

MedAire and Good Samaritan Team-up to Support US Navy Physicians

PHOENIX, Ariz. (October 31, 2001) In a pilot program being launched November 1, 2001, select, ship-based US Navy physicians will utilize Phoenix-based MedAire, Inc. to gain direct access to medical specialists at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center (also in Phoenix) in order to provide the highest level of onboard medical care. MedAire and the Good Samaritan medical specialists (including sister organization Banner Health's Northern Colorado Medical Center burn unit in Greeley, Colo.) are volunteering their services for the program.

Calls will come directly from a naval ship to MedAire's MedLink Emergency Telemedicine Center inside Good Samaritan, where they will be managed in conjunction with the specialists. While ship communications will primarily be two-way voice communications, the pilot project may also involve visual transmissions as well.

Since 1986, MedAire and Good Samaritan of Banner Health System, have operated MedLink inside Good Samaritan's emergency center. Within MedLink, Communication Specialists and Good Samaritan board-certified emergency physicians provide 24/7, real-time assistance to people who are managing medical emergencies onboard commercial and corporate aircraft, ships at sea and those who are otherwise isolated from medical care. The MedLink Center is currently taking more than 1,000 emergency calls a month from around the world.

"It is a tremendous honor to provide this service to our armed forces," said Good Samaritan CEO and vice-president Steven L. Seiler. "We are extremely proud of our medical staff," he added. Some 120 Good Samaritan doctors have volunteered to work with MedAire to provide this service.

"We were in the process of putting the infrastructure in place for next year to support remote access to medical specialists," said MedAire president and CEO Joan Sullivan Garrett. "But with the overwhelming response of the physicians and our collective desires to contribute wherever we can – we were able to move things forward a few months."

The US Navy has not indicated how long the pilot program would last. Due to the nature of the program, neither MedAire nor Good Samaritan will be able comment on any medically-related communications.

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