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## **Riverside County health officials ask residents to call 9-1-1 when they have urgent health needs**

Riverside County health officials are reminding residents to seek emergency care when they have potentially serious symptoms such as chest pains, shortness of breath or signs of a stroke, and not wait to call 9-1-1 out of fear of catching coronavirus.

Officials are concerned that residents are waiting too long to call 9-1-1 when they begin to have symptoms because they are afraid of contracting COVID-19 at the hospital or during transport to a medical facility. By waiting, the patients may come into the hospital in more serious condition than they would have otherwise.

“Our Emergency Management System and hospital providers have taken numerous measures to prevent exposure and spread of coronavirus,” said Bruce Barton, director of the Emergency Management Department. “It is important that patients call 9-1-1 when serious symptoms first develop, so they can begin to receive the care that will help them recover more quickly. In some cases, these delays can be a matter of life and death.”

Hospitals have implemented individual surge plans to cope with the influx of COVID-19 patients in addition to handling patients who have other critical problems. These surge plans include increasing the number of ICU beds within the facility and techniques on how to prevent exposure and spread of coronavirus.

“With health emergencies, every second is critical,” said Riverside County Board Chair and Fourth District Supervisor V. Manuel Perez. “The sooner people experiencing strokes, heart attacks, appendicitis or any type of urgent medical need can get to the hospital and get treated, the greater the chance for survival and successful recovery. I commend our health care workers

who, in addition to being on the frontlines of the pandemic, provide life-saving quality care when it is immediately needed.”

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