

**“Doctor Heli” takes flight over Jeju Island, a World Natural Heritage Site**  
**세계자연유산 제주도에 “닥터헬기” 날아오른다!**

PRESS RELEASE

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The Ministry of Health and Welfare announced that Jeju Special Self-Governing Province was selected for deployment of emergency medical helicopter (‘Doctor Heli’).

Doctor Heli is a helicopter dedicated to rapid air transport or first-aid treatment in rural areas with vulnerabilities in emergency medical services such as islands or mountainous areas on the basis of the Emergency Medical Service Act.

Unlike patient transport helicopters operated by the Fire Department and the Korea Coast Guard, the Doctor Heli is deployed at a medical institution with an emergency medical center, and with emergency medical personnel such as emergency medicine specialists on board to treat patients at the scene of an accident or disaster or in the process of transport, which are factors that can significantly improve patient survival and outcome.

Doctor Heli was first deployed in Incheon and Jeonnam in 2022, and seven vehicles are in operation including Gangwon / Gyeongbuk (2013), Chungnam / Jeonbuk (2016), and Gyeonggi (2018).

Home to 690,000 residents as well as a major tourist destination (15.23 million annual domestic and international tourists as of 2019) and host to various international events, Jeju has promoted for the deployment of Doctor Heli due to Mt Halla located at the center of the island making land transport of emergency patients take a long time and frequent maritime accidents during peak fishing season.

According to the Jeju Special Self-Governing Province Fire Safety Headquarters, 119-Emergency paramedics transported 1,695 cases from five major islands to Jeju from 2017 to 2020.

With the decision to deploy Doctor Heli, Jeju Special Self-Governing Province will strengthen its consultative body with organizations in the area with helicopter operation such as the Navy, the Fire Agency, and the Maritime Police Agency. Jeju will focus on its policy capacities to strengthen the safety and medical welfare of the residents.

Jung Sung-hoon, Director of the Emergency Healthcare Division at the Ministry of Health and Welfare said, "Jeju applied for this project and was selected after three rounds of evaluation by a committee composed of external experts in aviation medicine, aviation operation, and other medical institutions with helicopter deployment." He added, "The deployment of Doctor Heli is expected to help upgrade the quality of emergency medical services for Jeju residents," and asked for cooperation of Jeju Province and Jeju Halla Hospital for operation preparation.

Doctor Heli will be operated by a wet-lease in which the helicopter operator is in charge of operation and maintenance. The 8th Doctor Heli is expected to begin operation in the second half of this year in Jeju, after the process selecting helicopter operator, securing helicopters, and approval by relevant authorities is completed.

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