COVID-19 Specimen Collection Program Approval

Effective: April 21, 2020
Replaces: NEW
Review: TBD

1. Approval

1.1. Under the California Governor's Declaration of Emergency related to COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2), EMTs and paramedics are authorized under a local EMS agency optional scope of practice to perform nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swab sampling. Venous blood sampling is within the paramedic basic scope of practice. This sampling protocol shall expire at the termination of the Governor's Declaration of Emergency.

1.2. As part of an organized and approved sampling site and in coordination with a laboratory licensed and authorized to perform COVID-19 testing, and having had education authorized by the Santa Clara County EMS Agency, an accredited EMT or paramedic may conduct nasopharyngeal, oropharyngeal, or mid-turbinate (self-administered only) nasal sampling. Venous blood sampling for serological testing may only be carried out by paramedics.

1.3. An EMS Provider Agency shall submit a detailed plan for approval, by the EMS Agency, to become an authorized sampling site utilizing this protocol. This plan shall minimally include:

1.3.1. contracted laboratory name and contact information
1.3.2. specimen collection devices that will be deployed
1.3.3. process for obtaining specimen supplies
1.3.4. process for handling and returning collected specimens
1.3.5. process for obtaining additional PPE needed
1.3.6. all training materials to be used
1.3.7. active roster of all trained personnel

2. Nasopharyngeal, Oropharyngeal, and Mid-turbinate Sampling (EMTs or Paramedics)

2.1. Nasopharyngeal, oropharyngeal, and mid-turbinate (self-administered only) testing requires a swab placed in a viral transport medium.

2.2. The procedure for sample collection should be that recommended by the manufacturer of the sampling kit.

3. Venous Blood Sampling for Serological Testing (Paramedics Only)

3.1. Venous blood sampling for serological testing shall be conducted using the blood collection system recommended by the manufacturer of the test being used.

4. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

4.1. The minimum PPE for the sampling of individuals shall be eye protection, fit-tested N-95 respirator, gloves, and gown.

4.2. The PPE used by EMS personnel during sampling operations for SARS-CoV-2 testing shall not compromise the availability of PPE for 911 EMS response and patient care.

5. Documentation

5.1. Individual demographics collected during sampling will be determined by the sampling site operator, prescribing physician and laboratory performing the tests.

5.2. Consent and other documentation from individuals undergoing sampling will be determined by the sampling site operator, prescribing physician and laboratory performing the tests.

5.3. Any injury caused or suspected to be caused during sample collection shall require the assignment of an EMS event, an ePCR, all necessary field treatment and referral or transport to a healthcare facility as needed.

5.4. All documentation collected during specimen collection is considered personal health information (PHI) and all applicable policies, regulations, and legislation, including but not limited to HIPPA, shall always be abided by.

6. Results

6.1. All results from the specimens collected shall be divulged by the laboratory directly to the patient the specimen was obtained from. The laboratory shall notify all other infectious disease processes as normal in accordance to all applicable governance.