

What Happened Inside The Hospital During The Joplin, MO Tornado

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Dr. Kevin Kikta was one of two emergency physicians on duty at St. John's Regional Medical Center in Joplin, MO on Sunday, May 22 when an EF-5 tornado struck the hospital.

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You never know that it will be the most important day of your life until the day is over. The day started like any other day for me: waking up, eating, going to the gym, showering, and going to my 4 pm ED shift. As I drove to the hospital, I mentally prepared for my shift as I always do, but nothing could ever have prepared me for what was going to happen on this shift.

Things were normal for the first hour and half. At approximately 5:30 pm, we received a warning that a tornado had been spotted. Although I work in Joplin and went to medical school in Oklahoma, I live in New Jersey, and I have never seen or been in a tornado. I learned that a "code gray" was being called. We were to start bringing patients to safer spots within the ED and hospital.

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