



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

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TO: Public Health and Healthcare Providers in Missouri

FROM: Paula F. Nickelson, M.Ed., CHEP, Administrator, Office of Emergency Coordination
Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

DATE: March 6, 2020

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services is aware of concerns with the availability of appropriate PPE, including masks, as we continue to plan for the potential of one or more confirmed COVID-19 cases in Missouri and protect our responders during the rule out process of PUIs.

Summary of federal efforts:

We wanted to share information with you that ASPR recently shared on the federal efforts to increase the flow of PPE, including masks and N95 respirators. Dr. Laura Wolf from ASPR's Division of Critical Infrastructure Protection presented the following PPE strategies that are taking place at the federal level on a March 2, 2020 conference call:

1. Working with industry on expansion of domestic production
2. Prioritize N95 mask availability to healthcare workers and 1st responders; diversion from other industries such as construction
3. ASPR, CDC, NIOSH, and OSHA are working on conservation of product guidance including promoting conservation in other industries
4. Whole of Nation Communication Strategy – consistent and coordinated messaging

Alternate PPE supply resources:

We are re-sending two documents supplied a few days ago by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officers (ASTO). The first is a list of alternate PPE resource suppliers and the second is an analysis of the similarity of various PPE resources. Both may be useful as you consider alternative methods for meeting your PPE needs.

Your organization may also wish to consider purchasing a different type of particulate respirator than an N95, see the attached analyses of the differences in various types:

https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nppt/topics/respirators/disp_part/default.html

<https://wwwn.cdc.gov/niosh-cel/>

Some preliminary research at DHSS seems to indicate alternate particulate respirators, such as N99s and N100s, may not be as difficult to access as N95s at the current time.

Conservation of N95 respirators:

If you have not already, your organization should implement conservation strategies for existing PPE, including N95 respirators and may find this CDC guidance useful: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirators-strategy/index.html>.

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Continue to provide information about the availability of PPE resources:

There is an open EMResource PPE query where we are continually gathering updated information from healthcare facilities about the availability of various types of PPE. As well, the Bureau of EMS yesterday launched a renewed PPE query. This quantifiable, consistent information is extremely important in our discussions with CDC and ASPR regarding our needs.

Collaborate within the healthcare coalition:

We encourage open, collaborative planning within the healthcare coalition and with your partners. Perhaps there are opportunities for sharing or otherwise accessing resources with your healthcare coalition partners that have not been fully explored. For anyone receiving this correspondence not currently engaged with your healthcare coalition, attached is a map and contact information. We would encourage you to become involved in your healthcare coalition for ongoing partnering in planning, responding and recovering from emergencies/disasters – the healthcare coalitions are an invaluable resource.

Availability of state stockpiled PPE and SNS supplies:

We have received inquiries about accessing any state stockpiled PPE and potentially the federal Strategic National Stockpile (SNS). Missouri does not have extensive PPE stockpiled, we have some gowns, N95s, face/surgical masks and gloves. **Everything** in our state stockpile is more than 5 years old (except those resources recently purchased with ASPR Ebola funding which largely are not compatible with the recommended PPE for the COVID-19 response). However, we did recently receive notification from CDC that lot numbers and expiration dates corresponding to our N95 masks were assessed according to NIOSH standards in other states and they are approved for use.

Today, March 6, CDC announced that the resource requests could be received through the states for assets from the SNS. CDC is clear there are not adequate PPE supplies, specifically indicating not enough N95s, in the SNS for the needs nationally.

We are in the process of finalizing a request and approval process for distributing our state stockpiled PPE and SNS assets, this will be released to everyone receiving this correspondence when it is available.

However, it is fair to transparently state that the distribution and the decision process for allocation of available resources will likely not meet all the need. For your planning, our request and approval process will require any requesting entity to provide, at minimum, an indication of efforts at conserving/optimizing PPE and accessing alternate resources or supplies.

My contact information is Paula.Nickelson@health.mo.gov or 573-751-5264.

Thank you for your work, patience and collaboration during our integrated preparedness activities for COVID-19.