

October 1, 2020

From: Dylan Kellogg, MD, STREMAC Chair

To: All Southern Tier EMS Agencies

Re: PPE Reminder

COVID-19 cases have continued to climb in our region since early September. Because it is so prevalent in our community right now, it is imperative for EMS personnel to follow PPE guidelines to ensure staff and patient safety:

1. Make sure that you are wearing appropriate PPE on all calls
2. Perform your initial assessment of patients from 6 feet away
3. Place a mask on the patient
4. If patient has concerning symptoms, notify the receiving facility in advance of arrival
5. Let's not under triage PUIs / keep a high index of suspicion
6. Wear N95/Face shield/Gown/Gloves for all aerosolizing procedures (this to include traumas too)

A good list of aerosolizing procedures for the crews to review/avoid if at all possible:

- Endotracheal intubation and extubation
- Tracheostomy suctioning and changing a trach
- Bag mask ventilation (manual ventilation)
- Non-invasive positive pressure ventilation (BiPAP, CPAP)
- CPR unless the patient is invasively ventilated and connected to a ventilator
- Nasal and oral suctioning
- High Flow Nasal Cannula
- Nebulized medications (use a metered dose inhaler if possible)

We also need to be careful about protecting ourselves from potential exposures between EMS personnel. Remember that some with this disease are minimally symptomatic or asymptomatic. Pay attention to social distancing at station houses, training events, meetings, and any other times that you may be around other personnel. At times you cannot socially distance, make sure that you are wearing appropriate PPE.

And for the sake of all of our first responders, please remind each other to take appropriate precautions. We cannot afford to lose any of you at this critical time!

As always, thank you for your incredible work, and please feel free to contact me with any questions.

P.S. Don't forget to get your flu shot this year – COVID isn't the only infectious disease to be wary of this winter.