



EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AGENCY
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*To ensure timely,
compassionate and quality
emergency and disaster
medical services.*



Health Services
<http://ems.dhs.lacounty.gov>

March 3, 2020

VIA E-MAIL

TO: See Distribution
FROM: Marianne Gausche-Hill, MD
Medical Director
SUBJECT: COVID-19

Current Status Update

As the spread of COVID-19, the disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (previous novel coronavirus), continues worldwide, I wanted to provide an update on what is happening in the California and Los Angeles County and provide you with information on how you can reduce the chance of exposure to this disease.

On February 29, 2020, the EMS Agency updated its dispatch protocol for Emerging Infectious Disease adding the countries of South Korea, Iran, Italy and Japan to the screening criteria as widespread community transmission of COVID-19 has occurred in these countries, as well as China. As the COVID-19 outbreak evolves further revisions may be made to this protocol.

In California, as of 10:00 am on March 2, 2020, there were 43 cases that tested positive for COVID-19 and only one of those cases was in Los Angeles County. 24 of the state cases are related to persons that were repatriated from China or the Princess Cruise ship. The other 19 cases include 10 travel related cases, 5 cases that were close contacts of one of the travel related cases and 4 cases from community transmission. Being ever vigilant we need to prepare for the potential of an increased number of community transmissions. This is a very dynamic situation.

How to protect yourself

When responding to any EMS call, make sure you obtain information on whether the patient has fever, cough and/or respiratory symptoms. In all cases, regardless of travel history, don personal protective equipment to include a N95 mask, gown, gloves and eye protection before contact with the patient. Additionally, place a surgical mask on the patient. On arrival at the hospital and after the transfer of care, doff your PPE and most importantly wash your hands using soap and water. By protecting yourself on all patient contacts with fever and cough symptoms you are greatly reducing your chance of exposure.

Outside of patient encounters, you can protect yourself and your family from potential exposure by adhering to these commonsense approaches:

- Frequently washing your hands with soap and water
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home from work if you become sick with respiratory symptoms such as fever and cough
- While polite convention is to shake hands when meeting others during this time acknowledge others without shaking hands

- At the end of your work day, remove your uniform and change into other clothing before entering your home. Launder your uniform as soon as possible.

Providing care to persons with a novel disease can be very stressful for you and your family, as much is unknown about the disease. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network organization has developed a guidance for families to cope with these situations and we suggest you review the document as you may find this helpful. This document can be found at: <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/parent-caregiver-guide-to-helping-families-cope-with-the-coronavirus-disease-2019> and is also available on the EMS Agency website.

Additional updates will be provided when new information is available or changes are needed to the screening or care of potential COVID-19 patients.

c: Each Supervisorial District
Director, Department of Health Services
Hospital Association of Southern California

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