SKYMED SURVIVOR

Biker with Cardiac Emergency Goes from KY ICU Aboard Medically Equipped Lear Jet to Hospital in FL

Frank Wattenbarger



I was on a much-anticipated motorcycle trip to Bardstown, KY, to experience the finest Kentucky Bourbons. After a three-day ride, our group of 11 Harley-Davidson riders had left Tampa, FL, and arrived in Bardstown, KY. We spent the next day touring several distilleries in the area. When I woke up the following morning and went to breakfast, I noticed a shortness of breath, sweats, and an elevated pulse rate. After breakfast, I packed my bags and loaded my motorcycle. I then sat down to catch my breath and decided to check my pulse rate—there's an app for that—on my phone. I subsequently got two readings at over 130 bpm. One of my fellow riders checked my pulse and got a similar reading. Not understanding what was going on but entirely convinced it was not good, I called 911 for an ambulance. Upon arrival to the hospital, I was immediately taken to an ER room and hooked up to an EKG. The instant diagnosis was atrial flutter, as distinguished by the EKG trace. I knew I would be there for a bit and began to wonder how I would get back home and how my motorcycle would get home, as well. Fortunately, I am a SkyMed member.

Another rider in our group immediately contacted my wife, and she called SkyMed. Before I was taken from the ER and admitted to a room, "Gerry" from SkyMed called asking what was going on and what he needed to do to arrange for my return to Tampa. Gerry immediately faxed the "Fit-to-Fly Form" to the hospital ER, which was given to me to pass to the doctor as I was being transported to the cardiovascular ICU unit. Once situated in my room, I received another call from CSRT Trucking asking about my motorcycle and where they could find it to pick up for transport back to Tampa.

After two nights in the ICU and once I was stable, my air ambulance transport arranged by SkyMed had arrived. Next, they took me by ground ambulance to the Bardstown Airport, where I boarded a medical Learjet for my flight home. They strapped me into the onboard gurney and monitored my heart rate with oxygen for the entire flight. Upon arrival in Tampa, I was taken to Pepin Heart Institute by ground ambulance and directly admitted to a bed.

How did you find out about SkyMed, and why did you choose SkyMed? I learned about SkyMed during a presentation at my Harley Owner's Group chapter meeting in October 2020. I chose SkyMed because it seemed like a good value proposition in light of the traveling my wife and I do, both on our motorcycle and in our car.

What would you tell your friends about your experience with SkyMed? I can't say enough about the proficiency exhibited by SkyMed during this whole ordeal. I am so glad my wife and I purchased our membership through Taylor and Tammy Paloscio. No time was lost in planning for both me and my motorcycle's return to Tampa. In addition, when it comes to the cost of everything involved, SkyMed spared no expense! When the motorcycle arrived, I found no damage, and all personal gear and bourbon left on it were intact. SkyMed is the real deal.

REMEMBER: In a medical emergency, time is always of the essence and SkyMed is there when you need it most! Not only will your Membership take you back to the home hospital of your choice, SkyMed will also ensure your vehicle—whether a car, RV, or motorcycle—will be transported back to the location of your choice. All it takes is one phone call: no copays, no deductibles, and no claim forms!

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Suggested search words: Air Evacuation, Commercial Transportation, Ground Ambulance, Med Escort, Misc Expenses, Vehicle Return, Vehicle Transportation, Canada, Caribbean, Global Traveler, Hawaii, Mexico, Virgin Islands, RV Traveler, Member's Name, Name of RV Park, State

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