

Priority creates specialized non-emergency patient transfer vehicle

By Louise Rachlis

Debra Szirtes, president and founder of Priority Patient Transfer Service, was vice-president of Westway Taxi when she perceived the need for a new kind of specialized patient transfer.

"At Westway, we were one of the first companies to have accessible taxi vans," says Debra, who began Priority in 2004.

"I recognized the need for a safe, comfortable, transport service that goes beyond door to door. I understand that every person's needs are different. We strive to accommodate whether ambulatory, wheelchair, or stretcher."

Priority Patient Transfer Service was the first to have a vehicle built just for patient transfer. They collaborated on the design of the new non-emergency patient transfer vehicle with Demers Ambulance, the Canadian leader in ambulance design, manufacturing and distribution.

Demers and Priority used all their expertise in the development of the new MEDILITE vehicle designed specifically for the non-emergency transport of patients.

"We're trying to set very high standards," she says. "Demers, who makes ambulances worldwide, took our design and built it for us. The result is the first specialized patient transfer vehicle. It's so exciting. Demers is incred-



Demers Ambulance and Priority Patient Transfer Service developed the new MEDILITE vehicle.

ible and we are really happy with the result."

She says Priority has also worked to ensure their vehicles are sanitized properly to avoid super bugs and infectious disease.

All drivers have a wide variety of certification and training in areas such as Advanced First Aid, oxygen administration, patient interaction protocols and hospital procedures.

"Our drivers are all medics; they are qualified first responders who have taken the course and are with us for a year before they go on to work as a paramedic with Ottawa."

Priority Patient Transfer Service provides a 24-hour bilingual dispatch service for stretcher, wheelchair and bariatric transfers. There is interactive online booking, bed-to-bed stretcher service, oxygen monitoring and local and long distance transfers through-

out Eastern Ontario.

Their fleet of new vehicles is equipped with oxygen upon request, a CPR board, two stretchers, an electric lift for wheelchair access, and restraint system for up to three wheelchairs.

"There is onboard live video monitoring so if there is an emergency, dispatch can see right away what is going on and respond to it. This technology has been developed in the VIVA lab of the University of Ottawa by Dr Robert Laganieri. This technology also captures events and records videos or snapshots when one or more sensors are triggered in the vehicle."

It's top quality and caring all around. "All of our staff are caring and sensitive to the needs of our clients," says Debra. "It's a precondition to working for Priority Patient Transfer."

The number to call is 613-727-0168.