The Milwaukee Regional Medical Center (MRMC) files a Notice of Intent and subsequently a Certificate of Need application with the Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in Madison. This application is to begin an air medical transport program based at the MRMC campus in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Barbara Hess, Chief Flight Nurse with Lifeline in Rockford, Illinois, begins working with MRMC on a consulting basis.

The Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) issues a stipulation allowing MRMC to begin operation of an emergency air medical transportation service in a demonstration project for one year. This service is named FLIGHT FOR LIFE (with name approval from the first hospital-based air medical transport program in the United States, based at St. Anthony’s Hospital in Denver, Colorado). FLIGHT FOR LIFE becomes the first air medical helicopter transport program in Wisconsin.

Six nurses from the Milwaukee County Medical Complex begin orientation to flight nursing.

Barbara Hess is hired as Program Director with FLIGHT FOR LIFE.

FLIGHT FOR LIFE - Wisconsin begins as the first air medical service in Wisconsin, flying a single-engine Bell Long Ranger helicopter.

FLIGHT FOR LIFE’s first patient is transported from Eagle River Memorial Hospital to the Milwaukee County Medical Complex.

Official public dedication of the FLIGHT FOR LIFE Program. (Channel 4 TV airs a half-hour special program about FLIGHT FOR LIFE.)

FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Wisconsin ends the first year by transporting 283 patients.

FLIGHT FOR LIFE establishes a “non-dedicated” airplane transport component of its program.

Air transportation provided by Air Methods

Revised 12/16/2014
December 1985: FLIGHT FOR LIFE transports a total of 503 patients.

1986: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Wisconsin transitions into a twin-engine, BK117 helicopter.

FLIGHT FOR LIFE-International is established, becoming the first 24 hour dedicated airplane program in Wisconsin for patient transport. It remains in service until 1993.

1987: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Wisconsin transfers the first patient in Wisconsin on an Intra-Aortic Balloon Pump.

May 1987: FLIGHT FOR LIFE begins a new “satellite” helicopter service, based at the Northern Illinois Medical Center in McHenry, Illinois. This service begins operation in a Bell Long Ranger helicopter.

October 13-16, 1987: FLIGHT FOR LIFE hosts the air medical industry’s (ASHBEAMS) national convention of 1,500 members at the Hyatt Regency Hotel and the MECCA in downtown Milwaukee. Ten helicopters land on Kilbourn Avenue for display during the three-day ASHBEAMS Convention. A second flight line of various ambulance-configured airplanes is located at the International Terminal at General Mitchell Field.

December 1987: FLIGHT FOR LIFE transports a total of 697 patients.

September 21, 1988: Scott Air Charter flies Barbara Hess to Boston to accept the ASHBEAMS organization’s highest award, the Marriott/Carlson Award, at their annual national convention. Named after the pilot and physician involved in the first known American medical helicopter transport mission in January 1945, this award is presented to an individual who has demonstrated long and dedicated leadership and service to the promotion of emergency air medical services. Two thousand ASHBEAMS members give a standing ovation as the award was presented. Barbara is nearing the end of her two-year battle with cancer.

October 11, 1988: FLIGHT FOR LIFE grieves the passing of its first Program Director, Barbara Hess.

December 1988: FLIGHT FOR LIFE celebrates its Fifth Anniversary, transporting almost 3,000 patients.
1990: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Northern Illinois completes its 1,000th patient transport.

February 21, 1991: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Wisconsin celebrates its Seventh Anniversary with a special memorial reception for Barbara Hess, during which her Marriott/Carlson Award was placed in the new Bridge Building Conference Center at the Milwaukee County Medical Complex.


September 1992: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Northern Illinois hosts a reception at the Northern Illinois Medical Center celebrating its Fifth Anniversary.

November 13, 1993: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Wisconsin celebrates its 10th Anniversary, inviting former patients and crew members, friends, and dignitaries to the dedication of the new rooftop hangar and helipad, and an upgraded BK117 helicopter.

1993: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Wisconsin transports its 4,000th patient.

March 1994: FLIGHT FOR LIFE presents its first annual Scene Call of the Year award at its annual educational conference.

December 1994: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Wisconsin transports its 5,000th patient.

1995: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Northern Illinois transports its 2,000th patient, also having a record year of 410 flights.

FLIGHT FOR LIFE’s budget supports the program entirely without “sponsor” support.

