

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 9, 2020

Department of Health Orders Further COVID-19 Protections for Hospital Staff

Harrisburg, PA - The Pennsylvania Department of Health today issued an [order](#) requiring that all hospitals take additional steps to further protect their staff and patients from COVID-19. The order requires all hospitals to develop, implement and adhere to safety measures by Monday, June 15.

“Across Pennsylvania, nurses and other front-line workers are treating patients around the clock in hospitals fighting the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine. “Many hospitals are already taking steps to protect their staff from this dangerous virus as much as possible. I have heard from nurses and staff, and this Order responds directly to many of their safety concerns. It ensures that the necessary steps are in place to deliver a safer environment so these workers can continue providing high-quality care during these extraordinary times.”

The Order addresses several concerns raised by nurses and other front-line workers. It requires hospitals to develop, implement and adhere to the following policies and procedures that provide for the safety of the hospital staff and patients by:

- ? Notifying hospital staff members who have been in close-contact with a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case within 24 hours of the known contact and provide instruction for quarantine and work exclusion.
- ? Testing symptomatic and asymptomatic hospital staff members who have received notice of a close contact with a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case upon request.
- ? Procuring and distributing nationally approved respirators to the hospital staff member when the staff member determines the mask is soiled, damaged or otherwise ineffective.
- ? Requiring universal masking for all individuals entering the hospital facility except for people for whom wearing a mask would create a further health risk or individuals under age 2.

These safety policies and procedures must be developed in consultation with the medical and nursing staffs, including front-line professional and auxiliary nursing staff members, including bed-side nurses, and must be implemented by June 15. In addition to medical and nursing staff, hospital staff members include therapeutic services, social services, housekeeping services, dietary services, and maintenance.

If a patient, family member or staff member at a facility is concerned about the safety at a facility, an anonymous complaint can be filed with the department. All complaints filed are confidential and the department will protect the anonymity of those who report

concerns. Any hospital staff who report concerns about worker safety should not be retaliated against.

The department investigates every complaint received. If there is a complaint about a healthcare facility, including a nursing home, please contact us at 1-800-254-5164 or fill out this [online form](#).

The Wolf Administration stresses the role Pennsylvanians play in helping to reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- ? Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- ? Cover any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, not your hands.
- ? Clean surfaces frequently.
- ? Stay home to avoid spreading COVID-19, especially if you are unwell.
- ? If you must go out for a life-sustaining reason, please wear a mask.

Updated Coronavirus Links: Press Releases, State Lab Photos, Graphics

- ? [Daily COVID-19 Report](#)
- ? [Press releases regarding coronavirus](#)
- ? [Latest information on the coronavirus](#)
- ? [Photos of the state's lab in Exton](#) (for download and use)
- ? [Coronavirus and preparedness graphics](#) (located at the bottom of the page)
- ? [Community preparedness and procedures materials](#)
- ? [Map with the number of COVID-19 cases](#)

All Pennsylvania residents are encouraged to sign up for AlertPA, a text notification system for health, weather, and other important alerts like COVID-19 updates from commonwealth agencies. Residents can sign up online at www.ready.pa.gov/BeInformed/Signup-For-Alerts.