



# FRONTLINE PERSPECTIVE: COVID-19

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## Boston EMS Overview

- Bureau of the Boston Public Health Commission
- Two-tiered 9-1-1 EMS system
  - Basic Life Support (BLS)
  - Advanced Life Support (ALS)

## Before COVID-19

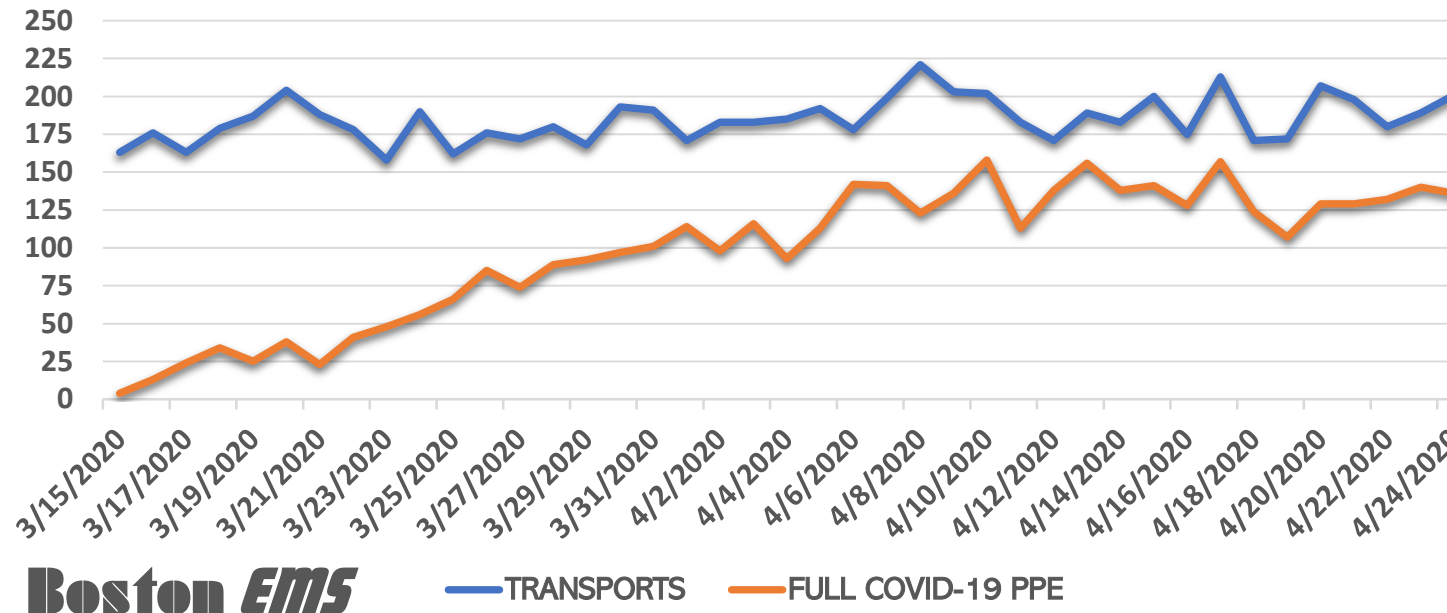
- Deployment coverage during peak hours
  - 22 BLS ambulances
  - 5 ALS ambulances
- 2019 Boston EMS Numbers
  - Total call volume of 127,802 clinical incidents
  - 159,346 ALS & BLS ambulance responses
  - 86,570 total transports
- Boston EMS workforce
  - 425 full-time positions
  - 399 are uniformed EMTs and Paramedics



## Current Situation in Boston

(As of 2020 APR 25)

- Over 7,900 COVID-19 cases & 271 deaths in Boston residents
- Over 50% of Boston hospital ICU beds are COVID-19+ patients
- Overall Boston EMS call volume and transports are down; the number of COVID related calls remains steady
  - Provided care to over 1,500 COVID-19+ patients





## How We Got Here

- February 1 First confirmed COVID-19 case in Boston
- March 13 Statewide order to limit large gatherings
- March 15 Public health emergency declared in Boston
- March 17 All Boston schools closed
- April 1 Total of 1,057 cases in Boston residents, 8 deaths
- April 10 Boston Hope, 1,000 bed field hospital, began accepting patients



## Planning & Preparedness

- Decades of emergency preparedness efforts
- Precedents set by previous infectious disease outbreaks
- Established health care system coordination

