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Memorandum

TO: Health Care Facility Chief Executive Officers and Administrators
Occupational Health Program Leaders

FROM: Elizabeth Daake Kelley, MPH, MBA, Director
Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality

SUBJECT: N95 Filtering Face Piece Fit Testing Requirements

DATE: March 30, 2020

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) continues to work with state, federal and local partners on the outbreak of novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19), caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2, and we continue to appreciate the essential role you have in responding to this evolving situation.

DPH is sharing with all Massachusetts healthcare facilities that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is allowing field offices to exercise discretion concerning the annual fit testing requirement provided that employers perform initial fit tests and comply with certain safety standards set out in its guidance (<https://www.osha.gov/memos/2020-03-14/temporary-enforcement-guidance-healthcare-respiratory-protection-annual-fit>).

Please note that health care personnel should visually inspect their N95 respirator to determine if the structural and functional integrity of the respirator has been compromised.

In addition to the above guidance from OSHA, the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) has temporarily lifted the requirement that surveyors validate the facility's last annual test of the fit of N95 respirator work by health care personnel.

DPH is adopting OSHA and CMS's guidance, and encourages health care facilities to suspend their annual fit testing programs until the State of Emergency is terminated by the Governor, or

until rescinded by the Commissioner of Public Health, whichever shall happen first, in order to conserve personal protective equipment.

Please note, in accordance with CDC guidance, N95 respirators should be used during aerosolized procedures such as nebulizer treatments and intubation when caring for individuals with confirmed COVID-19. During all types of other care, masks with eye protection are recommended.

Additional Resources and References:

- OSHA tutorial video on fit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzpZ5fko-fg> (English); <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgRKuRcTGeE> (Spanish)
- OSHA User Seal Check Procedures: <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.134AppB1>
- CMS Press Release: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/covid-19-response-news-alert-cms-issues-key-protective-mask-guidance-healthcare-workers>
- CDC guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>

Additionally, please visit DPH's website that provides up-to-date information on COVID-19 in Massachusetts: <https://www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus>.