

Partnership to deliver medications with cargo drones to patients on the Virginia Eastern Shore

Riverside, in partnership with VIPC, DroneUp, VISA/ODU, the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission work to discover medical delivery solutions.

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, UNITED STATES, April 24, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Riverside is excited to announce a new partnership with [DroneUp](#), Virginia Institute for Spaceflight & Autonomy (VISA) at Old Dominion University (ODU), the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission, and the [Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation](#) (VIPC) to begin delivering prescription medications to patients

who live on the Eastern Shore and adjacent Tangier Island. In 2022, the partnership submitted a medical drone delivery project entitled, Drone Medical Package Delivery for Improved Transportation and Better Patient Outcomes, to the U.S. Department of Transportation for funding support. The project was one of 59 proposals awarded funding through the Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grants Program out of a nationwide pool of 389 applications. This project was the only application in the Commonwealth of Virginia to be awarded a SMART Grant during the inaugural year of the program.

"We are always looking for innovative ways to provide care for our patients," says Sally Hartman, Senior Vice President of Strategic Initiatives at Riverside. "This partnership provides us with the opportunity to support patients in more rural communities by improving access to prescription medications with fast at-home delivery."

The medical cargo drone delivery project is divided into two categories; stage one: planning and prototyping and stage two: implementation. During stage one, Riverside will begin utilizing medical cargo drones from DroneUp, a leading autonomous drone delivery platform and drone



"We know that drone service delivery to our patients living in rural areas of our community will not only improve access to medications but also improve patient outcomes and overall health." Nick Chuquin, President of Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital

services provider, to test and plan for the delivery of prescription medications to patients living in rural areas on the Eastern Shore, particularly for remote communities such as Tangier Island. Once stage one is successfully complete, the partnership will move into stage two, implementation, where medical cargo drones will be deployed from Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital (RSMH) delivering medications to a patient's doorstep. As drones depart RSMH, the patient and Riverside's care teams will be able to track delivery of medications in real time. At the launch of the project, Riverside will focus on delivering hypertension medications as the Eastern Shore has a higher preponderance of hypertension than the rest of the Commonwealth of Virginia.



"The drone delivery project truly embodies our mission to ignite growth, talent, and innovation at ODU, our region, and the Commonwealth of Virginia," said Dr. David Bowles, Executive Director of VISA.

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VIPC's mission is to support game-changing market development initiatives, such as this medical drone delivery service for Riverside's patients on the Eastern Shore."

Tracy Tynan, Director of the Virginia Unmanned Systems Center at VIPC

"We are excited to see the first medical cargo drone take flight from RSMH in May," says Nick Chuquin, President of Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital. "The Eastern Shore is a unique geographical area with a rural make-up that can pose accessibility challenges for patients in need of prescription medication. We know that drone service delivery to our patients living in rural areas of our community will not only improve access to medications but also improve patient outcomes and overall health."

The medical drone delivery project on the Eastern Shore was organized last fall with initial funding from VIPC's Unmanned Systems Center. VIPC has supported other pilot

projects in Virginia utilizing unmanned systems. In 2020, it teamed with DroneUp to determine the effectiveness of delivering test kits by drone to stop the spread of the Coronavirus.

"VIPC's mission is to support game-changing market development initiatives, such as this medical drone delivery service for Riverside's patients on the Eastern Shore," Tracy Tynan, the Director of the Virginia Unmanned Systems Center at VIPC, said. "VIPC concentrates on investing seed funding during the early stages of technological innovation to stimulate and accelerate economic growth, which increases vital resources for communities throughout the state."

VISA's role in this project will be overall project management, health outcomes Modeling,

Analysis, and Simulation, and workforce development in support of the Accomack- Northampton Planning District Commission, who was the submitting organization for this grant.

“The drone delivery project truly embodies our mission to ignite growth, talent, and innovation at ODU, our region, and the Commonwealth of Virginia,” said Dr. David Bowles, Executive Director of VISA.

