



FOR RELEASE  
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## **The Yukon government and Alkan Air announce retrofit of medevac plane**

WHITEHORSE—Together with Alkan Air, Minister of Health and Social Services Mike Nixon and Minister of Community Services Currie Dixon announce the retrofit of a medevac plane for the transport of bariatric patients from Yukon communities.

The Department of Health and Social Services is responsible for the delivery of medical air transportation throughout Yukon. The frequency of requests to Yukon Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for bariatric transport has increased in recent years, requiring a medically appropriate solution. Yukon EMS clients who exceed the weight or width limits of standard medevac equipment—a weight of 350 pounds and maximum width of 24 inches—meet the medical definition of a bariatric patient.

"A partnership between Alkan Air and the Government of Yukon made this initiative possible," Nixon said. "We are pleased to be able to offer safe and effective air transportation for Yukoners experiencing a health crisis."

As Yukon's provider of air ambulance service, Alkan Air is an integral part of the Yukon health care system. Previously, in-territory bariatric flights were conducted using cargo aircraft, which did not provide the patient or their care team with a suitable environment. Out-of-territory bariatric flights were outsourced, contributing to both delays in patient transport and increased medevac expenses. This innovative retrofit will reduce patient transfer delays, increase patient safety and provide a better working environment for our first responders.

"Alkan Air is proud to be a partner in enhancing the medical air transportation service for all Yukoners. We have just completed the installation of a larger accessibility door in our King Air 350," Alkan Air general manager Ron Limoges said. "The new door will allow EMS to provide improved service for patients who require the special loading system."

Alkan's initiative allows Yukon Emergency Medical Services to implement a mechanical lift system that pairs with the door of the aircraft.

"We are pleased with the purchase of an electronic lift to assist in the safe transfer of our bariatric patients, as well as the provision of training for our EMS personnel to ensure proper use of the new equipment," Dixon added. "This collaboration between the Yukon government and Alkan Air provides a significant improvement to health services for Yukoners."

The bariatric medevac aircraft will go into operation later this spring once standard operating procedures have been established and both EMS and flight crews have been trained in operating the new equipment.

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