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October 3, 2016

To: All professionals in the EMS System for Metropolitan Oklahoma City and
Tulsa

From: Jeffrey M. Goodloe, MD, NRP, FACEP
Medical Director, Medical Control Board

Re: Influenza 2016-2017

As most of you know well by now, I detest memos for their highly impersonal and usually bureaucratic tone. That being said, your health, the health of your families, and the health of our patients is always in prevailing importance to me. In service to those priorities, please read on.

As much concern as EMS professionals and citizens alike had 2 years ago regarding the Ebola Virus Disease, please remember that influenza, a disease that has afflicted humans for centuries now, has already claimed far more lives than Ebola most likely ever will. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), influenza was linked to over 8,646 hospitalizations in patients of all ages and to 85 pediatric deaths in the US alone in the 2015-16 flu season. Widespread vaccination can help us all experience a less severe season this year.

This memo then serves three purposes:

1. My reminder to you to take all the good information about personal protective equipment (PPE) that we have educated upon in our EMS system and to apply good infection control practices when working with patients that have suspected influenza.
2. My request of you to get an influenza vaccination within the next 4-6 weeks. Yes, I will receive mine in the next 30 days and have voluntarily received an annual influenza vaccination for the last 21 years. Hillcrest Medical Center in Tulsa joined a growing number of medical facilities in the last three years in requiring its health care professionals to receive a seasonal influenza vaccination to continue working (unless medically contraindicated due to personal allergies, etc). Remember that when you voluntarily receive vaccination, you protect you, you protect your families, you protect your colleagues, and you protect your patients and your communities. While I have no plans to require you to get immunized against influenza to remain credentialed as an EMS professional in our EMS system, I do pass along my strong encouragement for influenza vaccination.
3. My authorization for Protocol 17J: Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Administration to become effective immediately for the 2016-17 flu season.

Thank you as always for your efforts in service to others and for your ongoing dedication to excellence in the practice of EMS medicine.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey M. Goodloe, MD, NRP, FACEP
Medical Director