2021 Metro Chiefs Education Conference

Today’s Speaker
Dr. Sara Jahnke
Aim 1: National Impact. Collect ethnographic data from fire service organizational leaders on the national disruption caused by the COVID19 pandemic for the fire service including resource and policy needs, shifts in priorities, and barriers and opportunities for future response.

Aim 2: Department Impact. Examine how fire department operations, practices, and policies shifted in response to the COVID19 pandemic.

COVID-Next, White Paper

What are the lessons learned from COVID-19 that need to be documented for future pandemic response?
What words describe your experience with COVID-19?
How prepared was your department to respond to the pandemic?

- 13 Somewhat prepared
- 0 Totally prepared
- 4 Somewhat unprepared
- 1 Neither unprepared or prepared
- 0 Totally unprepared
How well has your department handled COVID-19?

- Totally botched it: 1.4
- We did ok, but could have done better: 2.2
- We did ok: 2.8
- We well: 3.1
- We did really well: 3.0
- We are Pandemic Rock Stars: 2.2
Emerging Themes

- PPE
- Policies (e.g. leave, response)
- Finances
- Coordination
- Vaccines/Mitigation
- Behavioral Health
- Short & Long Term Consequences
Open Ended
What percent of your personnel have been diagnosed with COVID-19?

- Less than 10%: 9
- 10-15%: 6
- 16-25%: 6
- 26-50%: 0
- More than 50%: 0
Of your personnel who contracted COVID, where did most become infected?

- Responding to department calls: 0
- From other personnel while at work: 0
- From outside of work (e.g., family, friends): 20
- Don't know: 2
- Our department did not collect this information: 0
Of your personnel who contracted COVID-19, what percent contracted it from other personnel within the firehouse?

- Less than 25%: 18
- 25-50%: 4
- 51-75%: 0
- 76-100%: 0
Policies
What policies did your department need to develop in response to COVID?

- Leaves
- Tele-health patient assessment with ER’s prior to transport.
- PPE, teleworking for admin staff, quarantine and leave
- Dispatch...Pre arrival instructions
- Mask wearing during COVID, Leave, Reporting illness, Testing, Exposure reporting
- Station Entry Evaluation, Leave policies for COVID-19, Quarantine Policy, Dispatch Protocols
- Return to work, exposure/quarantine, PPE policies
- Leave policies
- PPE, quarantine, vacation, return to work, station cleaning, de-con, dispatch, screening
What policies did your department need to develop in response to COVID?

- Policy regarding what would staffing model be if 20%, 30%, 40%, etc. of the workforce could not work. And policy on response model, i.e., patient meet crew outside.
- Fire station protocols for cleaning/mask wearing/temperature taking.
- Public Access to the Stations.
- PPE, Fitness for duty, Leave (COVID-related, family, etc.), Dispatch.
- Continuity plans.
- Adjust Alternate Work Site, Leave, Alternate Schedule. Create policy on all things Covid. MOUs with Labor.
- In addition to changing patient contact and treatment protocols, we had to develop a critical staffing policies.
- Operational policies to mitigate risk of infection PPE Pay during isolation.
- Presumptive coverage, testing & vaccination.
What policies did your department need to develop in response to COVID?

Shift changes done outside
What policies did your department develop that worked well?

- Fire station infectious control policies
- Quarantine, PPE
- Infection control tracking, Station Decon Policy, PPE policy
- Infectious control response policies
- COVID Sick leave, PPE requirements, Staffing
- UV cabinet for disinfecting PPE
- Forming permanent teams without changes
- Patient-contact centric policies were effective. Station isolation policies (limiting public interaction) were effective.
What policies did your department develop that worked well?

- Paid COVID leave, Exposure and Illness flowchart, Staffing, Use of technology for meetings
- Alternate Worksite and schedule
- PPE, remote work for admin positions, exposure precautions, AGMP limitations, airway management, leave, infection control
- Equipment cleaning
- Station isolation, quarantine, employee support/resiliency
- Response
- Virtual meetings
What policies did your department develop that DID NOT work well?

- Fire station cleaning policies
- Initially isolation/quarantine policy
- Local government policies that didn’t fit with fire & EMS
- Separating crew members while in the station, meal times etc.
- Reuse of once disposable PPE
- In station containment
- Use of face covers in the station setting.
- Routine mask use, fomite disinfection
- Clear communications throughout the department.
What policies did your department develop that DID NOT work well?

temperature checks
What policies or practices were developed in response to COVID-19 that you will consider keeping in place once the pandemic is under control?

