



The EHSF would like to remind EMS agencies the Department of Health is the lead regarding information about the Coronavirus. The EHSF will continue to disseminate information provided by the Bureau of EMS for EMS agencies as quickly as possible. Information and guidance are changing rapidly.

Regional Status

As of the time this document was written (Tuesday, 03/24/2020 at 1630 hours), there are 851 confirmed cases of COVID-19 throughout Pennsylvania and 7 reported deaths. Please know the number of cases can change frequently.

County	Confirmed Cases	Deaths
Adams	6	0
Cumberland	13	0
Dauphin	4	0
Franklin	3	0
Lancaster	10	0
Lebanon	3	0
Perry	0	0
York	18	0
EHSF Total	57	0
Pennsylvania Total	851	7

You can monitor the coronavirus in Pennsylvania at this link:

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

Updates from the Governor's Office/Department of Health:

Continue practicing social distancing.

Non-essential businesses are closed. Public schools will remain closed until 09 April 2020.

Updates from the Bureau of EMS

Here is the link to a listing of EMS Information Bulletins (EMSIBs): <https://www.ehsf.org/ems-information-bulletins/>.

- **Previous EMSIBs**
 - o EMSIB 2020-01 Novel coronavirus 2019-nCoV
 - o EMSIB 2020-02 Infection Control
 - o EMSIB 2020-06 Protocol and Policy Updates Related to COVID-19
- **New EMSIBs**
 - o EMSIB 2020-07 Alternate Pathway for Psychomotor Testing
 - o EMSIB 2020-08 Issued Extension to EMS Certification Expiration Dates



EMSIB 2020-07 Alternate Pathway for Psychomotor Testing

The Bureau of EMS released the EMSIB providing an alternate pathway for psychomotor testing. If and EMS candidate/student successfully completed the certification class and the respective cognitive (computerized) exam, then the psychomotor (hands-on) exam will be waived, and the candidate will receive their EMS certification. This pathway is available for EMR, EMT, AEMT, and paramedic students. The Bureau of EMS will be making the necessary data changes in the EMS Registry to credit the EMS candidates pending only the completion of the psychomotor exam.

Cognitive Exam

At this time, there is no guidance on waiving the cognition exam.

We did learn some Pearson Vue Testing Centers will re-open beginning Wednesday, March 25th for testing of essential healthcare personnel, which include EMS providers. Appointments are first come, first serve via scheduling at the Pearson Vue site.

2020-08 Issued Extension to EMS Certification Expiration Dates

The Bureau of EMS released the EMSIB providing EMS provider certifications with an expiration date of 03/31/2020 or 04/01/2020 will be extended to 07/01/2020. This includes EMSVO, EMR, EMT, AEMT, Paramedic, PHRN, PHPE, PHP, and MCP.

EHSF Physician Guidance

The EHSF meet with the Medical Command Facility Directors and physicians on the EHSF Medical Advisory Committee on Monday, March 23, 2020, on a variety of topics.

Alternate Destinations

The meeting discussed steps to begin discussion for the possibility of transporting patients to alternate destinations. The EHSF understands a variety of partners need to be included to determine the workflow and to gain interest in alternate facilities to accept patients from EMS. Additional planning is needed to begin using this option.

No Transport

The meeting discussed not transporting patients with influenza-like illnesses. The Committee developed a regional protocol to include a standing order for medical command to provide if a patient meets criteria within the triage screening tool, then EMS can recommend the patient stays at home and provides home self-care instructions. Specific guidance and documents will be shared directly with EMS agencies.

Mitigation of Provider Exposure

The meeting discussed guidance for EMS providers to reduce the risk of exposure, which could provide modifications to current clinical and operational practices. The EHSF is attempting to identify current practices which could be modified to still provide adequate patient care but increase provider safety.



Dispatching

The EHSF is working with the eight-county PSAPs (9-1-1 Centers).

Updated Screening Tool (EIDS-coronavirus)

The EHSF updated the screening tool used by the 9-1-1 centers to identify at-risk chief complaints for suspected coronavirus. The dispatcher will now advise the caller/patient to meet EMS at the front entrance of the residence/facility if well enough to do so.

The 9-1-1 Centers are experiencing an increased call volume and receiving questions/recommendations from EMS to change dispatching and screening for patients with suspected COVID-19. We are asking you do not contact the 9-1-1 centers requesting changes to the procedures regarding how they are dispatching units, screening callers for suspected COVID-19, or additional information provided to the crew.

Request to Reduce Inquiries for Change of Dispatching

Each 9-1-1 center in the EHSF region uses Priority Dispatch for Emergency Medical Dispatching. This is an international program that does not permit deviation. As we respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 9-1-1 centers are following the guidance of our regional medical director.

At this time, patients/callers who fall into categories of suspected risk of COVID-19 are being asked a series of additional questions as approved through Priority Dispatch. If the caller answers yes to a question, then the 9-1-1 center is providing the information to the responding crew.

If you have a concern or suggestion regarding dispatching procedures, you can provide them to EHSF: Megan via e-mail. We are communicating frequently with the county 9-1-1 centers and will continue to implement measures to increase the EMS providers' safety.

