



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, 03/31/2020 at 1800 hours), there are 4,843 confirmed cases of COVID-19 throughout Pennsylvania and 63 reported deaths. Please know the number of cases can change frequently.

County	Confirmed Cases	Deaths
Adams	9	0
Cumberland	36	1
Dauphin	45	1
Franklin	19	0
Lancaster	123	3
Lebanon	28	0
Perry	1	0
York	66	0
EHSF Total	327	5
Pennsylvania Total	4,843	63

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 and public schools will remain closed indefinitely.

A stay at home order is in effect for the following EHSF counties: Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, and Lebanon and York Counties.

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**

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



- **New EMSIBs**

- EMSIB 2020-09 Out of State Licensed EMS Agencies
- EMSIB 2020-10 EMS Providers Obtaining Nasopharyngeal Swabs

2020-09 Out of State Licensed EMS Agencies

The Bureau of EMS provided clarification to permit an out of state licensed EMS agency to respond to an emergency when there are not enough resources available to respond.

2020-10 EMS Providers Obtaining Nasopharyngeal Swabs

The Bureau of EMS released clarification to provide a provider certified above an AEMT is permitted to obtain and label nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs for laboratory analysis when properly trained. The EMSIB identifies the ability to perform this skill aligns with other procedures permitted in the approved scope of practice, such as inserting NP airways, administration of intranasal medications, and nasal/bronchial suctioning. EMS agencies may stock swabs in vehicles if they work with a lab and their medical director to develop a process for proper labeling, storing, transporting, and dropping off specimens. There must be a plan for how physicians will order the lab. Additionally, a medical command physician can order a NP swab.

Dispatching Updates

The Priority Dispatch, which is the program used for dispatching by the eight county PSAPs in the EHSF region, released updates for COVID-19. These updates were approved by our Regional Medical Director. The changes will not impact the screening or information relayed to EMS for suspected COVID-19. The changes are as follows:

- Protocol 26: Sick Person
 - Determinant code added: 26-A-12 Coronavirus illness suspected was changed back to possible meningitis
 - New suffix C for suspected coronavirus illness
- Protocol 36:
 - Entire protocol refers to “flu like” symptoms and diseases rather than just the flu
 - Separate key question pathway for COVID-19
- Protocols 6 (breathing problems), 10 (chest pain), 13 (diabetic problem), and 26 (sick person)
 - EIDS Tool for coronavirus will be launched.
 - The PSAPs in the EHSF region are already using this tool to screen all medical calls.
- Protocols C (airways/arrest/choking >8 years instructions) and Yc (tracheostomy airways/arrest/choking > 8 years instructions):
 - Wording changed in instructions to accomplish breathing evaluation to be compliant with new COVID-19 guidelines recommending not placing rescuer’s face next to the patient’s face.

PPE Burn Rate Calculator

The CDC provided a spreadsheet to calculate the usage or burn rate of PPE. Information can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/burn-calculator.html>.



CMS Paying for Alternative Destinations

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced they will pay for transports to alternative destinations and pause the repetitive, scheduled non-emergency prior to authorization program for ambulances during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.

Additional information can be found at: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/covid-ambulances.pdf>

Reimbursement for Transport to Alternative Destinations

CMS will expand the list of Medicare covered destinations to include all destinations equipped to treat the condition of the patient consistent with EMS protocols established by state and/or local laws. These facilities may include, but are not limited to:

- Alternative site determined to be part of a hospital, critical access hospital, or skilled nursing facility
- Community mental health centers
- Federal qualified health clinics
- Rural health clinics
- Physicians' offices
- Urgent care facilities
- Ambulatory surgery centers
- Any location furnishing dialysis services outside an end stage renal disease facility when one is unavailable
- Beneficiary's home

The destination expansion applies to all emergency and non-emergency ground ambulance transports in the United States regardless of participation with the ET3 pilot program.

Pausing Non-Emergency Prior Authorization Model

Effective March 29, 2020, the Repetitive, Scheduled Non-Emergent Ambulance Transport Prior Authorization Model will be paused in Pennsylvania until the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency ends. During the pause any claims for repetitive, scheduled non-emergency ambulance transports will not be stopped for pre-payment review if prior authorization has not been requested by the fourth round trip in a 30-day period.

Provider Mental Health

The EHSF posted a social media message for Mental Health Mondays on Facebook. We will continue to post mental health messages every Monday.



Conference Calls

The EHSF will be hosting a variety of conference calls with each county EMS council to provide a system overview of the COVID-19 response and answer questions. Please watch for meeting invitations and consider participation.

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)
 - o Dr. Alvin Wang Regional Medical Director, Montgomery County EMS Council
- 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
 - o Screening Providers
 - o No Work / Return to Work Eligibility
- Monitor staffing levels of EMS agencies and PSAPs
- Sent treatment consideration for ALS Protocol change to Bureau of EMS
 - o Currently under consideration
- Developed tool to assist with no transport/treat at home with self-care for influenza-like illness patients

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
Franklin	Doug Bitner
Lancaster	Darrell Fisher
Lebanon	Steve Mrozowski



**EMERGENCY HEALTH
SERVICES FEDERATION**
YOUR COMMUNITY. OUR COMMITMENT.

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>