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February 22, 2021

MEMORANDUM TO: Anthony Dale, CEO, Ontario Hospital Association
Donna Duncan, CEO, Ontario Long-Term Care Home Association
Lisa Levin, CEO, AdvantAge
Cathy Hecimovich, CEO, Ontario Retirement Communities Association

FROM: Helen Angus, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health
Richard Steele, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care
Denise Cole, Deputy Minister, Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility
Greg Meredith, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development

SUBJECT: Access to Personal Protective Equipment

We are writing to provide an update about expectations regarding the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for workers in hospitals, long-term care homes and retirement homes during the COVID-19 pandemic, as part of our shared commitment to the safety of the health care workforce.

The Ontario government is continuously monitoring data related to COVID-19, including the variants of concern. On January 29, 2021, the Ontario government released [Ontario's six-point variant action plan](#), which enhances the existing coordinated and ongoing efforts of the province to prevent, detect, track, trace and contain the spread of COVID-19. Public Health Ontario also released updated [IPAC Recommendations for Use of Personal Protective Equipment for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19](#), which includes a reference to the primacy of Directive 5.

The Ministry of Health confirms that Directive 5, updated on October 8, 2020, is the framework in place for the use of PPE in hospitals and long-term care homes. In addition, in accordance with O. Reg 68/20 made under the *Retirement Homes Act*, retirement homes must take all

reasonable steps to follow the required precautions in the Directive. Directive 5 states that where it conflicts with another Directive, Directive 5 takes precedence. **Directive 5 is the provincial baseline standard for provision of personal protective equipment for hospitals, long term care homes and retirement homes.**

In recognition of our shared commitment to occupational health and safety, the ministries are writing to support the continued implementation of Directive 5.

- The ministries request that employers review all guidance, policies, procedures and practices for management and staff to ensure alignment with Directive 5. This includes clarity that N-95 respirators or equivalent protection can be accessed by workers based on a point-of-care risk assessment (PCRA) or workers determination, depending on the circumstance.
 - Directive 5 clarifies the role of the PCRA for accessing N-95 respirators for both regulated and unregulated health care workers, even if not performing Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures (AGMPs). It also outlines how an unregulated worker in a setting in outbreak can determine whether an N-95 respirator or equivalent is needed.
 - Employers are reminded that they are not to deny a worker access to an N-95 respirator when the process outlined in Directive 5 has been followed.
 - An updated [Directive 5 FAQ](#), dated February 19, is attached.
- As employers continue in their stewardship role of ensuring an adequate supply of PPE, if they are having difficulty in securing adequate supplies of N-95 respirators, they are encouraged to access provincial stockpiles following the steps described in Appendix A, below. Employers should regularly review inventory to ensure they have adequate supplies and not resort to using expired products. In extraordinary circumstances, where efforts to secure timely PPE have not been successful, and where PPE has expired, the ministries expect employers to be guided by Ontario Health's [Optimizing the Supply of Personal Protective Equipment During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).
- Fit testing may be required on an ongoing basis to support new workers or to respond to the availability of different sizes of respirators. For access to fit testing resources for long-term care homes and retirement homes, please refer to Appendix B, below.
- The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development has put in place a mechanism to provide an urgent inspector response to complaints in the health care and retirement home sectors. This includes where workers have conducted a PCRA, have determined a certain level of PPE is required and are not being provided with that level of PPE. This service is available at the Occupational Health and Safety Contact Centre during regular business hours at 1-877-202-0008 and at the Spills Action Centre after hours at 416-325-3000.

The government continues to monitor the supply of PPE and is taking steps to ensure adequate supply through the spring and summer.

The provision and correct use of PPE is one part of successful occupational health and infection prevention and control (IPAC) practices. The ministries recognize that there may be new workers on site at any given time, requiring a process of continued training and on-site information resources and guidance about PPE access and IPAC practices. For access to IPAC expertise, employers can engage their local IPAC hub or contact EOCoperations.moh@ontario.ca.

The ministries recognize that employers and unions have local processes in place to address issues related to compliance with Directive 5 and other guidance and directives related to IPAC.

Health care workers are the most important resource Ontario has in our response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for your continued commitment to their safety.

