

## Patient Contact and PPE's

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### RESPIRATORY ILLNESS IN A PANDEMIC: PATIENT CONTACT AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

During an actual or potential outbreak of a novel or pandemic influenza within the United States of America, the State of New Mexico, or the four corners region, this protocol may be activated by the service director and medical director to ensure the health of the EMS and public safety personnel.

Note: As a new infectious disease unfolds, there will likely be changes to assessment protocols, PPE recommendations, and treatment guidelines. The protocol is intended to be an initial guide.

An influenza-like illness (ILI) has a non-specific symptomatology. It may include, fever, cough, rhinorrhea, dyspnea, myalgias, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and/or other vague symptoms.

Follow the protocols for GENERAL MEDICAL PATIENTS (2-13) and REACTIVE AIRWAYS DISEASE (2-22, 2-23) as applicable.

#### To minimize the exposure of highly-trained medical personnel:

- Patient care responsibility should be delegated to one paramedic and another medical professional of lesser training.
- Only the aforementioned personnel shall initiate patient contact and perform patient care.
- Other personnel on scene should maintain a minimum distance of 6 feet from the patient, and preferably remain in their vehicle for instructions.
- Should additional resources be required, they can be called for the responding personnel.

#### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

For all ILI encounters:

- MASK: Simple surgical mask upon arrival. If administering a nebulizer treatment or managing an airway, wear an appropriately fit-tested N-95. Be sure to don and doff appropriately. Do not re-use masks.
- GLOVES: Non-sterile gloves should be worn prior to ANY contact with a patient.
- EYE PROTECTION: Recommended for all encounters. Mandatory for all nebulizer treatments or airway management.
- If the patient can tolerate a surgical facemask, apply one.

PPE is to be worn until post-transport cleaning of all pertinent surfaces (including the vehicle) is complete. Be sure to wash hands frequently.