

April 28, 2010

- The Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society (STARS) base in Grande Prairie will receive provincial funding for the first time in its history as part of a new 10-year agreement between Alberta Health Services and STARS. The new agreement commits to long term partial funding for the Grande Prairie base as well as continued partial funding for the bases in Calgary and Edmonton.
- In the new funding model, Alberta Health Services will support STARS with \$5.488 million annually over each of the next 10 years – an additional \$1.2 million annually as compared to previous funding.
- Approximately 25 per cent of STARS total mission costs is funded by Alberta Health Services and the remaining 75 per cent from STARS fundraising and community partnerships. STARS total operating expenses in 2009 were approximately \$27 million of which \$23.7 million were mission operations.
- As part of the renewed partnership going forward, STARS will facilitate a critical care transport medicine education program for all air medical personnel (fixed wing and rotary). This will provide consistent training and equitable education opportunities.
- STARS will also assume the role of coordinating the movement of critically ill patients from rural hospitals to larger centres. Approximately half of the STARS annual missions are inter-hospital critical patient care transfers and the remaining half are emergency or rescue scene calls. Public emergency calls continue through the 9-1-1 system.
- On April 1, 2010, Alberta Health Services assumed responsibility of ensuring air ambulance services are available across the province. In addition to STARS, which provides dedicated rotary air ambulance through the agreement, fixed wing air ambulance services will continue to be conducted by 12 providers contracted through Alberta Health Services.
- The integration of ground and air ambulance within the province-wide health delivery system ensures all Albertans have access to emergency medical services, no matter when or where they find themselves in need of emergency care.
- STARS serves 94 per cent of Alberta's population 24 hours a day 365 days a year – the remaining six per cent are served by fixed wing and ground ambulance and often rendezvous with STARS.
- STARS flew 1,368 missions in 2009. Since 1985, STARS has flown more than 19,000 missions.
- STARS responds with five BK117 helicopters, including two located in Edmonton, two in Calgary and one in Grande Prairie. The helicopters rotate through mission service and also function as back-up (during maintenance or a major incident) and as training aircraft.
- Crew members on every mission include two pilots, a flight paramedic and flight nurse with critical care skills. A STARS Referral Emergency Physician (REP) flies on approximately 20 per cent of missions, and provides medical referral for inter-hospital missions, and some scene calls.

AHS/STARS Agreement

- Six fundamental commitments are outlined in the Agreement including:
 1. **Rural Red Patient Referral Process For All Inter-Facility Transfers** – STARS will assume the role of coordinating care and transport of rural critically ill patients from sending-hospitals to larger centres.

2. **Medical Oversight for Air Ambulances** – STARS will provide a provincial Air Ambulance Medical Director who will work closely with the Alberta Health Services EMS Senior Medical Director and the EMS Medical Director Team.
3. **Term, Bases** – The 10-year Agreement includes a commitment to continued partial funding of STARS' bases in Calgary and Edmonton, and extends partial funding to the Grande Prairie base.
4. **Medical Education** - STARS will facilitate a critical care transport medicine education program for all air medical providers (fixed wing and rotary) providing consistent training and equitable education opportunities for all.
5. **Helipad Infrastructure** - STARS will participate in Alberta Health Services Helipad Sub-committee to assist in the management of helipads.
6. **Public Trust** – STARS and Alberta Health Services will collaborate and work together to create and maintain public and health system awareness of the referral process for rural Red Patients requiring transport.