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POLICY MEMORANDUM 6701

Implementation Date: March 17, 2020

Review Date: March 17, 2022

REVIEWED/APPROVED BY:

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SUBJECT: TREATMENT AND REFERAL FOR ILL PATIENTS DURING THE COVID-2019 OUTBREAK

AUTHORITY:

California Health and Safety Code Sections 1797.94 and 1797.153
California Code of Regulations Sections 101310

PURPOSE:

To guide the evaluation and transport decisions for patients experiencing mild respiratory illness possibly related to COVID-19.

I. PRINCIPLES AND BACKGROUND

The severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and its associated clinical syndrome known as COVID-19 is circulating worldwide and adversely impacting EMS everywhere, including in Solano County.

Based on the available data, most infected persons experience mild illness and fully recover. Those at high risk for severe illness and/or complications are patients who are elderly or have underlying medical conditions.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that low risk patients potentially infected with COVID-19 experiencing mild disease symptoms self-isolate at home unless symptoms worsen.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Low risk potential COVID-19 patients: Patients greater than 12 months of age and less than 65 years of age with fever and/or respiratory complaints with NONE of the following complaints:
1. Shortness of breath or chest pain or syncope;
 2. Abnormal vital signs for age except fever;
 3. History of significant comorbid disease including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), congestive heart failure (CHF), cardiac disease, renal failure immunodeficiency, critically ill appearing, or emergency medical condition per paramedic judgement.
- B. Emergency Medical Condition: A condition or situation in which an individual has an immediate need for medical attention.
- C. Self-isolation: The practice of a symptomatic person isolating themselves and completely avoiding contact with other people, in an effort to prevent transmitting an infection to other people.

III. PROCEDURE WHEN ENCOUNTERING POTENTIAL LOW RISK COVID-19 PATIENTS

- A. Low-risk patients with mild symptoms or respiratory infection (e.g., fever, cough, upper respiratory illness) who appear non-critical should be advised that their current condition does not require transport to the Emergency Department (ED).
- B. EMS personnel shall advise the patient or the patient's legal representative to:
1. Self-isolate at home, avoid having guests to the home, apply appropriate social distancing, avoid contact with high-risk persons, and self-monitor their condition for worsening symptoms.
 2. Cover the nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing and practice frequent hand hygiene.
 3. Seek follow-up treatment as needed with their physician if their symptoms worsen.
 4. Continue isolation at home until patient is symptom free and cleared by the patient's physician based on current guidelines from the CDC and Solano County Public Health.
- C. The advice given will be documented on the Patient Care Report (PCR). The following statement is recommended for use in documentation and patient advisement:
- “It appears that you do not require immediate care in the emergency department. You should seek care with your regular healthcare provider or a doctor’s office or clinic if symptoms worsen. If you develop shortness of breath or other severe symptoms, recontact 9-1-1.”**

- D. If the patient or the patient's legal representative requests the patient be transported after assurance that transport is not needed, EMS personnel should honor the request and transport per Solano County EMS Policy 6700, Destination Protocols for Ambulances.
1. EMS personnel transporting patients with suspected COVID-19 shall notify the receiving facility in advance prior to arrival and may be directed to a screening area other than the ED.
 2. EMS personnel who are assessing, treating or transporting a patient with suspected COVID-19 shall use appropriate PPE at all times to including gown, gloves, mask, and eye protection.

Patients with suspected COVID-19 should wear a surgical mask at all times during transport.
 3. Upon arrival at the ED and after transfer of care, EMS personnel should follow PPE doffing and hand hygiene procedures.
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