



REGULATORY/ MEDICAL HEALTH SERVICES
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DATE: April 4, 2018

TO: ORANGE COUNTY EMS DISTRIBUTION LIST

FROM: SAM J. STRATTON, MD, MPH
MEDICAL DIRECTOR, ORANGE COUNTY EMS

SUBJECT: NARCOTIC SHORTAGE

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'SJS', is written over the 'FROM' field of the memo.

There is currently a shortage of morphine and fentanyl due to damage of manufacturing facilities in Puerto Rico during the past hurricane season.

The shortage of morphine and fentanyl is nationwide, affecting both hospitals and EMS providers. Additionally, due to increased demand there are also shortages of pain control alternates such as ketamine. It is possible that some Orange County EMS providers will run out of narcotics without a feasible alternative for pain control.

It is recommended that EMS field use of narcotics be limited to management of chest pain of suspected cardiac origin not relieved with nitroglycerin and for control of pain from obvious fractures of the hip or lower leg including the femur or tibia-fibula. This recommendation is made with the intent to extend the current narcotic inventory.

In consulting with pharmacists, it is expected that the narcotic shortage will continue for a number of months before supplies return to normal. Orange County EMS will continue to monitor the narcotic shortage and update EMS providers.

SJS/#3216