

## 8/26/20 Community Town Hall Questions

### Topic: PPE

#### PPE Supply

- Social media also saying shortage at hospital if masks and PPE. True or not?
- We hear that the staff does not have sufficient PPE. Is this true? How are they and the patients getting COVID if the PPE is sufficient?
- Is there a place that the public can see the amount of each of the different types of PPE the hospital has left?
- What is the hospital's plan to acquire some of the harder to get PPE? Hair nets and proper wipes are recently reported to have run out, have more been ordered?
- How many days / month's worth of PPE do you have
- Why is PPE tight? This surge isn't a surprise?
- With PPE tight, what plans are there to ensure supply for future needs, possible emergencies?
- Why is PPE tight? You have had since March to resupply with enough PPE to protect staff.

Maui Health is not currently experiencing a shortage of masks or PPE at any of its facilities. There are many individuals who are working behind the scenes daily to ensure that our PPE is being managed appropriately and continues to be sourced. The current surge was not a surprise, and our team has been working for months to prepare for and continue sourcing PPE. The fact is that there isn't an infinite amount of PPE. There are shortages of PPE across the nation as all health care facilities are working hard to source PPE to protect their health care workers during this pandemic. The continued increase in demand has taxed supply availability everywhere. PPE demand can change at any moment and so it's important for us to be able to have adequate supply available. As an example, with new gown protocols put into place at Maui Memorial Medical Center, in addition to the number of patients requiring the use of isolation gowns, the usage increased by over 900%. When there was an increase in cases in the community and hospital, we saw our N95 mask usage increase by over 470%. But thanks to the hard work of our team, the support from our community, and our affiliation with Kaiser Permanente, we have been able to work through supply sourcing challenges and use alternate sourcing where needed.

Each PPE item has a different inventory level and that can/will fluctuate based on current usage, but our target is to have PPE to cover 60 days, at current usage level, on hand for each PPE item.

Regarding headcovers, we have a supply of headcovers and are utilizing our limited bouffant supply for our procedural areas (Operating Room, Heart Brain Vascular, Endoscopy, etc.). We also have generously donated fabric headcovers sewn by many of you in our community, as well as donated shower caps from many of our local hotels for non-procedural areas in the hospital. We have also implemented headcover guidance to ensure adequate supply for specific purposes.

Again, supply levels are monitored daily to ensure that even as usage increases, we can support that use with current supply levels. We continue to be as transparent as possible and have made supply level reports available to our employees, providers, and the public on a consistent basis for months. The community is welcome to view current supply levels, updated at each weekly employee town hall, on our website at [mauihealth.org/townhall](http://mauihealth.org/townhall).

The rumor that our staff does not have enough PPE is not true and we know this could create fear and anxiety in our hospital and community. We want our team to feel supported and safe. One of the reasons staff may think PPE supplies are low is because of the method PPE is distributed. Because we need to closely monitor supply levels and usage, some PPE, like N95s, are not available in public areas for employees to pick up freely like they were prior to the pandemic. The new distribution process is one that hospitals across the nation have had to implement to ensure enough N95s are available for the appropriate use. Additionally, because of global supply constraints, much of the “typical” or “normal” PPE that staff are used to seeing and using is no longer available to order and so they are being replaced with an item that may look different (different brand and color) but is the same quality item, with the same level of protection. Lastly, we follow (and many times exceed) CDC guidelines for the type of PPE required for different levels of patient contact and procedures, and for caring for COVID-positive or suspected patients. For this reason, not all employees will be assigned an N95. That may cause some employees to assume we do not have PPE. But those employees that are not provided N95s by the hospital are allowed to bring and wear an N95 from home as long as they follow masking protocol which requires them to wear a hospital-issued mask over their personal N95. All healthcare workers providing direct care to a suspect/actual COVID patient must wear a hospital-issued N95 mask or respirator of equal protection (i.e., CAPR). They may not wear their own N95 in this instance. All of the PPE protocols in place at Maui Health are to protect our patients, employees and providers, and it is critical that all of our employees know and understand that we have the PPE that is appropriate for their role at the hospital, and available to protect them. We encourage all employees and providers who feel they cannot get the PPE they need to talk to their manager, contact the Emergency Operations Center, or submit their issue through our anonymous CARE hotline at 242-2273. While we appreciate being able to hear these concerns on social media or from the community, we need to know where the disconnect in communication is or where in the hospital employees are not getting what they need so we can help them.

## PPE Protocol

- Is COVID spread by fine mist or aerosolization? Studies refer to this. Why are the protocols restricted to droplet precautions? Do staff get provided with N95s if you use droplet precautions?
- Why are you withholding N-95 masks, waiting for "the surge?"
- why not let everyone that do patient care wear N95? Since infection is all over the hospital.
- Isn't it true that N95 masks only go to 0.3 microns whereas size of COVID virus is .06 microns? So N-95's not effective?

