

Boston MedFlight Equipment Return

Because of the nature of transporting patients in an emergency; specialized, often expensive, equipment gets left behind when the patient is safely delivered to the hospital. After the patient has been properly cared for and the emergency room is cleaned, some of the equipment used in their transport is thrown away or placed in the hospital storage area. The equipment stays at the receiving facility until its owners return to the hospital to retrieve it. The loss of such valuable equipment is financially taxing on local fire departments and private ambulance service companies. Paying a full or part-time employee to retrieve the items is not always feasible.

Today, and for the last 15 years, Mike "the Equipment Ambassador", makes every effort to retrieve, clean and return equipment that belongs to community hospitals, local fire departments, and emergency service companies, as well as to Boston MedFlight. For Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard hospitals, he brings the equipment to the Hyannis airport and they see that it gets back to their proper owner.

Because Boston MedFlight collaborates with so many facilities in Massachusetts, CEO Suzanne Wedel, MD, agreed to fund a part time equipment retrieval person in 1997. That person was Mike Lessard who has been a part time member of the Boston MedFlight team since then. His travels can take him as far north as southern New Hampshire and as far south as Rhode Island Hospital to retrieve and return BMF equipment, as well as that of others. Mike uses a special decontamination area in the BMF Plymouth base to thoroughly clean all equipment.

The initial funds for the 1st retrieval van were donated by Arabella Insurance Company which was retired with 180K miles on it. Mike is currently on his fourth van and travels about 45,000 miles each year and burns through 40,000 gallons of fuel. Today, the cost of the program is fully supported by Boston MedFlight. Mike says, "We realize how important it is that all patients are transported with safe and properly working equipment. That is part of Boston MedFlight's mission and we will do all that we can to make that happen."