

## **Medical Travel and Housing Resources for Families**

### **Angel Flight America Network**

Thousands of volunteer pilots donate their time and financial resources to provide free air transportation on private aircraft for those who are financially needy or are too ill to travel on public transportation. These pilots are members of Angel Flight America Network, a nonprofit organization that arranges free air transportation to distant medical facilities where individuals can receive diagnosis, treatment, or rehabilitation they would not otherwise have access to. Patients and healthcare providers do not pay any of the transportation fees. The participating pilots may pay up to \$1000 out of their own pockets for a single flight, so only those who are truly in financial need, have no access to commercial transportation, or whose medical condition precludes them from using public transportation should contact Angel Flight to schedule a trip. A minimum of 5 days' advance notice is generally required to set up a flight, although emergency transport has been provided in certain cases, such as for individuals who need an immediate transplant or burn victims who need urgent care. Anyone requesting a flight is required to provide the name and contact information for his or her physician.

Before booking passage, patients and their caregivers should know that Angel Flight is a medical transport system, not an air ambulance service. Since Angel Flight pilots are not medically trained, passengers must be medically stable, ambulatory, and must be able to sit in an airplane seat for the duration of the flight. They are required to present a medical release form signed by their physician stating that they are medically fit for the journey.

The pilots represent about half of the membership of Angel Flight America. The remaining (nonpilot) volunteer members serve the organization in various capacities: they are mission coordinators, outreach support staff, or financial contributors to the organization. The cost to become a member is \$50, and annual dues are \$35. [See the Appendix for information on how to enroll or donate.] Always in need of additional pilots for their missions, Angel Flight encourages pilots with at least 200 hours' flight time, ready access to an aircraft, valid aircraft liability insurance, and a desire to actively participate in charitable flying to complete a Pilot Application.

The Angel Flight organization has 6 regional branches: Central, Mid-Atlantic, Northeast, Southeast, South-Central, and West. In addition, there are Angel Flight groups devoted to special populations, such as children, veterans, cancer patients, and the terminally ill. (See "Related Links" for more information about Children's Angel Flight, Angel Flight for Veterans, Angel Flight Samaritans, and Hospice Angel Flight.)

### **Mercy Medical Airlift**

The Angel Flight Program is just one of the participating organizations in a larger network dedicated to air transport, referral services, and lodging facilities. This network is Mercy Medical Airlift (MMA), which has been coordinating charitable air transport and lodging programs for almost 15 years. Committed to ensuring that individuals have equal access to specialized medical treatment regardless of geographical distance and financial status, MMA's efforts are made possible by the support it receives from the

Combined Federal Campaign, United Way, private corporations, national foundations, workplace campaigns, churches, civic clubs, and individuals.

In addition to Angel Flight, other organizations that are part of the MMA network are the Patient-Travel Helpline, the Airline Charitable Ticket Program, Special-Lift Programs, and the National Association of Hospital Hospitality Houses (NAHHH).

***Patient-Travel Helpline.*** This is a referral network offering information on the full spectrum of charitable long-distance air medical transport options. MMA offers this 24-hour nationwide hotline in support of the National Charitable Air Transportation System. The telephone number is 800-296-1217.

***Airline Charitable Ticket Program.*** MMA developed this national service as a way of getting commercial airlines involved in setting up their own charitable ticket programs. Call 757-318-9174 for more information.

***Special-Lift Programs.*** MMA coordinates charitable air transportation programs for individuals who need access to medical research centers and disease-specific treatment programs. For instance, a child with a rare disease whose only hope for treatment is at a facility 2000 miles away from home would be a candidate for such programs. To find out more, call 888-675-1405.

### **National Association of Hospital Hospitality Houses**

Your patient's flight has been arranged, and he's scheduled for care at a state-of-the-art facility. But where will he stay, when even Motel 6 is beyond his budget?

You and your patients may be surprised to learn that there are many people out there willing to open their houses to people in need. A good place to start the search is NAHHH, a charitable support network that promotes and assists more than 150 "member houses" throughout the United States that are dedicated to providing family-centered accommodations and support services to patients and their families who have traveled far from home to seek medical care.

