

MEMORANDUM

Date: March 19, 2020

File: 195-20/BCEHS All
CLIFF: 1059878

To: All BCEHS Staff

Re: Non-essential escorts during aeromedical transport COVID-19

Following advice from our paramedics, health partners and air carriers we have decided to suspend all non-essential escorts until further notice. This action has been taken in order to protect staff and patients and to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 within the aviation environment.

Essential escorts are considered:

- All medical personnel required for the direct provision of care in transport: (physicians, perfusionists, etc.)
- Non-medical escorts required for direct care for special needs situations
- Maternal, Neonatal and Pediatric:
 - Mother-baby dyad: maintain, even when mother has been discharged post-partum or when mother is actively breast-feeding
 - An awake child (i.e. any age child who would require supervision at the receiving site, and where they will not already be receiving one to one nursing)

We understand that separating family members can cause distress, and in some cases may be viewed as clinically detrimental. In these extraordinary times, please consider the time it would take the parent to travel to the receiving hospital vs. travelling with you, or where the parent has no alternative means to travel by, before denying them boarding.

When refusing escorts for any age patient, but in particular the maternal and neonatal population, please ensure you establish a reliable communication method with family members prior to departing to ensure that ongoing medico-legal consent is available from the primary proxy decision maker.

Select the escort who represents the lowest risk possible in the circumstances (i.e. no clinical symptoms, not self-isolating, etc.) and have them use reverse precautions (wear a mask, clean hands, etc.).

Finally, where there is any dispute or uncertainty regarding non-essential escorts, the paramedic is to consult with EPOS for a final decision.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Dr. John Tallon
Chief Medical Officer
BC Emergency Health Services