GUIDELINES FOR REUSE OF N95 RESPIRATORS

At this time, the available supply of N95 respirators is limited nationwide, and there is a need to maximize the lifespan of each N95 mask. Existing Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) guidelines recommend a combination of approaches to conserve supplies while safeguarding healthcare workers and first responders in such circumstances.

Safe N95 reuse is affected by a number of variables that impact respirator function and contamination over time. While there is no way to determine the exact number of safe reusages of an N95 mask, the general rule is to use the mask until it is obviously damaged, soiled, wet, or becomes hard to breathe through. Particularly during this time of national shortage, **N95 masks are not intended to be used once and then disposed.** Future requests for N95 masks will not be able to be fulfilled unless all individuals and organizations reuse their N95 masks multiple times.

The following is a partial list of considerations to help preserve the masks for reuse:

- Hang used respirators in a designated storage area or keep them in a clean, breathable container such as a paper bag between uses. To minimize potential cross-contamination, store respirators so that they do not touch each other and the person using the respirator is clearly identified. Storage containers should be disposed of or cleaned regularly.
- Clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after touching or adjusting the respirator. Only touch the respirator if adjustment is necessary for comfort or to maintain fit.
- Avoid touching the inside of the respirator. If inadvertent contact is made with the inside of the respirator, discard the respirator and perform hand hygiene as described above.

Please refer to the CDC website for a full set of guidelines (see [https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hcwcontrols/recommendedguidanceextuse.html](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hcwcontrols/recommendedguidanceextuse.html)).

These recommendations are not intended to replace your organization’s policies regarding personal protective equipment. They are intended to supplement those policies to help reduce demand of existing limited supplies.