Authorization for Travel of Essential Personnel

At this time, there are no travel restrictions or shelter-in-place orders within our region. However, we received questions from EMS agency leadership about what would be needed if these restrictions come. According to the Department of Human Services Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) under Presidential Policy Directive 21 (PPD-21), healthcare and public sector is considered critical infrastructure.

The EHSF does not foresee the Department of Health providing letters for EMS providers to travel if restrictions are put in place. It is recommended the employer provides documentation to respective employees.

The EHSF developed a template letter for EMS agencies to use and modify as needed, if desired.



End-Tidal Carbon Dioxide (ETCO₂) Monitoring

Stryker provided guidance relating to if the ETCO₂ filters air on the Lifepak 15 monitor and how to decon.

Medtronic provided a response specially for customers using Microstream Capnography sampling lines validated for use with the Lifepak. They cannot provide guidance about other manufacturers of non-Microstream sampling lines.

They provided Medtronic does not have formal testing as related to COVID-19. However, they know the filter on the Microstream capnography sampling lines is rated at 0.2 microns. A N95 respiration is rated at 0.3 microns.

Here are three resources provided:

1. Medtronic Blog on the Role of Filtration in Protecting Clinicians:
<https://hcpresources.medtronic.com/blog/the-role-of-filtration-in-protecting-clinicians-from-contagious-respiratory-pathogens>
2. White Paper: Filterline, Sampling Line Tech Brief:
<https://www.medtronic.com/assetviewer.html?path=/content/dam/covidien/library/us/en/product/capnography-monitoring/capnography-filter-line-captures-airborne-bacteria-white-paper.pdf&sid=holly.stewart@medtronic.com&uid=9e28c4b8-edf0-12ba-e4b1-1c96c9af1642>
3. Info Sheet: Microstream Capnography Filter Lines Warranty Overview - EMS:
<https://www.medtronic.com/assetviewer.html?path=/content/dam/covidien/library/us/en/product/capnography-monitoring/microstream-capnography-sampling-lines-warranty-overview-ems-information-sheet.pdf&sid=holly.stewart@medtronic.com&uid=2775c86a-6450-0752-ec27-27c171ec43e4>

Patient Transfer of Care Form

The patient transfer of care form is mandated by the PA EMS Systems Act. However, the EHSF just wants to remind EMS providers of the importance to complete this form. Some hospitals are using the form to provide follow-up contact for patients who test positive.

Confirmed Positive Tests

The EHSF was questioned how providers or agencies will learn if a patient's test is positive for COVID-19. According to the Department of Health in areas with Bureau of Community Health Services (BCHS) coverage when the tracing of a positive case reveals EMS involvement, then the Department of Health's healthcare branch would make a notification to the EMS agency. However, as the number of cases begins to grow the notification becomes a greater challenge in terms of time. The Department of Health intends to provide guidance to facilities/hospitals soon to clarifying their role with notifications.



A suggestion or best practice to confirm the test results for COVID-19 is for the EMS agency to consider providing a follow-up telephone call with the patient or patient's family to inquire on the test results.

Webinar on COVID-19

An on-demand viewing of a recording webinar with Katherine West, BSN, MSED, is available at the link below. The webinar will provide what EMS providers need to know about COVID-19: origin, signs and symptoms, risk groups, modes or transmission, PPE, disinfection practices, and promising treatments.

<https://www.jems.com/webcasts/what-you-need-to-know-about-covid-19/>

EHSF Activities to Date

- Conference Calls:
 - o Medical Command Facility Directors
 - o County Council Presidents
 - o SCTF
 - o EMS County Council Meetings
 - o Regional 9-1-1 Centers (PSAPs)
- Finalized Regional COOP Plan Revisions
 - o Prepares the region to request exceptions and make provisions if workforce or resources reach critical levels
 - o Sharing plan with necessary stakeholders
 - o Developing documents to request exceptions if needed
- Generated Best Practice Documents for the following:
 - o EMS Operations and General Information
 - o QRS Response Guidance
 - o Fire Services on EMS Incidents
- Monitor staffing levels of EMS agencies and PSAPs
- Sent treatment consideration for ALS Protocol change to Bureau of EMS
 - o Currently under consideration
- Meet with medical command facility directors and physicians of EHSF MAC regarding no transport and alternate destinations for transport
- Developed regional protocol for no transport, treat at home with self-care for EMS

Communication Pathway

We encourage EMS agency leadership to communicate with the respective County Council President. We will be sharing information to them to share with the EMS agencies. We will also be communicating with them frequently to evaluate the status and needs of each county.

County	County Council President
Adams	Eric Zaney
Cumberland	Duane Nieves
Dauphin	Jason Campbell



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SERVICES FEDERATION**
YOUR COMMUNITY. OUR COMMITMENT.

Franklin	Doug Bitner
Lancaster	Darrell Fisher
Lebanon	Steve Mrozowski
Perry	Wes Smith
York	Mark Moody

Helpful Information:

You can learn more about the coronavirus on the CDC's website at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

You can reference documents shared by the EHSF at:

<https://www.ehsf.org/index.php/resource/coronavirus-update>