

being distributed directly to hospitals and is used only in cancer and transplant patients. Monoclonal antibodies have been found to be effective in use for omicron patients going to the hospital.

- **OCEMS Report:**

Dr. Grewal presented a report on COVID in Orange County. He stated that the case rates remain high and presently there are 79 cases per 100,000 population which is much higher than last year. 25%-30% of COVID cases are in the ICU. 87% of COVID patients in the ICU have not been vaccinated with the remaining COVID patients being elderly and vaccinated. It has been noted that other types of respiratory illnesses have been seen.

David Johnson reported that the Health Care Agency has entered in an agreement with a new provider for the provision of a bi-directional data exchange program. Jason Azuma reported that details are being worked out. Jeff Lopez, Huntington Beach Fire, inquired whether data will continue to be uploaded into OCPRIHO. Mr. Azuma reported the OCPRIHO system will continue to exist and fully functioning until the new agreement between fire departments and OCEMS is in place.

- **Health Emergency Management (Disaster Report):**

Kevin Chao reported on activities discussed with Health Emergency Management. In-person planning meetings with Emergency Managers will resume to plan for drills and exercise once the pandemic ends.

Danielle Ogaz reported that hospitals and skilled nursing facilities may submit a resource request to fill staffing shortages (nurses and paramedics). The information is submitted to the State who will work directly with the facility to fulfill these requests. At the present time eight acute care hospitals and one skilled nursing facility have submitted requests to fill additional staffing needs. Other hospital resource requests are pending.

Dr. Grewal reported on the test kits that have been received. CDPH has distributed iHealth Kits for the purpose of testing healthcare workers.

- **Hospital Diversion Report (Annual Report for 2021):**

David Johnson presented the 2021 Annual Diversion Report (see attachment #2). Mr. Johnson stated that staffing shortages have made it difficult for hospitals to not be on diversion. Specialty (stroke-neurology, STEMI, and trauma) centers were allowed to go on diversion for a number of reasons. HAVBed reports must be submitted by the hospitals three times a week.

V. **Unfinished Business**

VI. **New Business**

- **Suspension of Hospital Diversion:**

Dr. Schultz reported that reasons for suspending diversion a year ago is different that the circumstance that had taken place. Dave Barry asked if there is a solution to reduce diversion for those facilities that border Los Angeles County. Dr. Schultz reported that both LEMSAs have met to discuss a solution solving the negative impact that diversion has on bordering hospitals. If a Los Angeles County Hospital (i.e., St. Mary's, Long Beach Memorial, and Lakewood Medical Center) is closed for diversion, then their Orange County counterpart (St. Jude, La Palma, and Los Alamitos) would also close for diversion.

- **Ambulance Patient Off-Load Time Discussion and 2021 Annual Report:**

Jason Azuma reported that December, 2021 recorded the highest number of 9-1-1 transports since the tracking of APOT. At one point in time, the single day record for 911 ambulance transports is 60 runs with 16 hospitals record APOT times over 40 minutes.

- **Ambulance Mutual Aid**

As 9-1-1 transports have increased, a large number of ambulance transports are being held at emergency receiving centers throughout the County. This resulted in the institution of a policy that allows ambulance units to either transfer a patient to another receiving center or leave the patient at the hospital on a cot or placed in the waiting area provided certain criteria are met. The ambulance transport provider must wait for greater than 60 minutes **and** a second unit must wait a minimum of 15 minutes before the patient is taken to another facility or left on a cot at the receiving center before returning to service. This policy will remain in place until stress on the system improves.

- **Discussion on Potential Policy on Treat and Release**

Dr. Schultz asked Committee members on developing a COVID-19 specific treat and release policy which allows paramedics to respond to a call and not have an ambulance dispatched. Concerns were expressed on the number of calls; conflicting information between the base hospital and field paramedics; and any age limit which was determined to be between 2 years and 65 years of age.

VII. **Other Business**

VIII. **Advisory Committee Reports**

- **Base Hospital Coordinators** - *Julia Afrasiabi reporting.*

Items and goals that the base hospital coordinators are working on. They look forward to having a good year working with their partners.

- **Orange County Fire Chief EMS** - *Jeff Lopez reporting*

Discussion on the memorandum released on December 29, 2021 regarding the temporary suspension of hospital diversion and actions to reduce ambulance patient off-load times (APOT).

- **Orange County Nursing Leadership** - *Kim Nichols reporting:*

The first meeting for this Committee will be held on Friday, January 14, 2022. They plan to discuss staffing issues and to have more open communication.

- **Facilities Advisory Subcommittee**

This Committee met on January 11, 2022 and discussed everything on today's agenda. They recommended that one facility be redesignated as a Stroke Neurology Receiving Center. The recommendation will be brought before the Emergency Medical Care Committee on Friday, January 14, 2022.

IX. **NEXT MEETING** – Wednesday, March 9, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.

X. **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.