

REACT

Newsletter



Winter 2022

What is REACT?

Revisiting Mercyhealth's premier flight program:

Kyla Ruf, RN, BSN, CCRN, Flight Nurse



Established in 1987 by Rockford Health System, REACT (Regional Emergency Acute Care Transport) is a helicopter air-medical transport program based in Rockford, Illinois. Mercyhealth REACT is

affiliated with two trauma centers: Mercyhealth's Javon Bea Hospital-Riverside in Rockford, IL, and Mercyhealth Hospital and Trauma Center in Janesville, WI. We work in partnership with Air Methods, who provide aviation, maintenance, and our aircraft.

While initially based at the Rockford Airport, REACT eventually made our home at the Mercyhealth Rockton Avenue campus in 1996, where the hangar remains today.

The flight crew is composed of a pilot and either a flight nurse and flight medic or two flight nurses. Currently we have seven flight nurses and three flight paramedics on our crew. We also have four full time pilots and two mechanics associated with our program.



REACT provides emergency transport of critically ill and injured adults, pediatric and

infant patients, as well as a maternal/obstetric transport team for Mercyhealth. Available 24/7/365, REACT transport may be requested by physicians, hospital personnel, emergency medical services, fire personnel, police, emergency management agencies and 911 dispatch centers.

Specialized services include:

- Comprehensive trauma care
- Ability to place chest tube and perform emergent pericardiocentesis
- Intra-aortic Balloon Pump (IABP) capabilities
- Impella cardiac support capabilities
- Extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) life support capabilities
- Internal pacer capabilities
- Continuous fetal heart rate and tocodynamometer (TOCO) monitoring
- Blood and plasma carried on every flight
- Full ventilator capabilities
- Complete cardiac, blood pressure and oxygen monitoring
- Complex hemodynamic monitoring
- Intracranial pressure monitoring
- Point of care ultrasound capable in flight

We provide services to central and northern Illinois, central and southern Wisconsin, and eastern Iowa. We respond both to prehospital EMS agencies as well as providing hospital-to-hospital transport.

Since 2018, REACT has utilized a Eurocopter EC145. This aircraft is a twin-engine light utility helicopter developed and manufactured by Airbus Helicopters. The EC145 features a larger cabin space than previous REACT helicopters. Other improvements include an increased maximum take-off weight and a further flight range. A key feature of the rotorcraft is the variable rotor speed and torque matching system, which Eurocopter has attributed as making the EC145 "the quietest helicopter in its class." With many updated safety features, including night vision goggle-compatible instruments and updated avionics systems, our pilots have the capabilities to fly entirely under GPS navigation from takeoff to final approach when required.



John Pakiela DO, FACEP, CMTE, is the REACT Physician Medical Director. He is also an MD-1 physician for the Rockford region. He has 23 years of emergency medicine experience, and has been with REACT since 2016.



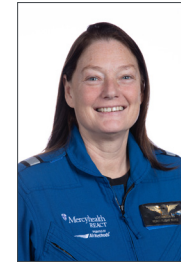
Chief Flight Nurse and Program Manager Kristi Lohmar, BSN, RN, CCRN, PHRN, has 25 years of nursing experience. She has been with REACT since 2005.



Debra Webb, RN, CFRN, has been in critical care nursing since 1984. Deb joined REACT in 1991 and was Chief Flight Nurse for 19 years.



Anthony Rehberg, BSN, RN, CFRN, EMT-P, has 37 years of experience in EMS and fire service. Tony joined REACT in 1992.



Lois Hinton, BSN, RN, CFRN, PHRN, has 40 years of nursing experience. She joined REACT in 2005.



Mike Stefko, FP-C, AAS, NRP, CCP, has been an EMT since 2006 and a paramedic since 2008. Mike began his flight career in 2008 and has been with REACT since 2014.



Jon Hartmann, NRP, has been a paramedic since 2002. He started his EMS career in the military, and joined REACT in 2014.



Danielle Swenson, AAS, NRP, FP-C, became a paramedic in 2007. She started her EMS career in the Air Force. Dani joined REACT in 2014.



Rachael Wilson, RN, BSN, CFRN, CEN, CPEN, has 24 years of emergency and trauma nursing experience. She joined REACT in 2018.



Kyla Ruf, RN, BSN, CCRN, TNS, has joined REACT in 2021. She has 9 years of ICU and ER nursing experience.



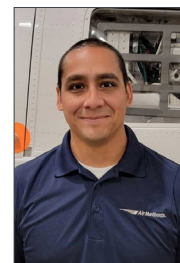
Kari Cieslak, RN, CFRN, CEN, TNS, joined REACT in 2021. She has 17 years of nursing experience, 7 years of which were as a flight nurse.



Travis Brainard is our lead pilot. He has 18 years of flight experience, including instructor, instructor examiner and safety officer. He also has 3 years of HEMS experience.



