



Our patients are your friends, neighbours and family.

PRAIRIE INNOVATION.

With more than 4,000 missions flown to 500 communities over the past five years, STARS is saving lives across Saskatchewan.

These patients are your friends, neighbours, coworkers and family. They are people like Carrie Derrin who nearly died on a remote trail in the forest when a recreational ride went wrong.

The year 2012 was one of the most significant and notable years in the history of **STARS**. Six years after our third base opened in Alberta, our nonprofit doubled in size and scope with six bases operating in three provinces – two of them in Saskatchewan. Carrie is among the first of the 4,000 missions in the province.

Not long after the bases opened in Regina and Saskatoon, Carrie was riding an ATV along a dirt trail with her family. When she struck a fallen tree, her world changed.

The branch tore through the front of her machine, pierced her abdomen and continued through the back of her seat. When she started losing blood quickly, Carrie packed her wound and waited for help.

WE ARE ALL *STARS*®

While her husband raced to find an area with cell service and call for help, Carrie tried to stay strong for her daughters.

“The only thing going through my head was that I needed to stay awake,” she said.

When the **STARS** crew picked up Carrie, she was in critical condition and her paramedic and nurse knew every second mattered. But she needed blood to stay alive and there wasn’t any on board, so the pilots landed at a nearby hospital to pick up blood. Carrie received a life-saving blood transfusion during the 40-minute flight to hospital for emergency surgery to remove the branch.

For flight nurse Raegan Gardner, Carrie’s window for a positive outcome narrowed with every passing second.

“It was certainly a mission where you hope for a good tailwind,” she said.

Carrie spent the next couple of weeks recovering in hospital before returning home. Not long after, she reunited with her crew.

“We’re so lucky to have **STARS** here in Saskatchewan,” said Carrie. “I truly believe that my crew brought me back to my family.”

Carrie’s incident led to a conversation about how **STARS** could access blood more readily and transport patients to hospital faster.

After months of research, Darcy McKay, clinical operations manager, brought the idea of stocking blood on the helicopter to the health region. It would include housing two units of O negative blood in a specialized cooler — similar to a concept deployed in the Iraqi war.

In November, 2013, **STARS** in Regina became the first air medical service in Canada to stock blood in advance for life-saving transfusions on air medical missions.

STARS’ Saskatoon base followed shortly after. Today, all bases have implemented the groundbreaking program.

“It is inspiring to see the innovation Saskatchewan demonstrated in providing our citizens this game-changing roadside treatment that very few other services in North America provide,” said Dr. John Froh, transport physician and base medical director.

From signing a 10-year agreement with the Government of Saskatchewan in April 2011 until today, **STARS** has flourished in the province.