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OPERATIONAL BULLETIN

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#2020-06-16-01	Universal Masking for EMS Clinicians		June 16, 2020
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None	Maine EMS	Maine EMS, Maine CDC, U.S. CDC	1
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Recently Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) was able to dramatically increase the state’s capacity to conduct COVID-19 testing including administrative testing that may be conducted by healthcare facilities. As a result of this increase and stabilization with personal protective equipment (PPE) supply chains, Maine EMS is recommending universal masking for all patient encounters. This means that no matter the patient’s complaint, all EMS clinicians and crew members should don at least a surgical mask and gloves and require all patients and family, involved in the transport, to also don a surgical mask, condition permitting.

If the EMS clinician suspects that the patient is a person under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19 based on the most current guidance, they anticipate performing an aerosol generating procedure, the patient is unable or unwilling to wear the surgical mask, or the patient is in cardiac arrest, then the crew should don full aerosol PPE protections including an N95 respirator or equivalent, gloves, gown, and eye protection.

EMS services should make every effort to obtain surgical masks through their existing supply chains and/or seek available vendors that have these masks available. Maine CDC will continue to have surgical masks available via the strategic national stockpile; however, this source functions as a *last resort* if/when services are unable to acquire it through traditional pathways. EMS clinicians and services should reference the *Guidance for Optimizing the Supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for EMS Clinicians* (March 27, 2020) for information on the extended use and reuse of masks. The same guidance offered for N95 respirators also applies to surgical masks.

It should also be noted that face coverings (i.e. homemade masks) should not be used instead of surgical masks within the healthcare environment unless absolutely necessary.

Due to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, this guidance is subject to change at any time pending new discoveries or scientific information.

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