March 11, 2020

EMS TREATMENT CONSIDERATIONS DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Best practices for management of the COVID-19 outbreak are dynamic due to the rapidly evolving situation and changing scientific knowledge. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance for EMS providers and healthcare personnel are continuously updated. All healthcare personnel should review these recommendations regularly.

EMS providers may encounter a known or suspected symptomatic COVID-19 patient. If prehospital providers have contact with a symptomatic patient meeting the current CDC criteria, they shall follow the County of San Diego EMS Medical Director’s PPE and exposure reporting directions dated February 25, 2020.

CDC has recommended EMS providers limit aerosol-generating treatments whenever possible. Exercise caution during procedures that may be aerosol-generating including:

- Endotracheal intubation
  - Perilaryngeal/King airway preferred
- Continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP)
- Nebulized medications
- Suctioning, and
- Bag valve mask (BVM) ventilation.
  - BVM ventilation should be equipped with a HEPA filter, if used.

Base hospital consultation is recommended for any patients that may otherwise receive one or more of these treatments. Lower flow nasal cannula oxygen (2-4 liters/per minute) is considered safe at this time for use if pulse oximetry <92%.

Thank you for your continued support and attention to managing this unprecedented event.

Respectfully,

Kristi L. Koenig, MD, FACEP, FIFEM, FAEMS, Medical Director
Emergency Medical Services
County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency

cc: Nick Yphantides, MD, MPH, Chief Medical Officer
    Andrew Parr, EMS Administrator