Spring 1996: FLIGHT FOR LIFE becomes the first air medical program in Wisconsin and the second in Illinois to be accredited by its national air medical association and CAMTS - the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems.

June 1996: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Wisconsin transports its 6,000th patient.

June 1997: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Northern Illinois has a reunion celebration with patients, crew members, friends, and dignitaries for its 10th Anniversary.
FLIGHT FOR LIFE

FLIGHT FOR LIFE Transport System History

1997: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Wisconsin completes transfer of a patient on a bi-vad and IABP, the first of its kind in Wisconsin. The patient is transferred from Sheboygan to St. Luke’s in Milwaukee.

October 1997: FLIGHT FOR LIFE completes its 10,000th patient transfer (both sites).


Spring 1999: FLIGHT FOR LIFE is re-accredited by CAMTS.

1999: FLIGHT FOR LIFE celebrates 15 years of safe patient transports.

2000: FLIGHT FOR LIFE purchases two BK117 helicopters to put into service at both sites.

December 2000: FLIGHT FOR LIFE (all sites) transports its 15,000th patient.

December 2001: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Northern Illinois moves into its new hangar.

May 2002: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Northern Illinois celebrates its 15 years of service with an Anniversary/Open House celebration in at its new hangar facility.

September 2002: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Wisconsin transports its 10,000th patient.

October 2002: FLIGHT FOR LIFE receives its second re-accreditation from CAMTS.

November 2003: FLIGHT FOR LIFE (all sites) transports its 20,000th patient.

January 2004: FLIGHT FOR LIFE kicks off its 20th Anniversary celebration at the annual Wisconsin EMS Association conference. The FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Wisconsin helicopter goes on display for three days at the Midwest Airlines Center in downtown Milwaukee.
January 2005: FLIGHT FOR LIFE adds Sky Connect satellite tracking system and a satellite phone to both aircraft.

Spring 2005: FLIGHT FOR LIFE initiates a rapid response pilot program for STEMI patients.

July 2005: FLIGHT FOR LIFE receives its third re-accreditation from CAMTS.

October 2005: Stu McVicar, FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Northern Illinois Flight Paramedic, receives the Association of Air Medical Services Medical Crew Member of the Year Award at the Air Medical Transport Conference in Austin, Texas.

Tammy Chatman, FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Northern Illinois Professional Relations/Marketing Manager receives the Association of Air Medical Services President’s Award at the Air Medical Transport Conference in Austin, Texas.

January 2006: FLIGHT FOR LIFE mourns the loss of Kathy Bertram, former FLIGHT FOR LIFE Fixed Wing Manager.

August 2006: FLIGHT FOR LIFE adds EMS Charts and a Toughbook computer on each aircraft which will allow for paperless charting on all transports.

October 2006: FLIGHT FOR LIFE announces the addition of XM Weather to both aircraft via the Garmin GNS 430.

November 2, 2006: FLIGHT FOR LIFE says goodbye to Dr. Joe Darin, one of the founders of FLIGHT FOR LIFE.


June 11, 2007: FLIGHT FOR LIFE transports its 25,000th patient.

September 16, 2007: Tammy Chatman, FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Northern Illinois Professional Relations/Marketing Manager receives the Association of Air Medical Services President’s Award at the Air Medical Transport Conference in Tampa, Florida.
FLIGHT FOR LIFE

FLIGHT FOR LIFE Transport System History

September 27, 2007: FLIGHT FOR LIFE announces it will begin operation of a FLIGHT FOR LIFE Communication Center in January of 2008.


October 10, 2007: FLIGHT FOR LIFE announces it will expand the FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Wisconsin operation to the Waukesha County Airport-Crites Field.

October 28, 2007: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Wisconsin recognizes the program’s 25,000th patient in a special event at St. Agnes Hospital in Fond du Lac.

November 6, 2007: FLIGHT FOR LIFE says goodbye to one of its founders, Jim Ryan, who died of cancer.

November 15, 2007: FLIGHT FOR LIFE hosts its first semi-annual Customer Service Advisory Board meeting.

December 26, 2007: The FLIGHT FOR LIFE Communications Center officially opens and assumes responsibility for dispatching the FLIGHT FOR LIFE aircraft.

January 29, 2008: FLIGHT FOR LIFE announces it will be placing a community-based helicopter at the Fond du Lac County Airport in summer of 2008.

February 1, 2008: FLIGHT FOR LIFE begins construction on the new Fond du Lac base facility.

March 2008: FLIGHT FOR LIFE transports its 26,000th patient.

