

## NEWS RELEASE

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Provincial Health Services Authority  
BC Emergency Health Services

### **BCEHS, Helijet and Santa Claus team up to visit children in five BC hospitals**

**VANCOUVER, BC** - Children at two hospitals on Vancouver Island and three more in the Lower Mainland are getting an early surprise visit from Santa Claus today.

Together, Santa and his entourage are flying to Victoria General Hospital and Nanaimo Regional General Hospital in the morning, followed by Surrey Memorial Hospital, Royal Columbian Hospital and BC Children's Hospital in the afternoon. The chance to see Santa and enjoy an early Christmas gift provides a welcome distraction for the young patients and their families, many of whom won't be home for the holidays this year.

"Being in the hospital during this time of year can be difficult, especially for children who love the December holidays so much," said Health Minister Adrian Dix. "Bringing Santa to visit the kids is a great way to spread holiday cheer and it's nice to see everyone share in this wonderful BC tradition."

Helijet and BC Emergency Health Services teamed up to fly Santa by BC Air Ambulance helicopter to and from each hospital to deliver presents and Christmas cheer to the kids. Joining Santa on his 14<sup>th</sup> annual "Santa flights" are Helijet President and CEO Danny Sitnam, BC Emergency Health Services Infant Transport Team (ITT) paramedic Kathryn Reid, and one of Santa's elves to help hand out presents.

For the ITT paramedics who are based at BC Children's Hospital, and the air ambulance flight crews who help them transport children during medical emergencies year-round, the annual Santa flights are a unique opportunity to interact with their young patients under happier, less stressful conditions.

"ITT paramedics help these children during some of the most difficult, traumatic circumstances imaginable," said paramedic Kathryn Reid. "But today is different. It is a happy day for all of these young patients and seeing them smile lifts our spirits too."

"All of us at Helijet are happy to have this opportunity to help make the holiday season special for these courageous kids and their families, who find themselves in hospital instead of at home as Christmas Day approaches," said Helijet President and CEO Danny Sitnam. "This is the 14<sup>th</sup> year our dedicated staff at Helijet has helped fly Santa to visit pediatric wards. We're very proud of our working relationship with the BC Ambulance Service and its paramedics to provide 24/7 helicopter service for hundreds of critically ill patients across the province."

**Helijet International** is a Canadian-owned company and the world's largest scheduled helicopter airline carrying well over 2.4 million passengers in the past 33 years. In addition to its scheduled helicopter services, Helijet is a major service provider of dedicated medically equipped helicopters to the BC Air Ambulance Service of British Columbia. Helijet provides exclusive use helicopters and business turbojet services to world renowned Sport Fishing Resorts, public service and energy companies throughout the West Coast of British Columbia and Pacific North West. Online at [www.helijet.com](http://www.helijet.com). Twitter: @Helijet.

**BCEHS** is responsible for the delivery and governance of pre-hospital emergency medical care and inter-facility patient transfer services through the BC Ambulance Service and BC Patient Transfer Services. BCEHS is supported by the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA). For more information, please visit [www.bcehs.ca](http://www.bcehs.ca) or follow us on Twitter @BC\_EHS.

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**Media contacts:**

**BC Ambulance Service**

Fatima Siddiqui  
BC Emergency Health Services  
604.660.2185  
[fatima.siddiqui@bcehs.ca](mailto:fatima.siddiqui@bcehs.ca)

**Helijet International**

Trevor Pancoust  
604.646.3567  
[tpancoust@pacegroup.com](mailto:tpancoust@pacegroup.com)

**Victoria General Hospital**

Meribeth Burton  
Island Health  
250.519.1815 local 11815  
[meribeth.burton@viha.ca](mailto:meribeth.burton@viha.ca)

**Nanaimo Regional General Hospital**

Cheryl Bloxham  
Island Health  
250.370.8878  
[cheryl.bloxham@viha.ca](mailto:cheryl.bloxham@viha.ca)

**Surrey Memorial Hospital**

Jacqueline Blackwell  
Fraser Health  
604.365.5763  
[jacqueline.blackwell@fraserhealth.ca](mailto:jacqueline.blackwell@fraserhealth.ca)

**BC Children's Hospital (Vancouver)**

Justine Ma  
Provincial Health Services Authority  
604.875.3560  
[justine.ma@phsa.ca](mailto:justine.ma@phsa.ca)

**Royal Columbian Hospital (New West.)**

Matthew Borghese  
Fraser Health  
604.613.8460  
[matthew.borghese@fraserhealth.ca](mailto:matthew.borghese@fraserhealth.ca)