

# **OSF Vice President and Founder of US Ambulances for Ukraine Recognized by President of Ukraine**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

(Sept. 26, 2023 | PEORIA, Ill.) – Chris Manson, OSF HealthCare Vice President of Government Relations and founder of US Ambulances for Ukraine, was recognized by Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the President of Ukraine, during remarks made at the National Archives on September 21, 2023. President Zelenskyy was in Washington D.C. for meetings with President Joe Biden and leaders of Congress. He presented Manson and nearly two dozen others from across the country with medals or other commendations on behalf of the People of Ukraine for their humanitarian work helping those in need following the invasion by Russia in February 2022.

“It was a great honor to meet the President of Ukraine. I am very humbled to receive such an honor and know that I would not be receiving this medal had I not had the support of so many people and organizations which made our effort possible,” said Manson.

In early March of 2022, Manson started US Ambulances for Ukraine after his daughter asked if anything could be done to help the people of Ukraine. With the support of OSF HealthCare, Advanced Medical Transport of Central Illinois, and the Ukrainian Consulate of Chicago, Manson was able to send his first donated ambulance to Ukraine on March 29, 2022. Since that first ambulance a total of 67 emergency vehicles have been sent to Ukraine including 52 ambulances, 8 fire engines, 6 SUVs and 1 utility truck. All vehicles have been sent filled with medical supplies or firefighting equipment. Manson has been to Ukraine six times and has personally led five convoys of vehicles into Ukraine, the last being a 22-vehicle convoy in August.

To recognize this achievement, by Decree of the President of Ukraine No 595/2022, Manson was awarded the Cross of Ivan Mazepa (Ukrainian: Хрест Івана Мазепи). This award, initially given in March 2009 by then President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko, honors citizens of Ukraine, foreign citizens or stateless persons for significant contribution to the revival of national, cultural, artistic, spiritual, architectural, military and historical heritage of Ukraine, for achievements in state, diplomatic, humanistic, scientific, educational and charitable activity.

In attendance at the National Archives ceremony, along with President Zelenskyy, were the first lady of Ukraine and several key Ukrainian staff members, the U.S. Attorney General, members of Congress, and Penny Pritzker, the new U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine’s Economic Recovery.

“I am very thankful for the support I have received from so many including OSF HealthCare, all the donors, the Ukrainian Consulate of Chicago, The UA Resistance Foundation, the Ukrainian Medical Association of North America and, most importantly, my family. This medal and recognition belong to everyone involved,” said Manson.

US Ambulances for Ukraine is working on its 10<sup>th</sup> shipment of ambulances, fire engines and other needed vehicles which they hope to have ready for shipment to Ukraine by early November.

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