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CAREFLITE TO IMPLEMENT NEW AIRCRAFT TECHNOLOGY FOR ALL WEATHER FLYING CAPABILITY

September 30, 2004 – Grand Prairie, Texas ---- Inclement weather and low visibility will no longer be deterrents for CareFlite helicopters that respond to emergency medical situations. CareFlite is now one in a handful of air medical programs that utilize single-pilot IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) aircraft that contain state-of-the-art computer equipment allowing the helicopter to take-off and land in less than ideal weather conditions.

"This new technology gives us an enhanced margin of safety when flying, even in poor weather conditions," said Ed Majors, president of CareFlite. “It gives us the capability to fly in weather that has been impossible in the past. CareFlite is the only air medical transportation provider in Texas to have aircraft with single-pilot IFR capabilities.”

Federal Aviation Administration guidelines currently call for daytime flight minimums of 500-foot ceilings and one mile of visibility before takeoff is allowed. At night, those standards are 800-foot ceilings with two miles of visibility. The technology is a point-space Global Positioning System (GPS) allowing it to safely operate in conditions in which Visual Flight Rules (VFR) aircraft are not allowed to fly.
"The GPS system means that the CareFlite helicopter will be able to leave and arrive safely when the weather is not good," Majors said. "Another significant difference is that VFR aircraft have to be hand-flown, meaning the pilot has both hands and both feet on the control mechanisms at all times and must physically manipulate those controls to make the aircraft respond. With IFR, the autopilot and GPS can simply be programmed to go to a specific destination."

CareFlite operates six helicopters, five of which are manufactured by Agusta, scheduled to begin SPIFR operations in mid-November.

Serving the community since 1979, CareFlite, the only nonprofit, full service medical transportation provider in North Central Texas, is celebrating its 25th year of providing emergency air medical transportation to more than 100 counties and communities within a 150-mile radius of the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. Other CareFlite services include ground ambulance service, critical care ground transport, state-of-the-art communications center, fixed wing service, 911 services, continuing education program, and a community service bicycle team.

For more information, please call Public Relations at 972-339-4217, or visit www.careflite.org.

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