



**MEMORANDUM
NOTE DE SERVICE**

TO Community Health Nurses,
À Pamela Miller, Acting Director of Nursing,
Nicole Liboiron, Acting Director of Nursing

Date
December 10, 2020

FROM Dr. Wadieh Yacoub, FNIHB Senior Medical
DE Officer of Health

Dr. Chris Sarin, FNIHB Deputy Medical
Officer of Health

SUBJECT: Continuous Masking and Eye Protection

Hello Community Health Nurses,

In April, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) introduced continuous masking in all First Nations health facilities in Alberta to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 transmission. Since then, the scientific community has found that the use of mask and eye protection, and diligent hand hygiene are the most critical measures in preventing respiratory infections. As such, the FNIHB Medical Officers of Health (MOHs) are recommending the continuous use of medical masks and eye protection. **All healthcare workers (HCWs), providing direct and indirect patient care, must wear a surgical/procedure mask and eye protection (e.g. goggles, face shield, procedure mask with built-in eye shield) at all times when engaged in patient interactions, that occur within two metres.**

The continuous use of medical masks and eye protection reflects emerging evidence of COVID-19 transmission, best practice, and guidance from Alberta Health Services and the Public Health Agency of Canada. Some important points to note are:

- HCWs should continue to complete a point of care risk assessment (PCRA) before every patient interaction to determine the risk and appropriate PPE required.
- HCWs (e.g. nurses, healthcare aides, pharmacists, paramedics, allied health practitioners, physicians) are required to wear a surgical/procedure mask and eye protection continuously when providing direct and indirect patient care. This may include screening questions, data entry, performing assessments, and cleaning the patient care environment.
- Eye protection may include disposable or reusable face shields, goggles, safety glasses, and mask and face shield combinations.
- Eye protection should be removed when it is wet, soiled, contaminated, damaged, before breaks, at shift change, or when you change your surgical/procedure mask. Eye protection does not need to be changed between each patient encounter, unless the patient has COVID-19 related symptoms, a positive COVID-19 screen, or is a lab-confirmed (or confirmed by an authorized point-of-care test) positive case.



- HCWs will continue to wear the appropriate PPE for contact and droplet precautions, which include surgical/procedure mask, eye protection, gown, and gloves, for patients with influenza-like illness symptoms or who are suspected/confirmed COVID-19.
- **To maximize effectiveness, HCWs should ensure that surgical/procedure mask and eye protection use is combined with hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, environmental cleaning/disinfection, and physical distancing.**

As community transmission of COVID-19 infections continues to increase in First Nation communities in Alberta, the need for appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) remains critical to ensure the safety of healthcare workers and patients. To protect healthcare workers and patients from inadvertent exposures to COVID-19 and to minimize its spread, we must remain vigilant and continue to do what we can to prevent respiratory infections.

More information related to PPE can be found at [Alberta Health Services](#) and [Public Health Agency of Canada](#).