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Jan. 11, 2024

Contact: Dan Sweet

Phone: 703-683-4646

Email: dan.sweet@rotor.org

Children’s Health Neonatal/Pediatric Transport Team Receives HAI’s Salute to Excellence Golden Hour Award

Alexandria, Virginia (Jan. 11, 2024) – Helicopter Association International (HAI) is pleased to announce the Neonatal/Pediatric Transport Team at Children’s Health in Dallas is the recipient of the 2024 Salute to Excellence Golden Hour Award. The award recognizes the efforts of an individual, group, or organization that, through a particular activity or contributions over time, has advanced the use of helicopters or UAS aircraft in air medical transportation. It will be presented Feb. 26, 2024 at HAI HELI-EXPO 2024 in Anaheim, California.

The term “golden hour” is traditionally used to identify those critical first 60 minutes after a traumatic injury or onset of symptoms when a patient must receive lifesaving care for the best chance of survival. In neonatal critical care, however, there is another critical window—the “golden six hours.” This phrase refers to the time from a traumatic birth to when an emergency treatment called neonatal therapeutic hypothermia must take place to reduce the chances of further complications, as well as subsequent brain and organ damage.

Neonatal therapeutic hypothermia is a therapy specifically for babies who have experienced a lack of oxygen and/or blood flow to the brain and other organs during the mother’s labor and delivery. This therapy is administered using a water-filled cooling blanket to lower the baby’s body temperature, prolonging the time before further damage can occur.

On a hot summer night in July 2022, a baby was born prematurely with multiple complications at a community hospital in North Texas. With no neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at the hospital, doctors decided to transport the baby to the Level IV NICU at Children’s Health Children’s Medical Center Dallas, all of whose ground vehicles and aircraft are equipped to support critical neonatal and pediatric needs.

After receiving the call, the Children’s Health Neonatal/Pediatric Transport Team launched the medical center’s Sikorsky S-76C++ from Dallas Love Field. Nicknamed Child 1, the aircraft is a dual-pilot IFR helicopter that allows patient transport in poor weather conditions when other services can’t fly.

During the 30-minute flight, registered nurse Alex Cross, respiratory therapist Korey Roberts, and paramedic Hali Henry pre-cooled the equipment while the community hospital team began stabilizing the baby and preparing the infant for transport. The effort of both teams allowed the transport crew to begin the cooling process by 3 am, well within the golden six hours.

“When we arrived [at the community hospital], it was clear the baby was distressed,” Cross shares. “We acted fast to make sure the patient was comfortable, initiated cooling, and transported the patient. Children’s Health

GOLDEN HOUR AWARD

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had their cooling mechanism ready, so as soon as we landed [back in Dallas], we moved the patient over and there was no interruption in this patient's intervention therapy.”

Children's Health and the transport team's readiness and rapid delivery of cooling therapy was instrumental in helping the infant. This intervention has become more common for the hospital, with the team performing it roughly once a month, Cross says. She attributes this action to increased awareness of the benefit of cooling in helping reduce neurological damage after a traumatic birth.

This transport process is an example of the wide variety of responses the Children's Health Neonatal/Pediatric Transport Team performs on any given day, with the team transporting more than 5,000 children a year. Children's Health is the leading pediatric health-care system in North Texas and one of the largest pediatric health-care providers in the nation.

The Golden Hour Award will be presented during HAI HELI-EXPO 2024. HAI HELI-EXPO[®], the world's largest helicopter trade show and exhibition, will be held at the Anaheim Convention Center in Anaheim, California, Feb. 26–29, with the exhibit hall open Feb. 27–29. For more information on HAI HELI-EXPO 2024, visit heliexpo.com.

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HAI is the professional trade association for the global helicopter industry and represents more than 1,100 companies and over 16,000 industry professionals in more than 65 countries. Each year, HAI members safely operate more than 3,700 helicopters and remotely piloted aircraft approximately 2.9 million hours. HAI is dedicated to the promotion of the helicopter as a safe, effective business tool that provides unique advantages to society and to the advancement of the international vertical aviation community.