Sincerely,



Helen Angus



Richard Steele



Denise Cole



Greg Meredith

- c: Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Matthew Anderson, CEO, Ontario Health
Erin Hannah, Associate Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care
Melanie Fraser, Associate Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health
Jay O'Neill, CEO and Registrar, Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority
Katha Fortier, Assistant to the National President, UNIFOR
Michael Hurley, Regional VP Ontario, CUPE
Vicki McKenna, Provincial President, Ontario Nurses' Association
Sharleen Stewart, President, SEIU
Warren (Smokey) Thomas, President, OPSEU

Appendix A: Supports for Requesting Alternate or Emergency Supplies of N95s

For organizations that have not exhausted all efforts to conserve supplies and procure their own stock through the established escalation process:

For hospitals or long-term-care homes that are looking to expand alternate inventories to obtain Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – employers can access the [Workplace PPE Supplier Directory](#).

For organizations that have exhausted all efforts to conserve supplies and procure their own stock through the established escalation process:

Organizations can request their emergency N95 supply through the Critical Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Swab Kit: Intake Form that is typically used for requests for critical PPE.

The Critical Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Swab Kit: Intake Process for Central, North, Toronto and East Region is outlined below:

1. Complete the Urgent Pandemic Supply Request on behalf of your long-term care home or hospital ([eHealth Ontario | It's Working For You](#)). Requests should be issued for single sites only (i.e., requests will be accepted individually for each long-term care home or hospital, rather than groups). Complete the intake form to the best of your ability – irrelevant fields will be disregarded as requests are reviewed and processed.
2. Select your organization type and check the “Personal Protective Equipment” box and confirm that your organization has a supply shortage of under 14 days of stock despite following the Ontario Health escalation process.

What will you be requesting today?

☒ Personal Protective Equipment

NOTE: The statement below should be selected in order to proceed.

☒ By selecting this box, your organization confirms it still has a supply shortage of under 14 days of stock despite following Steps 1-3* and requires PPE from the pandemic stockpile to continue providing services. Additionally, I have verified or will verify and confirm that any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) I receive from Ontario Health will remain in Ontario, and will be used for direct patient care. Further, the PPE received will not be resold or redistributed without the express written consent of Ontario Health.

3. Complete your ‘Organization Details’, ‘Requestor Details’ and ‘Shipping Details’.
4. Under ‘Item Type’ select N95 Mask for Regular Supply
5. Select the mask type you are ordering under ‘Description’. Note that you may request multiple models of the three that are available (3M 8210, Halyard Fluidshield 46726, Halyard Fluidshield 46827).
6. Indicate the number of staff who are using the specific N95 model requested within a given 24-hour period. Note that fit testing and user training is required prior to use.

Please indicate the number of staff who require this model of respirator per day (i.e. 24-hour period) *(This is defined as a Health Care Worker or Regulated Health Professional who delivers care to suspected, probable or confirmed COVID patients. Per IPAC guidelines, homes should cohort patients with suspected, probable or confirmed COVID-19, assign designated teams of health care providers, and batch patient encounters to help conserve the use of PPE.)* *

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This number should reflect the number of patient-facing clinical staff that are working on site per day (i.e. 24-hour period); it does not refer to the total number of Full-Time Equivalents at your organization)

7. Complete the remainder of the form, ensuring that all mandatory form fields have been completed prior to submitting the form. Mandatory fields that are not relevant to this allocation will be disregarded.
8. Confirm ability to receive aged, donated, or expired product. Note that this product is provided for use during fit testing only and is not intended for regular use. Please also be advised that a waiver is required to be submitted for this request. The provider will receive a copy of the waiver (Agreement for Expired or Donated PPE) in the automated email generated upon submission of this request.

Certain PPE is only available in the Provincial Stockpile as either aged, expired or donated. When requests are being assessed, providing PPE that is not aged, expired or donated will always be the first option considered. In those cases where that is not an option for the PPE requested, please confirm if your organization is willing to receive aged, expired or donated supplies below.

☒ Aged ☒ Donated ☒ Expired ☐ No

9. The Ontario Health regions will review incoming requests, assess for reasonableness, and escalate to the MOH. Product will be provided using an ethical approach. Organizations may expect regions to follow-up on requests for clarification.
10. Orders may take 5-10 days to ship, however delays may be expected depending on volumes. Shipments to homes or hospitals currently in outbreak will be prioritized.

