

TO: Adult Day Services, Assisted Living Facilities, Visiting Nurses Services, Correctional and Detention Facilities, Dental Facilities, Dialysis Facilities, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Police Forces, Fire Departments, Hospitals, Inpatient Psychiatric Care Facilities, Nursing Homes, Primary Care and Community Health Centers, and Therapeutic Community Residence and Recovery Facilities

FROM: William Irwin, Sc.D., Department of Health Representative, State Emergency Operations Center

Guidance on N95 Respirator Sterilization in Your Region

Background

This message is for those who use respiratory protection in Vermont for health care purposes during the COVID-19 response. There is a global shortage of N95 respirators, which is expected to last for the coming months. As Vermont works to preserve the supply of N95 respirators, your facilities' and emergency services' respiratory protection programs should implement safe mitigation strategies to help preserve supply.

Requested Actions:

- **Use respirators as the last choice in respiratory protection.** Engineering and administrative controls that reduce exposure to hazards must be exhausted first. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) strategies for optimizing the supply of N95 respirators are found [here](#).
- **Ensure respirators are used only by those who actually need it.** There are many people whose work only requires a medical procedure mask or a cloth face covering. Conserve commercially produced surgical masks for hospital or ambulatory care surgical procedures. Vermont Department of Health guidance for many occupations is found [here](#).
- **Save N95s and get them sterilized at one of nine hospitals providing this local service.** The State Emergency Operations Center has provided seven hospitals with Steris V-Pro low temperature hydrogen peroxide sterilizing units. These units are typically used for sterilizing other medical devices but were granted Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to sterilize certain N95 respirators. In addition, Northwestern Medical Center and Central Vermont Medical Center have graciously extended this service using their previously existing sterilizing units.
- **Contact the hospital in your area for their guidance on packaging and transporting N95 respirators for sterilization.** – *See list of hospitals and contacts below.* Generally, respirators for sterilization must be clean, with no writing and no lipstick or other

makeup. Discard soiled or damaged respirators in accordance following your facility procedures and sterilize only used respirators that are in good condition. The sterilizing facility may not return respirators if they are too soiled for sterilization or too damaged for reuse.

The Steris V-Pro system can effectively decontaminate numerous N95 respirators up to 10 times. The Vermont and nationally tested and acceptable respirator types for V-Pro sterilization include 3M models 8000, 8210, 1860, 1860S, 1870P, and 9205+; Moldex models 1510Z, 1511, 1512, 1513, and 1517; and Honeywell model DC365.

Hospitals providing sterilization services for N95 respirators with their points of contact:

Hospital	Point of Contact
Brattleboro Memorial Hospital	Mike Geissler, mgeissler@bmhvt.org ; 802-257-8228
Central Vermont Medical Center	Keith Sherwood, 802-225-7808; Keith.Sherwood@cvmc.org
North Country Hospital	Michael Sanville; msanville@nchsi.org ; 802-334-3270
Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital	Pete Tomczyk; p.tomczyk@nvrh.org ; 802-748-7348
Northwest Medical Center	Deirdre Young; dyoung@nmcinc.org ; 802-524-1062
Rutland Regional Medical Center	Brian Olsen; bolsen@rrmc.org ; 802-747-3647
Southwestern Vermont Medical Center	Joy Bull; Joy.Bull@svhealthcare.org ; 802-440-8927 or Tanya Cowder; Tanya.Cowder@svhealthcare.org ; 802-442-6361
Springfield Hospital	Nicole Young; nyoung@springfieldmed.org ; 802-885-7489
University of Vermont Medical Center	Drew Robinson; Andrew.Robinson@uvmhealth.org ; 802-847-4258

Questions? Contact the HAN Coordinator at 802-859-5900 or vthan@vermont.gov.

HAN Message Type Definitions

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Info Service Message: Provides general correspondence from VDH, which is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.