

Three Rivers Ambulance Authority  
Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update - March 13, 2020

Three Rivers Ambulance Authority (TRAA) is reviewing our continuity of operations as we continue to deal with how to best serve you during this COVID-19 pandemic. We want to assure you that we are as prepared as possible to continue to provide our community the quality care you have become accustomed to throughout this period of uncertainty. We would also like to give you an idea of what to expect now and for the future as needed.

### **Field Operations:**

Our operations division is fully trained and prepared to handle patients with possible COVID-19. This preparation begins with some changes when you call 911. In our IAED Accredited call center, our call-takers have implemented new telephone protocols to help identify patients who **may** have symptoms commonly associated with COVID-19. COVID-19, presents quite similar to other viral respiratory illnesses with somewhat similar signs and symptoms. In cases where symptoms are identified that *might* be associated with COVID-19, our medics may handle the encounter somewhat differently.

For *possible* COVID-19 patients, once the ambulance arrives, TRAA's medics may begin their initial evaluation from a distance of 6 feet away. This is a CDC recommendation and is for their protection until they can identify your symptoms. It **is not** because they are being rude, unfriendly or do not like you. It is purely for their protection so they don't become infected and can continue to treat all patients in our community. Once the medics have completed their initial assessment, they will then either come closer to complete their assessment and treatment **or** they may go back to the ambulance to put on masks, gowns and eye protection (PPE). The PPE is normal protection following CDC guidance for healthcare workers to protect them **in case** you have COVID-19. It **does not** mean you definitely have COVID-19 as without specific testing that we cannot do in the field setting, we cannot confirm or rule-out COVID-19. They may also place a mask over your face for added protection and to lessen the chance for contamination of the ambulance if you are transported.

While we normally allow family members to ride in the ambulance with a loved one in many cases, in suspected cases of COVID-19 illness, we will not be allowing that to happen. This is primarily due to the local hospitals currently limiting visitation and keeping non-patients from entering their emergency care areas without proper hospital screening.

Once we transport a patient with possible COVID-19 symptoms (or any patient with any possible disease that could be passed to other patients), TRAA medics disinfect equipment used as well as the inside of the ambulance. We always make every attempt possible to

prevent cross contamination of patients due to our equipment or ambulance surfaces.

**Business Office:**

Currently, our business office continues to operate as normal. As the number of local COVID-19 cases grow, we may find it necessary to protect our employees from exposure as much as possible. It may become necessary at some point to close our business office to the public. Should that becomes necessary, patients can still pay bills online at [www.traa-ems.com](http://www.traa-ems.com), by U.S. mail, or by telephone with a credit card. While we are currently working under normal conditions, we would urge you to make payments by mail, our website or by phone for your protection as much as ours. That way, you will limit your potential exposure as well. Throughout this pandemic, we will strive to continue to be as available as possible to answer your billing questions and take payments by phone.

For the most up-to-date and accurate information on COVID-19, we recommend the following websites:

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH)

<https://www.in.gov/coronavirus/>

Allen County Department of Health

<https://www.allencountyhealth.com/get-informed/covid-19/>

Finally, we want to assure you that TRAA is making every effort to meet your continued needs, whether it be providing you the quality care you expect or working with you or your insurance for prompt processing of your billing and insurance needs.