April 1, 2020

Dear Clinic Providers and Staff,

As you are all aware, novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is circulating in our community. We should expect that we have all come in contact with someone with the virus, be it at work or in the community. In an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19 among our workforce, patients, and community, we are requesting that a simple surgical mask (non-N95) be worn by all staff in the clinics at all times except when eating or drinking.

Guidelines for use of personal protective equipment in the clinic setting have also been updated in order to both standardize use by Ambulatory Care staff and physicians, and to conserve our supplies and ensure they are available when needed. An overview of the current guidelines is outlined below:

- Clinical staff involved with direct patient care should be wearing a simple surgical mask at all times while in clinic (except when eating, drinking, or using the restroom), in an effort to decrease asymptomatic spread of SARS-CoV-2 in the healthcare setting (source control).
- Unless wet or visibly soiled/damaged, surgical masks may be used for up to one week when worn by staff who perform screening at entryways, staff who do not have direct contact with patients, and staff who are not caring for patients with respiratory symptoms.
- Staff who do not have direct contact with patients may wear homemade cloth masks instead of surgical masks, with the understanding that these measures are being implemented for source control, and these masks are not to be treated as PPE. These masks should be washed and re-used daily.
- An N95 respirator is not needed by staff who are not involved in direct contact with patients.
- An N95 respirator is not needed by staff when providing direct care to patients without respiratory symptoms, or when providing routine care to COVID-19 suspect patients.
- An N95 respirator or equivalent is required when staff are caring for a patient with known or suspected COVID-19 when undergoing aerosol generating procedures (including nasopharyngeal specimen collection that can induce cough). A simple surgical mask should be worn for all other patient encounters.
- Patients who present with respiratory symptoms such as cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat will continue to be given a surgical mask prior to entry into the clinics. If another individual must accompany the patient to their appointment, they will also be given a mask.
• Staff who perform screening at entryways should wear goggles, gown, gloves, and a simple surgical mask at all times. Goggles can be worn throughout shift, cleaning per protocol at end of shift. Gown and mask can be worn throughout shift, changing only if visibly wet/soiled. Gloves worn throughout shift, and should be changed every 2 hours or more frequently as needed. Hand hygiene should be performed over gloves regularly and after contact with anyone. Hand hygiene should be performed before doffing and donning new gloves.

Sincerely,

Theresa Cho, MD
CEO and Medical Director of Ambulatory Care
Ventura County Health Care Agency

Cc: William Foley
    Barry Zimmerman
    Allison Blaze, MD