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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

St. James Mercy Participates in “Flurricane” Disaster Drill

May 18, 2011...Hornell, NY...St. James Mercy Hospital is participating in a statewide disaster exercise in collaboration with emergency responders and hospitals in Steuben, Schuyler and Chemung counties.

Called “Flurricane 2011”, the four-day exercise began on May 16 and simulates an area-wide disaster caused by heavy rains, winds and flooding from a hurricane. During the exercise, state and regional emergency responders are engaging in joint communications and decision-making to evacuate and place patients to other facilities during a mass casualty disaster.

On May 19, St. James Mercy Hospital is staging a drill with the Hornell City Fire Department to triage and treat victims of a train-bus accident and chemical exposure, due to washed-out roads resulting from severe weather.

“This drill is intended to test our triage plan during a mass-casualty incident,” said Peg Gelser-Webb, Safety Office at St. James Mercy. “We regularly test our emergency plans, and this particular drill will assess our preparedness for event similar to weather disasters we’ve seen in other parts of the country.”

Flurricane 2011 is the first of a three-year series of emergency drills and represents eleven months of planning. The local planning team was a collaborative between the Finger Lakes Regional Resources Center, Rochester Regional Healthcare Association, State Office of Emergency Management Region V, and Western Region Health Emergency Preparedness Team.

Statewide, eighteen hospitals and 100 long-term care facilities are participating in Flurricane 2011. In total between 2,000 and 4,000 individuals are expected to take part in the full-scale exercise.

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