

Frequently Asked Questions for CMOH COVID-19 Directive #5

For Hospitals within the meaning of the Public Hospitals Act

1. Does this mean that every nurse gets a N95 whenever they ask for it?

The directive continues to reinforce that droplet precautions are necessary for nurses for all interactions with suspected, presumed or confirmed COVID-19 patients.

Based on a PCRA, a nurse may determine that other precautions are necessary, including a N95 respirator, given the unique patient presentation.

The directive also continues to reinforce that a N95 respirator is required for an AGMP.

Finally, hospitals are reminded that they should be utilizing a combination of administrative and engineering controls to minimize the need for any PPE. The PCRA should not just be limited to only PPE measures and there should be an assessment of other health and safety measures that could be utilized to reduce the risk of harm.

2. What if after conducting a PCRA it is determined that certain PPE is required and the supply is not available?

The employer and employee should explore alternative health and safety measures, including alternative PPE options, in order to minimize the risk of harm to the employee and patients.

3. What does this mean for an assessment centre where nurses are screening patients for COVID-19?

Droplet precautions continue to be the advised for nurses at assessment centres.

In atypical patient presentation, based on a PCRA, a nurse may determine that other precautions are necessary, including a N95 respirator, given the unique patient presentation.

The PCRA should not just be limited to only PPE measures and there should be an assessment of other health and safety measures that could be utilized to reduce the risk of harm.

4. What happens if the hospital disagrees with what is appropriate health and safety measures following their PCRA?

The employer and employee should review whether there are additional health and safety measures that should be implemented and this discussion should not just be limited to access to a N95 respirator. If there are other options, then the employer and employee should implement these first. If after this assessment the worker determines based on their professional and clinical judgement that a N95 respirator is the appropriate health and safety measure, then the employer must not unreasonably deny access to this PPE.