

March 27, 2020

Changes in Mask Distribution for the Healthcare Team

As northern Michigan faces the community spread of COVID-19 and a global shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE), Munson Healthcare is committed to the safety of our staff, patients, and the community.

As part of this commitment, Munson Healthcare is initially rolling out “universal masking” for any healthcare team member who has regular, direct contact (within six feet) with patients in the following areas:

- Emergency departments
- Urgent care clinics
- Walk-in clinics
- Home Health

These healthcare team members will have the option of using surgical masks if they so choose. They will also receive brown bags for storing their masks.

In an effort to conserve and properly utilize PPE, team members are expected to use the surgical masks provided until they become contaminated or soiled, are torn, or are hard to breathe through, which may mean using the same mask for multiple shifts. Providers in the care areas above will receive masks and brown bags following the process identified within that department.

Anyone who receives a surgical mask must follow these important guidelines:

- Store the surgical mask in the brown paper bag provided and label the bag with your name.
- Follow the instructions for donning and doffing surgical masks.
- Use the mask until visibly soiled or damaged or hard to breathe through

FAQ:

Why are these team members included in universal masking?

These departments were initially chosen because they are interacting closely with patients whose history and symptoms may not be fully known. As the situation with COVID-19 changes, other departments may be added to this list.

What if my department is not on the list, but I am in contact with a patient or visitor with a cough?

Any healthcare team member who believes they need a mask, based on the necessary precautions to interact with a patient, will always be able to wear the appropriate PPE. All staff should continue to follow the Munson Healthcare requirements for droplet contact protection and airborne contact protection. These are based on the COVID-19 safety guidelines established by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Can I bring in and use a mask from home?

Yes. However, we cannot guarantee the effectiveness of masks that are not distributed by Munson Healthcare, especially those that are homemade. In the event a team member needs to interact with a patient with isolation precautions, MHC PPE should be used and not their mask from home.

Those healthcare team members who are not directly involved in the care of a patient with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should follow the effective preventive measures everyone in the community is asked to do, which include performing hand hygiene frequently; avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth; practicing respiratory hygiene by coughing or sneezing into a bent elbow or tissue; maintaining social distance from individuals, especially those with respiratory symptoms; and wearing a mask if you have respiratory symptoms.

We are continuing to monitor this rapidly evolving situation. Now more than ever, it is critical that we all work together to use PPE correctly and appropriately.

Thank you for your support and cooperation during these challenging times. We will continue to keep you updated as things change.

