UPS Flight Forward, CVS To Launch Residential Drone Delivery Service In Florida Retirement Community To Assist In Coronavirus Response

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UPS (NYSE:UPS) and CVS Health Corporation (NYSE:CVS.N) today said UPS subsidiary UPS Flight Forward (UPSFF) will use drones to deliver prescription medicines from a CVS pharmacy to The Villages, Florida for the largest U.S. retirement community, home to more than 135,000 residents. The service will use Matternetâ€™s M2 drone system.

Drone transport offers a fast delivery option for medicines that are time-senstive, while supporting social-distancing efforts. Drone delivery options provide individuals with a convenient alternative to visiting a pharmacy. This program can also help prioritize the protection of our healthcare heroes.

“Our new drone delivery service will help CVS provide safe and efficient deliveries of medicines to this large retirement community, enabling residents to receive medications without leaving their homes,” said Scott Price, UPS chief strategy and transformation officer. “UPS is committed to playing its part in fighting the spread of Coronavirus, and this is another way we can support our healthcare customers and individuals with innovative solutions.”

UPS and CVS last year announced plans to jointly explore the use of drone delivery. The companies successfully completed their first drone deliveries of medical prescriptions from a CVS pharmacy in Cary, N.C. in November 2019.

“Now more than ever, it’s important that our customers have access to their prescriptions,” said Jon Roberts, executive vice president and chief operating officer of CVS Health. “In addition to our in-store pickup, free delivery services and drive through pickup, this drone delivery service provides an innovative method to reach some of our customers.”

The new service in The Villages in central Florida begins in early May under the Federal Aviation Administration’s Part 107 rules, with authority to operate through the pandemic and explore ongoing needs as they arise after that period. The operation could expand to include deliveries from two additional CVS pharmacies in the area.

The first flights will be less than one half mile and be delivered to a location near the

retirement community. Initially, a ground vehicle will complete the delivery to the resident's door.

Last year, UPS and Matternet initiated an ongoing revenue-generating drone delivery service at WakeMed's flagship hospital and campus in Raleigh, N.C., completing more than 3,700 flights to date under the FAA's Part 107 rules. UPS also established UPS Flight Forward in June 2019, which later earned the Federal Aviation Administration's Standard Part 135 Air Carrier certification to operate a drone air carrier in September 2019. The companies later initiated service at the University of California San Diego Health system, also under the FAA's Part 107 rules.

UPS Flight Forward has been exploring prospects for supporting the healthcare industry's fight to stop the spread of Coronavirus. In April, the company announced its participation in tests in Virginia with the US government and partners to determine how unmanned aerial systems can assist medical professionals in their fight to stop the spread of the virus.

Source: UPS

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