PPE in Shelter Isolation & Quarantine Settings

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) consists of gowns, gloves, masks, facial protection or respirators, which can be used to provide a barrier to help prevent potential exposure to infectious disease, including the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Routine practices, such as hand hygiene and using PPE, will help lessen transmission and should be incorporated in shelter isolation and quarantine settings. This document provides links to resources on the types of PPE required, how to properly use PPE, where to source PPE, and how to manage and conserve PPE.

PPE in Shelter Isolation & Quarantine Settings

In ideal circumstances, PPE should be available for both staff and clients in shelter isolation and quarantine settings. Guidelines for the type of PPE required, depending on work placements, interactions, and COVID-19 status, have been developed and shared by numerous organizations, including:

- Community Solutions, *Personal Protective Equipment and Staff Safety in Isolation and Quarantine Settings* (answers 13 commonly asked questions and provides related resources)
- York Region, *Infection Prevention and Control Summary of Recommendations for use of Personal Protective Equipment for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19 in Emergency Housing Service Settings* (pages 3-5)

Masks

There are three types of masks:

1. N95 respirators
2. Medical masks (surgical masks)
3. Non-medical masks (homemade masks)

The spread of COVID-19 has resulted in an increased demand and decreased supply of N95 and/or medical masks and should be managed and conserved carefully. To determine which mask should be worn in different situations, Community Solutions developed guidelines for Health Care Personnel (including those working in shelter isolation and quarantine settings): *Facemask or Respirator Determination*. 
The Public Health Agency of Canada recommends wearing a non-medical face mask as an additional measure to protect individuals in situations where physical distancing is difficult to maintain. However, it is important to understand that non-medical masks have limitations and need to be used safely. Before using non-medical face masks in shelter isolation and quarantine settings, the following guidelines should be carefully reviewed:

- Government of Canada, *Considerations for use of Homemade Masks to Protect Against COVID-19*

**Proper Use of PPE**

Training in the proper use of PPE must be provided to all staff who have the potential to be exposed to COVID-19. To find out how to access training in your community, it is recommended that you contact your local health authority. The following is a list of resources that may supplement this training or serve as reminders after training has been completed:

- **Putting on (donning) and taking off (doffing) PPE**
  - York Region, *Personal Protective Equipment* [poster]
  - BC Centre for Disease Control, *The 5 Steps to Put On PPE* and *The 5 Steps to Take Off PPE* [posters]
  - Public Health Ontario, *Recommended Steps for Putting On and Taking Off PPE* [poster]
  - Center for Disease Control USA, *Sequence for Putting On and Removing PPE* (2 pager)
  - Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, *COVID-19 Guidance for Homeless Shelters* including types of PPE, when to use, and process for taking gloves and masks on and off [video]

- **How to wear a face mask**
  - BC Centre for Disease Control, *How to Wear a Face Mask* [poster]
  - *Proper Way to Put on a Face Mask* [video]

- **How to clean and disinfect eye and facial protection**
  - BC Centre for Disease Control, *Cleaning and Disinfection Instructions for Eye/Facial Protection*

- **How to remove gloves**
  - WorkSafe BC, *Glove Removal Procedure* [poster]

**Sourcing PPE**

The unprecedented demand and urgent need for PPE has made sourcing challenging. Knowing how much PPE you may need is the first step. The PPE Burn Rate Calculator has been developed to help facilities plan and optimize the use of PPE for response to COVID-19.

**Bulk Purchasing / Donations**

Some options for bulk purchasing and/or donations for homelessness sector front-line providers are available on the CNH3 website (under the “Sourcing Personal Protective Equipment” drop-down).

**PPE Drive**

Some organizations have organized a PPE Drive to encourage businesses and individuals to donate unopened PPE that has not expired, as well as:
Here are a few examples of PPE campaigns:

- Michael Garron Hospital, PPE Drive
- Texas Medical Association, How to Organize a PPE Drive

Managing and Conserving PPE

Due to the shortage of PPE, it needs to be carefully managed and conserved. Several resources are available to provide guidance on how staff should operate with a limited supply of PPE:

- Community Solutions, Personal Protective Equipment and Staff Safety in Isolation and Quarantine Settings
- JAMA Network, Sourcing PPE During the COVID-19 Pandemic [see: Box. Summary of Recommendations for PPE Conservation and Management]
- BC Centre for Disease Control, COVID-19: Emergency Prioritization in a Pandemic PPE Allocation Framework

Disclaimer: This document is a collection of resources and/or ideas compiled by the team at CAEH. Please follow Public Health Agency of Canada guidelines on COVID-19 as the primary resource for all health-related concerns.

CAEH will continue to update this resource as new information or ideas become available. Please refer to the CNH3 website Resources page at cnh3.ca/resources for additional information. If you have an idea or resource to share or are seeking further support, please contact us at info@caeh.ca.