



Saskatchewan Air Ambulance, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, CA

In 2016, Saskatchewan Air Ambulance, affectionately known locally as “Lifeguard”, marked 70 years of service.

In the early years, airfields were scarce so pilots would land their old military surplus Norseman bush planes in farm fields or made pontoon landings on open water. In winter, aircraft were outfitted with skis. Along with transporting patients, planes delivered medical supplies, or delivered physicians or nurses to isolated communities.

Today, SAA's fleet includes four Beechcraft King Air B-200 aircraft. The service averages about 125 flights monthly. Each mission carries two pilots, along with a nurse and/or paramedic. All planes are fitted out for critical-care with a ventilator, defibrillator/pacemaker, blood- and medical supplies. When needed, a doctor or special medical team provides in-flight care.

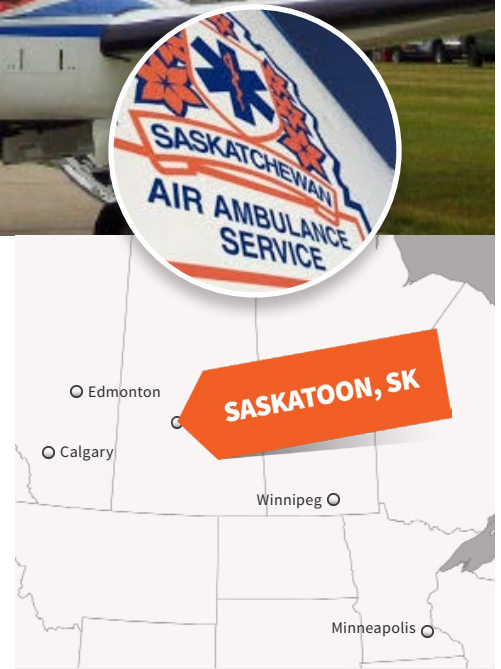
The operation is owned and managed by Saskatchewan's Ministry of Central Services. Its 2016 budget was about \$15 million. Patients are charged \$465 per trip with the balance covered by the government.

SAA began using Aladtec's cloud-based software about the time Medical service manager David Mandzuk joined up.

“Probably like many health care providers we struggled with the 1970's version of scheduling -- which was a telephone and a piece of paper and a pencil. We figured out that we needed to do something different.”

SAA subsequently ordered two subscriptions to cloud-based Aladtec scheduling -- one to schedule flight nurses, whom Mandzuk oversees, and another for the air crews, who are supervised by Jim Thompson, Director of Flight Operations.

Thompson too, previously used an Excel template, output through a printer -- which meant pilots and staff had to be onsite. The shift to Aladtec allowed him to receive staff requests



Department Info:

Roster: 80 employees with four pilots and three flight nurses always on duty.

Calls: About 1,500 in 2017.

Service area: 600,000, approx. 250,000 sq. miles.

Apparatus: 4 King Air, twin-engine aircraft, all based at John G. Diefenbaker International Airport.

Aladtec users since 2012



Neighboring agencies also using Aladtec:

Keewatin Yatthe Regional Health Authority, Saskatoon; Wakaw & District EMS, Wakaw; Lanigan & District Ambulance Assoc., Lanigan; Parkland Ambulance Care Ltd., Prince Albert.

electronically and modify the schedule in real time. Requests were also logged and time-stamped. The program also helps ensure adequate staffing and verifies compliance with scheduling rules, Thompson wrote.

About a quarter of Saskatchewan's million residents live in or near Saskatoon (pop. 245,000), home to Saskatchewan Air Ambulance. The service does mainly interfacility transfers within Saskatchewan, but also does flights to cities like Toronto, Minneapolis and Rochester, MN. The longest trip was delivering a patient to Duke University Medical Center in Raleigh-Durham, NC.

"We obviously don't do scene calls with the planes, but we cover all four corners of our province," he said. "We certainly service the patients of what we'd call the northern part of our province, and those are smaller communities. A lot of them are First Nation or indiginus communities, so we do a lot of that work."

