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To: Highest Jurisdictional Officials
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From: Theodore Delbridge, MD, MPH
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Timothy Chizmar, MD, FACEP
State EMS Medical Director

Date: May 18, 2021

RE: **UPDATE: PPE for EMS Clinicians**

We have made incredible progress in the fight against COVID-19 over the past several months. Cases and hospitalizations have declined from their peaks. Millions of Marylanders have been vaccinated. However, with the lifting of the public mask mandate on May 15, 2021, questions have surfaced regarding the appropriate use of masks and PPE by EMS clinicians.

Based on guidance from CDC and MDH, **masks should still be worn in all health care settings, which includes EMS patient encounters.** EMS clinicians should continue to wear a minimum of a surgical mask for all calls, and place surgical masks (not N-95s) on all patients. If the patient shows signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19 illness, EMS should wear an N-95 mask, gown, gloves, and eye protection.

While vaccines are highly effective at preventing symptomatic COVID-19 infection and decreasing the risk of hospitalization, it is not clear that they prevent transmission of the disease altogether. As we care for vulnerable or unvaccinated patients, we should continue to use masks at this time. Additionally, our partners in hospitals and health care facilities continue to observe universal mask use.

When in the station or other communal settings, fully vaccinated health care professionals (≥ 2 weeks since a single dose vaccine was given or ≥ 2 weeks since 2nd dose of 2-dose vaccine), may dine, socialize or meet without masks or social distancing. However, if unvaccinated personnel are present, everyone should wear a mask and unvaccinated people should physically distance from others.

Thank you for your continued attention to helping our clinicians protect themselves and our patients.