Required Extended Mask Use Policy (COVID-19 Response)

POLICY:

The safety of every SCCA patient and employee is our top priority. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to rapidly evolve and new information becomes available, we have carefully considered the optimal strategies to ensure the safety of our patients and employees, anticipating short and long-term needs. We have also heard employees concerns and want our staff to feel safe and confident as they continue to care for our vulnerable patients during this pandemic.

Over the coming weeks and months we expect to face new challenges, including:

- A planned transition to less restrictive physical distancing measures in the community expected at the beginning of May
- An increase in outpatient visits, procedures and surgical volume
  - An ongoing need to provide care for patients with COVID-19 in clinics, emergency departments and hospitals
- Continued outbreaks in local and regional skilled nursing facilities
- Potential risk of COVID-19 resurgence in Seattle, the Puget Sound region and the State of Washington

In addition, while close contact with symptomatic individuals remains the primary mode of transmission, research supports the risk for pre-symptomatic transmission. In the context of the above, additional interventions are needed to limit the unrecognized introduction of SARS-CoV-2 into healthcare settings and to prevent nosocomial transmission in the hospitals and clinics.

Beginning Monday, April 27, 2020 SCCA will require:

- All staff in SCCA clinics wear a procedural mask continuously, throughout their entire shift, while on the premises for the safety of our patients and staff. This mask will be provided by SCCA. Procedural masks should not be used outside of clinic locations.
- SCCA employees in non-clinic locations are expected to wear, at a minimum, a cloth face covering or a personal mask, as recommended by the CDC, while on premises and within 6 feet of another person.

Extended use masking is a departure from standard approaches to infection prevention. This change is made...
based on the continued expansion of the local COVID-19 epidemic and is contingent on our ability to maintain adequate PPE supplies. Please note that the ability to receive additional supplies of masks is not assured and all staff are entrusted with thoughtful and judicious use of their masks.

This mask policy, which includes procedural masks (and not N95 respirators), will serve to:

- Protect our patients and other staff members should the health care worker be infected and is experiencing no or very mild symptoms which may be hard to recognize (e.g. fatigue, myalgias), or should they develop symptoms at work. A mask may decrease the risk of spreading infection from an infected individual to another person.

This practice requires staff participation regarding:

- Strict adherence to proper extended use/reuse of surgical masks
- Strict adherence to hand hygiene
- Proper mask use and hygiene – including:
  - Wearing the mask as directed to cover the mouth and nose
  - Avoiding touching the mask and your face
- Staff members who are already on site should secure a face mask (surgical or procedural mask) and wear it continuously until they leave the clinic
- Before putting on the mask, be sure to perform hand hygiene, and remember not to touch your face after putting the mask in place.
- Please remember that conservation of personal protective equipment (PPE) supply is essential, so take and use only one mask per shift – unless the mask becomes visibly soiled or damaged
- **Strict adherence to COVID-19 Stay at Home when Sick – Return to Work Guidelines**: Employees with any symptoms of a respiratory illness will not be allowed to work on the premises.

Masks are only one component of the COVID-19 Prevention and Control Bundle and not a replacement for physical distancing (6 ft) or frequent hand hygiene. Most importantly, employees with symptoms should **NOT come to work even if wearing a mask**, and complete the COVID-19 Testing Survey to be scheduled for COVID-19 testing.

For staff experiencing irritation or allergies due to extended surgical mask use should inform your supervisor or manager, complete an accident illness report (AIR) and contact the employee health team. Employee health will investigate the potential reaction and, if appropriate, attempt to find an alternative mask made with different components with Infection Prevention.

**Attachments**

No Attachments

**Approval Signatures**

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<tr>
<td>Terry McDonnell: Chief Nurse Exec, VP-Clin Ops</td>
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**Applicability**

Seattle Cancer Care Alliance Outpatient Policies