

MEMORANDUM

TO: Executive Leadership Team and Leadership Forum
FROM: Marion Dowling and Corinne Rowsell, COVID-19 Joint Response Team Co-Leads
DATE: July 8, 2020
SUBJECT: Update to Masking Guidelines for Health Care Workers

The Joint Response Team, in co-ordination with the Chief Public Health Office, is advising all health care workers of changes to the direction for use of medical masks in patient care settings.

Moving forward, **a medical mask is to be worn by all staff or physicians who cannot physically distance themselves at least two metres (six feet) away from patients.**

Staff are to follow extended use masking guidelines (attached), with an expected use of four masks per 12-hour shift.

Masks do not need to be worn in areas where a physical barrier, such as plexiglass, is used.

This change in practice is reflective of the growing movement in North America and around the world to implement greater use of masks to reduce the spread of COVID-19. While the risk in PEI is unchanged since last week and remains low due to a lack of community spread of the virus here, the use of masks in patient care settings when physical distancing cannot be maintained is now needed in light of evolving evidence and new recommendations from CPHO.

Clinical areas within Health PEI should evaluate their medical mask supply and contact their facility-based PPE champion to request additional masks if required.

Fee-for-service physicians who require additional PPE may reach out to the Medical Society of Prince Edward Island by contacting Donna Lamont at donna@mspei.org to access the provincial contingency stockpile for supplies.

Staff who do not provide direct patient care may choose to wear non-medical or cloth masks in health care facilities if they see fit or feel more comfortable doing so, however, those staff are responsible for procuring their own cloth mask and ensuring it is used properly. Guidance for use of non-medical masks is available on the [CPHO website by clicking here](#).

Also, as per the CPHO's strong recommendation regarding non-medical mask use by the public, all patients and visitors are encouraged to wear their own non-medical mask where possible and when unable to physically distance, except in Long Term Care where all visitors are required to wear a medical-grade mask when visiting inside.

Masks are most effective in protecting those around the person wearing them, rather than protecting the wearer themselves. Good screening protocols, hand hygiene and physical distancing where possible remain vital in containing the spread of COVID-19.

Please direct any questions you may have to your executive leader (CAO or Executive Director), who can ensure they are provided to the relevant Joint Response Team members in a timely manner.