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Sent: May 7, 2020 8:29 PM
To: Khalil, Samantha; Theis, Rick; MacKendrick, Andrew
Cc: Bélair, Thierry (HC/SC); Pascuzzo, Matt (HC/SC); Nowers, Kathryn (HC/SC); Exton, Adam (HC/SC)
Subject: FLAG: PHAC posting - Conserving gowns
Attachments: Conserving gowns final.docx; Conserving Gowns final FR.docx; PHAC_ML_nCoV Gown shortage 2020-05-07_FINAL_EN.docx

Hi,

Flagging the attached web posting, scheduled to be go online **Saturday at 2 PM**.

Background on issue:

- Canada is currently experiencing a critical shortage of medical gowns.
- The shortage is expected to be alleviated through domestic production and the anticipated delivery of international orders.
- In the meantime, PHAC is developing the recommendations to help healthcare settings address this shortage.

What this is:

- The attached guidance is to provide strategies on what to do regarding a shortage of PPE gowns.

Highlights of release:

- It notes that PPE gowns can be either **single-use** or **reusable**.
- PHAC recommends the below strategies:
 - Save existing supplies of gowns by decreasing the need for their use
 - Increase the frequency of laundering of reusable gowns
 - Use other types of gowns
 - Change uniforms more frequently
 - Use expired disposable gowns for training of HCWs
 - Identify other apparel or combination of apparel that could provide similar protection
- “If no alternatives are available, then, after discussions with staff, the **use of expired gowns** that are physically intact and show no visible wear **could be considered** in the strategies to address a shortage.”

Next steps:

- Posting is scheduled for **2 PM Saturday**
- In time for this posting, Health Canada has updated its online guidance on use of expired gowns.
- Media attention is expected. Lines to follow; departmental MLQA attached as well.

Thanks,
Ash

Aisling MacKnight

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- Conserving the use of gowns in healthcare settings when supplies are limited

Conserving the use of gowns in healthcare settings when supplies are limited

An isolation gown is an item of personal protective equipment (PPE) used by all healthcare workers (HCWs) in all healthcare settings, including acute care, long-term care, ambulatory care and home care.

- HCWs include personal support workers, orderlies, nurses, doctors, etc.
- Other critical staff and volunteers working in those settings such as housekeeping staff may also require PPE for certain activities.

Wearing a gown helps protect the HCW's clothing and forearms while caring for a patient with an infection such as COVID-19.

Isolation gowns can be reusable or disposable. They should have long-sleeves, cover the body front and back from the neck to the thighs, overlap in the back, fasten at the neck and back and be easy to put on and take off. All HCWs require training on how to put on properly and take off PPE safely, including the isolation gown.

If a shortage of isolation gowns might occur in a healthcare setting, the following strategies should be considered:

- Save existing supplies of gowns by decreasing the need for their use. Examples include:
 - placing a physical barrier between HCWs and individuals at screening points
 - reducing, postponing or cancelling non-essential procedures that may require a gown
 - bundling of activities to reduce the need to change a gown
- Increase the frequency of laundering of reusable gowns
- Use other types of gowns such as:
 - operating room (or surgical) gowns
- Change uniforms more frequently
- Use expired disposable gowns for training of HCWs
- Identify other apparel or combination of apparel that could provide similar protection, including:

- Coveralls
- Laboratory coats
- Aprons
- Sleeve covers
- If no alternatives are available, then, after discussions with staff, the use of expired gowns that are physically intact and show no visible wear could be considered in the strategies to address a shortage.

Other apparel such as coveralls, laboratory coats and aprons are not normally used by HCWs when caring for patients. It is important to train HCWs on how to put on and safely take off these apparel, to minimize the risk of self-contamination.

Coveralls

Coveralls (reusable or disposable) provide full body protection. They open at the front and can cover the head and feet as well. They are more complicated to put on and take off and sizing may be an issue for some HCWs. They might have to be worn in combination with an apron if the clothing is not fully protected at the front.

Laboratory coats

Laboratory (lab) coats (reusable or disposable) provide a cover over clothing similar to a gown, except that they open in the front and may not be as long as a gown. Gloves may not fit well over the cuff of the lab coat, possibly exposing the wrist. Sizing may also be an issue for some HCWs.

- To increase effectiveness, lab coats should be buttoned up
- Lab coats may need to be worn in combination with other items, such as an apron

Aprons

Aprons (reusable or disposable) provide protection to the front of the body. They can tie at the neck or have an overhead strap (this type increases the chance of touching the face and self-contaminating when taking them off). They can be long-sleeved or without sleeves and can be made of different kinds of material, such as plastic or fabric.

- Aprons should be used in combination with other apparel, such as a lab coat and sleeve covers, since aprons may not cover the back and arms

Sleeve covers

Sleeve covers protect the forearms and are available in different kinds of material.

- Sleeve covers need to be used in combination with other apparel such as aprons

Learn more about [technical specifications and risk levels for gowns](#).