



Thursday, April 2, 2020 | 3:08 p.m.

Subject: \*Mask Policy Update\* Re: Current Mask & PPE Guidelines

Hi Team –

Preparing for the COVID-19 surge has required careful planning and management of our limited resources, especially N95 and surgical masks. As we [shared](#) this past Sunday, the conservation of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), specifically masks, is one of our highest priorities in order to be able to consistently protect and ensure the safety of our team members, providers and patients. While we continue to follow CDC PPE and mask guidelines as mentioned in that communication, we are working diligently—almost around the clock—to implement our supply chain strategy that will ensure we have enough N95 and surgical masks to equip all of our front-line caregivers with appropriate PPE through the COVID surge, and beyond, as the virus spread remains but diminishes over time.

At our current use rates, we have approximately 60 days of PPE supplies. In a surge scenario, use rates will increase dramatically and that inventory will shrink rapidly, and so we must conserve our current stock to ensure we have enough PPE for the impending surge. While we await the confirmation of the ordered additional PPE, TriHealth has **made the decision to expand on the CDC guidelines and allow for more liberal but still measured use of PPE in all patient care areas effective Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

Policy Update:

Below are the updated guidelines requiring ALL team members and physicians to wear masks in patients care areas and non-clinical areas (**Please refer to the updated COVID19 Mask Guideline policy [here](#) and the new PPE matrix [here](#) on the COVID Resource page on Bridge**):

- All team members who interact with patients on a consistent basis will be issued a surgical mask:
  - This mask should always be worn throughout the day and discarded when the mask becomes soiled or becomes dysfunctional. During times like this of PPE scarcity, the CDC recommends that surgical masks can be re-used for up to a maximum of one week, provided the mask is not visibly soiled or damaged – in which case it will be replaced.
- All team members in care areas treating COVID patients (confirmed positive or pending) or when performing aerosolizing procedures on **any** patient will wear an N95 mask:
  - This mask should be discarded after two (2) days of use, placing the mask in a labeled paper bag at the end of each day
  - The mask should be deposited in recycling bins at the end of the two-day use, or discarded if soiled or damaged earlier than two days
  - A user seal check should be performed before each use. If you cannot achieve a proper seal, place the N95 mask in the appropriate recycling bin.



- In non-clinical areas, such as shared services, team members will be required to wear a cloth mask when in close proximity to or interacting with others:
  - Distribution of masks and guidance for use will be shared soon

**Moving to this phase of our PPE strategy is not optional – ALL team members and physicians will now be required to wear a mask at all times when in care areas to minimize spread, and to protect our patients and essential health care workers as we prepare for the coming surge in COVID-19 patients. Specifics of how masks will be distributed and controlled to accommodate this new expanded universal mask use policy will be forthcoming.**

We are awaiting updates on several very large PPE orders, for both surgical and N95 masks, and are continuously monitoring our existing inventory. As soon as we have an update on these orders, we will notify our front-line team members and physicians immediately, and we will further evolve this policy when our stocks of PPE are replenished and increased. In the meantime, the above conservation measures must be followed carefully to ensure our supplies of PPE remain adequate for the duration of the surge. We are committed to providing the safest care environment possible with appropriate PPE, and we will continue working to secure as many masks and other supplies as humanly possible given the global shortage of PPE.

Thank you for your hard work and sacrifices, on the front lines and beyond, to ensure we are delivering the best patient care while also keeping our team members and physicians safe. Look for an update from us very soon.

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