



MEMORANDUM

To: All Caregivers
From: Hans Cassagnol, MD, EVP, Chief Clinical Officer & Chief Physician Executive
Date: March 31, 2020
RE: Updated PPE Guidelines

In an effort to ensure that all Catholic Health associates are provided a safe environment and appropriate personal protective equipment based on CDC guidelines we are recommending the following updates.

According to the CDC, transmission of COVID-19 primarily occurs through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets travel momentarily in the air before landing on surfaces, typically within 3-6 feet of the infected person. In some instances, transmission may occur through aerosol generating procedures that mechanically disrupt secretions, producing a fine mist of particles that may remain suspended in the air for a longer period of time. For COVID-19, this is associated with aerosol generating procedures such as intubation, extubation, open suctioning, CPR, BIPAP and CPAP and possibly nebulizer treatments. However, there is no evidence that COVID-19 is transmitted in this manner absent these types of activities.

Current CHS policies reflect CDC guidance for PPE when caring for COVID-19 patients. The substantial increase in COVID-19 cases has led to a dramatic increase in the frequency of PPE used throughout our facilities. As a consequence, PPE is being discarded at levels never previously experienced by healthcare facilities, leading to substantial strains on our supply.

Fortunately, the CDC has now provided guidance that allows for re-use and extended use of some PPE, thereby aiding us in our goal to maintain a constant supply of PPE for staff caring for suspected and confirmed COVID-19 patients.

In light of these challenges, a PPE conservation policy was circulated on March 22. In order to facilitate the extended use and multiple use components of this policy, Catholic Health is requesting the following changes occur:

Masks

- Staff that expect to use a procedure mask during their shift may voluntarily take one surgical mask for full day use. It may be worn through the day unless soiled or wet.
- Staff that work in areas of the facility that are most likely to need an N95 respirator during their care activities will be provided an N95 upon entry into that unit. These units include:



- The Emergency Department
- PUI/COVID-19 Restricted Isolation (red zone) Units
- The ICU
- Respiratory Therapists

N95 masks used in these areas may be used for extended periods (between patients) per the PPE conservation policy procedure attached below.

- Anesthesia staff and ENT providers will be provided one N95 to use as needed when performing aerosol-generating procedures related to their work. These masks may be re-used per the CHS PPE conservation policy.

**** Discarded N95's should be placed into designated clean collection containers ****

N95 innovations

Presently, factory-new N95 masks are distributed to all associates. However, we are evaluating alternatives to discarding N95s, should our supply dwindle over the next few months. Guided by research through Duke University, and an FDA-approved process to sterilize N95 masks using equipment commonly used for operating room devices, we will collect used, undamaged N95 masks to store in the event a sterilization and re-use protocol needs to be implemented in the future.

Social distancing & Hand Hygiene

It is very important that we continue to practice social distancing among each other and in our private lives. It is a proven measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19, as the virus is spread by droplets. We are encouraging employees to limit the number of people they meet with and socialize with at work and in their private lives. It is equally important to perform hand hygiene, upon entry and exit of a patient's room.