

Mercy Flight sues for alleged wrongful transport

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(June 28, 2007) — Mercy Flight Central, an emergency medical helicopter service that transports critically ill patients to hospitals in western and central New York, claims two law enforcement agencies are cutting in on its territory.

In a lawsuit filed this week in U.S. District Court in Rochester, Mercy Flight alleges that the state Police and the Onondaga County Sheriff's Department use their own helicopters to transport patients Mercy Flight should be handling.

The lawsuit doesn't specify the number of patients the two departments have allegedly transported but claims the actions of the two departments violate the Federal Aviation Act because neither agency is certified for emergency transports.

The lawsuit asks for unspecified monetary damages and a court order prohibiting both agencies from transporting emergency patients.

A State Police spokesman said his agency hasn't seen the lawsuit and couldn't comment. Officials from the sheriff's department couldn't be reached immediately for comment.

Mercy Flight is based in Canandaigua. Its helicopters are based there and in Marcellus, Onondaga County and are often used to transport critically injured accident victims to hospitals when time is of the essence.

In 2006, Mercy Flight transported 744 patients, according to the lawsuit.

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