

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

VALERIE A. ARKOOSH, MD, MPH, CHAIR  
KENNETH E. LAWRENCE, JR., VICE CHAIR  
JOSEPH C. GALE, COMMISSIONER



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

MONTGOMERY COUNTY E.O.C. • 50 EAGLEVILLE ROAD  
NORRISTOWN, PA 19403  
610-631-6500

FAX: 610-631-6536  
WWW.DPS.MONTCOPA.ORG

THOMAS M. SULLIVAN  
DIRECTOR

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** All Montgomery County EMS and QRS Agencies  
**FROM:** Dr. Alvin Wang, DO FAAEM FAEMS NRP  
Regional EMS Medical Director  
**DATE:** 7 March 2020  
**RE:** COVID-19 Preparations - **UPDATE**

In response to the recent presumptive positive cases of SARS-CoV-2 / COVID-19 cases in our county and in proximity to our region, ECOMM has enhanced their communicable infectious disease screening procedure. Effective immediately, **all 9-1-1 callers reporting medical emergencies will be asked: “Is the patient or those in close contact with the patient such as household members exhibiting any flu-like symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath?” An affirmative response will result in the AFRI notes being added to the call.** Appropriate CAD notes and radio notifications will be made.

EMS practitioners are urged to maintain enhanced situational awareness of patients exhibiting flu-like symptoms so that appropriate PPE can be utilized. Please refer to the updated PPE memo of 7 March 2020 for further guidance if needed.

PA BLS Protocol 931 provides guidance regarding EMS actions in response to patients with suspected influenza-like illness. We ask that you review the protocol and refresh your staff. Some key highlights:

1. Upon receipt of this message/dispatch, the EMS units and other first responders are to follow the CDC guidelines for COVID-19 PPE including standard, contact, and airborne precautions. N-95 masks, goggles, and gowns should be donned prior to approaching the patient. The vehicle driver should doff their PPE (except for their N-95 mask) and perform hand hygiene prior to entering the forward cab during hospital transport to the hospital.
2. Limit personnel in direct contact with the patient and in the ambulance to the minimum necessary to safely care for the patient.
3. Whenever possible, EMS on the scene should notify the receiving facility of the suspected AFRI case so that facility can prepare and provide appropriate instructions upon arrival at the hospital.
4. Aerosol-generating procedures such as nebulizer therapy, NIPPV, and suctioning should be limited to patients who meet criteria for administration.
5. EMS practitioners are asked to report unusual incidents and potential high consequence cases to the ECOMM supervisor or watch desk for tracking.

**Special attention to Police and other non-EMS first responders:**

1. It is recommended that you wear the PPE as described above if you are going to be in close contact with the patient.
2. If all recommended PPE is not available, it is recommended that you remain at least 6' away from the patient if the patient's clinical condition permits this.

When doffing PPE, using alcohol-based hand sanitizer on the first responder's gloved hands immediately prior to glove removal is recommended to reduce the risk of contamination.

It is vitally important for your agency to work closely with your medical director and infection control officer to make certain that your crews are following your agency's infection control plans and that adequate supplies of properly fit-tested PPE are available for crews. If you should have any questions or need additional guidance, please contact the EMS office. The CDC offers strategies for optimizing the supply of N95 respirators here which includes information on contingency and crisis PPE strategies: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirators-strategy/index.html>

As this is a dynamic situation, EMS practitioners and agency leadership are urged to frequently review the CDC COVID-19 EMS guidance located at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-for-ems.html>

The Pennsylvania Department of Health maintains a repository of COVID-19 guidance at <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

In addition, MCDPS will maintain a resource list including pertinent links and documents at: <https://www.montcopa.org/3468/Coronavirus-Disease-2019-COVID-19>

Montgomery County DPS is working closely with the Office of Public health to ensure prompt notification to any responders involved in the care of any presumptive positive COVID-19 patient.

Further information will be distributed as it becomes available.

**\*\*\*\* FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY (FOUO) \*\*\*\***