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IMPORTANT EPIDEMIC ADVISORY

February 28, 2017

EMS Agency Leaders,

An update on the current opioid epidemic was provided to the Virginia EMS Advisory Board by Dr. Marissa Levine, Health Commissioner for the Virginia Department of Health. It was noted that the current trend in overdose cases continues to be on the rise around the state. Furthermore, the state recognized that the area being hardest hit by this issue is in the northwest area of the state and it is having a significant impact on our region. Some of the fentanyl and carfentanil combinations being identified are extremely dangerous. Very small amounts of the drug, if found in powder form, can accidentally become airborne. If this were to occur, first responders that inhale the drug could immediately become incapacitated and even **small doses may be lethal**. It is imperative that all providers maintain situational awareness and use proper precautions to prevent an exposure.

This information was shared with Council board members for dissemination, but it was felt that a follow up is warranted due to the seriousness of the situation. Please share this information with fire and law enforcement agencies in your jurisdictions so we can remain diligent in keeping all of our first responders safe. We will continue to provide updates on the crisis as information becomes available.

Sincerely,

Jon Henschel
LFEMS Council President