

COVID-19 Update
April 21, 2020

Attention RN's

During SARS ... two approaches to worker safety - one based on the precautionary principle, the other on scientific certainty - came to a head over the issue of the N95 (a respirator that protects much more than a surgical mask) and fit testing. Some experts believed that since SARS was spread mostly by large droplets, surgical masks were sufficient in most situations. Others argued that since not enough was known about how SARS was spread, and since the possibility of airborne transmission by much smaller particles could not be ruled out, it was better to be safe than sorry and to require health workers to wear fit-tested N95 respirators. Knowledge about how SARS is transmitted has evolved significantly since the outbreak. Some recent studies suggesting a spread by airborne transmission lend weight to a precautionary approach to protect health workers against a new disease that is not well understood. (Campbell 2006: 26)

Given the current uncertainty regarding the mode of transmission for Covid-19, approximately **135** known workplace exposures, and **12** confirmed Covid positive members, ONA Local 100 has advocated that the minimum level of PPE for all members in clinical areas should be a surgical level 2 mask, not a level 1 procedure mask.

Members are required to complete a Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA) prior to providing care. As a result of the information above, ONA Local 100 is recommending that members working in Critical Care, ED, and the in-patient Medicine and Mental Health Covid 19 Units, based on their PCRA and professional judgment, **should wear an N95 respirator at all times.**

The level of PPE determined by the nurse as a result of the PCRA will not be unreasonably denied. If you have any problems accessing the PPE you require please contact the Union ASAP. We are available 24/7 for these emergent matters. You do have a **limited right to refuse unsafe work** if it becomes necessary. ONA will support you through that process. **You cannot be terminated for exercising this right.**



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