Healthcare Corporation. LifeFlight's airplane, five helicopters, and ground ambulances are based in Bangor, Lewiston, and Sanford. The aircraft are operated by LifeFlight Aviation Services and dispatched by MedComm. Along with dedicated ground ambulances, these vehicles cover the entire state and offshore islands. LifeFlight complements and supports the work of local EMS and hospital personnel in caring for the critically ill or injured. Each base is staffed by a highly qualified team of pilots, mechanics, nurses, and paramedics. More than 38,000 patients have been safely transported since LifeFlight's founding in 1998. LifeFlight was fully re-accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems in 2022.

As a nonprofit,
LifeFlight of Maine relies on your support
to ensure that every person, in every community in Maine,
has access to critical care and medical transport when needed.

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