THE STATE of ALASKA
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Department of Health

DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
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Dear colleagues,

The risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission in healthcare settings is primarily through respiratory droplets and aerosols, with limited evidence supporting fomite transmission. A risk-based approach for the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) may now be used in healthcare settings.

On August 19, 2025, the Alaska Infection Control and Prevention Advisory Committee (AK ICPAC) convened to review personal protective equipment (PPE) recommendations for COVID-19. After review of updated guidance from other jurisdictions and emerging scientific evidence, the committee recommends a risk-based approach to PPE for individuals caring for patients with suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection in inpatient settings. To support consistent practices across the healthcare continuum, this guidance applies to all healthcare personnel, including those providing care in non-facility settings:

- Eye protection and a fit-tested N95 filtering respirator or similar respiratory protection as standard for all room entry or other patient care.
- Gown and glove use should be in accordance with standard precautions and utilized when activities involving contact with respiratory secretions or other potentially infectious material are anticipated.

Facilities adopting these recommendations are encouraged to consult with their infection prevention teams and ensure staff receive training on the revised protocols. Please note that these are recommendations, not regulations, and facilities must continue to meet all applicable regulatory requirements. Skilled Nursing Facilities should continue to follow guidance provided by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

Healthcare facilities caring for patients at high risk for COVID-19 complications should encourage COVID-19 vaccination for staff with patient contact and use appropriate PPE when indicated by standard precautions, transmission-based precautions, return-to-work guidance, and facility policies. Facilities may update infection prevention and control policies to respond to periods of increased community respiratory virus transmission. This may include universal masking, increased ventilation, and vaccination clinics. Universal masking may be implemented facility-

wide or tailored to higher-risk areas. For questions regarding this guidance, contact AK_DPH_HAI_Team@alaska.gov

As you may be aware, the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC), the national body previously making recommendations for infection control in healthcare settings, was disbanded earlier in 2025. As a result, the responsibility for updating healthcare infection prevention guidance such as this risk-based approach to PPE now lies with individual states.

Sincerely,

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