

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago
Heliport Review Committee
Summary of January 24, 2019 Meeting

This report summarizes the issues discussed during the January 24, 2019 regular business meeting of the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago Heliport Review Committee. A full list of meeting participants appears at the conclusion of this report. Any questions or comments about the Lurie Children's Heliport and its operations should be directed to LaDarius Curtis, Community Relations Manager, LCurtis@luriechildrens.org.

- 1. Welcome and Meeting Purpose:** Susan Hayes Gordon, Chair of the Helicopter Review Committee, opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m. by welcoming meeting participants and restating the purpose of the Committee.
 - a. The purpose of the Heliport Review Committee is to provide community review of the Helicopter Air Ambulance Services (H.A.A.) at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago.
 - b. The Committee will meet quarterly to review H.A.A. operations at Lurie Children's in accordance with the guidelines set forth in Institutional Planned Development Number 3.
 - c. It has been decided that the Committee meetings held in January and April will be conducted as a conference call, while meetings held in July and October will be in person at Lurie Children's Hospital. The meetings to discuss the winter months (January & April) will be held as a conference call due to the small number of flights that historically take place during that time frame.

- 2. Introductions:** Susan Hayes Gordon facilitated introductions of participants and reviewed the Committee's meeting materials.
 - a. Roll Call of Committee Members: Susan Hayes Gordon asked all participants to identify themselves. A full list of meeting participants appears at the conclusion of this report.
 - b. Introduction to Materials: Each Committee member was emailed the following prior to the meeting and provided with hard copies at the meeting:
 - i. Meeting agenda and supplementary materials; and,
 - ii. Heliport Usage Reports for the months of October, November and December 2018. Heliport Usage Reports are posted publicly and can be found online at: <https://www.luriechildrens.org/en-us/community/community-relations/Pages/lifesaving-heliport-operation.aspx>.

- c. Susan introduced Lisa Tofil, legal counsel and federal lobbyist for ACCT for Patients, who provided an update on safety advocacy efforts in the critical care transport industry.

3. Update on National Critical Care Transport Safety Advocacy Efforts: Lisa Tofil, Esq., Counsel to Association of Critical Care Transports for Patients (ACCT).

- a. The most important accomplishment of ACCT is to change the conversation from ‘why is there a need to protect patients?’ to ‘how can we protect patients?’
- b. The FAA changed the name of medical helicopter flights from Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (H.E.M.S.) to Helicopter Air Ambulance services to promote a culture of safety in the industry. The FAA wanted to emphasize that aviation safety decisions are separate from medical decisions.
- c. The FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 was passed by Congress and signed by the President last fall. The bill authorizes FAA funding and programs until 2023.

The Act also included language authorizing the formation of an Advisory Committee on Air Ambulance and Patient Billing that would make recommendations with respect to disclosing charges and fees for air ambulance services and the prevention of balance billing.

In addition, the FAA reauthorization bill also includes provisions for the submission of complaints by air ambulance customers as well as a report to Congress on air ambulance oversight.

- d. ACCT strongly urged Congress to include language that would remove non-air transportation services of air ambulance operators from oversight under the Airline Deregulation Act (ADA). This would create a consumer protection that would help prevent high consumer costs by allowing states to regulate the rates and services of air ambulance providers.
- e. There are two competing bills expected to be reintroduced into Congress during the current session. One ties increases in reimbursement rates for air ambulance providers to higher quality of care and patient safety standards. The other raises reimbursement rates across the board. ACCT supports linking any increase in reimbursement rates to standards proven to increase the quality and safety of air ambulance transport.

4. Trends Impacting Transport Services to Lurie Children’s Hospital: Susan Hayes Gordon

- a. Susan reminded the Committee that the Transport Team is in the process of studying the impact of several key trends that relate to the Hospital’s critical care services, including:

- i. Changes in the acuity of patients needing care – patients who require care at Lurie Children’s are sicker than in the past
- ii. Hundreds of pediatric beds in community hospitals have closed throughout the state
- iii. Higher acuity children are being referred to Lurie Children’s from a wider geographic area
- iv. There are new best practice guidelines for treating critically ill or injured patients

5. Update on Lurie Children’s Helicopter Air Ambulance (H.A.A.) Operations: Karen Arndt, Director of Interfacility Transport

- a. Landing agreement providers are reviewing all Lurie requirements and are in the process of their annual training classes.
- b. Lurie Children’s fixed-wing provider went through safety protocol training sessions.
- c. Lurie Transport Team staff attended the Air Medical Transport Conference, where two Lurie flight nurses were speakers.
- d. Karen Arndt and Laura Westley attended the ACCT Conference and took workshops on best practices in supporting flight crews.
- e. The Transport Team is currently developing a peer support program between the flight crews and ER teams.

6. Review of October through December 2018 Heliport Usage Reports: Karen Arndt reviewed Heliport Usage Reports for the reporting period from October to December with the Committee:

- a. Copies of the October, November and December 2018 Heliport Usage Reports are included as an attachment to this report.
- b. All Lurie Children’s Heliport Usage Reports are posted publicly and can be found at: <https://www.luriechildrens.org/en-us/community/community-relations/Pages/lifesaving-heliport-operation.aspx>

7. Committee Feedback:

- a. A question was asked whether the new best practice guidelines will impact where we accept patients from and total volume. The guidelines will help partner hospitals that are not as experienced in pediatric care to diagnose earlier and gain consistency of care. This is a national trend in pediatrics, so should not impact where we accept patients from.

- b. A committee member asked if colder weather impacts decision to use air ambulances. It is possible to choose not to fly due to manufacturing limits. If is too cold, hydraulic lines can freeze up. Also, if you have to do a precautionary landing you have to consider the ability of the crew and patients to stay warm.

8. Committee Meeting Schedule: The Committee's next meeting will be April 25, 2019 and will be a conference call from 8:30-9:30 a.m.

9. Close: Susan Hayes Gordon concluded the meeting at 9:30 a.m.

10. Meeting Participants:

- a. Susan Hayes Gordon
- b. LaDarius Curtis
- c. Laura Westley
- d. Dr. Leah Harris
- e. Karen Arndt
- f. Dave Kostelansky
- g. John Wilhelm
- h. Mike Riordan
- i. Marc Schulman
- j. Gil Salinas
- k. Nick Polutnik