
NEW MEXICO HEALTH ALERT NETWORK (HAN)

ADVISORY

Recommendations for Optimizing Use of Personal Protective Equipment in a Healthcare Setting

03/06/2020

The New Mexico Department of Health encourages healthcare providers to follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for infection control hierarchy. Controlling exposures to occupational hazards is a fundamental way to protect personnel. Multiple control strategies can be implemented concurrently and or sequentially. This hierarchy is listed from most effective to least effective:

- Elimination – Physically remove the hazard
- Engineering controls – Isolate people from the hazard
- Administrative controls – Change the way people work
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) – Protect the worker with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Additional CDC guidance and best practice recommendations for Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Confirmed COVID-19 or Persons Under Investigation in Healthcare Settings can be found at

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/index.html>

The Federal Government has approved a multi-billion-dollar package to support the response to COVID-19 and manufacturers and distributors of personal protective equipment (PPE) have been requested to increase production, however PPE conservation strategies are still recommended because of the time it will take to implement additional manufacturing and distribution. Some conservation strategies recommended by the CDC and endorsed by NMDOH include:

- Reduce face-to-face HCP encounters with patients (e.g., bundling activities, use of video monitoring)
- Cohort patients: Group together patients who are infected with the same organism to confine their care to one area
- Cohort HCP: Assign designated teams of HCP to provide care for all patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19
- Use alternatives to N95 respirators where feasible (e.g., other disposable filtering facepiece respirators,

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- elastomeric respirators with appropriate filters or cartridges, powered air purifying respirators)
- Decrease length of hospital stay for medically stable patients with COVID-19 who cannot be discharged to home for social reasons by identifying alternative non-hospital housing
- Use N95 respirators beyond the manufacturer-designated shelf life for training and fit testing

Additional CDC guidance and best practice recommendations for Healthcare Supply of Personal Protective Equipment can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/healthcare-supply-ppe-index.html>

For immediate assistance or further guidance, please contact the
New Mexico Department of Health – Emergency Operations Center Representative
(NMDOH EOCR) 24/7/365 at (505) 231-5506