

MEMO

Date: August 24, 2020
To: All health-care workers
From: **Dr. Brent Roussin**
Chief Provincial Public Health Officer
Lanette Siragusa
Chief Nursing Officer, Shared Health

Re: **COVID-19 – Use of Non-Medical Masks in Health Care Facilities**

As we approach respiratory illness season, all health-care facilities in Manitoba are preparing to implement a requirement that all visitors wear non-medical masks for the duration of their visit(s). This requirement will apply to all who visit health care facilities, including designated support persons, general visitors and outpatients attending medical appointments.

This requirement will take effect in hospitals and health centres across Manitoba on September 1, 2020. The requirement is already in effect in Manitoba personal care homes and within all health-care facilities across the Prairie Mountain Health Region.

Patients seeking care at emergency departments, urgent care centres and/or clinics will similarly be encouraged to wear a non-medical mask but will continue to be provided with a procedure mask, if appropriate, when screened prior to entry. Visitors designated “ORANGE ZONE” (e.g. essential travelers) will continue to be provided with personal protective equipment appropriate to their situation.

Children under the age of two and individuals with medical conditions unrelated to COVID-19, including breathing or cognitive difficulties, that prevent them from safely wearing a mask are exempted from this requirement. Persons who are unable to put on or remove their mask without assistance are similarly exempted.

Visitors should be asked to provide their own mask. Cloth and other non-medical masks are acceptable and readily available in most communities. Those who do not have a mask will be notified of locations where they may be purchased. In certain circumstances, they will be provided with one.

Facilities will be responsible for the development of processes or procedures at their site related to visitor screening, escalation and where to refer visitors for easy local access to masks. This

work is underway and further information will be shared as it is available. Please refer to Frequently Asked Questions: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-masks-faq.pdf>.

Medical masks are only to be provided in exceptional situations where the circumstances of the visitor and/or patient being visited require their use. Refer to: COVID-19 Inpatient Visitation Principles (<https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-inpatient-visit-principles.pdf>). In these instances, staff will provide both the mask and information on its appropriate use.

Directions on the appropriate care and use of non-medical masks are also available to print or share with visitors by referring to: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/non-medical-mask-poster.pdf>.

Requiring the use of masks in hospitals and health centres will ensure we are doing all we can to protect our patients, our staff and our communities from this virus. Thank you for your support in sharing this information with staff, patients, families and outpatients.