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'Vision Zero' Helicopter Emergency Medical Services Accident-Avoidance Program Uses Social Networking Tools to Build a 'Community Culture of Safety'

Alexandria, VA – Media outlets, the public and, most importantly, crew members and others involved in helicopter emergency medical services (HEMS) can now participate in activities, updates and conversations regarding the revitalized “Vision Zero” program via Twitter (www.twitter.com/visionzero) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/VisionZero). These social-networking tools are among a host of materials being developed as part of the reinvigorated program, which will be highlighted at the annual Air Medical Transport Conference (AMTC), Oct. 26-28, in San Jose, Calif.

Vision Zero was initially launched by the Association of Air Medical Services in March 2005 with the goal of reducing and eliminating “errors of consequence” – or those events within the medical transport environment that result in serious injury or fatality – through greater safety awareness, vigilance and avoidance of complacency. However, after a spike in air medical accidents in 2008, the program has since received greater attention and a renewed focus, as well as more funding and educational resources.

“Education, awareness and vigilance – these are the three points upon which Vision Zero focuses,” said Program Chair Jonathan Godfrey, RN, CMTE, a Washington, D.C.-based flight nurse and HEMS safety advocate, who survived after the medical helicopter he was flying in crashed in the Potomac River in 2005. “Vision Zero addresses the essential components of building a culture of safety and as such is breathing new life into our community and creating greater safety awareness.”

Among the tools that Vision Zero plans to unveil is an educational documentary video, “Maximum Impact: Safety and Survivability,” which outlines Godfrey’s crash experience and provides information on how to increase the odds of surviving of a HEMS crash, along with advice on how crew members can avoid flight-related incidents and accidents. As part of its video initiative, Vision Zero is encouraging air and ground providers who have been involved in crashes to share their experiences and lessons learned.

For further Web-based Vision Zero information and regular updates, see <http://visionzero.aams.org>.

About AAMS – The Association of Air Medical Services (AAMS) is the trade association serving the entire air and critical care ground medical transport community. AAMS, together with its charitable arm, the Foundation for Air Medical Research and Education (FARE), strives to enhance the medical transport industry by promoting the highest level of industry safety; promoting quality patient care; inspiring commitment to the industry’s work, causes, and viability; and providing superior service to its members. For details, see www.aams.org.

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