



March 25, 2020

Health Authority Chief Executive Officers  
Health Authority Chief Operating Officers  
Health Authority Chief Medical Officers

Dear colleagues:

As we continue to engage in our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the added complexity of a compromised supply chain has created constraints and concerns within the health care system. When personal protective equipment (PPE) supply is at risk of becoming depleted, prioritization of allocation must take place in order to protect health care workers and to support continuation of care.

To help guide health authorities in making ethically supported decisions in allocating PPE when supplies are scarce, I am attaching the *COVID-19: Emergency Prioritization in a Pandemic: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Allocation Framework (March 2020)*. This PPE Framework contains strategies to implement throughout all risk assessment stages of supply with detailed guidance on PPE prioritization in all care settings for a range of individuals.

Based on our current provincial PPE supply, health authorities are to implement Stage 4 of the PPE Framework. Effective immediately:

1. Health authorities should **secure their PPE supply** in one location in each facility where they can effectively control distribution.
2. Health care workers should do a full risk assessment and complete a point of care assessment for **every patient or resident interaction** and use appropriate PPE. Appropriate PPE use includes **diligent hand hygiene** particularly when donning and doffing PPE.
3. Health care workers and staff who have direct physical contact with patients who are suspected of having or have been diagnosed with COVID-19 should wear a **surgical or procedural mask, eye protection, gloves, and gown**. N95 respirators **must only be used** for aerosol generating medical procedures and in accordance with Policy Communique #2020-02.

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4. Health care workers limit their use of PPE as follows:
- **Use one mask or respirator per shift** unless the mask is too damp, soiled, or damaged for effective droplet protection, or when you leave the unit, ward or facility.
  - **Use one form of eye protection** per shift and reuse eye protection between shifts or after leaving a unit, ward, or facility using appropriate cleaning protocols.

The Ministry of Health has already begun planning for implementation of Stage 5 of the PPE Framework where the supply of at least one type of PPE has been depleted.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Stephen Brown  
Deputy Minister