Jake Davison joined REACT in 2021. He has 9 years of previous flight experience, including Crew Chief in the Marine Corps and as a flight instructor.



Marcus Alvarado is REACT's lead mechanic. He has 20 years of experience as an avionics technician, and started with REACT in 2022.



Richard Lowrance is REACT's full time mechanic. He has 8 years of experience, and started with REACT in 2021.

RockCom renovation

Veronica O'Daniel, Manager of RockCom



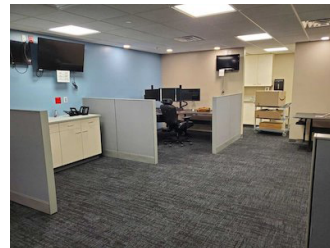
A major renovation project has taken place at Mercyhealth RockCom's communication center, both at our back-up center at the Mercyhealth Riverside campus, as well as the main site at the Mercyhealth Rockton campus. Renovations began early in the year and were completed at the end of May.

Phase one of the project was to install equipment at the already built communications center at the Riverside location, next to the EMS room. This upgrade included four dispatch consoles, radios with eight speakers to each station, and a new VOIP phone system. This allows RockCom have a true redundant back-up center in the event that there is an evacuation need at the Rockton campus. Installing all of the equipment also ensures that there is no disruption in service to our fire departments and community during that time.

Once the first phase of the project was complete, staff from RockCom relocated to the Riverside location for eight weeks while the larger renovations were started at the Rockton campus. During this time, the room was expanded from 170-square-feet to about 525-square-feet. Several upgrades to the new space included better lighting, HVAC, new carpet and paint. RockCom was also given more space for equipment storage and a small

kitchenette. The Rockton campus received four dispatch consoles, all complete with three screens, eight speakers, and new desks that raise and lower. All of the stations have upgraded computer-aided dispatch software, radios and newly upgraded VOIP phone system.

It has been some time since RockCom has had upgrades to this magnitude, totaling a cost of around \$500,000. This much needed remodel allows employees to have an enhanced environment and advanced equipment to better serve our fire departments and community.



Blue phones: Keeping communication simple

Kyla Ruf, RN, BSN, CCRN, Flight Nurse



In an effort to provide quick and efficient communication between our Mercyhealth staff members and the REACT flight crew, "blue phones" have been introduced to some of our frequently-visited departments.

When the receiver is picked up, a Mercyhealth staff member will be automatically connected to REACT's dispatch. There are information cards attached to each phone to give the staff member guidelines for basic information that dispatch will need to know.

Our goal is to have our REACT team en route to the facility as soon as the patient is in need of transport. By activating REACT early, it ensures we're at the patient's bedside as soon as a bed is available. Early activation also provides support to your facility until a transfer can be made. If the patient is unable to be transferred, no bill will be generated for our services. Our goal is to help you and your team get patients to the desired destination safely while providing excellent care!

Requesting Mercyhealth REACT for Air Medical Transport

When you pick up the phone, it automatically dials REACT dispatch. When requesting Mercyhealth REACT, have the following information available:

- Call-back number
- Your name and facility
- City, county and state
- Patient weight
- Special medical equipment
- Intubation status
- Number of drips
- Patient name
- Pick-up unit/room
- If known, destination facility

Current class offerings

Trauma:

- General Trauma Management
- Abdominal/hepatic/neuro/ortho/renal/thoracic
- Blood administration
- Tourniquets

Adult:

- Airway
- Shock
- Cardiac care
- Intravascular emergencies
- Stroke
- Sepsis
- Adult abuse
- Ventilation management

Pediatrics:

- Airway
- Cardiac
- Child abuse
- DKA
- Respiratory issues
- Sepsis
- Ventilation management

OB/GYN:

- Emergency delivery
- Trauma in pregnancy
- Neonatal care post-delivery
- Pregnancy complications
- Postpartum complications
- Post-delivery complications

General:

- Preparing patient for transport
- Helicopter safety class

EMS Region CEU focus

Mercyhealth Prehospital and Emergency Services Center-Rockford

- **October:** Annual Skills Validations and Respiratory Emergencies
- **November:** Anatomy, Physiology, and Pathophysiology
- **December:** First Responder Mental Health and Stress Management

How to contact REACT:

If you would like REACT to come to your event or provide education to your agency or staff, please scan the QR code or contact us by visiting mercyhealthsystem.org/education-programs/emergency-services-training/. You can also contact Lois Hinton, REACT PR Coordinator, at lhinton@mhemail.org.

Do you have a topic you would like to see in the newsletter? Please contact Kyla Ruf at kruf@mhemail.org.

Follow us on Facebook @MercyhealthPrehospitalREACT

To dispatch REACT:

Prehospital: (855) 667-3228

Hospital: (800) MD-REACT
(800) 637-3228



Want to see a full listing of available educational offerings or schedule a visit with REACT? Scan the QR code above!