Its humble beginnings can be traced to a couple from Pennsylvania, Cyril and Claudia Garvey, whose son Kevin had died of leukemia; they wanted to ease the burden of other families who needed to travel to distant healthcare facilities. The Garveys purchased a house in Buffalo, New York, and undertook extensive renovations. A few months later, the Kevin Guest House opened its doors to patients who were receiving medical care at facilities nearby -- and welcomed their families as well. Out of this concept grew such well-known "Houses That Love Built" as the Ronald McDonald House, the American Cancer Society's Hope Lodges, and the Fisher Houses (for military personnel and their families).

The 150-plus member houses operate on small budgets to provide warm, caring support for more than a quarter million people each year, and most are located within walking distance of the hospital; some are even located within a hospital. Some offer free stays; others are extremely inexpensive (\$5 to \$15 per night).

Even if your patient can cover her medical costs without assistance, she can stay at an NAHHH member house. A directory of NAHHH accommodations is updated and published annually. Call the Hospitality Hotline at 800-542-9730 to receive a catalogue or check the directory on the Web site (<http://www.nahhh.org/members/search.php>) for a complete listing.

In addition to providing referral services, NAHHH promotes the development of new houses and offers assistance with fundraising and public awareness efforts to its member houses.

## **Contact and Membership Information**

### **Angel Flight**

3236 Donald Douglas Loop South

Santa Monica, CA 90405

Phone: 888-4-AN-ANGEL; 888-426-2643; 310-390-2958

Email: [info@angelflight.org](mailto:info@angelflight.org)

Web site: <http://www.angelflight.org>

To apply for membership:

[http://afids.angelflight.org/membership\\_application.asp](http://afids.angelflight.org/membership_application.asp)

### **Mercy Medical Airlift**

*National Headquarters:*

9998 Wakefield Drive, Suite 110

Manassas, VA 20110

Phone: 800-296-1191 ext. 23; 703-296-1191 ext. 23

Fax: 703-257-1642

*Patient Assistance Center:*

4620 Haygood Road, Suite 1

Virginia Beach, VA 23455

Phone: 888-675-1405; 757-318-9175

Fax: 757-318-9107

Email: [mercymedical@erols.com](mailto:mercymedical@erols.com)

Web site: <http://www.mercymedical.org>

**National Association of Hospital Hospitality Houses, Inc.**

*Mailing Address:*

NAHHH Inc.

P.O. Box 18087

Asheville, NC 28814-0087

*Physical Address:*

National Association of Hospital Hospitality Houses, Inc.

44 Merrimon Ave., 1st Floor

Asheville, NC 28801

Phone: 800-542-9730; 828-253-1188

Fax: 828-253-8082

Email: [helpinghomes@nahhh.org](mailto:helpinghomes@nahhh.org)

Web site: [www.nahhh.org](http://www.nahhh.org)

To apply for membership:

[http://www.nahhh.org/membership\\_form.html](http://www.nahhh.org/membership_form.html)

**Related Links:**

Access-Able Travel Source

<http://www.access-able.com/>

AirLifeLine

<http://www.airlifeline.org/a1/servlet/visit>

Angel Flight America

<http://www.angel-flight.org/>

Angel Flight Central

<http://www.angelflightcentral.org/>

Angel Flight East

<http://www.angelflighteast.org/afe/main.htm>

Angel Flight Northeast

<http://www.angelflightne.org/>

Angel Flight Samaritans

<http://www.angelflightsamaritan.org/>

Angel Flight Southeast

<http://www.angelflightse.org/>

Angel Flight South-Central

<http://www.angelflightsc.org/>

Angel Flight for Veterans

<http://www.angelflightveterans.org/>

Angel Flight West

<http://www.angelflight.org/>

Children's Angel Flight

<http://www.angelflightchildren.org/>

Christopher & Dana Reeve Paralysis Resource Center - Travel

<http://www.paralysis.org/Travel/TravelMain.cfm>

Consumer MedHelp

<http://www.consumermedhelp.com/>

Hospice Angel Flight

<http://www.hospiceangelflight.org/>

Mercy Medical Airlift

<http://www.mercymedical.org/>

National Association Hospital Hospitality Houses

<http://www.nahhh.org>

National Patient Air Transport Helpline

<http://www.patient-travel.org/>

National Patient Travel Center

<http://www.npath.org/AFAS/nptc.htm>

Society for Accessible Travel and Hospitality

<http://www.sath.org/>