

MEDSTAR 2 RETURNS TO 100 PERCENT SERVICE

FORT MYERS, FL—Critical Care air ambulance service returned to normal today in Lee County as MEDSTAR 2 returned to 100 percent service. It had been the backup helicopter to the newer MEDSTAR 1, flying about 25 percent of the air ambulance mission requests during the past five years. That changed yesterday when MEDSTAR 1 went down in the water near Upper Captiva Island.

MEDSTAR 2 is an American Eurocopter BO 105 with the ability to carry two patients and two paramedics. It is currently servicing the critical care needs of Lee and backup for Collier counties until Collier's aircraft is operational again.

MEDSTAR 1, an American Eurocopter EC-145, tail number N911LZ, was in the water just under 24 hours. It was pulled out of the water by crane at 12:02 a.m. August 18.

The helicopter is currently housed at the Lee County Mosquito Control Hangar where it will be examined by the FAA and the NTSB. Those two agencies have total control over the aircraft until their investigations are complete.

Crew members from the downed MEDSTAR 1 helicopter continued to recuperate and help FAA and NTSB investigators determine the cause of the crash through interviews today. The three survived the accident in good condition after Lee County MEDSTAR went down in the Intracoastal Waterway near Upper Captiva around 12:30 a.m. August 17.

All three attribute the safety training they received to saving their lives in the accident.

Crew members are Pilot Diana Tackett, Paramedics Dave Duncan and Jason Ausman. County administrators have asked them not to participate in media interviews until the FAA and NTSB investigation is complete.