



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**This is an official
MS Health Alert Network (HAN) Alert**

MESSAGE ID: MSHAN-20200405-00439-ALT (Health Alert)
RECIPIENTS: All Physicians, Hospitals, ERs, ICPs, NPs, and
Healthcare Providers - Statewide
DATE: Sunday, April 5, 2020
SUBJECT: Updated Recommendations for Universal Masks for
Healthcare Professionals

Dear Colleagues,

Given the rising number of cases of COVID-19 in Mississippi, and the increased risk of exposure to healthcare professionals and patients, the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) recommends that healthcare workers wear masks throughout the workday. N95 or KN95 masks should not be used routinely but preserved for those caring directly for patients with COVID-19 or those suspected of having COVID-19. This recommendation applies to healthcare professionals working in patient care areas, even when they are not in a patient facing role. Healthcare professionals included in this recommendation are all paid and unpaid persons serving in healthcare settings with the potential for either direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials, contaminated medical supplies or contaminated environmental surfaces. Please realize masks should be used in addition to (not instead of) continuing proper distancing and proper hand hygiene.

Proper hand hygiene should be performed after donning and doffing the mask. Masks should be replaced when they become soiled, moist or damaged. Masks can be replaced at various time points as directed by your healthcare institution, following hygienic principles. If surgical masks are not readily available due to restrictions in supply, masks of similar quality produced by local industry or homemade cloth masks can be used as directed by your institution. Cloth masks should be laundered at home daily in hot water and dried with high heat. See CDC guidelines for cloth masks: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

When caring for patients with possible COVID-19 symptoms, MSDH still recommends a minimum complement of a surgical mask, eye protection and gloves. When caring for patients with known COVID-19 we strongly recommend strict compliance with CDC infection control guidance, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control.html> .

Regards,

Thomas Dobbs, MD, MPH
State Health Officer

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Alerting Message Specification Settings

Originating Agency: Mississippi State Department of Health
Alerting Program: MS Health Alert Network (MS HAN)
Message Identifier: MSHAN-20200405-00439-ALT
Program (HAN) Type: Health Alert
Status (Type): Actual ()
Message Type: Alert
Reference: MSHAN-00439
Severity: Unknown
Acknowledgement: No
Sensitive: Not Sensitive
Message Expiration: Undetermined
Urgency: Undetermined
Delivery Time: 600 minutes

Definition of Alerting Vocabulary and Message Specification Settings

Originating Agency: A unique identifier for the agency originating the alert.

Alerting Program: The program sending the alert or engaging in alerts and communications using PHIN Communication and Alerting (PCA) as a vehicle for their delivery.

Message Identifier: A unique alert identifier that is generated upon alert activation (MSHAN-yyymmdd-hhmm-TTT (**ALT=Health Alert**, **ADV=Health Advisory**, **UPD=Health Update**, **MSG/INFO=Message/Info Service**)).

Program (HAN) Type: Categories of Health Alert Messages.

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Health Info Service: Provides Message / Notification of general public health information; unlikely to require immediate action.

Status (Type):

- Actual: Communication or alert refers to a live event
- Exercise: Designated recipients must respond to the communication or alert
- Test: Communication or alert is related to a technical, system test and should be disregarded



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Message Type:

- Alert: Indicates an original Alert
- Update: Indicates prior alert has been Updated and/or superseded
- Cancel: Indicates prior alert has been cancelled
- Error: Indicates prior alert has been retracted

Reference: For a communication or alert with a Message Type of “Update” or “Cancel”, this attribute contains the unique Message Identifier of the original communication or alert being updated or cancelled. “n/a” = Not Applicable.

Severity:

- Extreme: Extraordinary threat to life or property
- Severe: Significant threat to life or property
- Moderate: Possible threat to life or property
- Minor: Minimal threat to life or property
- Unknown: Unknown threat to life or property

Acknowledgement: Indicates whether an acknowledgement on the part of the recipient is required to confirm that the alert was received, and the timeframe in which a response is required (Yes or No).

Sensitive:

- Sensitive: Indicates the alert contains sensitive content
- Not Sensitive: Indicates non-sensitive content

Message Expiration: Undetermined.

Urgency: Undetermined. Responsive action should be taken immediately.

Delivery Time: Indicates the timeframe for delivery of the alert (15, 60, 1440, 4320 minutes (.25, 1, 24, 72 hours)).