The Urgent Pandemic Supply Request Process for organizations in the West Region is outlined below:

1. Complete the Urgent Pandemic Supply Request on behalf of your long-term care home or hospital ([eHealth Ontario | It's Working For You](#)). Note: Please select “Critical Personal..... **With WEST LHIN(s)**”. Requests should be issued for single sites only (i.e., requests will be accepted individually for each long-term care home or hospital, rather than groups). Complete the intake form to the best of your ability – irrelevant fields will be disregarded as requests are reviewed and processed.
2. Select “PPE Order Forms”.
3. Go to the heading ‘Option 3 – Additional Programs or Allocations’.
4. To request N95s, go to the heading ‘Option 3 – Additional Programs or Allocations’ and select “N95 Respirator Order Form”
5. Complete the Consent, General, and Contact Detail pages. Select your organization type and check the “Personal Protective Equipment” box and confirm that your organization has a supply shortage of under 14 days of stock despite following the Ontario Health escalation process.

What will you be requesting today?

☒ Personal Protective Equipment

☒ By selecting this box, your organization confirms it still has a supply shortage of under 7 days of stock despite following Steps 1-3* and requires PPE from the pandemic stockpile to continue providing services. Additionally, I have verified or will verify and confirm that any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) I receive from Ontario Health will remain in Ontario, and will be used for direct patient care. Further, the PPE received will not be resold or redistributed without the express written consent of Ontario Health.

6. Complete your ‘Organization Details’, ‘Requestor Details’ and ‘Shipping Details’
7. Under ‘Item Type’ select N95 Mask for Regular Supply
8. Select the mask type you are ordering under ‘Description’. Note that you may request multiple models of the three that are available (3M 8210, Halyard Fluidshield 46726, Halyard Fluidshield 46827).
9. Indicate the number of staff who are using the specific N95 model requested within a given 24-hour period. Note that fit testing and user training is required prior to use.

Please indicate the number of staff who require this model of respirator per day (i.e. 24-hour period) *(This is defined as a Health Care Worker or Regulated Health Professional who delivers care to suspected, probable or confirmed COVID patients. Per IPAC guidelines, homes should cohort patients with suspected, probable or confirmed COVID-19, assign designated teams of health care providers, and batch patient encounters to help conserve the use of PPE.)**

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This number should reflect the number of patient-facing clinical staff that are working on site per day (i.e. 24-hour period); it does not refer to the total number of Full-Time Equivalents at your organization)

10. Complete the remainder of the form, ensuring that all mandatory form fields have been completed prior to submitting the form. Mandatory fields that are not relevant to this allocation will be disregarded.
11. Confirm ability to receive aged, donated, or expired product. Note that this product is provided for use during fit testing only and is not intended for regular use. Please also be advised that a waiver is required to be submitted for this request. The provider will receive a copy of the waiver

(Agreement for Expired or Donated PPE) in the automated email generated upon submission of this request.

Certain PPE is only available in the Provincial Stockpile as either aged, expired or donated. When requests are being assessed, providing PPE that is not aged, expired or donated will always be the first option considered. In those cases where that is not an option for the PPE requested, please confirm if your organization is willing to receive aged, expired or donated supplies below.

☒ Aged ☒ Donated ☒ Expired ☐ No

12. The Ontario Health regions will review incoming requests, assess for reasonableness, and escalate to the MOH. Product will be provided using an ethical approach. Organizations may expect regions to follow-up on requests for clarification.
13. Orders may take 5-10 days to ship, however delays may be expected depending on volumes. Shipments to homes or hospitals currently in outbreak will be prioritized.

