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October 7, 2014

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 2014-2015

As most of you know, 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. So, in service to those, please read on.

I do hope that each of you received through your organizational chain of communication my advisement regarding the Ebola Virus Disease, dated October 2. If you have not seen such, please ask your supervisor(s) to share with you. That memo also contains important details I deem vital to your health.

As much concern as EMS professionals and citizens alike have regarding the Ebola Virus Disease, please remember than 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 9,500 hospitalizations in patients of all ages and to 95 pediatric deaths in the US alone in the 2013-14 flu season. Please recall, the 2013-14 flu season was generally regarded as a mild one.

This memo then serves three purposes:

1. My reminder to you to take all the good information about personal protective equipment (PPE) that is being shared regarding Ebola and to apply similar good infection control practices when working with patients that have suspected influenza.

2. My plea to you to get an influenza vaccination as soon as possible. Yes, I've received mine last week. In fact, Hillcrest Medical Center in Tulsa joined a growing number of medical facilities last year 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 can't, and wouldn't, 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. 'Nuf said.

3. My authorization for Protocol 17J: Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Administration to become immediately effective for the 2014-15 flu season.

Thank you as always for your attention to my communications and for your ongoing dedication to excellence in out-of-hospital emergency medical care.