

SUPPORT FOR LIFE

THE FOUR NEW AIR MEDICAL INTERIORS THAT SPECTRUM AEROMED IS CURRENTLY DEVELOPING CONFIRM THE COMPANY'S WELL-KNOWN ABILITY AND COMMITMENT TO HELPING EVERY EMS OPERATOR SAVE LIVES.

BY AMITAV DASH

Although Spectrum Aeromed had designed a medical interior for the Bell 429 a few years ago, when the opportunity came up to work with Life Flight Network (LFN) on a revised version, it didn't hesitate to modify its original design to suit LFN's needs. After all, creating customized emergency medical service (EMS) solutions is one of Spectrum Aeromed's main strengths.

Formed in 1991, this multi-award-winning North Dakota company has designed medical interiors and equipment for all kinds and sizes of aircraft—everything from light, single-engine helicopters right up to jet airliners. Most of these products are designed to fit several different aircraft. However, the company often combines a number of them, along with its engineering ability, technical know-how and customer service commitment, to create a unique solution for a specific client's needs.

"We believe in taking the time to talk to the customer and find out what their mission needs are and what they really want from their air medical solution," said Matthew Christenson, Spectrum Aeromed's vice-president and account executive.

When it came to LFN—which serves the northwestern United States—this EMS operator liked Spectrum Aeromed's existing Bell 429 interior concept but wanted some changes that fit its specific requirements.

"The interior they need will have a single Pivot Stretcher, forward medical cabinet with a liquid oxygen 10-liter orb, medical pivoting seat, ceiling valance, medical lighting and a light weight floor protection kit," said Christenson.

"We had a [previous] concept but the solution that has been chosen by LFN we only have in design models. So, there is plenty of new engineering work for this set-up that will begin now that the Bell 429 project is underway."

Christenson said the Pivot/Articulating Stretcher and base deck, medical swivel seat, and medical mounts are established designs, while the floor adapter attachment is an update to an existing product. The other items—ceiling valance, electrical kit, light weight floor protection kit and medical cabinet—for Spectrum's Bell 429 EMS interior

solution are all new designs. Each component provides a host of benefits, but the stretcher and base deck are the focal point from which the solution starts.

Through its base deck, the Pivot Stretcher can rotate and extend outside the aircraft and be locked in multiple positions. Among the benefits this provides are more-effortless loading and handling of the patient and better, safer access to the patient in flight. With the Pivot Stretcher, up to three medical seats can be in the cabin, including one that rotates toward the patient. (A version with dual stretchers is available.)

A Stretcher Bridge can be mounted to the stretcher to secure medical equipment needed for specific missions. Alternatively, an Infant Transport Deck can be secured to the base deck, replacing the stretcher for neonate missions.

Additional devices can be secured on top of the medical cabinet, which has lockable drawers to store drugs and medications.

"This Bell 429 interior solution won't be limited to any one HEMS [helicopter EMS] provider or style," said Christenson. "This should hold some nice versatility that others would be able to utilize with no modifications. If they do need modifications, that will also be easy enough to capture and provide with an STC [supplemental type certificate] upgrade."

When he spoke to Insight in August 2019, Christenson said Spectrum Aeromed was at the beginning of the project. "Our main design campaign starts now and will continue for the next few months and then to the production phase."

Spectrum Aeromed will send the interior kits to Bell in 2020. Bell will then perform the installation and deliver the helicopters to LFN.

For operators with different fleet considerations, Christenson said Spectrum Aeromed is hard at work on three other STCs that might be of interest.

The first STC campaign is for a Pilatus PC-24 light jet. Spectrum Aeromed is currently working on confirming a contract for this air medical interior concept. Once that contract is signed, the project will move forward.



The second campaign, which is already underway, is for the Embraer Phenom 300 light jet. "We have the STC number, and the design and equipment are complete. We are looking for an aircraft to use for the conformity now so that we can finish out the STC process and be ready for a customer."

The third STC campaign is for the Leonardo

AW169. Given the HEMS-focus and growing popularity of this new light-intermediate, twin-engine helicopter, Christenson said Spectrum Aeromed wants to have its solution completed by the end of 2020, "so we can be an option for Leonardo or [can go] direct to customers."

Whatever products or solutions

Spectrum Aeromed's clients end up choosing, one thing is constant: "The relationship we have with each of them will last for the life of that offering, and hopefully beyond that. Our long-term commitment to each customer ensures they can commit, every day, to saving lives. That's support for life." ✈



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