Mandzuk has programmed a four-week repeating schedule for simplicity and to help assure nurses they're scheduled for a full complement of shifts. Part-time employees can pick up shifts until they reach a threshold that shows Mandzuk they're incurring overtime, after which they must seek administrative approval to be scheduled. The configuration helps him track and manage overtime costs.

"It's a really neat feature and actually, if I recall, we didn't have it initially and I made a call to the Help Desk and they said -- 'Let's try this ...' and it was like -- great! It worked really well."

On the flight crew side, Thompson finds Aladtec's scheduling "easy to use. We have a nine-week averaging period that is very complex."

Aladtec's functionality "just makes things so much faster for me," said Mandzuk. "It's like night and day. My workload has gone down significantly, the efficiencies have gone up significantly, and best of all, people can see in real-time, what's happening -- if I'm granting them vacation or scheduling a shift in for them."

Mandzuk and SAA's nurse educator have begun to more aggressively utilize the Forms tools in Aladtec. They're in the process of entering each member's licenses, credentials and expirations -- including attaching a digital copy of the respective license in the the member database.

"We (previously) did it in a manual process. I think we're going to get to a really good spot for me as an administrator and Carol (Grant) as an educator -- part of her job is to make sure everybody is up to date on everything. We've really tapped into this now. We're going to get there." "Again, we're a bit unique in some ways of what we do and how we do it. We have a very dedicated team.

"My two-cents worth is that this program's worth its weight in gold to me because it saves me so much time. And the employees and the staff love it because it's instantaneous. They can trade and swap shifts without having to go through anybody. It's right there and they can see it," said Mandzuk.

"It's a very easy system to use overall too. Once you get the hang of it

-- it's not hard to learn -- you can really make a lot happen. Like I say, we've just started to look at forms and other pieces of this program that will help us."

Thompson concurs. "Yes, very effective tool for effort. Transparency and equity within the schedule can be demonstrated, and if there is something wrong it can be effectively researched."

And Mandzuk loves the unlimited tech support that comes with an Aladtec subscription.

"Whenever I have had to call and get assistance, they've been really good to work with. Very helpful! And I'm not on hold for 25 minutes listening to (recorded music) either. It's been nothing' but great customer service."

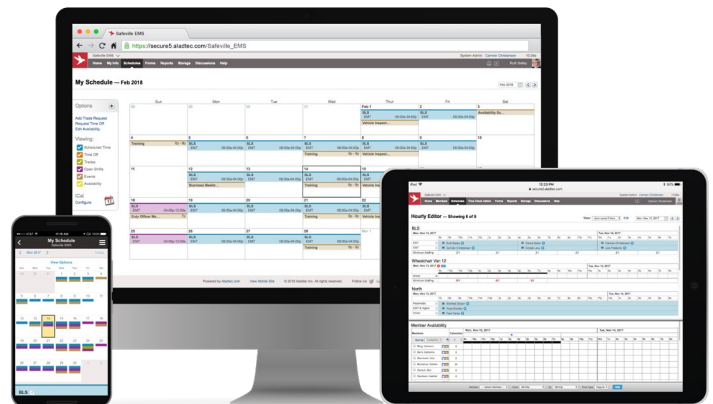


David Mandzuk

David Mandzuk has been a registered nurse for over 25 years and has worked in many different clinical areas such as orthopedics, neurosciences, and critical care. He managed critical care departments for 12 years before joining the Saskatchewan Air Ambulance team in 2012 as medical team manager.

Jim Thompson

Jim Thompson became SAA's Director of Flight operations in 2014. Previously, he served more than a decade as Chief Pilot for Saskatchewan's Executive Air Service. He has also been a flight instructor for 25 years. He holds BS degrees in microbiology and biochemistry, and a Masters degree in Human Resource Development -- both from the University of Regina.



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