

# COVID-19 Provider Update

Friday, April 3, 2020

## Important Update Regarding Precautions Categories and N95 Respirator Masks

With the safety and well-being of our colleagues front and center, we continue to evolve our policies and procedures to respond to current circumstances. The rising level of community exposure and transmission of COVID-19, coupled with our increasing confidence in our Supply Chain, have prompted us to make the following changes, effective April 2.

We are eliminating the category of Enhanced Droplet Precautions and instead all suspected and confirmed COVID-19 patients will be placed in Quarantine Precautions.

Additionally, we are updating our mask policy. N95 masks will now be issued to:

- All colleagues working in the Emergency Department (ED)
- Direct caregivers in the Intensive Care (ICU), Medical Surgical, and Maternal Child Health units with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patients

For the ED, N95 masks will be provided daily by the charge nurse or department leader for colleagues to wear continuously, if tolerated throughout their shift, only to be removed while eating or drinking or having difficulty breathing. For the ICU, Medical Surgical, and Maternity units, N95 masks will be issued to colleagues caring for or entering the rooms of confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patients.

Universal masking will continue – facemasks will be distributed daily for colleagues to wear throughout the day.

Please remember that conservation of our PPE supply is essential. More information on how to care for and extend the use of our N95 masks will be shared shortly.

We are especially grateful to our Supply Chain colleagues working tirelessly to bring you this additional level of protection.

## Government and Small Business Assistance

This week, new and expanded programs were announced to provide financial relief for small businesses, including providers. Detailed information on the following programs may be accessed on [Digital 411](#).

- The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) has created the [Small Business Emergency Assistance Grant Program](#). Grant applications will be reviewed and considered in order received, but they will not be added to the queue until all required information is provided.
- The U.S. Small Business Administration is offering low-interest federal disaster loans for working capital to small businesses suffering substantial economic injury as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19).
- The CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program authorizes the use of forgivable loans to small businesses to pay their employees during the COVID-19 crisis.

- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has expanded the Accelerated and Advance Payments Program to increase cash flow to providers of services and suppliers impacted by the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The expansion now covers a broader group of Medicare Part A providers and Part B suppliers but is only for the duration of the public health emergency.

### **NJ Case Summary Report Available**

The [Communicable Disease Service COVID-19 Confirmed Case Summary report](#) provides information on New Jersey's laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases. The report is organized by patient age and gender, severe outcomes, geographic distribution and timing of illness onset. It also displays trends on COVID-19 testing. Expect the report to be updated and posted each day on [CDS's COVID-19 webpage for Public Health Professionals](#). State officials note that the report is based on a snapshot of CDRSS data as of the indicated date and time and may not match information collected by local jurisdictions.

### **NJ Executive Orders**

This week, Governor Phil Murphy issued new executive orders to support the state's PPE supply chain and clinical resources.

- Executive order 113 formally authorizes the State Police to commandeer supplies and equipment, including N95 masks, ventilators and other PPE. In a related event, the U.S. Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services announced they will distribute PPE seized from hoarders to those on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response in New York and New Jersey.
- Executive Order 112 authorizes the Division of Consumer Affairs to temporarily reactivate the licenses of recently retired healthcare professionals and grant temporary licenses to doctors licensed in foreign countries. The executive order also temporarily permits certain health care professionals to perform acts outside of their ordinary scope of practice.

### **FDA updates blood donation guidance to spur giving**

In an effort to encourage more blood donations, the Food and Drug Administration is revisiting and updating several existing policies to help ensure an adequate-but-safe national blood supply. To account for COVID-19, the agency is providing [notice of alternatives](#) to certain blood donor eligibility requirements for the duration of the pandemic. Among other changes, the guidance allows blood centers to reduce donation deferral periods for certain categories of blood donors from 12 months to three, and includes revised recommendations for reducing risk for HIV, Malaria and Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease.

### **Being Here for Good Allows Us to Move Forward, Even When Times Are Tough**

Virtua is using video and audio to deliver COVID-19-related messages to colleagues and the community at large. Check out our latest messages:

- Virtua C President and CEO [Dennis Pullin](#) addresses the fears and uncertainties we are all experiencing, while offering his conviction that Virtua Health is truly Here for Good.
- [Dr. Marty Topiel](#), Virtua Chief of Infectious Diseases, talks about his relationship with Dr. Anthony Fauci — the face of the White House's coronavirus response, the challenge facing

clinicians addressing the virus, and the important steps you can take to help control the spread and save lives.

- [Dr. Sam Weiner](#), primary care physician and medical director of Virtua Health, gives advice on how to best utilize primary care providers during the coronavirus pandemic.
- [Dr. Nicole Lamborne](#), Program Director of Women's Health at Virtua, discusses this precious time and precautions Virtua is taking to keep moms and babies safe.
- [Dr. Robert Barrucco](#), a cardiologist at Virtua Health, reminds us not to ignore other health issues like a potential heart attack.
- SVP and Chief Philanthropy Officer, [Sarah Fawcett-Lee](#), takes a moment to talk about Virtua's Coronavirus Emergency Fund, established to help support the important work Virtua is doing to meet the growing needs of the community.
- [Cory Booker](#), U.S. Senator for New Jersey, thanks all Virtua colleagues for doing the critical work of caring for the members of our community under unprecedented challenges.