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Owner:	<i>Michelle Swetky: Infection Preventionist</i>
Policy Area:	<i>Infection Prevention</i>
References:	<i>Organization Wide, PTC</i>
Applicability:	<i>Seattle Cancer Care Alliance Outpatient Policies</i>

QLT216 Universal Mask Policy

POLICY:

Use of facemasks reduces the risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 and is recommended by the CDC and WHO. The universal mask policy applies to all employees in clinical and non-clinical locations.

The goal of instituting universal masking is to: 1) to protect patients and other staff members should the healthcare worker have asymptomatic infection or develop symptoms at work (a mask decreases the risk of spreading infection by providing source control) and 2) to protect our staff and healthcare workers that may come in close contact with an individual with either asymptomatic infection or who has symptoms that have not yet been recognized. A mask can decrease one's risk of acquiring the virus.

PROCEDURE:

Employees, Providers and Contracted Staff

- A. The Universal Mask Policy applies to all employees working at any SCCA location including clinical, administrative, and laboratory locations.
- B. In clinical buildings, employees are required to wear at a minimum a procedure (surgical) mask. Procedure masks are available at points of entry and in breakrooms. Please see [Self-provided Respirator Requirement](#) if employee wants to use a self-provided respirator as a universal mask. Mask will be discarded and replaced in the following situations:
 1. If the mask becomes visibly soiled or damaged
 2. Once the mask is removed for a break or meal
 3. After any single encounter with a patient in droplet precautions
- C. In non-clinical building (i.e. administrative buildings), employees are required to wear a medical grade mask at all times. Medical grade mask include surgical mask, KN95 or N95.
 1. They can replace their cloth mask with an SCCA surgical mask, or they can place the surgical mask over their cloth mask.
 2. Employees with their own well-fitting medical grade masks do not need an SCCA provided mask in non-clinical buildings.
- D. Employees must wear the mask over the mouth and nose.

- E. Masks must be worn at all times on SCCA premises except when working alone in a private office with the door closed or when eating in designated areas. Masks must be worn when walking through common areas.
- F. Employees should practice principles of social distancing, respiratory (cough and sneeze) etiquette and frequent hand hygiene.
- G. Drinking is permitted in designated locations in clinical areas. If employees need to drink, they will ensure that they are 6 feet away from others, perform hand hygiene, briefly remove the mask, drink, and then replace the face mask and perform hand hygiene again.
- H. To limit the number of people in a break room, staff must stagger break times.
- I. In designated areas where eating and drinking is not restricted, employees will take the following steps to remove the mask:
 - 1. Perform hand hygiene with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub
 - 2. Remove the face mask and place it on a clean surface such as a paper towel, paper bag or paper tray, or dispose if a procedure mask (clinical settings)
 - 3. Perform hand hygiene with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub before eating
 - 4. After finishing eating or drinking, replace the mask (or use a new procedure mask) taking care to avoid touching face or eyes
 - 5. Perform hand hygiene with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub
- J. Every effort should be made to limit exit and entry to the facility during each shift to preserve supplies of face masks. Employees using the mask in exclusively non-clinical settings can store the mask and reuse it upon re-entry; employees working in clinical areas should discard the mask upon exit and obtain a new one upon re-entry.

Patients and Visitors

- A. All patients and visitors are required to wear a medical grade mask at all times at SCCA. Medical grade mask include surgical mask, KN95 or N95.
 - 1. They can replace their cloth mask with an SCCA surgical mask, or they can place the surgical mask over their cloth mask.
 - 2. Patients and visitors with their own well-fitting medical grade masks do not need an SCCA provided mask.
- B. If not wearing a mask upon entry into the clinic, patients and visitors will be provided with an SCCA surgical mask to be used for the duration of their visit as long as not soiled or damaged. A replacement mask will be provided if the mask becomes soiled or damaged.
- C. The mask should be worn throughout the entire visit at SCCA except when removal is necessary for clinical care.
- D. For patients and visitors that refuse to wear a mask, please refer to the [Masking Accommodation Policy](#)

Additional Guidance

Masks are only one component of the COVID-19 prevention 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 mask use should inform their 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 solution with Infection Prevention.

In the event the supply of procedure masks prohibits the procedures outlined in this policy, distribution of masks will be prioritized based on the highest risk clinical activities.

Self-provided Respirator Requirement

- A. When caring for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients, a patient requiring airborne precautions, or performing an aerosol generating procedure you must wear a fit tested N-95 and/or a PAPR that is provided by SCCA. Use of these respirators should comply with the [Respiratory Protection Program Policy](#) and follow current PPE capacity.
- B. If an employees want to use a self-provided respirator as a universal mask, do the following:
 1. Contact the Respiratory Protection Program at rpp@seattlecca.org to review, and submit the Notice for Users of Self-Provided Respirators documentation (see [Appendix](#)).
 - a. Using self-provided disposable respirators:
 - i. Extended or single-use only respirators may not be re-used. You should bring enough supplies to cover your shift.
 - ii. You must cover your self-provided respirator with a procedure mask as many commercial respirators do not have adequate protection for droplets/fluid
 - iii. You may not use self-provided respirators in isolation rooms that require respirator use (you must use a SCCA provided, fit-tested respirator or PAPR)
 - b. Using self-provided elastomeric or filtering face piece respirators:
 - i. Extended use only -- When removed, clean per manufacturer guidelines. If SCCA does not have appropriate disinfectants, it is up to the employee to provide.
 - ii. Care of the respirator, including filter maintenance, is the responsibility of the employee.
 - iii. Self-provided respirators may not be used in any Isolation rooms that require respirator use (you must use a SCCA provided, fit-tested respirator or PAPR)
 2. Read and follow all instructions provided by the manufacturer for use, maintenance, cleaning and care, and warnings regarding the respirator's limitations.
 3. Keep track of your respirator so that you do not mistakenly use someone else's respirator.
 4. Do not wear your respirator where other workplace hazards (e.g., chemical exposures) require use of a respirator.
 5. Respirators can be an effective method of protection against COVID-19 hazards when carefully selected and worn. However, if a respirator is used improperly or not kept clean, the respirator itself can become a hazard to the worker.
 6. Please note that SCCA will not provide fit testing for personal respirators.

REFERENCES:

- A. CDC - Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19, June 28, 2020; <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
- B. CDC- Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Healthcare Settings, Updated May 18, 2020; <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>
- C. WHO - Advice on the use of mask in context of COVID-19, June 5, 2020; WHO Reference Number: WHO/2019-nCov/IPC_Masks/2020.4
- D. WHO - Infection prevention and control during health care when novel coronavirus (nCoV) infection is suspected, March 19, 2020; **WHO REFERENCE NUMBER:** WHO/2019-nCoV/IPC/2020.3

Attachments

[Appendix - NOTICE FOR EMPLOYEES WHO CHOOSE TO USE SELF-PROVIDED RESPIRATORS.pdf](#)

Approval Signatures

Approver	Date
Administrators PolicyStat: PolicyStat Administrators	12/27/2021
Terry McDonnell: SVP, Operations	12/27/2021
Tom Purcell: SCCA Chief Medical Officer	12/27/2021
Marni Schatzman: Assc Dir Hlth Sfty & Security	12/27/2021
Michelle Swetky: Infection Preventionist	12/27/2021

Applicability

Seattle Cancer Care Alliance Outpatient Policies