

# Hello NUHW Members,

Our Shop Stewards have been in constant communication with management throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Our goal has been to obtain a clear and consistent communication with all employees about how we are going to continue to manage the COVID-19 pandemic in the upcoming weeks and how PPE will be made available.

We understand that everyone would be safer if PPE was readily available and there were not shortages of safety equipment including PAPRs. However, there are critical shortages of all safety equipment and at the same time the safety of our healthcare workers is our top priority.

The information provided below is management's response to address the PPE shortage. NUHW Shop Stewards will continue to work together with you and the Hospital to address the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects in the workplace.

Here are some updates:

**Q: What are the CDC guidelines for PPE when caring for COVID-19 patients?**

A: Gown, clean gloves, N95, & face shield. PAPR preferred.

**Q: What is the current protocol for the use of N95 masks?**

A: One N95 mask will be provided daily to staff that are caring for COVID-19 patients. Employees caring for patients awaiting diagnosis ("rule outs") or attending codes in the ER unit will also receive one new N95 mask daily. Employees who did not use the N95 mask during their daily shift, can wear it on their next scheduled shift.

**Q: When can I request a new N95 mask?**

- CDC recommends discarding the N95 after aerosolizing treatments.
- If the masks became soiled, damaged or it becomes difficult to breath.
- After one day of usage with COVID-19 or rule outs.

**Q: What is the protocol on use of gowns at this time?**

A: Management has stated that we are to use one gown, per COVID19/RULE OUT patient, per nurse/RT/or otherwise, per shift. These gowns are to be hung in the patient's room and reused upon re-entry. We are not to have these gowns come out of the patient's room. A shipment of gowns was received recently, we believe it will alleviate the gown shortage. Request a new gown if the one you are using is soiled, damaged or has splashes on it.

**Q: Is there really a shortage on PPE?**

A: Globally, yes. However, Management in anticipation of shortages has taken measure to ration N95's, gowns, masks with face shields, and Caviwipes. WAMC's rationale is to

preserve the supply we have so “we don’t run out completely”. According to management they have a “decent supply” of most of these things but have run critically low at times over the past weeks. At times, manufacturers accept WAMC’s orders and give a delivery date, but the stock never makes it, the orders get delayed or canceled.

**Q: Who should I contact if PPE is not available in my unit?**

A: Gowns and masks are being handle by the department managers. The supplies should be enough per department per day and if they run out, charge nurses and leads should be IMMEDIATELY contact house supervisors to obtain more supplies. If not then you can escalate the issue through the chain of command starting with the department directors followed by these departments: House supervisor (714) 229-5600 available 24/7, Infection prevention (714) 229-5653, CNO Barbara Tenneson, Jeannette Celeste, Admin (714) 229-4062, or Lori Oum, HR supervisor (714) 229-4030 or (714) 229-5738 and Frank Amato, HR Director. If you couldn’t resolve your issue contact your steward or union representative.

**Q: Why can’t we all have PAPR’s?**

A: Management says that there are simply not enough. There are 8 working PAPRs throughout the hospital. Speaking with the Respiratory Therapy Manager, there is an order for 7 more and this is the maximum amount the company that produces PAPR’s would allow, and we are “keeping our fingers crossed” that we receive them and get them by mid-April. The management is unaware at this time where those 7 PAPRs will be allocated but our Union will be in communication with management and healthcare workers to help come up with the best distribution and use for these much needed devices.

**Q: Are we getting crisis pay?**

A: Our Shop Stewards requested crisis pay and WAMC would not agree.

**Conclusion:**

It is important that you notified your Shop Stewards, the CNO, and management if there are any instances when an employee is denied PPE. We’ve recognized that this is a fluid and ever changing situation, flexibility for all parties involved is important and crucial at times like these. **However, our safety and the safety of our patients is crucial.** The hospital has the obligation to provide adequate supplies for our safety and the safety of our patients.

The NUHW Steward team together with our members will continue our open communication with management to deal with the COVID-19 crisis. We will continue to ask questions and encourage management to be transparent and consistent in sending hospital wide emails with updates as frequently as possible and it is our responsibility to ensure we check our emails and continue to ask questions and get answers.

These answers and solutions are not ideal, but we will continue looking for better answers and solutions to provide a safer work environment for all members at WAMC.

Thank you for all you do. Our life depends on the work you do as healthcare providers and our Stewards are working hard to make sure that you are able to work safely during these extraordinary circumstances. Please contact your steward or union organizer, Isacc Perez Ramirez, at 626-391-8224 with any questions or concerns and please keep yourself as safe as possible.

We urge you to go to the NUHW COVID 19 website which has information on safety protocols and benefits available for those who may have hours reductions, <https://nuhw.org/covid-19/>.

Please thank and recognize steward Michelle Davis, RT for her enormous assistance in creating this document.