

# EMS Pandemic Response Protocol FAQ

1 Apr 2020

## 1. Phase 1, #2, Management of Acute Respiratory Symptoms during COVID-19 Pandemic” (page 161) “

- a. Under EMT, #1, the protocol indicates to maintain an SpO<sub>2</sub> >93%. In the current December 1, 2019 Maine EMS protocols, the goal is to maintain a SpO<sub>2</sub> >94%. Why the change?
  - *The change is based on some of the early research work from China, where SpO<sub>2</sub> > 93% on room air was used as a cut-off to help determine patients who could be managed at home vs. those who needed hospitalization. This is based on currently best available evidence.*
  
- b. Under EMT, #2, the protocol indicates that an EMT can assist a patient with their own albuterol or albuterol/ipratropium MDI. Is OLMC required to perform this or to repeat, if needed, in 20 minutes as indicated?
  - *OLMC is **not** needed for this. It is considered a standing order based on the EMT’s assessment. The MDPB believes that OLMC will be busy due to the anticipated surge in ED volume and unduly burdening them with questions to which the answer will likely be “yes”, the use of OLMC is felt to be unnecessary.*
  
- c. Under AEMT, #5, the protocol indicates that an AEMT can assist a patient with their own or use an MDI from EMS-supplied medication (if available), albuterol or albuterol/ipratropium MDI. Is OLMC required to perform this or to repeat, if needed, in 20 minutes as indicated?
  - *OLMC is **not** needed for this. It is considered a standing order based on the AEMT’s assessment. The MDPB believes that OLMC will be busy due to the anticipated surge in ED volume and unduly burdening them with questions to which the answer will likely be “yes”, the use of OLMC is felt to be unnecessary.*

## **2. Phase 1, #2, Management of Acute Respiratory Symptoms during COVID-19 Pandemic, AEMT Item #5**

- a. With regard to the use of albuterol and Duoneb MDIs, the Phase 1 protocol states it is acceptable for AEMT's to give either albuterol (already in the AEMT scope of practice) OR Duoneb MDI. Does the use of Duoneb in nebulized form apply as well to AEMT's under the Phase 1 protocol?
  - *No. AEMTs may only administer albuterol via nebulizer under this protocol at this time. Both albuterol and Duoneb were placed as options for MDI treatment, in the Phase 1 protocol because the idea is to avoid nebulizer use as much as possible, and a Duoneb MDI may be all that the patient has. Therefore, the option to use either MDI was included for AEMTs. However, Paramedics may give either medication if nebulizer use is necessary.*

## **3. Phase 1, #2, Management of Acute Respiratory Symptoms during COVID-19 Pandemic, Paramedic Item #10 Magnesium Sulfate administration**

- a. Some services are having difficulty acquiring the needed 50ml normal saline bags. How should magnesium sulfate be mixed for administration?
  - **There are TWO options:**
    1. *Using a 250ml NS bag, withdraw 200ml (leaving 50ml) and discard removed fluid, then add the 2gm magnesium. **OR***
    2. *If there is a need for more fluids (i.e., shock, dehydration) the magnesium can be mixed and administered in a larger volume. Do not mix in volumes greater than 250ml to ensure entire dose is infused.*
  - **Note about volume:** Most of the COVID-19 patients do not present in shock initially and the need for volume may be limited. Also, limiting the amount of fluid may help prevent ARDS later in disease progression. However, if your patient is showing signs of dehydration or shock, treat accordingly.