



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mississippi Off-Line Medical Directors

THROUGH: Alisa Williams
Bureau of EMS – Director

FROM: Dr. Robert Galli, MD
Mississippi State Medical Director

DATE: April 20, 2020

SUBJECT: **EMT/AEMT/Paramedic obtaining Nasopharyngeal Swabs**

The Bureau of EMS (BEMS) is issuing this Informational Bulletin to clarify that EMS providers at or above the level of EMT may obtain and label oropharyngeal (OP) and nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs for laboratory analysis, when the provider has been appropriately trained to obtain these samples.

Because EMS providers at or above the level of EMT are already able to do oropharyngeal/nasopharyngeal procedures such as, inserting OP/NP airways, administration of intranasal medications, and nasal and bronchial suctioning, the BEMS considers NP swabbing to be within the scope of practice of these providers. At this point, the published scope of practice in the Mississippi EMS Rules and Regulations is not being changed, but the purpose of this memo is to clarify that the BEMS considers OP/NP swabbing by these providers to be within their scope of practice.

EMS agencies that choose to provide OP/NP swabbing must ensure that the providers are adequately trained to obtain these samples. Viral testing has an increased rate of false negatives when OP/NP swabs are not obtained properly. Additionally, agencies that stock swabs in their vehicles must work with a lab and their medical director to be sure that there is a process for properly labeling, storing, transporting, and dropping off specimens. There must also be a plan for how physicians will order these labs. Due to the shortage of swabs and testing materials, NP swabs should only be done when ordered by a medical control physician (or potential when following protocol in the future).

