



Update on MERS – May 13, 2014

Second Case of MERS-CoV found in the U.S

Today the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced a second case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome from a Corona Virus, commonly known as MERS-CoV.

The second case was identified in Orange County Florida in a healthcare worker who was visiting the U. S. from Saudi Arabia. The patient had traveled on May 1st from Jeddah to Florida transiting through London, Boston and Atlanta and reportedly had been feeling ill at the start of the trip. However, it was not until the patient reached Orlando, FL that they sought medical attention for fever, cough and chills. The patient was admitted to the hospital and was diagnosed with MERS-CoV on May 11th. The two cases are unrelated. The first case of MERS in an Indiana patient was recently released from the hospital after recovering from the illness. The FL patient is reported to be doing well with supportive therapy.

The CDC stresses that MERS-CoV, although very formidable with a high mortality rate, is low risk in spreading from human to human. However, healthcare workers should become familiar with the case definition of patients suspected of being at risk for MERS-CoV and practice strict isolation protocols as well as decontamination procedures.

What does this mean for EMS?

The recommendations for EMS remain unchanged. Crews and dispatch need to be aware of the case definition in case they are called to treat someone infected with MERS-CoV. Proper Patient Protection Equipment (PPE) needs to be readily deployed, notification of receiving hospitals of suspected cases needs to be implemented, disinfection procedures should be followed and disease tracking using patient care records and dispatch cases should be monitored to look for any suspicious trends that may be caused by disease in the community.

While it is fully expected that more cases will be discovered in the U.S., using proper protection to prevent transmission will counter the risk of spread to those taking care of these patients.

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