

<b>Date:</b>	March 20, 2020
<b>To:</b>	All Northern Health Staff and Physicians
<b>From:</b>	Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Mark De Croos, VP Finance Cathy Ulrich, CEO
<b>Re:</b>	<b>Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) – Guidelines to Flatten the PPE Usage Curve</b>

Some staff members have expressed concern about running out of Personal Protective Equipment or PPE. PPE include masks, gowns, visors, and so on.

We want to address these concerns and ask you all to take some mindful steps to protect our supplies. In mid-January, we had enough PPE to last us several months. A few weeks later, as news of COVID-19 emerged overseas, our usage had increased dramatically – even though not a single COVID-19 patient had been admitted to our hospitals. At that rate, we knew we only had **weeks** of supply left, not months.

Now, thanks to sourcing additional supplies, we do have more in stock. But as the virus has spread, there is now a global shortage of PPE. This makes it very important for us to safeguard our remaining supplies.

**Working as a team, this is what we'll focus on:**

You've heard a lot about curves lately, so we need your help to **FLATTEN THE PPE Usage CURVE!**

**Steps you can take:**

**First, consider our usage guidelines and the science they rely on.** NH is following the [guidelines of the BC Centre for Disease Control](#). While there has been speculation about asymptomatic spread, at this moment, this is theoretical. And, we think the risk is pretty low. But consider this: every time you use any mask outside the guidelines to theoretically decrease your risk, that's one less mask for someone in the emergency department, on Medicine, or in the ICU. Your future self and your colleagues may be caring for a COVID-19 patient 4 or 6 weeks from now.

**Second, remind each other to flatten the PPE usage curve!**

Support comes in many forms. If you see unnecessary use of PPEs, just gently remind your colleagues that we need to rely on what we know about transmission and stick to the guidelines. A supportive and reassuring word may be all it takes to remember that we're in this together and need to take small, mindful actions to protect us all in higher-risk situations.

**Third, safeguard our pandemic-related supplies**

Unfortunately, we have experienced incidents of theft by the general public. Staff should be careful about leaving large quantities of supplies unattended. For example, if there are surgical masks placed at entrances to facilities, no more than five (5) masks should be placed there at once.

Further, to secure our supplies, we will be restricting access to stock supply rooms. The rooms are being re-keyed or re-coded with access restricted to a few designated staff in each facility. The names and contact information for the designated staff will be posted at each door.

Thank you for your efforts to **flatten the PPE usage curve**, and thank you for your hard work and dedication to our patients and residents. By working as a team, we will all have the necessary protection and emerge safely from this challenge.