- Are staff required to wear goggles on shift?
- There are staff not wearing appropriate PPE and not following universal precautions. What is being done to monitor staff and reprimand staff who don't follow protocols?
- There have been reports of employees not wearing appropriate masks or using universal precautions. What are the ramifications for employees not following protocol and who is monitoring this?
- After asymptomatic patients are admitted to the facility are they being required or encouraged to wear surgical masks at all times?
- Was the employee fired for buying her own PPE then told that she couldn't wear it, and then was fired by Mike Rembis, has that employee got her job back ?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have deemed SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, to be a droplet transmitted virus. Many however, associate COVID-19 with being airborne. Therefore, in alignment with the CDC's droplet precaution recommendations, Maui Health facilities executed modified droplet precautions to be followed when entering all of its facilities. This is in addition to the transmission-based precaution that the healthcare worker is required to follow when providing patient care. When providing care to a suspect or actual COVID-19 patient, all Maui Health facilities utilize enhanced droplet precautions. This type of precaution requires the use of appropriate PPE including gowns, gloves, eye protection and an N95 mask (or another comparable respirator such as CAPR/PAPR).

Maui Health has and continues to follow CDC and the State of Hawaii Department of Health guidelines for appropriate use of N95 masks. Any healthcare worker that performs a task that requires the use of an N95 mask is provided one. It is important to know and understand that the continued overall global constraint on N95 supply does not support the use of N95 masks by all health care workers. Guidelines state that N95 masks should be reserved for aerosol generating procedures (AGP) and surgical procedures that might pose higher risk for transmission if the patient has COVID-19. Maui Health continues to work diligently on sourcing N95s to ensure an ample supply is maintained for these procedures. Maui Health's current protocol surpasses these guidelines as we have also included the use of N95 masks when participating in any and all aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) regardless of a patient's COVID-19 status, select surgical procedures, as well as at all times when in designated isolation units where one may encounter a suspect or actual COVID-19 patient.

N95 masks are designed to remove more than 95% of all particles that are at least 0.3 microns ( $\mu\text{m}$ ) in diameter. In fact, measurements of the particle filtration efficiency of N95 masks show that they are capable of filtering  $\approx 99.8\%$  of particles with a diameter of  $\approx 0.1 \mu\text{m}$ . SARS-CoV-2 is an enveloped virus  $\approx 0.1 \mu\text{m}$  in diameter, so N95 masks are capable of filtering most free virions, but they do more than that. Viruses are often transmitted through respiratory droplets produced by coughing and sneezing. Respiratory droplets are usually divided into two size bins, large droplets ( $>5 \mu\text{m}$  in diameter) that fall rapidly to the ground and are thus transmitted only over short distances, and small droplets ( $\leq 5 \mu\text{m}$  in diameter). Small droplets can evaporate into 'droplet nuclei', remain suspended in air for significant periods of time and could be inhaled.

Some viruses, such as measles, can be transmitted by droplet nuclei. Larger droplets are also known to transmit viruses, usually by settling onto surfaces that are touched and transported by hands onto mucosal membranes such as the eyes, nose and mouth. The characteristic diameter of large droplets produced by sneezing is  $\sim 100 \mu\text{m}$ , while the diameter of droplet nuclei produced by coughing is on the order of  $\sim 1 \mu\text{m}$ .

Regarding eye protection, the CDC guidance states “recommended” but Maui Health has required the implementation of eye protection effective August 14, 2020. Safety glasses, goggles, or face shields are to be used for all direct patient care. Safety glasses have been deployed to staff and providers.

In response to questions about masking requirements for patients, yes, all patients admitted to Maui Memorial Medical Center are required to wear a face mask whether they are symptomatic or not. Additionally, all staff and visitors are required to wear a Maui Health provided mask that is supplied at the hospital entrance each day. This is also where everyone who enters the hospital is screened for symptoms and temperature. Anyone with symptoms or temperature is not allowed to enter. Staff with symptoms are immediately sent to the Emergency Department for assessment by a provider and a COVID test and are not allowed to report to work.

We can confirm that there has not been a case in which an employee was terminated for buying their own PPE or not allowed to wear it. Employees that are not required to wear hospital-provided PPE may wear their own PPE, for example an N95 mask from home, as long as they wear a hospital provided surgical mask over their own N95.

To address the questions about reports of employees not following PPE protocol, we encourage any of our team members to report any concerns about coworkers who are not following PPE protocols immediately to their manager. If they feel more comfortable, they can report their concern anonymously on our CARE hotline at 242-2273 or can choose to leave their name and contact information if they’d like to receive a response directly. Our priority is the health and safety of our employees, providers and patients and any action or inaction by a staff member that threatens the safety of those around us will be reviewed and addressed immediately.