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Foothills helipad to be named after STARS founder

CALGARY – The heliport at Foothills Medical Centre (FMC) will be officially named the Dr. Gregory Powell Helipad in recognition of Dr. Powell’s role as founder of STARS air ambulance and the STARS Foundation, and his exemplary service over a 35-year career.

Since retiring as STARS President and CEO in March 2012, Dr. Powell continues to volunteer as an ambassador for the organization and provides advisory expertise in the area of international air medicine.

“The newly named helipad recognizes Dr. Powell’s tremendous leadership in the fields of critical care, aviation medicine, medical training and education,” says Minister of Health Sarah Hoffman. “With his years of service and contributions in the course of his career to the lives of countless patients, Dr. Powell is truly deserving of this recognition.”

Dr. Powell, who is also Professor Emeritus of Emergency Family Medicine at the University of Calgary, says he is honoured to have the FMC helipad bear in his name.

“The naming of the helipad was a complete surprise and is a very special and humbling honour,” he says. “There have been many people and organizations from many walks of life who have made critical care air medical transport a reality in our medical system. I hope that this is viewed as a recognition of those collaborative efforts over the past 30 years. Ultimately, it is about the patients and their care.”

The helipad, located on the roof of Foothills Medical Centre’s McCaig Tower, began operations in February 2014. The original helipad was located on the ground in front of the facility’s emergency department. The new rooftop location enables patients arriving by STARS to go straight into a specialized trauma operating suite at McCaig Tower. Foothills Medical Centre is the main trauma centre for southern Alberta.

STARS – which celebrates 30 years of service this year – provides rapid, highly specialized emergency medical transport for the critically ill and injured. As founder of STARS (Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society), Dr. Powell has also been involved in community fundraising in support of the vision and mission of the organization.

“Dr. Powell has helped shape the way we care for emergency and trauma patients in Alberta,” says Vickie Kaminski, President and CEO of Alberta Health Services. “On a daily basis, STARS continues to play a critical role in getting patients to hospital safely where they can access the advanced care they need.”

Dr. Powell was also inducted into the Order of Canada in 2006 for his service to the community and Canada in the areas of emergency medicine and medical transport.

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“With a lifetime legacy in leading and defining transport medicine, Dr. Gregory Powell is not only an organizational leader and innovator, but also a gifted physician,” says Andrea Robertson, President and CEO of STARS.

“STARS has flown over 30,000 missions in 30 years, and this would not have been possible without Dr. Powell’s vision, hard work and passion for improving the care of critically ill and injured patients.”

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than four million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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