

# COVID-19 UPDATE

## Keeping You Safe



Thunder Bay Regional  
Health Sciences  
Centre

To: All Hospital and Health Research Institute staff and professional staff

From: Dr. Stewart Kennedy, COVID-19 Incident Manager

Date: Sunday April 5, 2020

RE: **REVISED: Distribution and use of procedural masks**

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The health and safety of all staff and professional staff is our utmost priority. The distribution and use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is of particular concern for everyone. Decisions have been difficult to make and are impacted by global shortages. The protection of all health care workers is our highest priority. This at times must be balanced with supply issues. Thank you for your input. Like all of you, I wish there was an unlimited supply. The reality is that, unless conservation efforts are made now, our current supply of procedural masks and other PPE supplies will not last. However, I trust together we will safely manage through this crisis by making the right decisions.

After careful consideration and review of evidence from Ontario Health, our Hospital is implementing a **procedural mask conservation plan**.

Effective immediately, procedural masks will be provided as follows for use by staff and professional staff working in **Areas with Unknown Risk of Exposure**.

Emergency Department: All staff will be provided two masks per shift.

All other Areas of Unknown Risk of Exposure: Two masks per shift will be provided to staff providing direct patient care. All others will be provided one mask per shift. This applies to:

- Renal Dialysis;
- Cancer Centre;
- Labour and Delivery;
- Diagnostic Imaging;
- Outpatient areas that are still open.

Masks will be distributed by Managers or designates and are to be worn at all times while patients are present. More information regarding proper usage and storage will be provided. To replace soiled masks, please see your manager or designate.

**Support staff should check with Manager or designate before entering an Area of Unknown Risk.**

**Staff and professional staff working in Areas with Unknown Risk of Exposure for a short duration (less than 15 minutes) and that can maintain physical distancing from**

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**patients should not wear a procedural mask.** In all other situations, standard PPE procedures should be followed.

Please refer to policy ICP-2-16 (Management of Novel Respiratory Infections) for more information.

Proper management of PPE equipment and supplies is vital to maintain their availability to all staff and professional staff throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Our Hospital is investigating safe evidence-based options to repurpose select PPE. We will inform you as soon as possible.

These measures are implemented for your health and safety.

In addition to the conservation plan outlined above, cloth reusable masks with polymeric filters have been ordered and are expected to be delivered shortly. More information regarding their proper usage will be provided.

For more information or to discuss any concerns, please contact your Manager.

All Hospital COVID-19 pandemic updates are available on the iNtranet at <https://comms.tbrhsc.net/covid-19-information/>.

Please contact TBDHU for more information regarding COVID-19 screening at 1-888-294-6630 or [www.tbdhu.com/coronavirus](http://www.tbdhu.com/coronavirus). More information is also available at <https://files.ontario.ca/moh-coronavirus-info-sheet-english-2020-02-18.pdf>