



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the Care of Patients with Multi-drug Resistant Organisms (MDROs) in COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) Pandemic

Date: April 10, 2020

Public Health Message Type: Alert Advisory Update Information

Intended Audience: All public health partners Healthcare providers Infection preventionists
 Local health departments Schools/child care centers ACOs
 Animal health professionals Other:

Key Points:

- SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) is currently circulating in New Jersey and the surrounding areas with facilities reporting shortages of PPE.
- When PPE supply is low healthcare facilities may consider:
 1. **Suspending the use of gowns** for the care of patients with **endemic MDROs** except for use of Standard Precautions (<https://www.cdc.gov/hicpac/recommendations/core-practices.html>).
 2. **Reserving the use of gowns** for the care of patients with **non-endemic MDROs** as part of Standard Precautions or **high-contact patient care** activities.
 3. **Suspending** the collection of Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) active surveillance testing (AST) nasal swabs unless transmission of MRSA is suspected.
- Compliance with the standards in this document does not require prior approval from the Department's Office of Certificate of Need and Licensing and facilities shall be deemed in compliance with all applicable licensing standards affected by the standards in this document.

Immediate Action Items:

- Healthcare facilities caring for patients with **endemic MDROs** such as Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), Vancomycin-resistant *Enterococcus* (VRE), or Extended-spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL)-producing Gram-negative bacilli:
 - **Consider suspending** the use of gowns except as required for **Standard Precautions**.
- Healthcare facilities caring for patients who have highly **resistant Gram-negative organisms** such as carbapenem-resistant *Enterobacteriaceae* (CRE) **and other non-endemic MDROs** such as *Candida auris* (*C. auris*):
 - **Gowns should be reserved** for use as part of Standard Precautions and also prioritized for **high-contact patient care activities** such as:
 - Dressing, bathing/showering, transferring, providing hygiene, changing linens, changing briefs or assisting with toileting, device care or use (central line, urinary catheter, feeding tube, tracheostomy/ventilator), and wound care.
 - **Bundle high-contact care activities** as part of individual care encounters.
- Healthcare facilities caring for patients with ***Clostridioides difficile* infections (CDI)**:
 - **Continue** using **Contact Precautions** for the care of **symptomatic** CDI patients.

- **Consider suspending** the use of **Contact Precautions** for the care of patients at high risk for CDI who have **asymptomatic carriage** of CDI.
- Healthcare facilities caring for patients with **ANY MDRO**:
 - **Consider suspending** the collection of MRSA AST nasal swabs **unless** transmission of MRSA is suspected in **ANY** unit of the facility.
 - **Continue to wear gloves** for contact with these patients and their environment.
 - **Continue to emphasize hand hygiene.**
 - Attempt to **place patients colonized or infected with any MDRO in a private room**, if available.
- Healthcare facilities should **refer to the CDC's** Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of Isolation Gowns (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/isolation-gowns.html>) for guidance and implement the recommended strategies to optimize their current supply of gowns. All U.S. healthcare facilities should begin using PPE contingency strategies now.

Contact Information:

- Jason Mehr, Healthcare-associated Infections Coordinator or Rebecca Greeley, Infectious Disease Team Lead at haiar@doh.gov, (609) 826-5964
- The Communicable Disease Service at (609) 826-5964 during business hours

References and Resources:

- NJDOH COVID-19: Information for Healthcare Professionals
https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_healthcare.shtml
- CDC Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Healthcare Settings
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>
- CDC Infection Control FAQ (COVID-19)
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-faq.html>
- CDC Strategies to Optimize the Supply of PPE and Equipment
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/index.html>