



## Key Points & Take-Aways

- **Dr. Evan Lyon, Chief Integrated Health Office for Heartland Alliance** Health provided guidance on personal protective equipment (PPE) through a question and answer session.
- When doing **non-contact work** (such as work that is not hands on and doesn't include physical contact), the safest way to work is by maintaining a 6-foot distance whenever possible and for all parties to wear regular surgical masks. At that distance there is no need for gowns or face shields.
- Remain at a **6ft distance** even when wearing a mask. If there is time when you have less distance between the other person, limit the amount of time and practice hand hygiene.
- Regarding the **use of gloves**, keep in mind that the virus isn't absorbed through the hands. If you touch something and then touch your face, the virus can still be transmitted. It is important not to get sloppy; you need to watch where your hands are going whether or not you're wearing gloves.
- **Surgical masks** are enough for people not engaged in medical work such as procedures. There aren't settings in which non-medical people are required to wear N95s. The guidance that homemade masks may be used to protect people who are not working in health care is correct.
- Masks should be **changed as often as possible**. If parts of a mask, such as the wire metal that helps it seal to your face, start to break down, then it should be discarded. Cloth masks should be washed as often as possible, such as daily. It may be reasonable to use a paper mask for 2-4 days.
- The risky time with using **PPE** is when putting it on and taking it off. When taking off PPE, be careful not to touch the outside which is dirty. Dispose of PPE or wash it (if applicable) immediately. It cannot hurt to take clothes off at the door when returning home.
- Any filter layer that you're able to add to homemade masks is helpful. However, keep in mind that when not used correctly, masks are not completely effective. For example, air leaks around the mask and that air is not getting filtered. Therefore, **keeping distance is crucial**.
- It is possible to create **disinfecting solutions** when they are difficult to obtain commercially. Dr. Lyon will follow up with formulas for this. Keep in mind that when using a solution that has been prepared with a certain percentage of bleach, it can be hard on the surfaces you're cleaning.
- Try to minimize the amount that you **transport participants**. If you do, keep the windows open because airflow disperses the virus. If you can use a van to put more space between people, that is beneficial. You may consider wearing a gown or a face shield on top of a surgical mask.

- **N95** masks are difficult to use. They need to be fit properly to the face and they don't work with beards.
- Try to support residents to wear their own PPE. If you're wearing PPE in the same room with other people who are not wearing PPE, minimize the amount of time and keep distancing. **Ventilation** in the room is important and one technique is to set up a fan blowing out of the window.
- There are risks to not wearing PPE properly, such as masks that do not cover the nose or masks that are worn on the neck. **Maintain hand hygiene** as often as possible and watch where your hands go. Keep in mind that a lot of the transmission is from surfaces/touching so using hand sanitizer and washing hands frequently is great protection.
- There isn't a list of places PPE can be obtained but it would be a good resource to have.
- There is no standard for how often frontline workers should be tested.