

MEMO

To: ECIEMS Providers
From: Kurt Bloomstrand, MD, FACEP, FAAEM
Date: November 13, 2020
Re: COVID-19 Pandemic

To All ECIEMS Providers,

Our region is starting to see a steady upward trend of COVID-19 cases (see fig. 1) as well as seeing widespread community transmission of COVID-19 cases.

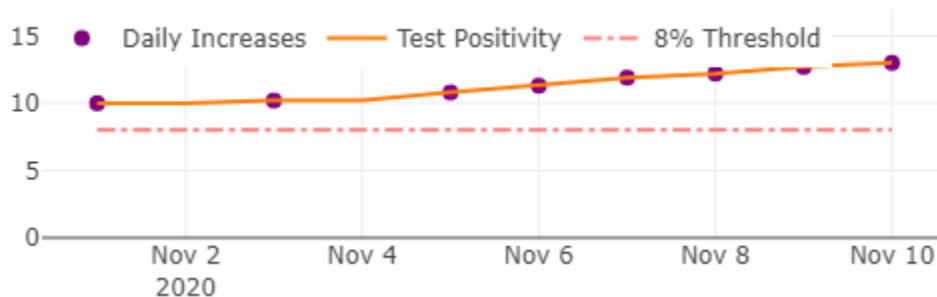


Fig. 1 Test Positivity 7 Day Rolling Average (Excluding UIUC Saliva Tests). Accessed from <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=6>

With the steady rise in cases, not only in our community but also within our departments, it is imperative that we as healthcare providers and first-responders are taking all necessary precautions to not only protect ourselves but also the communities that we serve. While responding to emergency calls in our community we need to be utilizing a high index of suspicion for possible COVID-19 exposure. We have been seeing many patients with COVID-19 that are either asymptomatic or have atypical symptoms that are not triggering the dispatch tool to prompt full personal protective equipment (PPE) utilization. We have also been seeing less than desirable adherence to masking recommendations while off-duty or in our stations, thus jeopardizing our patients and crews. I implore each and every one of us to be good stewards of infection prevention when it comes to COVID-19 in order to protect ourselves, our families and the patients that we serve.

Recommendations:

- Utilize a high index of suspicion on all emergency and non-emergency calls for possible COVID-19 exposure.
 - Follow appropriate transmission based precautions for all calls (i.e. mask/respirator, gloves, gown, eye protection).
 - With the widespread community transmission, consider utilizing N-95 masks or higher-level respirator on all call types as long as stock allows.



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- Limit non-essential gatherings, trainings and meetings within your department.
 - Utilize tele-conference and/or phone calls in place of in-person events.
- While in your station, continue to utilize CDC recommended universal source control measures to include wearing a mask, maintaining appropriate social distance and frequent hand washing.
- Continue screening all personnel and visitors for signs and symptoms consistent with COVID-19. Screen EMS/Fire personnel at the start of each shift and visitors prior to entry into your station. Please refer to our website for more information and access to templates.
- For those providers that are exhibiting signs and/or symptoms concerning for COVID-19 or have been exposed to COVID-19 please follow our policy entitled: “*COVID-19 Exposure and/or Illness*”. This policy as well as other resources can be found on our website <https://www.osfhealthcare.org/ems/eciems/>.

We will continue to overcome these challenging times together and ensure that everyone goes home safe!

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me or reach out to our EMS office at (217)359-6619.

Sincerely,

Kurt Bloomstrand, MD, FACEP, FAAEM

EMS Medical Director
East Central Illinois EMS