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](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html)


Regards,

Thomas Dobbs, MD, MPH
State Health Officer
### Alerting Message Specification Settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Originating Agency</td>
<td>Mississippi State Department of Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alerting Program</td>
<td>MS Health Alert Network (MS HAN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Identifier</td>
<td>MSHAN-20200405-00439-ALT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program (HAN) Type</td>
<td>Health Alert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status (Type)</td>
<td>Actual ()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Type</td>
<td>Alert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>MSHAN-00439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severity</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitive</td>
<td>Not Sensitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Expiration</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urgency</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery Time</td>
<td>600 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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-yyyyymm-dd-hmmm-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
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)).