

March 20, 2020

Appropriate Use of 9-1-1 System

As COVID-19 cases continue to rise in San Bernardino County, local hospitals and public health officials are anticipating an increase in emergency room visits from the public; as such, this may also cause a strain on the 9-1-1 system.

In anticipation of this potential surge, local public safety officials are urging the public to utilize the 9-1-1 system for actual emergencies only to ensure the first-responders are available for life-threatening emergencies.

To alleviate excess 9-1-1 calls, if a person is exhibiting flu-like symptoms or has another non-emergency medical situation, public health and public safety officials recommend that the public first contact their primary physician or their health care provider's nurse health line for assistance.

Most health care providers have 24-hour nurse advice or Call for Care numbers available to serve their members for several non-emergency medical situations such as colds, coughs, sore throats, flu-like symptoms, and questions about medicines. Inland Empire Health Care (IEHP Nurse Advice Line), Kaiser Permanente (Call for Care), Molina Healthcare, and Blue Cross or Blue Shield, are examples of health care plans in the region that have 24/7 nurse advice or Call for Care lines available to their members. The information for these services is listed on the back of the membership cards. The information can also be found on the providers' websites and mobile apps.

You may be asked additional questions by the 9-1-1 telecommunicator to help screen for potential COVID-19 indicators. You may also be asked to step outside to meet first responders if you are physically able to do so. These steps are necessary to minimize exposure to first responders and others in the event the symptoms are in fact COVID-19 related.

Your fire and law enforcement agencies remain committed to providing the utmost in customer service and public safety amid these unprecedented circumstances. Help us be there when you need us most. As always, if you or a loved-one are experiencing any life-threatening emergency, don't hesitate to call 9-1-1 to request an emergency response.

For the latest information and preparedness tips, please visit San Bernardino County Public Health website at <http://wp.sbcounty.gov/dph/coronavirus/>.

San Bernardino County Resources:

San Bernardino County Public Information Line: 909-387-3911, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Please note this line is for general information only.

San Bernardino County **2-1-1** is your one-stop connection to thousands of community services; staff to assist callers 24 hours a day. If you are outside the area or dialing 2-1-1 doesn't work at your place of business, you can call 888-435-7565.

Contact: Tracey Martinez, Public Information Officer
909-936-5511 mobile