

Medevac helicopter still missing in Alaska

by UPI

ANCHORAGE, Alaska -- Bad weather has hampered the search for a helicopter that vanished in Alaska as it carried a woman to an Anchorage hospital. The LifeGuard helicopter was last heard from almost 40 minutes after it took off from Cordova at 4:40 p.m. Monday, The Anchorage Daily News reported. When the pilot failed to make his next two scheduled progress reports, the helicopter was declared overdue. Keith Essex, owner of Alpine Air, a helicopter service in Girdwood, said the pilot may have been caught in unexpected nasty weather. "It was a very, very unusual weather phenomenon," he said. "A lot of times the weather will come off the Gulf of Alaska; it will have a direction it will move in from. But this didn't come from a specific area. All of a sudden a cloud formed over the mountains, it descended and it started snowing. It created its own weather. It was actually very scary." Poor visibility and blowing snow on Tuesday made the search difficult. Gay McDowell, co-owner of the Cordova Rose Lodge, was being taken to Anchorage for treatment of complications from breast cancer surgery. In addition to the pilot, a paramedic and nurse were on board.

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