

Universal Masking Policy

Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) - For Internal Use Only

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DISCLAIMER: COVID-19 information is rapidly changing and documents will be updated accordingly.

1. What does it mean to have a universal masking policy?

This means that at all of our care facilities, every team member working in clinical settings where there is direct patient care will wear a mask. The type of mask (e.g. a surgical mask or an N-95 respirator) will be appropriate to the clinical setting and the potential exposure of COVID-19.

2. Why are we doing this now?

The CDC recently released information that suggests one in four patients infected by COVID-19 might be asymptomatic, and yet, they may still be contagious and might be able to pass on the virus to others. As a result of this new information, the CDC may broaden its current guidelines on who should wear a mask. As a system we are acting now instead of later to move forward with a universal masking policy for all of CommonSpirit Health.

3. Is the masking policy the same in every division?

Yes, where supplies allow every division will have a universal masking policy at their care facilities.

4. Do we have enough PPE to implement a universal masking policy?

Right now we have enough supplies to implement a universal masking policy.

Maintaining this policy depends on an adequate supply of masks and our diligent efforts to conserve and extend the life of supplies. We are working with suppliers as well as state and federal officials to secure more masks, and we work to send

those supplies to areas in our network where they are most needed. We have also implemented a program to reprocess (sterilize) masks wherever possible.

5. When will universal masking go into effect at my care facility?

Some facilities have already put this practice in place, and we expect this practice to be in place at all of our care facilities in the coming days. We will continue to assess our approach based on the availability of masks.

6. What is the masking policy in acute care settings such as hospitals? How does it apply to people working in different parts of the facility?

At our acute care facilities, every team member working in clinical settings where there is direct patient care will wear a mask, subject to the availability of supplies.

7. What is the masking policy in ambulatory care settings such as health clinics? How does it apply to people working in different parts of the facility?

At our ambulatory care facilities, every team member working in clinical settings where there is direct patient care will wear a mask, subject to the availability of supplies.

8. What is the masking policy for home health workers or employees at our assisted living and skilled nursing facilities?

The masking policy for these workers will be the same as for team members working in clinical settings where there is direct patient care.

9. What is the masking policy for employees who do not work in a care setting such as an administrative corporate office?

These employees will not be provided a mask; however, if employees opt to wear a cloth mask, that is acceptable.

10. Are we changing our guidelines for other types of PPE?

We will continue to update our guidance on the appropriate use of PPE and are following CDC guidelines.

11. Should I wear a mask outside of work?

Health officials are beginning to recommend that everyone wear a cloth or homemade mask while in public. While these steps should not replace social distancing and guidance to stay at home, it's possible that a cloth mask may provide some protection outside of our homes and workplaces. Please remember that medical-grade masks should be reserved for our caregivers for use while in care settings.

12. Will the masking policies change in the future?

As we learn more about this virus, we will continue to adjust our policies to follow the latest guidance from public health officials and ensure we're taking every appropriate step to keep our employees and our patients safe.

13. What do I do if I have questions about masking?

Reach out to your manager with any questions.