Record of Conversations – Lexington Medical Center
RRD18MR003

On the morning of February 7, 2018 NTSB Chief Medical Officer Mary Pat McKay spoke by telephone with Mike Greely, Vice President of Operations at Lexington Medical Center. (803-791-2105).

This is a 434 bed community hospital without a trauma level designation. Mike has close relationships with Lexington County EMS. A hospital disaster was called out around 0315 – he was called through an internal process. While en route to the hospital he called EMS Chief Brian Hood's cell phone to ask about the extent of the MCI. He was told to expect about 25 patients and that they would primarily be "greens" – walking wounded. No reds or yellows were expected. This information allowed Mike to decide not to call in additional surgical and OR staff as he had been planning. Once he arrived, having accurate information allowed him to quell the rumors among ED staff that they were going to get 60-70 severely injured patients. The general surgeon on call did come in and overall they admitted one person with a chest tube and one with a broken ankle. In total, they got 30 patients and were able to manage them. The ED sees 100,000 visits annually, so this extra number of walking wounded in the middle of the night was not a huge stretch – they had ED beds available.

They were at a full inpatient census (have been for weeks) because of the flu but have a 12 bed pre-admit area in the ED (also full). If all thirty had needed to be admitted, that would have created a much larger problem.

In getting patients discharged, the Red Cross helped move uninjured people to the shelter site or to hotels. The hospital has its own transport buses (used to get staff to distant parking lots, etc.) and their safety staff is trained to drive them so they took the discharged people to the shelter that way.

Mike commented that if Brian Hood hadn't been the one working, he's not as sure where he would have gotten the detailed information so early in the process. A formal, rather than informal, system will need to be developed. But in the case, the communication worked out well.