Appendix B: How to Access N95 Fit Testing

The below continuum of actions can be taken to secure fit test support:

1. Train an in-house fit tester to support ongoing fit test needs
2. Engage an external fit test service
3. Request fit test support through the Critical PPE Escalation Portal (applicable to LTC and RH sectors only)

1. Train an in-house fit tester who can support ongoing fit test needs

As the provincial stock will continue to vary subject to global supply constraints, local demand, and disease prevalence, it is highly encouraged that hospitals and long-term care homes identify individuals to become designated fit-testers and participate in train the trainer education, which is delivered by Public Services Health & Safety Association (PSHSA) - <https://www.pshsa.ca/courses/training-the-fit-tester-for-respiratory-protection-distance-learning-training-program>. Trainees must have access to a fit testing kit to conduct the training and to deliver fit testing to staff. This option allows ongoing fit testing to be conducted in-house in case availability of respirators shifts to new models.

Masks for the purposes of fit testing can be requested through the [Critical PPE Escalation Portal](#). Please use the correct link for the West Region vs. the common link for the Toronto, Central, North and East regions. The province will send respirators for fit testing that are in sustainable volumes of supply, so that, if required, organizations can request product from the province for regular use. Note: expired masks may be sent to support fit testing.

2. Engage an External Fit Tester

A list of organizations in Ontario that provide fit test services is at the end of this document. This list is not exhaustive and includes only examples of vendors that providers may contact for fit test services. Employers who require fit testing for their staff are encouraged to contact one of these vendors or to identify another qualified service provider to schedule an appointment. N95 respirator supply to support fit testing can be requested through the [Critical PPE Escalation Portal](#).

Please note employers are responsible for the cost of fit testing. Request fit test support via the Critical PPE Escalation Portal.

3. Request fit test support through the Critical PPE Escalation portal

Long-term care homes and retirement homes can request fit test support through the Critical Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Swab Kit: Intake Form that is typically used for requests for critical PPE.

The Critical Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Swab Kit: Intake Process for all regions is outlined below:

- i. Complete the Critical Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Swab Kit: Intake Form on behalf of your long-term care home or hospital ([eHealth Ontario | It's Working For You](#)). Requests should be issued for single sites only (i.e., requests will be accepted individually for each long-term care home or hospital, not groups). Complete the intake form to the best of your ability. Note that certain mandatory fields may not be applicable to this program. For example, this checkbox below must be selected in Remedy to proceed, as it is an attestation to your consent however it is not relevant to this program.

☒ By selecting this box, your organization confirms it still has a supply shortage of under 14 days of stock despite following Steps 1-3* and requires PPE from the pandemic stockpile to continue providing services. Additionally, I have verified or will verify and confirm that any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) I receive from Ontario Health will remain in Ontario, and will be used for direct patient care. Further, the PPE received will not be resold or redistributed without the express written consent of Ontario Health.

- ii. For organizations in the Central, North, Toronto and East Region, select “Make a Request” in the LHIN-agnostic box.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)
Critical Personal Protective Equipment
(PPE) and/or Swab Kit Requests

[Make a Request](#)

- iii. For organizations in the West Region, select “Make a Request” in the box specified for West LHINs.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)
Critical Personal Protective Equipment
(PPE) and/or Swab Kit Requests
with WEST LHIN(s)

[Make a Request](#)

- a. Select “PPE Order Forms”.
- b. Go to the heading ‘Option 3 – Additional Programs or Allocations’.
- c. To request N95s, go to the heading ‘Option 3 – Additional Programs or Allocations’ and select “N95 Respirator Order Form”.
- iv. Under “General”, select your organization type and check the “Personal Protective Equipment” box.

What will you be requesting today?

☒ Personal Protective Equipment

- v. Complete your 'Organization Details', 'Requestor Details' and 'Shipping Details'.
- vi. Select "N95/Respirator Fit Testing Support" under item type.
- vii. The "N/A" under the Description field will be pre-selected for this Item Type.
- viii. Indicate the # of staff that require fit testing under "Quantity".

Item Type:	Description:	Quantity: (Number of Staff)	Preferred Timeline: (Please note priority response is in effect)
N95/Respirator Fit Testing Support▼	n/a	40 <small>(It is important to note the total number of staff that require fit testing, not the total number of staff you have employed)</small>	5 Days▼

- ix. Indicate "Yes" if your organization requires a supply of N95s to fit test staff to or "No" if you have supply on hand to accommodate staff fit testing.

Do you require a supply of N95 respirators (including elastomerics and other respirators)? (Please note: There is a cost for fit testing services that must be covered by your home/hospital. The cost will be determined once your needs are reviewed.)

