



# UTSW/Parkland BioTel EMS ALERT

January 22, 2020

## EMS ALERT 20-001

### Guidance on Outbreak of 2019 Novel Coronavirus (“2019-nCoV”)

**Purpose:** To provide education and guidance on recognition, management, and infection prevention and control measures for the 2019 novel coronavirus known as 2019-nCoV.

**Background:** An outbreak of pneumonia began in Wuhan City, China during December 2019. As of January 21, 2020, there have been more than 400 confirmed infections and at least 9 deaths. Most of the initial patients in the outbreak were linked to a seafood/animal market in Wuhan. Cases also have now been identified, however, in travelers to other cities in China, at least 5 other Asian countries AND the United States.

This virus was thought to be spread from animal to person. There are, however, growing indications that limited person-to-person spread is occurring, including potential for transmission to healthcare workers. When person-to-person spread has occurred with other coronaviruses (such as SARS and MERS), it is thought to occur by respiratory droplets with close contacts. Because transmission dynamics are still being determined, the CDC currently recommends a cautious approach to patients under investigation (PUI) for 2019-nCoV.

#### Action Items for EMS Providers:

1. If your patient exhibits symptoms of an acute febrile lower respiratory infection (i.e. fever, cough, shortness of breath), place a surgical mask on the patient AND initiate standard, contact and airborne precautions (gloves, gown, N95 respirator) and use eye protection (goggles or face shield).
2. Obtain a detailed travel history, including travel to specific cities in affected countries in Asia, especially China, Taiwan, Thailand, South Korea, Macao and Japan. (NOTE: The list of affected countries may increase at any time.)
3. Notify BioTel who will then notify the receiving hospital as well as the Dallas County Health Department if your patient meets the following PUI criteria for 2019-nCoV:
  - a. Fever\*\* AND symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough and shortness of breath):
    - i. AND in the last 14 days before symptom onset,
      1. History of travel from Wuhan City, China OR close contact with another person under investigation for 2019-nCoV.
  - b. Fever\*\* OR symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough, shortness of breath):
    - i. AND, in the last 14 days before symptom onset,
      1. Close contact\*\*\* with an ill, laboratory-confirmed 2019-nCoV patient.

\*\*Recognize that fever may not be present in some patients, such as those who are very young or elderly, immunosuppressed, or taking certain fever-lowering medications. Good clinical judgment should be used to guide testing of these patients.

\*\*\*Close contact is defined as being within ~6 feet, or within the same room or care area, of a patient with 2019-nCoV for a prolonged period of time while not wearing PPE, including living with, visiting, or sharing a healthcare waiting area, OR having direct contact with infectious secretions of a 2019-nCoV case (e.g. being coughed on).

More information is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> or at the QR code to the right.



***UTSW/Parkland BioTel EMS Providers may contact BioTel or the EMS Medical Direction Team at any time with questions or concerns about this EMS Alert***