



# NEWS RELEASE

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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## **Dispatchers to Ask Additional Questions during 911 Calls**

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, dispatchers have started asking additional questions when 911 callers call in for medical emergencies. When 911 is called, trained dispatchers may ask additional questions under their Emerging Infectious Disease (EID) protocol to gather additional information.

The protocol is asked to callers when patients are showing flu like systems or shortness of breath. The callers are asked these questions while crews are already dispatched, not to delay response times or care. Our dispatchers are the first line of defense for responding crews and gather vital information on the patient's condition, history and possibility of having COVID-19. This information is relayed to responding units. Symptoms dispatchers are looking for are difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, nasal congestion, persistent cough, sore throat or a runny nose. Other questions include recent travel history, confirmed travel to highly infected areas, or contact with someone who has suspected flu-like symptoms. In addition to the questioning, when possible patients may be asked to go outside for assessment and care.

These questions and our first responding units wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) is important to reduce the probability of an exposure.

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