

December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020

**To All Our Valued Team Members,**

As the pandemic continues to grow around the world and an increase amount of COVID positive patients in our region, our line of work has become increasingly essential as each day passes.

As of this moment, we have been adhering to every new provincial legislation and policies in order to safely transport patients throughout our Hospitals and Care Homes. It seems as though some of you are still misinformed or not completely sure and/or safe when transporting a COVID positive patient. Let me reassure you all that the current PPE that is supplied to us is more than safe for our crews, hospital and care home staff. However, I have taken the liberty and created some "Care Packages" for you all to increase your safety.

In the packages contain, a company logo face mask (to be only used outside of the work place should you need a fabric mask for general outings), a reusable splash & fluid protection Face Shield (adjustable with anti-fog technology) as well as your own personal hand sanitizer. They will be available in the Wheel Chair van with a limit of \*ONE package per staff member at your earliest convenience (Kelowna Location). As for the Kamloops crews, the package has been mailed as of yesterday.

I have also heard that some staff members may/will refuse to transport a COVID positive patient unless he/she is fitted for an N95 mask. I can re-assure you all, as well as infection control, this procedure is false and inaccurate. We are well aware that most of you see the Paramedics and Fire Fighters wearing them on almost every transport however, they are responding to local emergency calls when the COVID positive questions are not available to them at first glance when treating the patient.

When the nurses and doctors wear the N95 masks within the Hospital and treating the patient, the patient is most definitely under an "Aerosolized Procedure Protocol". This protocol indicates that the patient has tested positive and potential fluid can be exposed. This usually means the patient is on a respirator, intubated and/or needing Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). The N95 provides the added protection to the nurse or doctor when the patient cannot be properly contained. This procedure is completely out of our scope of practice and would never be given to IFT should these patients need transport.

If and when a COVID positive transport is given to IFT, there is a mountain of questions, safety concerns, Doctors as well as the Medical Health Officers involved in order to safely execute such transport. Given the new packages available to you as of this morning, Hospital PPE and proper Donning and Doffing techniques, transporting a COVID positive patient should no longer be of concern should each step be done properly.

We also consulted our business counterparts on the Mainland and the Island in regards to their current procedures and have confirmed their PPE are the same. They also transport roughly 20-30 positive patients per day safely and have also reported zero COVID positive cases amongst their staff.

Your next question will be, if and when you transport a COVID positive patient, do you have to self-quarantine for two weeks. The answer to that questions is No. Health Care workers are exempt from this

rule for obvious reasons. One of many being quite simple, there would be no nurses, doctors, paramedics or fire fighters left to work every day if they all had to quarantine with every positive patient.

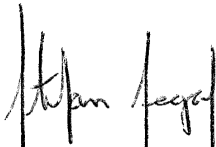
You might also ask yourself, if I transport a COVID positive patient, can I still see my parents, grand-parents, family etc.? Although as I stated above, should the proper procedures be executed correctly, you are safe to do so. However, it is the Provinces advice not to schedule gatherings with anyone who do not currently live in your residence at this time.

To summarize, as long as the patient is wearing proper PPE, the crews are wearing proper PPE, the vehicle and equipment are cleaned and sanitized properly, we are all completely safe. We have worked extremely hard to procure hand sanitizers, gloves, Face Shields and a mountain of disinfecting wipes to decontaminate any surface.

Those of you whom need a little refresher on Donning and Doffing, a short video clip is on our staff website for easy access.

If you have any questions or concerns or wish to continue to decline these transports, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards,



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