



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
Office of Emergency Medical Services
67 Forest Street, Marlborough MA 01752

CHARLES D. BAKER
Governor

KARYN E. POLITO
Lieutenant Governor

MARYLOU SUDDERS
Secretary

MONICA BHAREL, MD, MPH
Commissioner

Tel: 617-624-6000
www.mass.gov/dph

MEMORANDUM

TO: All MA Licensed Ambulance Services
CC: EMCAB Members
FROM: Dr. Jon Burstein, State EMS Medical Director
DATE: March 29, 2020
RE: Emergency COVID-19 Non-Transport Protocol

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) continues to work with state, federal and local partners on the outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2, and we continue to appreciate the essential role you have in responding to this evolving situation.

The purpose of this Memo is to inform you of the emergency protocol to use, in conjunction with the emergency waiver issued by the Commissioner of Public Health to the EMS System regulations, to allow for non-transport of certain patients with mild COVID-19 symptoms and no other complaints, who do not appear to require hospital-level treatment and resources. The attached protocol provides an algorithm for assessing which patients who, in consultation with online medical control, qualify for continued self-care at home. EMS will not need to obtain a patient refusal of transport for patients falling under this protocol. All EMS crews utilizing the attached protocol shall file a completed PCR detailing their assessment and patient interaction, and record the name of the online medical control physician who participates in the evaluation.

This emergency protocol will likely require additional training and/or working with receiving hospitals on increased capacity to provide online medical control for these patients. Given this deviation from normal operations, it is expected there will be a significant amount of work to prepare systems for this implementation, and this protocol is being issued before an anticipated increase in EMS call volume and hospital surge.

The emergency waiver of the EMS System regulation to allow for non-transport, in conjunction with this protocol, is only to be used for patients with symptoms potentially attributable to COVID-19 who have no other complaints. Neither the waiver nor the emergency protocol is applicable to 911 patients with other complaints.