April 28, 2008: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Fond du Lac medical crew hired.

May 19, 2008: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Northern Illinois 10,000th patient honored by FLIGHT FOR LIFE and the Waukegan Fire Department.

June 10, 2008: The first of two EC145s arrive at HSI in Janesville, Wisconsin for installation of the avionics and EMS interior packages.

June 30, 2008: The second EC145s arrives at HSI in Janesville, Wisconsin.
FLIGHT FOR LIFE

FLIGHT FOR LIFE Transport System History

August 4, 2008: FLIGHT FOR LIFE expands to become: The FLIGHT FOR LIFE Transport System provided by the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center and headquartered in Waukesha, Wisconsin, with bases in Waukesha/Milwaukee and Fond du Lac - Wisconsin, and McHenry - Illinois.

The Fond du Lac Base goes into service at the Fond du Lac County Airport and does its first flight within seven minutes.

August 7, 2008: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Fond du Lac Base hosts an Open House for EMS providers.

August 17, 2008: An Open House and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony is held for the FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Fond du Lac Base.

August 20, 2008: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Waukesha/Milwaukee Base and corporate offices move to their new hangar and corporate offices at Waukesha County Airport - Crites Field.

September 6, 2008: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Waukesha/Milwaukee Base hosts a Ribbon Cutting and VIP Reception, Open House for EMS providers and Open House for the general public.

October 20, 2008: Les Love, Mechanic at the McHenry Base, receives the Association of Air Medical Services Transport Mechanic’s Award of Excellence for 2008. The award was presented to Les at the Air Medical Transport Conference Awards Dinner in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

February 2009: FLIGHT FOR LIFE transports its 27,000th patient.

May 15, 2009: The new EC145 helicopter to be based at FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Waukesha/Milwaukee takes its first test flight.

May 28, 2009: The new EC145 helicopter arrives at FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Waukesha/Milwaukee.

June 18, 2009: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Waukesha/Milwaukee holds a Dedication Ceremony for the new EC145.
FLIGHT FOR LIFE

Transport System History

June 30, 2009: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Waukesha/Milwaukee puts its new EC145 into service.

The BK117 from FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Waukesha/Milwaukee is flown to its new home, the FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Fond du Lac Base.

July 21, 2009: The new EC145 helicopter to be based at FLIGHT FOR LIFE-McHenry takes its first test flight.


September 19, 2009: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Waukesha/Milwaukee holds a 25th Anniversary Open House/Blood Drive.

October 17, 2009: FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Fond du Lac holds a 25th Anniversary Open House/Blood Drive.

February 1, 2010: Rick Boeshaar, FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Waukesha/Milwaukee base Paramedic, who also serves as a Flight Medic in the Wisconsin Army National Guard, has been named recipient of the “Darold M. Hoeltz Award” from the 832nd Medical Company, in West Bend, Wisconsin.

February 16, 2010: Stu McVicar and Sharon Purdom, flight crew from the FLIGHT FOR LIFE-McHenry base, teach a cardio-pulmonary lecture and lab throughout the FFL service area. While teaching at the Hebron-Alden-Greenwood F.P.D. the 5000th student went through the lab and lecture!

April 5, 2010: FLIGHT FOR LIFE launches online Customer Satisfaction Surveys giving customers a choice of responding online or via fax.

April 23, 2010: Communication Center Observational Experience (CCOE) is created to give customers an opportunity to spend a shift with a Communication Specialist.

Summer 2010: FLIGHT FOR LIFE transports its 29,000th patient.
FLIGHT FOR LIFE

FLIGHT FOR LIFE Transport System History

**Summer 2010:** FLIGHT FOR LIFE bases each host their second annual blood drives in conjunction with their local blood centers. Each base raffles off a one-of-a-kind quilt to support the FLIGHT FOR LIFE Night Vision Goggle Fund.

**June 2010:** The BK117 based at FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Fond du Lac base is upgraded to include new safety equipment.

**August 31, 2010:** A Pink Heals Fire Truck stops at Centegra Hospital-McHenry and members of the FLIGHT FOR LIFE-McHenry crew attend the event.

**September 15, 2010:** FLIGHT FOR LIFE begins sale of Pink Heals T-shirts, hooded sweat-shirts and baseball caps with a unique Pink Heals/FLIGHT FOR LIFE logo specially designed for this purpose. Each FLIGHT FOR LIFE base selects a local charity which helps women with cancer who will receive the profits of their sales of these items.

