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# New medical helicopter to improve Iowa air ambulance service

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FORT DODGE, Iowa (AP) - A medical helicopter that will be stationed at a Fort Dodge hospital will improve air ambulance service in a high-need area, officials said Thursday.

Trinity Regional Medical Center announced that a LifeFlight helicopter will be based at the hospital beginning in May, the Fort Dodge Messenger reported (<http://bit.ly/1B6uox2> ). It's the first vehicle of its kind to be stationed in Fort Dodge and will serve north-central Iowa 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The addition of the air ambulance is the result of a partnership between the hospital and UnityPoint Health LifeFlight, based in Des Moines. The helicopter will be staffed with eight people - including pilots, nurses, paramedics and an aircraft mechanic - and the group will be trained in critical care, advanced life support, pediatrics and advanced airway management.

The helicopter will be used to transport patients from Trinity to other hospitals, and also to relocate patients to Trinity or other facilities.

"By having LifeFlight services available at all times, Trinity can significantly reduce the transportation time for critically ill patients, which can have a significant impact on patient outcomes," Troy Martens, the hospital's chief operating officer, said in a statement.

Martens said a temporary landing pad in a hospital parking lot has been set up for the helicopter until construction on

the hospital's emergency department is complete. At that point, the helicopter will have access to a rooftop landing pad.

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Information from: The Messenger, <http://www.messengernews.net>

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