- Surgical mask on all calls
- Station decon and apparatus decon
- Some remote work.
- Critical staffing policy
- Masks during flu season
- Clinical dispatch/telemedicine
- EMS PPE Policy, Remote working for civilian/day personnel
- Use of electronic meetings, using masks more often, sick reporting
- Burn rates of PPE, being conscientious about wearing masks on calls,
What policies or practices were developed in response to COVID-19 that you will consider keeping in place once the pandemic is under control?

- Remote locations for support personnel.
- Teleworking.
- Teleworking for admin areas, virtual conference call capabilities for EOC operations and other purposes.
- Establishment of an incident command team to address large issues.
- A better focus on logistics and supply chain for medical PPE and more on-hand stock versus just-in-time ordering.
- MS Teams meetings with crews.
- Remote work, remote learning, meeting connectivity, PPE, infection control, low priority call deferral.
Finances
How much has COVID-19 affected your operational budget?

- Not at all: 2
- Somewhat: 2.7
- Significantly: 1.8
- So bad you won’t even believe it: 1
What additional information do you wish you had access to during the pandemic?

Truth
- More concise valid information without politics
- Better real time information and data sharing with state health department
- More honesty in the gravity of the situation.

TRUTH
- Truthful information
- Town centre level data on case rates, positivity rates, vaccination rates
- Alternatives
What additional information do you wish you had access to during the pandemic?

- Stable information
- Reliable global information
- Truth!
- Better 'early-on' collaborative information sharing locally
- Better info related to alternative funding sources, grants, etc.
- Truth
- CDC guidelines were far behind the arrival of COVID
- More info on when to quarantine with each type of exposure
- Earlier warning intelligence
Coordination
Where have you gotten your information on COVID-19?
Did you have a relationship with your local health department before the COVID-19 pandemic started?

- No relationship: 3
- Some relationship: 11
- Close relationship: 7
What is the relationship between your department and the local health department now?

- No relationship: 0
- Some relationship: 4
- Close relationship: 18
Vaccines/Mitigation
Approximately what percent of your personnel are vaccinated currently?

- Less than 25%: 7
- 25-50%: 7
- 50-75%: 8
- More than 90%: 0
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No trust in government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future health concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had covid already or not enough information on the vaccine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't trust it yet. Seemed rush to market.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical, political</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unknown long term</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rush of vaccine development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fear and trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they dont put anything in their bodies except for natural organic food</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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For those firefighters who have not been vaccinated, what reasons are you hearing for this decision?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political party</th>
<th>Experimental drug, don't want it to mess with my DNA</th>
<th>Not safe, against religious beliefs, conspiracy, not safe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don't trust the vaccine, concerned about the unknown</td>
<td>Unfortunately, I think politics and peer pressure</td>
<td>Concern over safety, risk of side effects, personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effects of the vaccine</td>
<td>plays a role</td>
<td>decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>lack of trust in the vaccine or did not think they</td>
<td>Effects DNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>needed it</td>
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For those firefighters who have not been vaccinated, what reasons are you hearing for this decision?

- Don’t trust the vaccine or what’s in it.
- Politics, religion, health, social media
What information did your department share on COVID and on COVID vaccines?

- Safety and effectiveness of vaccine
- As much as we could write that was valid.
- Official city position with supporting documentation.
- Educational videos explaining what and how vaccines are designed and how they work
- Videos, in person outreach, podcasts, memos, written information
- Referred personnel to DPH or CDC.
- Vaccinated homebound seniors
- Through social media we encouraged vaccines as firefighter/paramedics
- Only info from CDC, state health and our physicians
What information did your department share on COVID and on COVID vaccines?

- Direct briefings to employees from Department Medical Director/Advisor
- Policies
- CDC, public health (state and local)
- Pushed as much as made available to us, and incorporated messaging from our occupational med physicians
- Re-broadcast of CDC guidance; positive messaging on infection control as positive affirmation; honest statistics
- Disseminated educational FAQs sheet by Medical Director
- Some videos on vaccine and then any info we found that explained it
- Creating a video that showed the actual impact of COVID-19 on firefighters who were infected
Behavioral Health
How much has COVID-19 impacted the behavioral health of your personnel?
How prepared is your department to respond to future pandemics?

- Totally unprepared: 0
- Somewhat unprepared: 1
- Neither unprepared or prepared: 0
- Somewhat prepared: 20
- Totally prepared: 2
The Ask...

INTERVIEWS
DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP
MEDICAL PERSONNEL
(E.G. EMS DIRECTOR, OCC MED PHYSICIANS)

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