



Press Release

Coming Through: Aethon TUG Delivers Hospital Goods and Real Savings for UPMC Health System

May 29, 2002 — PITTSBURGH, PA — Aethon, Inc. announces the launch of TUG[®], the first robotic delivery system for hospitals to economically and reliably move supplies and equipment. Today's launch at UPMC St. Margaret, a hospital of the UPMC Health System, marks the implementation of what has been a yearlong partnership to develop the first TUG for use in this acute care community and teaching hospital.

Like an aircraft tug or tugboat, the Aethon TUG is a small but powerful hauler of big loads. The size of a small suitcase, the TUG hitches to any hospital cart and can pull up to 500 pounds. Hospitals do a tremendous amount of hauling, 24 hours a day. In many hospitals the number of carts for moving equipment, supplies, meals, linens, medical records, lab specimens, and waste roughly equals the number of patient beds. About 30% of hospital transport is now performed by professional staff, including nurses and pharmacists. The reliable, cost-effective TUG can relieve these professionals of running errands so they can concentrate on their real job—patient care—while saving hospitals as much as \$275,000 per TUG, deployed over a span of five years. It is estimated that a 200-bed hospital could realize maximum benefit by deploying up to 25 TUGs. UPMC St. Margaret has initially ordered a fleet of 12 TUGs.

According to Richard Sobehart, President of UPMC St. Margaret, "We are extremely pleased to debut the TUG at UPMC St. Margaret. This type of technology can solve some real problems for hospitals by helping to alleviate persistent staff shortages among service workers, freeing up nurses and other professional staff for improved patient care, and providing major cost savings." Managers and staff at UPMC St. Margaret have assisted Aethon in the design and testing of the first TUG. Following the successful launch at UPMC St. Margaret, Aethon expects TUGs to be used throughout the UPMC Health System, one of the largest, not-for-profit integrated health care systems in the country. "We so believe in the benefits of the TUG delivery system," says Scott Lammie, Executive Vice President of UPMC Diversified Services, "we became an investor in Aethon to further develop and market the TUG to other hospitals." Discussions are underway with leading hospitals to deploy as many as 500 TUGs over the next two years.

"To see the TUG roll into the hospital's Central Supply storeroom, be loaded up, and deliver its cargo efficiently, quietly, even elegantly, is the realization of about 30 years of research and development" said Henry Thorne, Aethon's Founder. "We are so pleased to install the first TUG at UPMC St. Margaret, where 'healthcare delivery' now takes on a revolutionary meaning." Mr. Thorne holds four patents and has been a pioneer in the development and implementation of industrial handling and delivery systems for the automotive and other industries since 1985.

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About Aethon: Aethon (www.aethon.com) is a leader in providing low-cost solutions for automatically hauling materials indoors. Aethon's first commercialized product, the Tugä, uses patented wireless technology to navigate, avoid obstacles, and continuously track and correct its positioning while pulling loads up to 500 pounds. Based in Pittsburgh, Aethon is named after the mythological horse that pulled Helios' chariot with the sun as cargo.

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