



## Memorandum

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**TO:** Premier Health Managers, Providers, and Staff [All AMC, All CompuNet, All Fidelity Health Care, All MVH, All MVHN, All MVHS, All PPN, Premier System Support Staff, All SBHI, All UVMC]

**FROM:** Mary Boosalis, President & CEO, Premier Health

**DATE:** April 30, 2020

**RE:** **Update on PPE (Masks to be Used by All Providers, Employees, and Visitors at All Sites of Care)**

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As we continue to work to ensure the safety of all providers, staff, patients, and others at our sites of care, we would like to make you aware of our latest guidelines for the use of masks and face coverings at Premier Health facilities. This update also ensures consistency with the latest guidance from the Joint Commission and the state of Ohio.

Effective Friday, May 1, to minimize the spread of COVID-19, all Premier Health employees, contractors, visitors, and medical staff must wear masks or face coverings at Premier Health facilities and subsidiary locations. **This new requirement applies to those working at the Premier Health Center at 110 N. Main St., Premier Physician Network offices, Fidelity Health Care, Samaritan Behavioral Health Inc., CompuNet Clinical Laboratories, and all other Premier Health sites of care.**

All employees still must adhere to the transmission-based isolation precaution policy ([view updated policy](#)) and other precautions as outlined for the care of confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patients.

Even with this new policy, we ask that if you have been wearing a mask from home, you continue to do so to help conserve PPE and ensure a safe environment for everyone at our care sites. Each employee who does not bring their own face protection may be provided with **one Premier-issued mask per shift that must be worn for every patient encounter**. Under normal conditions, we anticipate one mask per shift per employee should be sufficient. These masks will be distributed at the employee's entry point to the care site if the employee is not already wearing a mask. Staff caring for patients in isolation will need to ensure that they are wearing the appropriate mask when interacting with patients in those areas.

Employees who provide support services but do not provide direct patient care:

- Must wear a face covering throughout their shift if they cannot maintain six feet of "social distancing" from their colleagues (this includes in cubicle work environments if someone is sitting within six feet of you);
- May and are encouraged to wear their own cloth masks, if they have them.

Masks may be removed when social distancing of at least six feet is possible (for example, after the employee enters a private office). Managers should take care to ensure that locations where employees take their meals and breaks can accommodate social distancing requirements so that employees can remove their masks while eating.

Please note that masks and other face coverings should not be placed on children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. Patients may remove their cloth face covering when in their rooms, but should put them back on when leaving their room or when others who are not wearing a mask enter the room.

As a reminder, non-Premier issued masks must meet the following criteria:

- Properly worn
- Regularly inspected, maintained and replaced as necessary by the employee
- Properly removed, cleaned, and stored or disposed of, as applicable, to avoid contamination of self, others, or the environment.
- Employees must perform hand hygiene after handling.

#### **SAFE WORK PRACTICES**

- Mask must be discarded if it is wet, soiled, damaged (holes, rips, tears) or becomes hard to breathe through.
- If it is a cloth mask (non-patient care areas only) it must be washed in between shifts. It is the responsibility of the employee to launder between shifts.

#### **PRECAUTIONS FOR PROPER HANDLING AND DISPOSAL**

- Employees must perform hand hygiene before removing masks.
- Employees must perform hand hygiene after removing masks.
- Employees must try to avoid touching the eyes, nose, and mouth.
- When the employee is not within six feet of other people, the mask can be carefully folded so that the outer surface is held inward and against itself to reduce contact with the outer surface during storage. The folded masks can be stored between uses in a clean sealable paper bag or zip lock baggie or breathable container or hang below your chin resting on your neck.
- The employee should write their name on the bag.

Please note: Cloth face coverings are NOT PPE and must not be worn for the care of patients with known or suspected COVID-19 or other situations where a respirator or facemask is warranted.