

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AUTHORITY

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DATE: March 19, 2014
TO: Commission on EMS
FROM: Dr. Howard Backer, Director
PREPARED BY: Lisa Schoenthal, Chief
Disaster Medical Services Division
SUBJECT: 2014 Influenza Outbreak Response

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Receive information regarding the EMS Authority's activities in response to the 2014 Influenza outbreak.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

DISCUSSION:

Influenza occurs with regular periodicity and has a season that is generally described as occurring from December to March each year. This year saw a particularly aggressive outbreak of influenza that was notable because of its increased virility and resultant mortality. This season was also notable because of a much younger age in which mortality occurred. Overall, the 2014 flu season saw an overall mortality about twice that of 2013, and a much higher mortality in the younger age groups. Consistent with the California Public Health and Medical Emergency Operations Manual (EOM), the dynamics of this year's flu season warranted classification as an Unusual Event.

The EMS Authority (EMSA) activities during this event focused on situational awareness and support if needed to regional and local jurisdictions. In coordination with CDPH, the Medical Health Coordination Center (MHCC) was opened and personnel from EMSA's Disaster Medical Services (DMS) Division provided a portion of the staff support in the Medical Health Branch and the Planning Section. Working through the Regional Disaster Medical Health Specialist (RDMHS) Program and the Medical Health Operational Area Coordinator (MHOAC) Program, and with assistance from the Local EMS Agencies

(LEMSAs) across the state, EMSA was able to obtain updated information weekly on the impact of the flu outbreak on local health care systems. Not only was this process useful to local jurisdictions in their planning efforts, it also provided a real time exercise of the principles and processes put forth in the EOM with regards to information sharing. Refinements to the EOM will ultimately result from the lessons learned during the 2014 Influenza Outbreak Response.