

MANITOBA REGIONAL OFFICE

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DELIVERED VIA EMAIL: lsiragusa@sharedhealthmb.ca

November 16, 2020

Ms. Lanette Siragusa
Provincial Lead Health System Integration & Quality,
Chief Nursing Officer
Shared Health
1502 - 155 Carlton Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 3H8

Dear Ms. Siragusa:

RE: SHARED HEALTH PROTOCOLS ON N95 MASKS

As you may know, CUPE has issued grievances at a number of Manitoba health care facilities calling on the immediate provision of N95 masks/respirators to health care support staff who are working with COVID positive patients, residents, or clients.

To-date, our grievances have been denied under the position that N95 masks should only be provided when staff are working with aerosol generating medical procedures based on a risk assessment from a nurse, and that these masks have been provided.

Our members are telling us they are not being provided N95 masks, including in facilities with COVID-19 outbreaks. This is particularly alarming when our members have direct contact in close quarters with COVID positive patients, residents, or clients.

CUPE continues to object to the position that N95 masks should not be provided unless the staff person is working with aerosol generating medical procedures or on a nurse's risk assessment, and that this policy needs to be revised to reflect what the latest science tells us. If our members are working in a facility with an outbreak, they should be provided every protection possible.

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On November 6, 2020, Dr. Teresa Tam acknowledged that precautions should be made related to aerosol transmission of COVID-19. The Public Health Agency of Canada updated the main modes of transmission of COVID-19 to include both respiratory droplets and aerosols.

Shared Health has not updated its PPE guidelines for the issuance of N95 masks/respirators since July 2020. Public health officials in Manitoba have highlighted that what we know about this virus changes, and that public health responds to those changes. This has clearly not been the case, and our members are being put at risk.

Considering the Public Health Agency of Canada's recent recognition that COVID-19 can be spread through aerosol transmission, will Shared Health be updating its protocols on the issuance of N95 masks to protect all staff at all times?

We understand the critical importance of conservation of PPE. This is to ensure we have enough personal protective equipment available for staff should there be a major outbreak.

With major outbreaks in many health care facilities across the province, and the entire province in "Code Red" the time to provide N95 masks to front-line health care workers is now. Doctors, nurses, allied health, and support staff all deserve the same protection from this virus, but they are not all receiving it.

We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

ABE ARAYA
PRESIDENT, CUPE MANITOBA

DARRIN COOK
PRESIDENT, CUPE 4270
SOUTHERN HEALTH-SANTÉ SUD

DANIEL RICHARDS
CHAIRPERSON,
CUPE PRIVATE PERSONAL
CARE HOME COMMITTEE

DEBBIE BOISSONNEAULT
PRESIDENT, CUPE 204,
WINNIPEG REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY,
SHARED HEALTH

CHRISTINE LUSSIER
PRESIDENT, CUPE 8600
NORTHERN REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

GORD DELBRIDGE
PRESIDENT CUPE 500,
RIVERVIEW HEALTH CENTRE, WRHA

wkp/cope 491

cc: Honourable C. Friesen, Minister of Health, Seniors & Active Living
W. Kinew, Leader of the Official Opposition
D. Lamont, Leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party
S. McAteer, CUPE Health Care Coordinator
W. Skomoroh, CUPE Health & Safety/Education Representative
L. McLeod, CUPE Regional Director