

August 8, 2014

To: All NYS EMS Agencies and Personnel
From: Bureau of Emergency Medical Services
Re: Recent Ebola Concerns

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) Bureau of Emergency Medical Services (BEMS) has been closely monitoring the most recent outbreak of Ebola in Africa and the potential for transmission of the virus to citizens in the State of New York.

NYSDOH BEMS has been working closely with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYCDOHMH), the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Fire Department of New York City (FDNY) as well as other state and national entities.

As of the date of this letter, there have been no confirmed cases of Ebola in the State of New York. However, EMS providers and agencies must be vigilant in their daily operations to assure that they are prepared for potential cases of Ebola and any other communicable diseases they may encounter. With this in mind, BEMS is issuing this guidance document and attached documents to provide EMS with the most up-to-date information we have.

The NYC Regional EMS Council (NYC REMSCO) has already had an EMS protocol approved by NYSDOH BEMS for Acute Febrile Respiratory Illness, Including Influenza-Like-Symptoms. This protocol contains concise information that should be utilized everyday by EMS for any potential communicable disease, including Ebola. The NYC REMSCO has updated their information to now include Ebola. BEMS strongly encourages EMS providers and agencies to review the attached information so they have a better understanding of patient symptoms as well as what is needed and not needed to appropriately treat the patient and protect themselves.

Important items to remember:

- Vigilant usage of standard PPE is crucial in your daily operations,
- Assuring EMS personnel have been properly fit tested and/or provided the proper N95 mask and other PPE such as goggles, shoe covers, suits, etc.,
- Placing a surgical type mask on the patient if the patient's condition allows for its usage,
- Questioning patients on any recent travel outside of the state or contact with others who have traveled to parts of the world where an outbreak is currently happening,
- Utilization of respiratory devices with one-way-valves for the delivery of nebulized medications, etc.,

- Timely notification to the hospital that you are transporting a patient with signs and symptoms of potential communicable disease. This will provide the hospital the ability to prepare resources and determine where and how the patient will enter their facility,
- Assuring proper disposal or cleaning of PPE, patient linens and any other equipment utilized during the call.
- Hospitals and the EMS agencies who are contracted to provide transport of patients to other healthcare facilities should be communicating with each other to develop policies and procedures concerning the transfer of these patients with unconfirmed or confirmed communicable diseases.

The CDC is continuously providing updates on the current situation world-wide, as well as providing healthcare workers with pertinent information to protect themselves and to better treat their patients. BEMS encourages all EMS personnel to monitor the CDC web site for the most up-to-date information at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/infection-prevention-and-control-recommendations.html>.

BEMS is also monitoring the recent developments regarding the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). The most up-to-date information on MERS can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/MERS/US.html>.

The BEMS will continue to provide updated information on our web site at <http://www.health.ny.gov/professionals/ems/> and through email correspondences as they are warranted.