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**Mike DeWine, Governor**  
**Thomas J. Stickrath, Director**  
**Robert L. Wagoner**  
*Interim Executive Director*

Emergency Medical Services  
1970 West Broad Street  
P.O. Box 182073  
Columbus, Ohio 43218-2073  
(614) 466-9447 • (800) 233-0785  
[www.ems.ohio.gov](http://www.ems.ohio.gov)

To: Ohio EMS providers, EMS agencies, and EMS medical directors  
From: Carol A. Cunningham, M.D., FAAEM, FAEMS  
State Medical Director

Date: March 31, 2020

**RE: Rapid COVID-19 Blood Tests and the Ohio EMS Scope of Practice**

The availability of rapid COVID-19 tests that are performed on blood was recently announced. These tests provide results within 15 minutes and can be completed on a small volume of blood including the volume that can be obtained from a fingerstick. Rapid COVID-19 tests are available from several vendors; therefore, the methods used to obtain and analyze the blood sample should be performed according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

Rapid testing modalities are serology tests which detect antibodies, and they are not as accurate as molecular tests which detect the actual pathogen. Analogous to other point-of-care testing modalities, there may be a small percentage of false negative rapid COVID-19 results. Molecular testing may be needed to confirm the negative test result. A positive rapid COVID-19 result may be due to an active COVID-19 infection, but it may also be due to a past or present infection from other strains of the coronavirus or from the SARS virus.

Per Ohio Administrative Code 4765-17-03(A)(24), the performance of rapid COVID-19 blood testing is within the Ohio EMS scope of practice for certified Ohio Paramedics with authorization, a written protocol, training, continuing education, and a quality assurance program provided by the EMS medical director. The performance of rapid COVID-19 blood testing is not within the Ohio EMS scope of practice for certified Ohio emergency medical responders (EMRs), emergency medical technicians (EMTs), or advanced emergency medical technicians (AEMTs). Per Ohio Administrative Code 4765-15-04(B)(13), analysis of blood is limited to glucose monitoring for EMTs and AEMTs.

The appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) must be donned for all patient contacts including scenarios when there will be known exposure to blood and body fluids. PPE should always be your first weapon, each and every day, in the battle to stay healthy.

Thank you for your dedicated service as we continue to navigate through the dynamic developments during the COVID-19 pandemic. Your efforts are much appreciated!

**Mission Statement**

*"to save lives, reduce injuries and economic loss, to administer Ohio's motor vehicle laws and to preserve the safety and well being of all citizens with the most cost-effective and service-oriented methods available."*

