

## **Public Service Answering Points (PSAPs)/Emergency Communications Centers (ECCs) Call Screening**

This document is intended to provide procedural guidance to Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) agencies on practices that could result in improved call screening and EMS care with the potential to decrease unnecessary COVID-19 transports to hospitals. If adopted these could alleviate a significant load on the currently strained healthcare system, and decrease additional infectious disease exposures among the community and healthcare providers. NOTE: protocols would have to be approved by state or local medical oversight

This guidance applies to all PSAP and EMS delivery models including but not limited to; free standing, third-service; fire-based, hospital-based, independent volunteer, private and related emergency medical service providers.

- For all requests for emergency care (including interfacility transports) the dispatcher/call taker should ask the following questions:
  - Has the Patient had a positive COVID-19 test?
  - Is the Patient A COVID-19 Person Under Investigation (PUI)? – (PUI is defined as: A patient who has been tested for COVID-19 but has not received their result).
  - Does the patient have Flu-like symptoms (fever, chills, tiredness, cough, muscle aches, headaches, sore throat or runny nose)?
  - The dispatcher/call taker should document any positive findings in their report.
  - **NOTE:** Recent travel is no longer a recommended question
- If the caller answers YES to ANY of the above, this information should be relayed to response agencies and the **Modified COVID-19 Response** Procedure should be followed
- If the caller answers NO to ALL of the above – response agencies should follow their normal response procedure

### **Modified COVID-19 Response (Caller answered YES to ANY PSAP/Dispatch screening questions)**

- First Responders/Emergency Medical Responders (non-transport)
  - It is recommended First Responders/Emergency Medical Responders **NOT** respond to limit potential exposures.
  - If First responders/Emergency Medical Responders respond, it is recommended that their response is limited to life safety only.
- Emergency Medical Services (transport units)
  - It is recommended that, when possible, only one EMS clinician make contact with the patient using PPE (while N95, eye protection, gown, gloves, and face shield continue to be the recommended standard, during times of limited supplies or limited availability of resupply, eye protection, gloves and surgical mask are acceptable alternatives).
  - If treatment and transport are required, consider having a single EMS clinician, in PPE, approach and treat the patient while isolating other EMS clinicians, family members and bystanders away from the patient.

- If transporting, it is advised that family members should not accompany the patient. Consideration may be given if the patient is a minor or vulnerable adult. However, the CDC recommends against family members riding in the ambulance. For more information, see the [Interim Guidance for Emergency Medical Services \(EMS\) Systems and 911 Public Safety Answering Points \(PSAPs\) for COVID-19](#).
- Consider treat-in-place/treat-no-transport guidelines (as approved by state or local medical oversight) for medically stable patients with the CDC identified COVID-19 signs and symptoms:
  - Fever as defined as 100.4 or greater without fever medications
  - Dry cough
  - Aches
  - Fatigue
- Examples of PSAP/ECC Resources:
  - CDC Recommendations for 911 PSAP can be found in the [Interim Guidance for Emergency Medical Services \(EMS\) Systems and 911 Public Safety Answering Points \(PSAPs\) for COVID-19](#)
  - National Emergency Number Association suggested triage questions can be found [on the NENA webpage](#).<sup>1</sup>
  - Association of Public Safety Communications Officials recommendations for caller interrogation can be found [on the APCO webpage](#).<sup>2</sup>
  - Protocol 36 (Emergency Medical Dispatching protocol) – Used on all calls where initial complaint is difficulty breathing, chest pain, headache, fever, and one additional flu symptom was identified during the call (for Emergency Dispatch clients) can be found [on the Academies of Emergency Dispatch webpage](#).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This document contains links to non-federal websites. Linking to a non-federal website does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. government, or any of its employees, of the information and/or products presented on that site.

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