

Maryland Institute *for* Emergency Medical Services Systems
Administrative Guidance

Viral Syndrome Pandemic Triage Protocol Implementation

Purpose

To provide guidance for EMS Operational Programs (EMSOPs) that plan to implement the Viral Syndrome Pandemic Triage Protocol.

Background

A global pandemic due to a novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has precipitated a surge in calls for emergency medical services (EMS) related to viral syndromes. On March 5, 2020, Governor Hogan declared a state of emergency in response to the first documented cases in Maryland. Furthermore, COVID-19 will continue to cause continued high volumes of calls for service from EMS and concurrent absenteeism in the EMS workforce for weeks to months.

With anticipated unprecedented patient volumes for EMS and Maryland hospitals, it is necessary to implement a protocol that assists EMS clinicians in identifying patients that may be appropriate to care for themselves safely at home, without transport to an emergency department. Therefore, the Executive Director of MIEMSS and the Chairman of the Maryland EMS Board issued this emergency protocol under their authority in Education Article Section 13-516(d)(1) and COMAR 30.03.05.02(I).

Process

- 1) The EMSOP shall insert any local guidance or specific resource information (e.g., local health department phone number, local urgent care information, etc.) within the Viral Infection Home Care Instructions
 - a. Local information shall be inserted on page two of the Word document, where indicated.
 - b. The instructions shall be printed as a two-sided document

- 2) The EMSOP shall provide EMS Clinicians with copies of the following:
 - a. Viral Syndrome Pandemic Triage Protocol
 - b. Viral Infection Home Care Instructions (a double-sided copy; provided to patients who are not transported by EMS)

- 3) The Viral Syndrome Pandemic Triage protocol may be used by ALS or BLS clinicians for appropriate patients. It should be in-hand and completed for each relevant patient. If the patient does not meet viral syndrome criteria, the EMS clinician shall refer to the appropriate treatment protocol in the *Maryland Medical Protocols for EMS*.
- 4) The EMS clinician shall document every use of the protocol under the COVID-19 tab in eMEDS.
- 5) The EMSOP should develop a process to make a follow-up phone call or visit within 24 hours for every patient who is not transported to the ED using this protocol. Follow-up calls or visits should be documented under "Call Type: Mobile Integrated Health", COVID-19 follow-up = Yes.
- 6) The EMSOP shall provide education to all EMS clinicians on the appropriate application of this protocol.

Approved:

 _____ March 17, 2020

Theodore R. Delbridge, MD, MPH
Executive Director