

# UW Health: Historic first Med Flight operates with all-female helicopter crew

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MADISON, Wis. – In August, UW Health’s Med Flight first all-female crew took to the sky.

On Aug. 17, Kai Ficek, Med Flight pilot, Cynthia Griffin, flight physician, and Deborah Volgarino, critical care registered nurse, became the first crew comprised of only women to take flight for UW Health. Ficek, is also UW Health’s first female pilot.

The team is grateful for the opportunity to fly together, and hopes their story can show young people that your gender doesn’t have to define your career.

“We want little girls out there to see us and be inspired,” Volgarino said. “Our work has taken on new meaning beyond the incredible responsibility of caring for critically ill and injured patients, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

In fact, women make up 40% of the Med Flight transport team, working as pilots, emergency medical technician drivers, doctors, nurses, respiratory therapists, and communication specialists. They respond to critically ill or injured patients in either a helicopter or one of the two Med Flight ambulances.

The all-female crew’s first flight took place from the regional base at Divine Savior Hospital in Portage. Med Flight has three bases, the other two locations are University Hospital in Madison and Iowa County Airport near Mineral Point. The Med Flight program serves the region by both ground and air.

Another aspect that makes this three-person team even more unique is the professional composition of the team. UW Health is one of the few air ambulance

services that has an advance care professional on every flight allowing them to respond with the best care possible no matter what the situation.

Interviews and B-roll with the crew members are available upon request.