

AHS PPE Taskforce Guidance

Topic: Continuous Masking and Patient Care

Date: August 21, 2020

We continue to work to ensure that we are achieving 100% compliance with our Continuous Masking Directive, which requires [all staff, physicians and volunteers](#) to mask in all patient areas at all times, and also to mask in ALL other areas where we cannot maintain a minimum physical distance of two metres or six feet, at all times. We cannot overstate the importance of this Directive, and your support in ensuring compliance, both with yourself and your colleagues. Wearing *is* caring. [Who are you wearing your mask to protect?](#)

We also require [all patients](#) and visitors to be masked when leaving any inpatient room to move to other areas in the facility. Masks must cover the nose and mouth.

We understand that staff are experiencing some resistance from some patients regarding the Continuous Masking requirements. It is imperative that we consider the health of patients, and our duty to provide care, in all circumstances. No patient shall be denied service in AHS because they cannot or will not wear a mask.

To manage these situations safely:

- Screen all patients thoroughly for symptoms of and risk factors for COVID-19.
- If patient refuses mask or is medically exempt:
 - have the patient clean their hands using alcohol-based hand rub.
 - Offer the patient a face shield to don in place of a face mask.
 - Escort the patient to a private care space and apply [Contact and Droplet precautions](#) until a thorough symptom and risk factor history can be obtained.
- Asymptomatic patients without risk factors can leave their room/care space as long as they can don a face shield.
- Symptomatic patients or those with risk factors should not leave their room/care space without a mask, other than in an emergency or medically necessary situation.
 - In this event the patient should be transported in such a manner as to limit contact with other patients or staff, and the receiving department should be prepared in advance to clear the area of non-essential personnel. Environmental Services should be engaged to ensure appropriate cleaning of surfaces
- Upon discharge, patients who cannot/will not use a face shield or a mask should be escorted off property using a route which is less travelled, and less likely to expose others to disease.

Your continued [example, support and vigilance](#) is appreciated.