**October 2010:** FLIGHT FOR LIFE launches a “Customers ONLY” webpage providing forms and information specifically for our customer’s use.

**October 2, 2010:** FLIGHT FOR LIFE holds its first conference in Fond du Lac at St. Agnes Hospital.

**November 2010:** Night Vision Goggle (NVG) crew training is completed and NVG use begins at all three FLIGHT FOR LIFE bases.

**November 24, 2010:** FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Waukesha/Milwaukee Flight Nurse Cherie Lockwood, one of the original FLIGHT FOR LIFE crew members, retires.

**January 2011:** FLIGHT FOR LIFE's Facebook page attains it’s 3,700th fan.

**February 14, 2011:** FLIGHT FOR LIFE-McHenry makes its $4,600 Pink Heals donation to Centegra Sage Cancer Center.

**March 14, 2011:** FLIGHT FOR LIFE goes live with lift-off on standby for Hospitals.

**April 18, 2011:** FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Waukesha/Milwaukee makes its $2,856 Pink Heals donation to Wisconsin Ovarian Cancer Alliance.

**Summer 2011:** FLIGHT FOR LIFE transports its 30,000th patient.
**FLIGHT FOR LIFE**

**FLIGHT FOR LIFE** Transport System History

**June 30, 2011:** FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Fond du Lac makes its $1,700 Pink Heals donation to Agnesian HealthCare Foundation’s Carol Hyland Caring For You Fund.

**October 17, 2011:** FLIGHT FOR LIFE receives American Eurocopter’s 2011 Vision Zero Aviation Safety Award at the Air Medical Transport Conference in St. Louis, Missouri.

**January 2012:** The State of Wisconsin awards its’ $32,000 WISCOM Grant for Interoperability to FLIGHT FOR LIFE. This is the first grant ever awarded to FLIGHT FOR LIFE in its 28 year history.

**January 28, 2012:** FLIGHT FOR LIFE receives a repurposed BK117 shell to be converted into a “trainer.”

**October 2012:** FLIGHT FOR LIFE receives a check for $2,500 from Sikorsky Aircraft at the Air Medical Transport Conference in Seattle, Washington. The check is in honor of Barb Hess, our first program director.

**December 2012:** FLIGHT FOR LIFE sponsors Blood Drives in 2012 which garner 472 units of blood.

**January 7, 2013:** FLIGHT FOR LIFE’s backup aircraft, 587MC, is updated and upgraded with the latest in safety and technology and a new paint job. First test flight performed in Janesville, Wisconsin.

**January 8, 2013:** FLIGHT FOR LIFE-McHenry and FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Fond du Lac present a check for $4,000 to Pink Heals of Northern Illinois from profits of Pink Heals merchandise sales. The money helps fund the replacement of fire truck “Jessica’s” radiator.

**January 20, 2013:** FLIGHT FOR LIFE’s Facebook page attains its 6,000th fan.

**January 29, 2013:** FLIGHT FOR LIFE goes live with Twitter.

**January 31, 2013:** FLIGHT FOR LIFE holds a news conference at the Wisconsin EMS Association Conference (WEMSA) to announce launch of Flight For Life Central Mobile App.

**February 15, 2013:** FLIGHT FOR LIFE receives its’ first Flight For Life Central App Helicopter Activation.

**October 21, 2013** FLIGHT FOR LIFE-Waukesha Base pilot, Janis Sierra, receives the National EMS Pilot Association 2013 Pilot of the Year Award.
January 2014: FLIGHT FOR LIFE’s 30th Anniversary Year begins and we are celebrating safe transport of over 33,000 patients.

January 29, 2014: We remember our first patient, Mary Bachmann, transported 30 years ago today.

May 19, 2014: Claire Rayford, last of our original flight nurses, then Chief Flight Nurse, and finally Professional Relations/Marketing Manager/PIO for the Waukesha Base, retires after 30 years!


August 11-12, 2014: The CAMTS reaccreditation site survey is completed.

September 26, 27 & 28, 2014: FLIGHT FOR LIFE’s 30th Anniversary Celebration Events, each featuring keynote speaker Randolph Mantooth and several patient speakers. Fond du Lac Base event on 9/26 at Fond du Lac Holiday Inn; Waukesha Base event on 9/27 at Waukesha County Expo Center Forum and McHenry Base event on 9/28 at McHenry County College, Luecht Conference Center.