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# Southwest Airlines Connects Patients To Critical Medical Care With More Than \$3.2 Million In Free Flights Through Medical Transportation Grant Program

**More than 100 hospitals and medical organizations to benefit in 2015**

DALLAS, Feb. 10, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- [Southwest Airlines](#) (NYSE: LUV) announced today that 75 nonprofit hospitals and medical organizations from across the nation will benefit from the Southwest Airlines 2015 Medical Transportation Grant Program, with the total impact reaching 101 facilities. Through the program, participating nonprofit hospitals and medical programs provide complimentary, roundtrip airline tickets to families who need to travel for specialized medical care. Receiving world class medical attention is more attainable when the cost of travel is not an issue. In 2015, Southwest will provide more than \$3.2 million in free transportation to caregivers and patients seeking medical treatment, a 14 percent increase from the 2014 program. For a full list of 2015 participants, please visit [www.southwest.com/medicalgrant](http://www.southwest.com/medicalgrant).

"We care about the communities we serve and are honored to partner with like-minded hospitals and medical transportation organizations," said Linda Rutherford, Southwest Airlines' Vice President of Communication and Outreach. "We are proud to help fill the gap between where patients live and where the doctors they need practice so patients can receive the treatment that best supports them."

Since the Southwest Airlines Medical Transportation Grant Program's inception eight years ago, more than \$16.4 million in free transportation has been distributed to organizations in 26 states, making a positive impact on the lives of more than 41,000 individuals. Andy Furmann and his family are just one example of those impacted by the program. In 2013, Andy was in a life-changing ski accident that left him partially paralyzed from a spinal cord injury. Andy traveled from his home in Massachusetts to Atlanta so he could receive treatment at [Shepherd Center](#), a hospital, research facility, and rehabilitation center specifically for people with spinal cord or brain injuries. Through the Southwest Airlines Medical Transportation Grant Program, Andy's father was able to balance work at home while also visiting Andy in Atlanta. According to Andy, his father's presence during his treatment was just as important as his physical therapy and medical treatment. Visit the [NUTS About Southwest blog](#) to read Andy's story and learn more about the positive impact of the Medical Transportation Grant Program.

"As one can imagine, when you have a catastrophic injury, finances become tight," said Anna Elmers, M.D., a staff physiatrist at Shepherd Center in Atlanta. "Southwest Airlines' Medical Transportation Grant Program has been a wonderful way of allowing family members to see their loved ones who are undergoing rehabilitation at Shepherd Center. Having loved ones near provides the patient with important emotional support during their recovery. We are so thankful for our partnership with Southwest!"

To learn about qualifications for travel assistance through the designated organizations, please contact the Social Work, Travel/Concierge Service, or Patient Assistance Department directly at each location, as each has unique guidelines for the administration of tickets.

#### ABOUT SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO.

In its 44th year of service, Dallas-based Southwest Airlines (NYSE: LUV) continues to differentiate itself from other air carriers with exemplary Customer Service delivered by more than 46,000 Employees to more than 100 million Customers annually. Southwest operates more than 3,400 flights a day, serving 93 destinations across the United States and five additional countries. Subject to government approvals, Southwest service to San Jose, Costa Rica, begins in March 2015; service to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, begins in June 2015; and service to Belize City, Belize begins in October 2015.

Based on the U.S. Department of Transportation's most recent data, Southwest Airlines is the nation's largest carrier in terms of originating domestic passengers boarded. The Company operates the largest fleet of Boeing aircraft in the world, the majority of which are equipped with satellite-based WiFi providing gate-to-gate connectivity while over the United States. That connectivity enables Customers to use their personal devices to access streaming music provided by Beats Music or to view video on-demand movies and television shows, as well as nearly 20 channels of free, live TV compliments of our valued Partners. Southwest is the only major U.S. airline to offer Bags Fly Free® (first and second checked pieces of luggage, size and weight limits apply), and there are never change fees, although fare differences might apply. In 2014, the airline proudly unveiled a bold new look: *Heart*. The new aircraft livery, airport experience, and logo, showcase the dedication of Southwest Employees to connect Customers with what's important in their lives.

From its first flights on June 18, 1971, Southwest Airlines launched an era of unprecedented affordability in air travel described by the U.S. Department of Transportation as "The Southwest Effect," a lowering of fares and increase in passenger traffic wherever the carrier serves. With 42 consecutive years of profitability, Southwest is one of the most honored airlines in the world, known for a triple bottom line approach that contributes to the carrier's performance and productivity, the importance of its People and the communities they serve, and an overall commitment to efficiency and the planet. The 2013 Southwest Airlines One Report™ can be found at [Southwest.com/citizenship](http://Southwest.com/citizenship).

Book Southwest Airlines' low fares online at [Southwest.com](http://Southwest.com) or by phone at 800-I-FLY-SWA.

To view the original version on PR Newswire, visit: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/southwest-airlines-connects-patients-to-critical-medical-care-with-more-than-32-million-in-free-flights-through-medical-transportation-grant-program-300033674.html>

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