

Angels of Flight sets up medical flights



By Brendan Wedley, Peterborough Examiner
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A Peterborough-based health-care company is serving as a highly specialized travel agency for medical professionals trying to get to Haiti to help with relief efforts, an Angels of Flight official said on Thursday.

A team of 10 medical professionals went to Haiti on Monday with Angels of Flight organizing its flight to the Caribbean country, the transfer of medical supplies and equipment as well as land transportation in Haiti, said Dr. Rocco Lombardi, the company's medical director.

"Our services are needed greatly because trying to get people down there logistically is very difficult," he said. "There's a lot of co-ordination involved.... This is what we do. We have multiple connections with air carriers and government agencies."

A magnitude-7.0 earthquake hit Haiti on Jan. 12, devastating much of the impoverished country. Some estimates have put the number of people killed by the earthquake as high as 200,000.

It took two days to organize the transportation for the group that left on Monday using Angels of Flight's contacts with air carriers and government agencies, Lombardi said.

Angels of Flight is currently working with two other groups that are trying to get to Haiti, he said. The company works predominantly with individuals and small Canadian groups but it has also been involved with American groups that are going to Haiti.

The company hasn't been charging for its services to get medical teams to Haiti, Lombardi said.

Angels of Flight staff have donated their time to facilitate the transportation for the groups, he said.

Angels of Flight specializes in medical evacuations and moving ill and injured people between health facilities, both in Canada and around the world. Its registered nurses specialize in aero medical and ground transportation.

The company operates out of Peterborough, Oshawa and Yuma, Arizona.

Lombardi said he couldn't reveal the names of the groups that have been in contact with Angels of Flight.

He said larger organizations tend to have their own transportation contacts and wouldn't need assistance from Angels of Flight.

Angels of Flight can sometimes arrange for free transportation through its military and civilian transportation contacts for medical teams looking to help with relief efforts, Lombardi said.

Any medical organization or individual interested in helping with the relief effort can contact Angels of Flight (call 1-800-563- 7686 or email admin@angellofflightcanada.com), Lombardi said.

The company can help connect individual medical professionals with an organization that's sending a team to Haiti, he added.

Angels of Flight is also staying in touch with governments in case there's a need for air medical evacuations, but so far there haven't been any requests, Lombardi said.

"I think they're still working on a lot of logistics down there and they're trying to treat immediate needs," he said.

NOTES: Angels of Flight's charitable arm is Global Angel Charitable Organization. Global Angel raised \$21,000 in March to transport a terminally ill woman to her Edmundston, N.B., home from Ottawa.... The charitable organization raised \$18,000 in February to get a terminally ill man home to his family and friends in Bishop's Falls, N.L., from Brampton.

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