

Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Administration

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES BULLETIN

Date: January 23, 2020

To: DC EMS Agencies and EMS Medical Directors

From: Brian W. Amy, MD
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Subject: 2019 Novel Coronavirus Update and Precautions for Emergency Medical Services

The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) community may encounter patients with Novel Coronavirus symptoms and those who have been exposed to the Novel Coronavirus.

- This Novel (New) Coronavirus is one of several different types of viruses in the Coronavirus Group which also includes Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).
- EMS personnel and healthcare providers should ask all patients about their recent travel, especially to China, Asia, or to anywhere the Novel Coronavirus outbreaks have been reported in the last 14 days.
- Coronavirus treatment is supportive care and there is no current vaccine available.
- Coronavirus symptoms include runny nose, headache, cough, sore throat, fever and malaise.
- Coronavirus transmission is airborne and spread from human to human, by coughing and close contact.
- Symptomatic patients and suspected patients should use surgical masks if available and remember to “cover your cough” when coughing.
- EMS crews should use Universal Precautions for all patients.
- EMS personnel and healthcare providers should use airborne respiratory masks (fit tested N-95 level or higher), eye protection, gloves and gowns, or Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), when handling confirmed Coronavirus patients.
- Infectious disease precautions should be used at all times.
- EMS transport crews should alert receiving hospitals that they are transporting symptomatic or suspicious patients who may have, or have been exposed to, the Novel Coronavirus.
- Please remember to appropriately disinfect all interior ambulance surfaces and equipment after the transportation of infected patients.

We will send periodic EMS Bulletins on Coronavirus as more information becomes available.