EMS Policy Memorandum No. 2020-06

DATE: March 17, 2020

TO: All Prehospital Care Providers

FROM: Katherine Shafer, M.D., EMS Medical Director

SUBJ.: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide direction on implementing Governor Newsom’s Executive Order for maintaining an adequate healthcare workforce. This memorandum is effective through April 30, 2020, unless superseded or rescinded earlier.

On March 16, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-27-20, stating in part: “to address increased demand for healthcare workers and first responders, Emergency Medical Services Authority, Department of Social Services, and the Department of Public Health shall authorize first responders, health and human services care providers and workers who are asymptomatic to continue working during the period of this emergency, subject to those responders, providers, and workers taking precautions to prevent transmission.”

In order to implement the Governor's order and consistent with the recommendations of the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health I am directing prehospital care service providers to implement the following actions:

1. Encourage employees to call in prior to their shift if they are experiencing an illness or COVID-19 or influenza like symptoms. Direct employees to be evaluated by employee wellness or primary care physician before reporting for work.

2. Employers screen all prehospital care personnel at the beginning of their shift for fever and respiratory symptoms. Actively take their temperature and document absence of shortness of breath, new or change in cough, and sore throat. If the employee is ill or has a fever above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit the employee should be asked to leave the workplace and referred to employee wellness or primary care physician for evaluation before returning to work.

3. Employees who become ill or exhibit COVID-19 or influenza like symptoms while working should be removed from the healthcare setting and referred to an appropriate healthcare provider for evaluation and treatment.
4. Consistent with CDC recommendations prehospital care personnel that have experienced a low, medium, or high risk exposure\(^1\) to a COVID-19 positive patient and are asymptomatic should be allowed to work. These personnel should still report temperature and absence of symptoms each day prior to starting work and should wear a facemask (surgical or N95) while at work for 14 days after the exposure. If these personnel develop even mild symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they must cease patient care activities, don a facemask (if not already wearing), and notify their supervisor or occupational health services prior to leaving work.

I have received many inquiries about laboratory testing for exposed personnel. Currently, COVID-19 testing for exposed healthcare workers must be arranged through the employee’s primary care physician or workplace physician. Several local hospital and commercial medical labs are performing COVID-19 testing. I will provide updates on lab testing as the information becomes available.

Regarding PPE supplies SJCEMSA is scheduled to receive its first deliveries of N95 respirators from the State cache fulfilling mutual aid requests. Please monitor WebEOC for the latest situation updates and PPE availability.

Detailed information on how to request PPE resources is available on the SJCEMSA website, see the links below:

- [https://www.sjgov.org/ems/PDF/HowtoRequestMedHealthPPEinWebEOCQRG.pdf](https://www.sjgov.org/ems/PDF/HowtoRequestMedHealthPPEinWebEOCQRG.pdf)
- [https://www.sjgov.org/ems/videos/How_to_Request_MH_MA_PPE.mp4](https://www.sjgov.org/ems/videos/How_to_Request_MH_MA_PPE.mp4)

If you have any questions regarding this memorandum you may direct questions to me through Matt Esposito, Prehospital Care Coordinator [mesposito@sjgov.org](mailto:mesposito@sjgov.org) or (209) 468-6818.