

Personal Safety Mask Solution

Value First has been researching various suppliers that can fill member needs for critical supplies such as masks, gowns, sanitizer, etc. We believe we have found a viable solution for reusable antimicrobial personal safety masks.

America Knits www.americaknits.com is a textile manufacturer based in Swainsboro, GA. The company is owned by Steven Hawkins and Dr. David Talton. Mr. Hawkins has more than 30 years of experience in the textile industry and Dr. Talton is a cardiothoracic surgeon at North Mississippi Health System; a 600-bed health system in Tupelo, Mississippi. The two are lifelong friends and launched America Knits in the fall of 2019. Mr. Hawkins manages the day to day operations while Dr. Talton is still a practicing surgeon.

America Knits is part of a consortium with Hanes to provide 5-6 million masks to FEMA per week. As part of that consortium, America Knits will be providing about 500,000 masks for FEMA per month. Their mask has several properties that make it unique:

- It has antimicrobial / antiviral properties impregnated into the fabric
- The mask is reusable / washable. The antimicrobial properties are guaranteed to last 20 wash cycles. They have washed masks 50 times that still retain their anti-microbial properties
- The entire mask is made in the US. The raw material and production are all based in the US
- 30,000 masks have been ordered by both North Mississippi Health System and the University of Alabama Birmingham Health System
- The mask is FDA approved and is currently being provided to FEMA
- The cost is \$2.50 per mask including shipping. They will have a capacity of 70,000 – 100,000 masks available per week starting in 2 weeks.
- A 50% deposit is required when the order is placed, and the balance is due 15 days after delivery of the product.
- Minimum order is 1 case, which is 500 masks
- Please note that Value First does not have GPO agreement with this supplier; LeadingAge members are receiving the manufacturer cost with no fees being paid to Value First or any other entity outside of America Knits

It should be noted that these masks are not intended to be used when treating a resident that has a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 diagnosis. These masks are intended for general use by staff, residents and visitors that are not having direct interaction with individuals with confirmed cases of COVID-19. The masks are a great option based on the increased cost and lack of availability of disposable masks as well as the recent CMS guidance for everyone in the facility to wear a mask.

<https://leadingage.org/regulation/cms-issues-new-recommendations-nursing-homes-covid-19-crisis>

We have had a number of members review the product, and the response has been positive. LeadingAge members have placed orders for about 80,000 masks so far. America Knits is committed to helping LeadingAge members meet their supply needs during these challenging times. If you are interested, *please reach out to Terry Romin* tromin@valuefirstonline.com / 224.230.7265 for additional information.