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Home for the Holidays

*Local Ambulance Company Provides Free
Transports to Reunite Families for Christmas*

San Diego (Dec. 24, 2009): A big, red ambulance is delivering Christmas cheer to local families and providing the best gift of all: a loved one.

Local ambulance provider San Diego Medical Services (SDMS) is providing free ambulance transportation from local residential care facilities so a few San Diegans may enjoy Christmas day with their families.

One patient at Sharp Birch Patrick care facility, Rosalia Abalos, has not been home for at least two years. Extensive medical problems, including a stroke, fractured back, paralysis and being on a dialysis machine, have limited the patient's mobility and her family's ability to transport her in a regular vehicle.

"Our family is very excited to have Rosalia home," said daughter-in-law Carmen Abalos. "The family goes to visit her regularly, but she has not been home for a while, so we are happy to have her be home with us."

Abalos's son is in the Air Force and is currently on deployment in Iraq. Christmas Day will be her first time 'seeing' him (on Skype) since his deployment nearly six months ago.

"We are really happy to make people's holiday wishes come true this holiday season," said SDMS Director of Public Affairs Michael Simonsen.

Since 2001, SDMS has given free rides home on Thanksgiving and Christmas to patients in residential care facilities that might not otherwise be able to spend the holidays with their loved ones. SDMS works with care facility staff to identify patients for the program who for medical reasons cannot be transported in regular vehicles or do not have the means to pay for professional transports. Patients are picked up in SDMS ambulances from the care facilities on holiday mornings and returned later in the day.

For more information on San Diego Medical Services, please visit www.SDMSE.com.

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