

PRESS RELEASE, 24 September 2008

Transcending limits together: Hirslanden doctors care for Solar Impulse pilots

Zurich, 24 September 2008 – once again the leading Swiss private hospital group Hirslanden is demonstrating its medical expertise by providing a carefully selected interdisciplinary team of doctors for Solar Impulse. Hirslanden will be accompanying the first ever flight around the world in an aeroplane powered by solar energy alone as Medical Advisor. Around the world in five legs using only the power of the sun, this is the ambitious project planned by Dr Bertrand Piccard and André Borschberg from Solar Impulse.

The private hospital group Hirslanden is placing its resources at the disposal of Solar Impulse immediately. With its 13 hospitals and a wide-ranging network of over 100 centres of expertise and specialised institutes, backed up by the very latest technology, the leading Swiss private hospital group Hirslanden will provide the medical care for the Solar Impulse team. The experienced internist Jean-Pierre Boss MD from the Hirslanden Bois-Cerf Clinic in Lausanne has been appointed medical coordinator of the medical team. He and his group of specialists are collaborating with the Solar Impulse team to develop a tailor-made medical concept.

Hirslanden's CEO Dr Robert Bider says: "Both we and Solar Impulse are breaking new ground by our involvement in this project. With our medical expertise and interdisciplinary network we are contributing to the success of this demanding project. The pilots are facing enormous physical and mental challenges. We will provide them with the best possible medical support both in the preparatory phase and during their flight around the world".

The two future pilots Bertrand Piccard, President of Solar Impulse, and André Borschberg, CEO of Solar Impulse, have set course towards a courageous project. The flight is not only a challenge for energy and technology that has never been faced before, it is also a human adventure into the unknown. Starting with the first test flights in the spring of 2009, right up to the planned circumnavigation of the globe in 2011, two pilots will take it in turns to fly the solar aircraft without interruption for several days. This requires extraordinary physical and mental condition. "The construction of the first prototype, HB-SIA, is coming along in huge strides. The time has now come for us to help the pilots prepare with the help of specialists with first class medical expertise" said Bertrand Piccard.

The partnership between Hirslanden and Solar Impulse combines common strengths: future-oriented responsible behaviour, the uninterrupted provision of high class services, and their endeavours to transcend ever more limits.

A physical and mental challenge

"During the different missions the pilots, who are at the centre of the adventure, must be physically and mentally strong and flexible to enable them to adapt to the extreme flying conditions" confirmed André Borschberg. And indeed, the following physical and mental challenges will have to be mastered:

- The small cockpit in which the pilot hardly has any room to shift his position poses health risks for the circulation. Further, the seat and the flight instruments must be fitted as well as possible in the cockpit.
- The pilots will be exposed to extreme fluctuations in temperature and oxygen levels on their flight. At an altitude of 8,000 to 12,000 metres the outside temperature ranges between minus 50 and minus 65° Centigrade. The oxygen level is very low. These are conditions to which the pilots must become acclimatised in a pressurized cabin for the time being.
- Since the pilot will be alone in the cockpit, he must always be fully focused. A nutrition plan and a sleep plan are imperative to ensure his physical, intellectual and mental prowess.

Hirslanden's medical coordinator, Jean-Pierre Boss MD confirms the itinerary: "First of all we must do the check-ups to rule out any risk to the two pilots' health. The tests will then follow. The aim is to guarantee the crew the very best possible medical care at all times, right from the first test flight to every stopover on the five continents."

Partnership with synergies

In a world so dependent on fossil energy Solar Impulse is a paradox, almost a provocation: an aeroplane powered solely by the energy of the sun will take off and land under its own power, during the day and at night. Until it has flown all around the world without fuel or harmful emissions. This is a goal that appears almost unattainable without transcending the limits of conventional technology. Solar Impulse is actively contributing to research and development into renewable energy to master this challenge successfully. Their approach is scientifically and technically innovative. The philosophical and communicative challenge consists of sensitising societies worldwide to the need to be economical with our energy resources and to bring home respect for the environment to them.

Hirslanden's CEO Robert Bider explains: "With our support for Solar Impulse we are expanding our sponsoring activities in the ecological sector. Hospitals consume enormous amounts of energy. Uninterrupted energy in the form of electricity is imperative for keeping patients alive. However, the continuous increase in energy efficiency has been an integral element of Hirslanden's company policy for a long time. The time has now come for us to reach out to those who collaborate with us, the doctors, and our patients to work towards a better balance between man and the environment".

Dr Ole Wiesinger, designate CEO, also confirms that: "Today the starting pistol was fired for several years' intensive collaboration with Solar Impulse. The new Hirslanden group management will co-operate with those who work with us to strengthen the sense of responsibility in handling resources carefully and judiciously".

Solar Impulse is receiving further support from the main partners: Solvay Group, Omega, and Deutsche Bank, as official scientific partner: L'Ecole Polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), as the engineering partner: Altran, and as adviser in aircraft construction: Dassault-Aviation.

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This release has been sent to you by the central media contact at the Head Office of the Hirslanden private hospital group. You will find pictorial material on the homepage www.hirslanden.ch/solarimpulse at Medien/Medienzentrum, Bildmaterial, and www.solarimpulse.com at Media.