

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



STEVEN BELLONE
SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

JAMES L. TOMARKEN, MD, MPH, MBA, MSW
Commissioner

TO: All Chief Officers, District Managers, and Administrators of EMS and Fire Agencies in Suffolk County

FROM: Nathaniel Bialek, BS, EMT-P, CIC, CCHP *NBB*
Director, EMS & Public Health
Emergency Preparedness

DATE: February 13, 2020

UPDATE and CLARIFICATION

RE: Dispatch Procedure Modification – Addition of FCT Response Suffix – Agency Notification

With the increased national attention to the Novel Coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan, China, and now fourteen (14) identified cases of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) within the United States, none of which have been found within New York State. The EMS Division, in consultation with the Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Service (FRES) and the EMS System Medical Director, in an effort to protect personnel responding to potentially infectious patients, have added the following notification and dispatch identifier:

- Effective January 27, 2020, Suffolk County FRES Communications and other local Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP), have commenced the utilization of the “FCT” suffix (Fever & Cough and Travel), which has been added to emergency medical dispatch (EMD) determinant codes to give responding personnel as much pre-arrival information as possible about potential patient(s). This code will alert responding agencies that the potential patient has Influenza-Like-Illness (ILI) symptoms, the patient has traveled outside the US within the previous twenty-one (21) days and that appropriate precautions should be taken.
- As of Sunday, February 2, 2020, the U.S. government implemented temporary movement and monitoring recommendations on certain individuals. Any U.S. citizen returning to the U.S. who has been in mainland China within the previous fourteen (14) days has undergone proactive entry health screening at a select number of ports of entry (JFK and Newark are the two (2) closest) and up to fourteen (14) days of monitored self-sequestering to ensure they have not contracted the virus and do not pose a public health risk.

The Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) is currently monitoring seventeen (17) of these such cases which are located in various jurisdictions within Suffolk County. For situational awareness and through an overabundance of caution, each agency is being notified, in real time that a patient within their district is self-sequestering, being actively monitored by the SCDHS and the addresses within their district.

With this being said, please remember that these addresses are **protected health information** and **should not** be disseminated in by a non-encrypted email platform, as this information could be utilized in a fashion that it is not intended for. **If posting within your dispatch center for possible direct dial calls, please place it in a fashion that will not allow unauthorized personal to have access to the address.**

Continued.



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DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
360 Yaphank Ave, Suite 1B, Yaphank, NY 11980 (631) 852-5080 Fax (631) 852-5028

Let me be very clear, these people are asymptomatic. They are not showing any signs of fever or cough. They are being actively monitored by the SCDHS on a daily basis and your agency will be notified if this changes. These patients may call 911 for other ailments unrelated to their self-sequestering, such as back pain, injuries from a fall, etc. Please follow the recommendations within this memo and the one issued on January 27, 2020, relating to the 2019 coronavirus.

EMS providers should be vigilant when encountering any patient with fever, cough and trouble breathing and we encourage providers to observe **Universal Precautions, circulate the air in the patient compartment during transport, wash hands frequently, and decontaminate non-disposable patient care items and interior ambulance surfaces on a regular and frequent basis. This includes the use of gowns and gloves, eye protection and N95/N100 respirators on all providers, and placing a surgical mask or non-rebreather oxygen mask with oxygen, whichever is indicated, on patients.**

If an agency is finding it difficult to replenish its supply of N95 masks, please contact the EMS Division Office at 631-852-5080 and we will help you obtain this needed supply. Please remember we have staff available week days, week nights and weekend days.

The EMS Division has a limited amount of N95 mask for distribution to agencies in need as a stop-gap-measure until agencies are able to obtain a sufficient amount of respiratory protection devices from their own vendors.

Please don't hesitate to call (631) 852-5080 or email nathaniel.bialek@suffolkcountyny.gov if you have any questions or require any additional assistance. We will continue to keep you informed from time to time as the situation evolves.

