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Quality Program
Manager
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Prevention**
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Institutional**

QLT216 Universal Mask Policy

SCOPE:

This policy applies to employees, providers, contracted staff, patients, caregivers and visitors within Fred Hutch clinical facilities.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the universal mask policy is to protect patients, visitors, and healthcare workers from infection transmission from infectious individuals by providing source control.

Use of well-fitting facemasks or respirators reduce the risk of transmission of respiratory viruses by providing source control, a recommended infection prevention intervention by the CDC, WHO, and Washington State Department of Health for healthcare settings.

DEFINITIONS:

Medical-Grade mask: American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) Level 1, 2, or 3 facemask or N95 respirator.

Respirator: N95 or Powered Air Purifying Respirators (PAPRs). A respirator is used to reduce the wearer's risk of inhaling hazardous airborne particles including infectious agents, gases, or vapors. Respirators, including those intended for use in healthcare settings, are certified by the CDC/NIOSH. PAPRs cannot be worn as source control.

Well-fitting facemask: A medical grade mask (as defined above) that, when worn, moves in and out slightly when the wearer breaths. The mask should be able to stay covering the mouth and nose without

manipulation after initial placement.

Clinical Facilities: Buildings where in-person (direct) patient care activities occur. Is further defined into patient facing and non-patient facing areas below. List of Clinical Facilities:

- Fred Hutch Wellness Center, Level E, (1100 Fairview Avenue N, Seattle, WA 98109)
- Fred Hutch SOUTH LAKE UNION CLINICS (“Building 1 and Building 2”) (825 Eastlake Avenue E)
- Fred Hutch MRI at Valley Street (1209 Valley St., Seattle, WA 98109)
- Fred Hutch at Evergreen Health (12040 NE 128th St., Kirkland, WA 98034)
- Fred Hutch Issaquah (1740 NW Maple St., Issaquah, WA 98027)
- Fred Hutch at Overlake Cancer Center (1135 116th Ave NE, Suite 250, Bellevue, WA 98004)
- Fred Hutch Peninsula (19917 Seventh Ave. NE, Poulsbo, WA 98370)
- Fred Hutch Proton Therapy Center (1570 N. 115th St., Seattle, WA 98133)
- Fred Hutch at UW Medical Center – Northwest (1560 N. 11th St., Level G, Suite G16, Seattle, WA 98133-9733)
- Shine (207 Pontius Ave. N, Seattle, WA 98109)

Non-Clinical Facilities (no patient activities): Buildings which only house administrative or laboratory spaces and never have patients present.

Source Control: Use of respirators (excluding PAPRs), well-fitting facemasks, or well-fitting cloth masks to cover a person’s mouth and nose to prevent spread of respiratory secretions when they are breathing, talking, sneezing, or coughing. Source control devices should not be placed on children under age 2, or as according to the [Masking Accommodation Policy](#). Face shields alone do not provide source control.

Patient Facing Areas: All patient care and public spaces of clinical facilities including clinic rooms, public bathrooms, public hallways, public cafeterias, elevators, lobbies/waiting rooms, and nurse’s stations; areas accessible to the public.

Non-patient Facing Areas: Staff breakrooms, team rooms, single and multi-person offices, conference rooms, and similar rooms isolated from patient facing areas by a closed door or away from patient facing areas; areas not accessible to the public and occupied by only employees, providers, or contracted staff in clinical facilities.

POLICY:

Employees, providers, contracted staff, patients, caregivers, and visitors over two-years of age will wear medical-grade masks while in patient facing areas at a Fred Hutch clinical facility, including during all patient interactions.

Employees, providers, and contracted staff are recommended, but not required, to wear a medical-grade masks while in non-patient facing areas.

Facemasks with exhalation valves must be replaced with or have a medical-grade mask donned over them to provide source control.

Mask will be discarded and replaced in the following situations:

- A. If the mask becomes visibly soiled, damaged, or difficult to breathe through;
- B. Once the mask is removed for a break or meal; and/or
- C. After any single encounter with a patient in droplet contact, aerosol contact or airborne precautions.

Exceptions to this policy for employees will be reviewed by Occupational Health. Exceptions to this policy for patients, caregivers/support persons and visitors will align with the [Masking Accommodation Policy](#).

PROCEDURE:

Employees, Providers and Contracted Staff

- A. Employees should don a medical-grade mask, which are available at points of entry and throughout the clinical environment, prior to entering a patient facing area.
- B. Employees should choose the Fred Hutch -provided medical grade mask with the best fit, protection, and comfort for the individual.
- C. Employees should also continue to practice principles of respiratory (cough and sneeze) etiquette, [staying home from work](#) when they develop respiratory symptoms and frequent hand hygiene.
- D. If a respirator is chosen for universal masking, fit-tested mask is not required. For respirators worn for personal protective equipment, refer to the [Respiratory Protection Program Policy](#). Please see Self-provided Respirator Requirement of the [Respiratory Protection Program Policy](#) if employees want to use a self-provided respirator as a universal mask.
- E. If using a PAPR, a medical-grade mask should be worn under the hood to provide source control when interacting with patients in aerosol contact, airborne respirator, or airborne respirator contact precautions.

Patients and Visitors

- A. All patients and visitors over two-years of age should wear a medical-grade mask while at Fred Hutch, except when removal is necessary for clinical care/examination or eating/drinking in designated areas.
 - 1. Patients and visitors should replace their cloth mask with an Fred Hutch-provided medical-grade mask, or they may place a Fred Hutch-provided medical-grade mask over their cloth mask.
 - 2. Patients and visitors with their own well-fitting medical grade masks do not need a Fred Hutch-provided medical-grade mask, provided it is not visibly soiled or damaged.
- B. For patients and visitors that refuse to or unable to wear a mask, please refer to the [Masking](#)

Additional Guidance

Staff experiencing irritation or allergies due to extended mask use should inform their supervisor or manager, complete an accident illness report (AIR), and contact Occupational Health. Occupational Health should investigate the potential reaction and, if appropriate, attempt to find an alternative solution.

NIOSH-cleared masks with a clear window for improved communication are available through Supply Chain for those clinical situations when they are indicated.

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

REFERENCES:

- A. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Disease (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases). (2022, February 02). Interim infection prevention and control recommendations for healthcare personnel during the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic. In Infection Control, Healthcare Workers, COVID-19. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>

Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
	Natalie Simpson: Policy & Practices Mgr	4/3/2023
	Terry McDonnell: VP & Chief Nursing Officer	3/27/2023
	Salma Walji: Quality Program Manager	3/27/2023