



## PRESS RELEASE

*Tom Marshal  
Incident Commander*

**\*\*For Immediate Release\*\***

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**CONTACT:** Steve Tracy, I.M.T. Public Information Officer  
(909) 665-0763,

### **NEW EMS PROTOCOL TO HELP DURING PANDAMIC**

Due to the COVID19 pandemic and start of the annual Flu season, San Bernardino County is seeing a concerning increase in 911 calls and hospital visits from the public. As such, this is causing a strain on local area hospitals within San Bernardino County. To help reduce the strain on the Counties EMS system and to provide timely medical care in our hospitals emergency rooms, the Inland Counties Emergency Medical Agency (ICEMA) under the direction of the Counties Medical Director will implement a county wide policy of Assess and Refer for all the Counties EMS first Responders.

The purpose of this policy is to establish standards for the identification of patients whose condition does not require transport by 9-1-1 emergency ambulance to an emergency department. All 9-1-1 calls for EMS will receive an appropriate response, timely assessment, and appropriate patient care. If it is determined that the patient is stable but is a suspected novel corona virus (COVID-19) person or a person with FLU like systems EMS field personnel will assess the patient and provide an appropriate referral recommendation.

If the patient's condition is stable, and the patient is not over 65 years of age and does not have underlying medical history, but presents with concern for suspicion of COVID-19 the patient will be appropriately assessed for referral to stay home, self-isolate, and seek follow-up treatment with their physician, or they will be provided with an alternate destination. Destination decisions will be based on patient's condition or patient, guardian, family or law enforcement requests.

The San Bernardino Counties All Risk Incident Management Team (IMT) in unified command with ICEMA and cooperating EMS providers believes this temporary enactment of the Assess and Refer policy will help relieve some of the stress on the Counties EMS system and local area hospitals. The IMT and ICEMA will continue to monitor and evaluate the situation and make appropriate decisions to ensure the Counties EMS system continues to provide the best emergency response and care without interruption.

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