

Nurses Fly High for Patients

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Talk about working under pressure. Amy Bosich's patient was a foreign dignitary who came complete with a detachment of secret service agents. The dignitary, who had suffered a stroke, was being transported to the U.S. for medical treatment. The jetliner was well over the Pacific when the patient began having respiratory difficulty. Acting quickly, the critical care RN used an ambubag and suction to raise the patient's oxygen level while everyone else remained oblivious to the crisis. The patient was delivered safely to his destination; it was another successful mission for Flying Nurses of Hawaii.

"You have to be familiar with flight physiology to transport patients," said Amy, who has Hawaii Air Ambulance experience. "Barometric pressure drops and oxygen levels decrease. Moisture decreases too, so a patient could get dehydrated." A Queen's nurse since 1989, Amy has worked as a house crisis nurse and an off-shift nursing supervisor. Now she works part time in the 4C trauma ICU and is the owner of Flying Nurses of Hawaii.

The fledgling company is a "bed to bed" medical travel service that offers low cost local and worldwide assistance to patients who require medical attention during their trips. Services range from preparing simple medical itineraries to accompanying acutely ill, ventilator-dependent patients on commercial aircraft. A nurse meets with the patient's physician to certify fitness for travel, arranges all ground and air transportation and secures any specialized equipment and supplies. Evaluations are done at no cost.

Amy started her business because of the need she saw for the service. Over a dozen nurses act as Flying Nurses, including several Queen's nurses. The company's clients are mostly neurologic, trauma, orthopedic, cancer, head injury, stroke and respiratory patients. Without transportation services, many would not be able to go home. Tourists are periodically stranded here for many weeks when they suffer a mishap. Often, patients are not able to afford the \$20,000 needed to hire a private jet. Flying Nurses can do it for anywhere between \$2,000 and \$5,000 by using commercial airlines. "Hospitals and physicians are thrilled," said Amy. "The families of patients are thrilled." You wouldn't think the other passengers in the plane would be thrilled by the patients, who often ride first class. One patient was confused and agitated, and threw a few drinks. Another parroted foul language. (Amy had to talk at her to get her to stop.) Not true, says Amy. Most people have complemented our nurses on the valuable service they provide.

Currently, the company makes 16 to 20 flights per month. Two nurses are ready to go every day, and usually have two days notice while arrangements are being made. "You never know where you're going to go," said Amy, who has been to Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Micronesia, Samoa, Guam and virtually every state. She has brought patients from around the Pacific Basin to Queen's, and sees her business as potentially beneficial to Queen's International's effort to attract patients from Asia.

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HMA members.—Please send a signed and type-written ad to the HMA office. As a benefit of membership, HMA members may place a complimentary one-time classified ad in HMJ as space is available.

Nonmembers.—Please call 536-7702 for a non-member form. Rates are \$1.50 a word with a minimum of 20 words or \$30. Not commissionable. Payment must accompany written order.

Office Space

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