



MEMORANDUM

To: Health Commissioners and Boards of Health

From: Amy Acton, MD, MPH / ldh
Director Ohio Department of Health

Date: March 24, 2020

Re: Guidance on sharing Information with First Responders

Many questions have come to my Department over the last few weeks about the authority of your departments to share information—specifically protected health information—with first responders in your jurisdictions. Our first responders are understandably concerned about being exposed to COVID-19 while responding to an emergency call.

To that end, if you, upon consultation with your local partners, determine that disclosure of protected health is necessary to avert or mitigate a clear threat to an individual or to the public health, the Department supports releasing that information only to those persons or entities necessary to control, prevent, or mitigate disease. (Ohio Revised Code 3701.17(B)(4)) This includes, but is not limited to, law enforcement, paramedics, firefighters, EMS personnel or other first responders. It is important that confidentiality is ensured, and the disclosure is limited.

Our first responders must continue to use the recommended standard precautions for all emergency runs. They should assume that any individual they come into contact with has been exposed to and may have COVID-19.