



NLCERA Prehospital Emergency Responders,

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus said “The only thing that is constant is change.” It was true in 500 BC, and it is certainly true now. Hardly a day has gone by that we haven’t heard about new and sometimes unusual symptoms which may be associated with COVID-19 and guidance from national and international sources is updated multiple times a week. I am working with your leadership to monitor all of this information and our response will continue to evolve as information about this disease evolves. What we were doing last week was the right thing based on the information available to us. As new information becomes available and the virus spreads in our community, we will respond to that change.

Identification of signs and symptoms in illnesses we’ve encountered for the entirety of our careers can be challenging and the full presentation of this illness has yet to be defined while our experience with this virus can be measured in weeks. There is increasing evidence that certain individuals may have very mild symptoms and still be contagious. There is also good evidence that patients that may become symptomatic are contagious for a period of time before symptoms start. With that in mind, I am requiring a face mask (not an N-95) be placed on all patients, regardless of their chief complaint, unless doing so would prevent necessary medical interventions from occurring. This will reduce exposure to respiratory droplets of all patients. This is consistent with current CDC guidelines that all individuals should be masked while encountering other people.

How do we protect ourselves from the pre-symptomatic or asymptomatic patient? Place a mask on the patient.

What about the patient who has signs and symptoms of COVID-19? Place a mask on the patient.

What about the confirmed COVID-19 patient? Place a mask on the patient.

Standard PPE has consisted of gloves and eye protection for a long time. Wearing a surgical mask or an N-95 for all patient contacts has been required for the past several weeks. Placing a surgical mask on all patients is now a part of the new normal.

If you have specific concerns, direct them to your leadership. If you need to contact me, please do so directly (not through group reply.)

Stay safe and healthy,

Dr Darren Tremblay  
EMS Medical Director  
Emergency Physicians of the Rockies  
UCHealth North Region  
NLCERA