

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

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PROTOCOL / GUIDELINE FOR HANDLING SUSPECTED EBOLA INCIDENTS

PURPOSE:

To establish standard procedures for response to suspected Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) patients, to provide guidance for providing patient care, and to ensure responder safety.

SCOPE:

This guidance document applies to all ambulance and first response services in the Suffolk County EMS System.

PROCEDURE:

Emergency Medical Dispatchers (EMD) at Suffolk County Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services (FRES) will follow Computer Aided Dispatch algorithms contained in the Emerging Infectious Disease surveillance tool. Call-takers/Emergency Medical Dispatchers will inquire of callers if the patient is presenting with signs, symptoms and fever, indicative of Ebola, travel history or close contact with individuals that traveled to affected areas (Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone) within the previous twenty-one (21) days. If the caller answers yes to the key questions, the call is coded in the EMS CAD with the suffix "ID" indicating potential for infectious disease, and the call will be dispatched as such. Note that FRES will also be using the "FC" suffix, indicating fever and cough. In these cases, the caller presents the signs/symptoms of seasonal influenza, which are similar but different, and there is no travel or close contact with a traveler to an affected area in West Africa. All other PSAPS have advised us they will institute similar procedures for those agencies not dispatched by FRES. We encourage all call taker/dispatchers in agencies that use a seven-digit hotline number as the key questions for signs/symptoms, travel history/close contact history, to ensure collection of important information, and ensure safety of responding personnel.

RESPONSE / PPE:

Ambulance Services should follow standard operating procedure and communicate with MedCom on the 800 MHz radio talk group (MedCom East or MedCom West) to ensure that appropriate information about the call is transmitted.

Continued.



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Ambulance crews should don appropriate fluid impervious personal protective equipment, using the buddy system, ensuring no skin is exposed prior to making patient contact.

Whenever possible, the inside of the ambulance should be protected with fluid impervious material over cabinetry and other surface areas.

The minimal number of personnel necessary to care for and transfer the patient should be used.

The patient should be “cocooned” in a fluid impervious blanket or fluid impervious Tyvek-type suit and oxygen mask to contain to the extent possible, any fluids or respiratory droplet secretions. The stretcher mattress should be covered with a fluid impervious covering. The ambulance crew should be in full bloodborne pathogen PPE, with no skin showing.

Emergency medical care should be limited to essential basic life support functions, and invasive procedures or aerosolizing procedures should be avoided whenever possible.

If an ambulance crew encounters a situation on an “ID” call in which they do not have the appropriate PPE, the scene should not be deemed safe, and the crew chief should contact FRES, or their PSAP, and request that additional resources, in the form of the nearest suit rescue trailer, be dispatched. Crews without appropriate PPE should not enter the area, and should attempt to communicate with the patient from at least six (6) foot distance to provide information/gather information.

TRANSPORT / TRANSFER OF CARE:

The patient is to be transported to the closest appropriate hospital. Every hospital in Suffolk County is prepared to receive a suspected EVD patient, or patient under investigation. Stony Brook University Medical Center has been designated as the Regional Ebola Hospital. This designation means that Stony Brook will accept patients via transfer from any receiving hospital upon laboratory confirmation that the patient does in fact have EVD. The inter-facility transport will be done by Stony Brook University’s Critical Care Transport Team. There is NO expectation that every “suspect case” or “ID” case be transported directly to Stony Brook University Hospital. Ambulance services may transport suspect cases to Stony Brook University Hospital if that is the closest hospital.

Radio transmissions with patient presentation, including signs/symptoms and travel/close contact history must be transmitted to the receiving hospital as soon as possible to allow the hospital time to prepare for your arrival.

Continued.



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Ambulance crews are to wait in the ambulance until instructed by hospital personnel. Ambulance crews should anticipate that hospital personnel will triage the patient in the ambulance, while wearing full PPE. Follow direction of hospital staff.

Ambulance crews should decontaminate the ambulance following standard bloodborne pathogen processes, as promulgated by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). NOTE: THAT if there was contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials, contaminated PPE should be doffed, using the buddy system, and a clean set of PPE donned, using the buddy system, prior to decontamination activity.

Ambulance crews shall doff their PPE, using the buddy observation system, in the area designated by the hospital, ensuring that no unprotected skin comes in contact with PPE. Ambulance crews shall complete the process by ensuring that hand washing is complete at the hospital.

All medical waste and decontamination waste generated by the ambulance service shall be placed in a red bag(s) and left at the hospital for appropriate disposal.

Ambulance crews shall notify the Suffolk County Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health of the transport of any suspected EVD patient, or patient under investigation. Use 854-0333 during regular business hours, the direct line to Public Health, and 631-852-4820 during nights/weekends/holidays, answered by FRES, who will link you to a Public Health Nurse.

Crews should be prepared to remain at the hospital, following hospital instructions, pending discussions between the hospital staff, crew, and Public Health Nurses, and/or others depending on the situation, for final disposition.

Requests for technical assistance from the EMS Division or FRES can be made by placing a request through FRES Communications Bureau.

Within the Suffolk Police District, the Suffolk County Police Department is maintaining a posture of safety, where sector car operators without PPE will avoid patient contact or entering homes on “ID” calls. To ensure appropriate police assistance is available, Emergency Services (ES) will be dispatched to all “ID” calls and provide police assistance as needed.

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END OF GUIDELINE



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