

# MEMBER UPDATE

March 2, 2021

## Updated Joint Statement on Personal Protective Equipment use during COVID-19 pandemic

**AHS GSS** Locals 054, 056, 057, 058, 095

**AHS Nursing Care** Locals 041, 43, 44, 45, 46

**Covenant Health GSS** Local 040/001, 040/004-010

**Covenant Health Nursing Care** Locals 040/001, 002, 004-010 and 46/005, 006, 007

As we approach the anniversary of the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, your union, along with the Health Sciences Association of Alberta (HSAA), United Nurses of Alberta (UNA), Alberta Health Services (AHS) and Covenant Health have updated the Joint Statement related to safe and effective use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

This replaces **the original joint statement from March 26, 2020** and applies to all health care staff working at AHS and Covenant Health.

Throughout this past year, PPE played an important role in protecting the health and safety of health care workers while you provide high quality care to Albertans and prevent exposure to and transmission of COVID-19.

**This updated statement provides further clarity** and empowers you to conduct your own Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA) (in the case of clinical workers) and risk/hazard assessments (in the case of non-clinical workers) to determine your preferred level of PPE, including access to N95 respirators.

The key difference from the previous statement is that the new joint statement explicitly states that *all health care workers* — regardless of classification or clinical setting — will be provided access to the PPE *they have determined appropriate* based on their PCRA or hazard/risk assessment for every patient interaction.

For non-clinical workers who are required to be within two metres of a patient and who do not conduct a PCRA, access to the PPE will be based on your assessment of all known and foreseeable risks and hazards. For any classification who must perform work around a patient that is undergoing an AGMP, a N95 respirator is absolutely required.

We have also created a new, expedited process for dealing with a difference of opinion about PPE between a worker and their supervisor. Read about that process, and other important information, in this **Supporting Guide**.

Please note that this joint statement does not affect the minimum requirements already in place for continuous masking. Rather, it is meant to supplement those requirements in clinical care settings.

We believe this agreement helps reduce concerns and supports all health care workers to feel confident in making the decisions you need to feel safe at work. We continue to look for better ways to protect the physical and mental health of health care workers who continue to face this pandemic every day.

If you have any questions about this joint statement, please contact AUPE's Member Resource Centre at 1-800-232-7284, Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.