“We’re really excited to be part of revolutionizing transportation of critical medical supplies in rural and other areas for those who really need it and to provide emergency first responders with a safe way to better access and assess hazardous or crisis situations,” added John Costulis, VISA Deputy Director.



Riverside will begin utilizing medical cargo drones from DroneUp, a leading autonomous drone delivery platform and drone services provider, to test and plan for the delivery of prescription medications to patients living in rural areas on the Eastern Shore.

The medical drone delivery project on the Eastern Shore will improve the overall health care experience for patients by delivering their prescription medication to their doorstep. The partnership is working closely with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to finalize documentation and begin project work on June 1, 2023.

To learn more medical services offered by Riverside on the Eastern Shore, visit riversideonline.com.

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About Riverside Health System

Riverside Health System (RHS) is an integrated health network touching 2 million lives annually. Serving Eastern Virginia since 1915, Riverside is guided by a mission to “care for others as we would care for those we love.” The health system offers a variety of services and programs in the areas of prevention, primary care, diagnostics, neurosciences, oncology, orthopedics, aging-related services, rehabilitation, medical education, home care and hospice. RHS operates four acute-care hospitals and a behavioral health hospital, in addition to a physical rehabilitation hospital and a critical illness recovery hospital in partnership with Select Medical. Riverside Medical Group has more than 750 physicians and advanced practice providers across a broad spectrum of specialties in over 100 locations throughout the region. Riverside Lifelong Health operates six nursing home facilities and three vibrant continuing care retirement communities alongside Riverside Home Health and Hospice services. In addition to these health care services,

RHS operates the Riverside College of Health Careers and four medical residency programs. The company employs more than 9,000 team members throughout Eastern Virginia. For more information on Riverside, visit riversideonline.com.

Riverside Health System

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About Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation (VIPC)

VIPC: Connecting innovators with opportunities. As the nonprofit operations arm of the Virginia Innovation Partnership Authority (VIPA), VIPC is the commercialization and seed stage economic development driver in the Commonwealth that leads funding, infrastructure, and policy initiatives to support Virginia's innovators, entrepreneurs, startups, and market development strategies. VIPC collaborates with local, regional, state, and federal partners to support the expansion and diversification of Virginia's economy. Programs include: Virginia Venture Partners (VVP) | VVP Fund of Funds (SSBCI) | Virginia Founders Fund (VFF) | Commonwealth Commercialization Fund (CCF) | Petersburg Founders Fund (PFF) | Smart Communities | The Virginia Smart Community Testbed | The Virginia Unmanned Systems Center | Virginia Advanced Air Mobility Alliance (VAAMA) | The Public Safety Innovation Center | Entrepreneurial Ecosystems | Regional Innovation Fund (RIF) | Federal Funding Assistance Program (FFAP) for SBIR & STTR | University Partnerships | Startup Company Mentoring & Engagement. For more information, please visit www.VirginiaIPC.org. Follow VIPC on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

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About VISA

The Virginia Institute for Spaceflight and Autonomy (VISA), located on the Eastern Shore, is chartered to grow the entrepreneurial ecosystems for space flight and autonomy. The Institute is the hub to leverage Virginia's world-class assets in space launch, autonomous systems, modeling and simulation and data science to solve real-world problems, such as those being explored by DroneUp and Riverside Health. Through industry, academic and governmental agency partnerships, VISA's vision is to create an environment of research, technology, commercialization, and educational opportunities to grow the spaceflight and autonomous systems industry.

VISA

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About DroneUp

DroneUp is an American technology company that combines airspace solutions, software applications, analytics platforms, and a trusted team of industry leaders to help companies operate at scale with drone innovation. DroneUp was founded in 2016 and is headquartered in Virginia Beach, VA.

DroneUp

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About A-NPDC

The Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission (A-NPDC), created by the Commonwealth of Virginia, has been the Eastern Shore of Virginia's regional planning organization since 1970. The Planning District Commission is comprised of elected officials from the Board of Supervisors of both Eastern Shore counties as well as town community leaders. The Planning District Commission is tasked with supporting local planning and economic development efforts and providing technical assistance on behalf of the Commonwealth.

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