## COVID-19 Operational Priorities

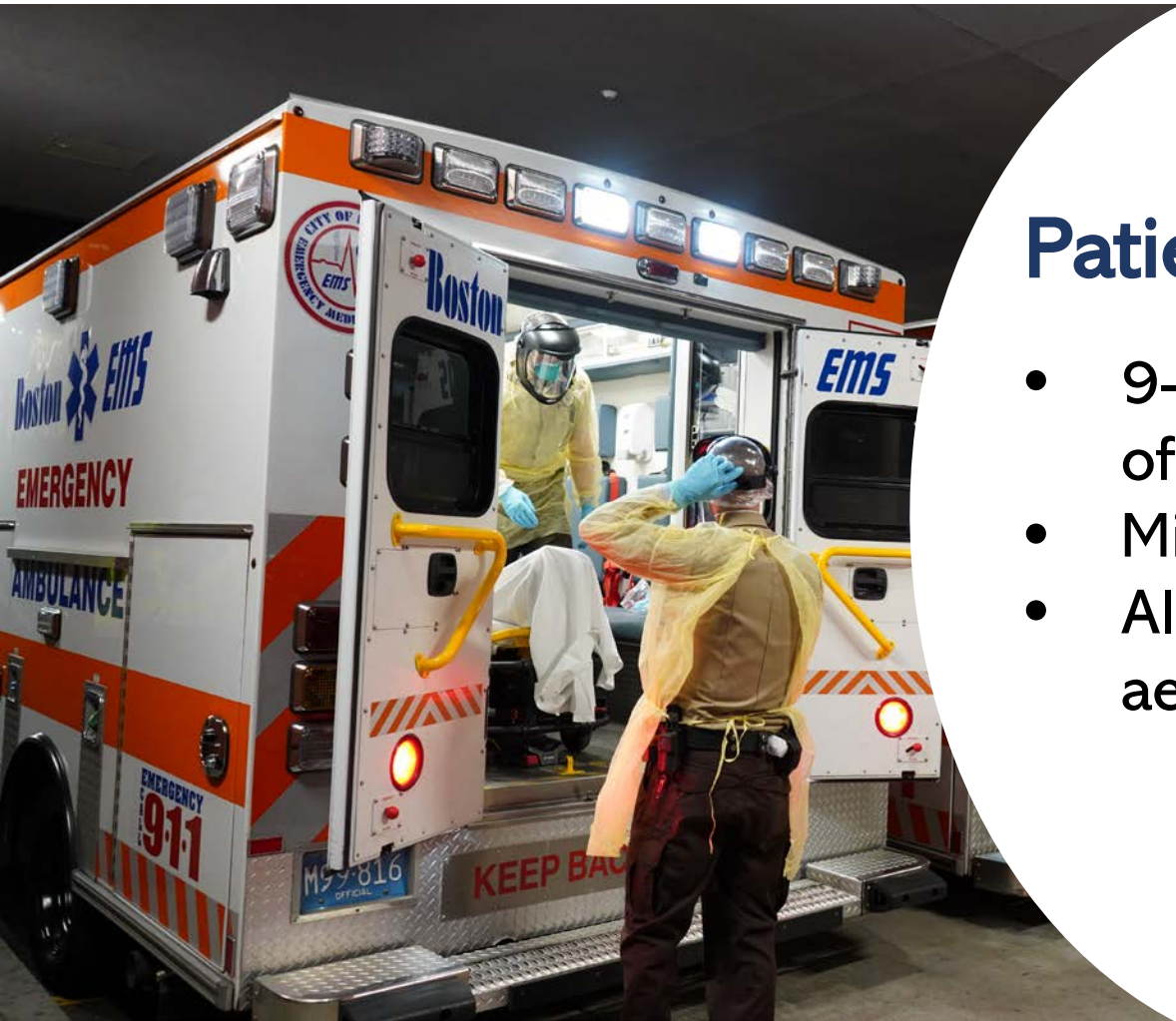
1. Personnel Health & Wellness
2. Patient Care
3. Medical Surge





## Personnel Health & Wellness

- Personal protective equipment
- Source control – mask on every patient
- Infectious disease control & testing for personnel
- Peer Support
- Strict wellness screening policy
- Housing



## Patient Care

- 9-1-1 call screening for early identification of COVID-19 related calls
- Minimize transmission of virus
- Alter patient care practices to reduce aerosolization



## Medical Surge

- Meet the demand for service
  - Increase response capacity
  - Maximizing capacity
- Reduce the demand for service
  - Pre-hospital telehealth
  - Deployment of department physicians







## Successes

- Personal protective protocols
- Alternative temporary housing
- Call screening and early identification of COVID-19 related 9-1-1 calls
- Robust infection control program
- Minimize disease transmission during patient care
- Standardized patient handoff and doffing procedures across 8 hospitals
- Pre-hospital telehealth

## Challenges

- **Adapting response operations for the foreseeable future to respond to COVID-19 calls as well as the “normal” 9-1-1 volume as the city reopens**
- Sustain heightened response posture
- Continue to minimize transmission both at work and outside work
- Maintain necessary levels of personal protective equipment
- Personnel retention
- Finances



Thank you to the men and women of Boston EMS who continue to rise to the challenge and meet the needs of the City of Boston and its residents every day during this unprecedented time.

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