



## Memorandum

TO: Premier Health Managers, Physicians, Advanced Practice Providers, and Staff

FROM: Mary Boosalis, President & CEO, Premier Health

DATE: March 30, 2020

RE: **Guidance for Use of Masks for Direct Patient Caregivers, Patient-Facing Employees and Other Employees**

In this unprecedented time, our work environment is changing rapidly. We continue to follow recommendations from the World Health Organization, as well as guidance from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

In addition to isolation precautions we've already implemented, effective Tuesday, March 31, 2020, we will be implementing the Non-Isolation Related PPE policy (also attached to this email), which is consistent with what many other health care systems are doing in the state of Ohio and across the country. At this time, this policy applies to **masks only**.

Every direct patient caregiver or patient-facing employee can be provided with one Premier Health-issued mask per shift. Direct patient caregivers are defined as providers or employees who provide hands-on care and treatment to patients. Patient-facing employees are defined as non-direct patient caregiver employees who, by the nature of their job, provide a service within 6 feet of a patient. Direct patient caregivers and patient-facing employees may not bring masks or other PPE from home at this time.

Non-patient facing employees will be permitted to wear non-Premier issued masks. Non-Premier issued masks are not proven to provide the same level of protection as Premier-issued masks and have not undergone the same quality and safety controls.

All employees are still required to adhere to the transmission-based isolation precaution policy or other precautions as outlined for the care of confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patients.

### **Caring for your mask**

When you are in common areas, not providing patient care, you do not need to wear your mask. To safely care for your mask throughout the day, we recommend the following:

- Masks should be discarded if wet, soiled, damaged (holes, rips, tears) or becomes hard to breathe through.
- Providers and employees should perform hand hygiene before and after handling masks.

- While the provider or employee is not working face-to-face or in a direct patient care environment, masks should be carefully folded so that the outer surface is held inward and against itself to reduce contact with the outer surface during storage. Folded masks can be stored between uses in a clean sealable paper bag or Ziplock baggie or breathable container or hang below your chin resting on your neck.
  - We encourage you to bring a bag from home for your mask but will have a limited supply of bags available.
  - Please write your name on both sides of the bag so that it is easily identifiable as yours.
- If the mask is made of cloth, it should be washed at home between shifts. Laundering is the responsibility of the employee.
- Masks not made of cloth should be discarded in a trash can prior to leaving the work area.

We understand that this is a rapidly evolving situation. As the pandemic unfolds, we will continue to update you as we monitor public health guidance and local and regional conditions.