Dr. Michael Lippe, who served as emergency room director at Good Samaritan Hospital in Suffern for 15 years, was killed Wednesday night when the plane he was piloting to a job at an upstate hospital crashed in bad weather.

Lippe, 56, of Mahwah, N.J., was thrown from the single-engine plane as it clipped some trees near Penn Yan Airport in a wooded area in the town of Barrington, about 50 miles south of Rochester.

Lippe was a licensed pilot who flew many volunteer missions for medical flight organizations.

He also served as medical director for Rockland Paramedics for many years and helped many Rockland ambulance corps.

"A great physician, a great mentor, a great personal friend," said Ray Florida, director of Rockland Paramedics. "He helped us come a long way in the field of emergency medicine. This is tragic."

Lippe left Good Samaritan Hospital in 2009 amid a dispute over a new management company for the emergency room.

He was married and had four daughters.

His plane left Essex County Caldwell Field Airport just after 6:30 p.m. Wednesday. It crashed a few minutes before its scheduled arrival at Penn Yan Airport. Authorities say there was freezing rain and sleet in the area.

Federal aviation safety officials will investigate.
The Associated Press contributed information for this report.