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Community Release: MedStar and Area First Responders Modify On-Scene Procedures

Move aims to enhance responder safety with growing shortage of personal protective equipment

MedStar and area first responders are modifying on scene personnel utilization for patients identified through the 9-1-1 call taking process as potentially high risk for a possible contagious illness.

For non-life threatening responses, first responders and MedStar personnel will meet together at the scene of the call and confer on the number of personnel necessary to make initial contact with the patient, typically one or two responders. These responders will don the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to facilitate patient assessment and treatment.

These modifications are being implemented to protect first response personnel by limiting the number of responders in close contact with the patient, especially in light of a growing countrywide shortage of vital PPE.

First responders are a crucial part of the health system's safety net, and, like other healthcare providers, keeping them safe is paramount to assuring appropriate resources for the community. PPE is an essential component of assuring responder safety.

EMS agencies and healthcare providers across the country, and here in North Texas, are reporting significant shortages of PPE for their personnel.

Across the country, over 1,000 EMS and fire personnel have been quarantined as the result of a possible exposure to COVID-19¹.

Procedure modifications, such as these being implemented in the MedStar system, will help assure first responder safety and preserve available PPE.

¹ <https://iafc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/3813d2f872224d8a93c52f05cd392b8c>