☐ Yes ☐ No

- x. Indicate whether you will require user training of staff to use the respirators.
- xi. Complete the rest of the form to the best of your ability, ensuring that all mandatory form fields have been completed.
- xii. Your organization will receive an email from Ontario Health with more information on the Fit-Testing Support Process.
- xiii. Requests will be prioritized according to need and you will be contacted by Levitt Safety for an initial consultation.

After your request has been submitted

- xiv. If you require N95 supply, **please request supply to conduct fit testing AFTER you have been contacted for an initial consultation by Levitt Safety.** Your needs will be assessed, and you will be instructed to submit an additional request for N95s for fit testing through the Critical Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Swab Kit: Intake Form.
- xv. Once this consultation has occurred, complete Critical Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Swab Kit: Intake Form on behalf of your site.
- xvi. Select "N95 Mask for Fit Testing" under Item Type.

- xvii. Select the Item Type and quantity to request as discussed during your consultation. You will likely have to issue multiple requests to select the products you have been instructed to order by Levitt Safety.

Item Type:	Description:	Quantity: (Number of Staff)	Timeline Required: (Please note, only items with less than 7 days on hand can be submitted through this intake process.)
<div>N95 Mask for Fit Testing</div>	<div>Halyard Fluidshield 46727</div>	<div>40</div> <div>(It is important to note the total number of staff that require fit testing, not the total number of staff you have employed)</div>	<div>5 Days</div>

- xviii. Confirm ability to receive aged, donated, or expired product. Note that this product is provided for use during fit testing only and is not intended for regular use. Please also be advised that a waiver is required to be submitted for this request.

Certain PPE is only available in the Provincial Stockpile as either aged, expired or donated. When requests are being assessed, providing PPE that is not aged, expired or donated will always be the first option considered. In those cases where that is not an option for the PPE requested, please confirm if your organization is willing to receive aged, expired or donated supplies below.

☒ Aged ☒ Donated ☒ Expired ☐ No

The provider will receive a copy of the waiver ([Agreement for Expired or Donated PPE](#)) in the automated email generated upon submission of this request.

- xix. Complete the rest of the form, ensuring that all mandatory form fields have been completed prior to submitting the form.

Organization	Phone Number	Email if Applicable
1 Contact Safety Training & Consulting	416-822-5925	info@1contactsafety.ca
Act First Safety	416-283-7233	safety@actfirstsafety.ca
Active Training Solutions	905-767-8447	
ACUTE Environmental	519-747-5075	info@acuteservices.com
AEC Safety	519-746-3518	
Algonquin Safety Training	705-223-0120	Admin@algsafety.ca
Barantas Inc.	1-855-FUL-SAFE	info@barantas.ca
Bullivant and Associates	289-779-6760	
Canadian Safety Group	905-321-9901 or 905-401-0088	info@canadiansafetygroup.com
Hamisco	519-652-9800	sales@hamisco.com
Hazmasters	877-747-7117	connect@hazmasters.com
HeartZap	1-866-764-8488	
Help Safety Services	905-821-8928	help@helpsafetyservices.com
Industrial Education Cooperative	519-383-1222	
Industrial Safety Trainers	1-800-219-8660	
KMC Safety Solutions	519-521 2744	info@kmcsafety.com
Major McGuire	519-944-9999	info@majorsmcguire.com
Northern Safety Solutions -	705-524-8189	info@nss4.com
Occupational Health & Safety Consultants	519-758-0146	admin@ohsconsultants.ca
Restoration Safety	416-799-9614	
Rubicon Safety	London: 519-551-9383; Burlington: 416-999-9304	
Safety Guys Ottawa	613-549-6941	
Spark Safety Solutions	844-267-8600	office@sparksafety.ca
STS Group Inc.	416-635-7800	info@stscanada.com
TGH Safety Consultant	519-383-7655	ccooper@tghsafety.com
Workplace Law Consulting	416-930-6180	wpl@workplacelawconsulting.com
Workplace Safety & Prevention Association	905-614-1400	customercare@wsps.ca
Worksite Safety Compliance Centre Inc	866-756-5552	