



March 16, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Providers

FROM: Stephen Wilson, B.S., NRP, Director 
Office of Emergency Medical Services

William Crawford, M.D., FACEP
State Emergency Medical Services Medical Director 

SUBJECT: Emergency Order and Transport of Suspected COVID-19 Patients

The Alabama Department of Public Health Office of EMS is providing guidance to EMS Provider Services for the transport of patients with signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

The State Health Officer has issued an emergency order stating that EMS Provider Services licensed in Alabama to transport patients may, after consultation and approval from online medical direction, alter the destination choice of a suspected COVID-19 patient from the patient's original destination hospital choice to the closest appropriate medical facility. Any regulation to the contrary is currently suspended for a period of 30 days, unless extended. Please be aware that this is only for patients who are showing signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

The signs and symptoms of COVID-19 usually present with fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Emergency Medical Services Personnel (EMSP) must don appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when assessing, treating, and transporting these patients. Please visit the following link to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website for guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-for-ems.html>. Used PPEs must be discarded in accordance with your biohazard waste plan, unless otherwise directed by the CDC.

It has come to our attention that many facilities are asking EMSP to wear PPE upon entering for both emergency and routine calls. We understand that these facilities need to protect their patient population, and we support that action. However, if the facility requires EMSP to wear PPE and there is no presence of a suspected COVID-19 patient, the facility must provide the EMS service with the PPE. This will help EMS providers conserve their supply of PPEs for emergency situations.

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We have also become aware that several EMS services in the state have made the decision that they will not transport an individual who has signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Please know that if your service decides to not transport patients who requests help through the 9-1-1 system, or by any other means of requesting help due to an emergency, you will be in violation of the Code of Alabama and the administrative EMS Rules promulgated there under; and, the Office of EMS will take appropriate action against your provider service license.

Attached you will find a flow chart for the appropriate transport of an individual who exhibits the signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Please circulate this information so that all EMSP working for your service will have access to it.

If you need assistance or medical advice about a patient you are treating, the Alabama Trauma Communications Center (ATCC) is a resource available to you. We have EMS physicians on call and prepared to answer your questions. It is not mandatory that you notify ATCC, but it is merely a resource if you need assistance.

The Office of EMS will continue to update you as information becomes available. Please remain diligent and protect yourself as we continue to treat and protect the citizens of Alabama.

SW/WC
Attachment