

Michigan Aerospace Manufacturers Association, Ghana Partner to Develop Emergency Relief Program

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The Republic of Ghana and the Michigan Aerospace Manufacturers Association in Sterling Heights will partner to develop a logistics program that will help optimize the response to humanitarian emergencies such as contagious diseases. The effort will be officially announced at the Paris Air Show in two weeks.

“As we saw recently following the outbreak of Ebola, the countries of West Africa are susceptible to severe medical emergencies and need MAMA’s (Humanitarian Emergency Logistics Program) to contain them,” says Gavin Brown, executive director of the Michigan Aerospace Manufacturers Association.

Brown says the program will include the creation of 10 regional medical centers in Ghana, which will receive two ambulances

and helicopters each. Medical centers will also have unmanned cargo aircraft and humanitarian assistance vehicles for the distribution of medical supplies and vaccines.

He says the organization and various partners and foundations will help to rebuild the recently destroyed medical supply center in Tema, a city on the Atlantic coast of Ghana, as well as train local medical staff in safe emergency medical techniques.

Brown says the Michigan Aerospace Manufacturers Association is in the process of reaching out to philanthropic organizations as well as corporations to make the project a reality.

“This is a call to action,” Brown says. “We are looking for more partners, especially Michigan companies like Detroit Aircraft, which is involved in this effort. Things are really starting to percolate.”

A partnership with Lockheed Martin, the world’s largest aerospace and defense company, will help to deploy an unmanned K-MAX helicopter, “which can safely deliver sling loads of essential medical supplies to multiple drop zones, and return to headquarters with minimal ground operator oversight.” By removing unnecessary human interactions, Brown says the spread of contagious diseases will be slowed.

Helicopters, both manned and unmanned, also can deliver supplies and needed equipment during Ghana’s rainy season, which can make roads and airstrips unusable.

“This will help Ghana, and we are looking to assist other countries with humanitarian missions using aircraft and unmanned aerial systems,” Brown says. While the K-MAX will deliver needed medical supplies, it can also return with blood samples from patients for further study at a laboratory.