



March 30, 2020

UPDATED - COVID-19: PPE and Medical Supplies

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & COMMERCE

PURPOSE

- This document addresses issues related to personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical supplies needed to respond to COVID-19. The information in this document is based on information provided by the Trump Administration. This document is intended to provide Members with the latest reported information during this unprecedented pandemic. The Committee continues to receive updates from Administration officials and will update Members as new information becomes available.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

- The Trump Administration has formed a **Supply Chain Stabilization Task Force** led by Rear Admiral John Polowczyk that is tasked with identifying the medical supply and PPE needs in the United States, and then working daily with global manufacturers to procure supplies. Supplies are now being transported by air from both Asia and Europe into the United States. **On March 28, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), [issued an Emergency Use Authorization \(EUA\)](#) that allows for masks from certain countries to be imported into the United States.**
- **Supplies procured by the Task Force are being distributed in the United States by commercial distributors in communities identified by the Administration as most in need. This will include masks, gloves, gowns, hand sanitizer, and surgical caps. Rear Admiral Polowczyk noted that the Task Force has coordinated the delivery of PPE from Asia to New York and New Jersey.**
- **States are reporting wide variations in fulfillment for Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) requests. We have also heard from Members that their states' orders are being diverted to other states while already in route to them. It is currently unclear what system the Administration has in place to both inventory what materials are available, and determine how such materials will be distributed.**
- **The White House [initiated](#) "Project Airbridge," in partnership with large U.S. health care distributors such as McKesson Corp., Cardinal, Owens & Minor, Medline, and Henry Schein Inc., to expedite air delivery of PPE to high-risk areas across the country over the next 30 days.**
- **The first of 22 air shipments of supplies as part of "Project Airbridge" [reportedly](#) arrived in New York from China on Sunday. The plane delivered "130,000 N95 masks, 1.8 million face masks and gowns, 10 million gloves and thousands of thermometers for distribution to New York, New Jersey and Connecticut." The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reports that additional flights will be delivering supplies to Chicago on Monday**

and Ohio on Tuesday, with the supplies then distributed to other high-risk areas across the country.

FEDERAL ACTION TO ADDRESS SHORTAGES OF PPE

- To address the shortages of masks, [FDA has worked with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) to allow health care workers and first responders to use similar respirator masks approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) — not currently regulated by the FDA, and typically used in construction and manufacturing — during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- In response to potential shortages, CDC has issued [Interim Infection and Prevention Control Recommendations](#) indicating that “alternatives to N95s should be considered.” These alternatives include other classes of filtering facepiece respirators (FFRs), elastomeric half-mask and full facepiece air purifying respirators, and powered air purifying respirators (PAPRs) where feasible.
- In late February, the Administration stated that the federal government’s [SNS](#) of medical supplies included 12 million medical-grade N95 masks and 30 million surgical masks — only about one percent of the 3.5 billion that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) estimates the country will need if the pandemic lasts at least a year.
- On March 4, HHS [announced](#) that the federal government had put in a guaranteed order for 500 million N95 masks over the next 12-18 months, a move it said would encourage manufacturers “to immediately increase production of N95s for use by health care professionals.”
- The Pentagon [announced](#) that they will provide five million masks from Department of Defense stockpiles to the SNS with the first one million being made available to HHS immediately.
- Through an [executive order](#), the Administration has also invoked the [Defense Production Act \(DPA\)](#), which confers broad presidential authorities to mobilize domestic industry in service of the national defense, defined in statute as various military activities and “[homeland security, stockpiling, space, and any directly related activity](#)” including emergency preparedness activities under the Stafford Act, which has been used for public health emergencies. The Administration recently used the DPA to prevent production of materials manufactured by Phillips from going overseas.

FEDERAL ACTION TO ADDRESS SHORTAGES OF MEDICAL DEVICES, SUCH AS DIAGNOSTICS AND TESTING SUPPLIES

- The [EUA](#) issued by FDA last week allows for the importation of non-NIOSH-approved respirators that have been designed, evaluated and validated to meet a performance standard. Respirators that are authorized under the EUA are for use in health care settings by health care personnel in accordance with recommendations from CDC to prevent exposure to airborne particulates. For the most current CDC recommendations on optimizing respirator use, please visit CDC’s webpage: [Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of N95 Respirators](#).

- FDA has also provided [information](#) to health care providers on how to address shortages of diagnostic testing supplies, such as where test components, including swabs, can be substituted with alternative products. For individuals who have questions about shortages, or would like to report shortages of testing supplies, FDA has established a 24-hour toll-free line: 1-888-INFO-FDA, choose option *.
- The Pentagon [announced](#) they will be providing up to 2,000 deployable ventilators from Department of Defense stockpiles to the SNS. [There are approximately 160,000 ventilators currently in U.S. hospitals and approximately 12,600 in the SNS.](#)

WAYS FOR LOCAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND FIRST RESPONDERS TO ACCESS SUPPLIES

- **FEMA has requested all private industry interested in selling medical supplies or equipment to the federal government, to submit information to FEMA [here](#). If private companies are interested in donating medical supplies or equipment, further details should be provided to [FEMA here](#). Private companies that want to produce a product related to the COVID-19 response should send an email to: nbeoc@max.gov. Private companies interested in doing business with FEMA and supporting the response to COVID- 19 with their company's non-medical goods and/or services should submit inquiries to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Procurement Action Innovative Response Team (PAIR) team at DHSIndustryLiaison@hq.dhs.gov.**
- FDA has issued letters to health care providers to share conservation strategies, such as the use of alternatives or when supplies can be used beyond the manufacturer-designated shelf life for [surgical masks and gowns](#) and [medical gloves](#).
- FDA has also provided [contact information](#) for manufacturers interested in importing PPE and other devices.
- Local providers and responders looking for supplies should be directed to your state health department. Some state health departments keep their own stockpiles of PPE and other devices for emergency purposes.
- If your state health department does not have additional PPE or other devices available for distribution, state governments are able to request federal assistance from the [SNS](#). State governors or their designees are responsible for requesting deployment of SNS assets.
- The HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary of Preparedness and Response (ASPR) will work with state officials and other responding federal agencies to evaluate the request and situation. Ultimately, HHS/ASPR determines a prompt course of action of where and when to release those assets that are most appropriate.
- Each state has established plans to receive and distribute SNS assets to their local jurisdictions as soon as possible after receipt of the deployment. SNS assets are delivered to one predesignated

location in the state. State personnel are then responsible for distributing the materials within the state to health care providers. To request items, governors or their designees should send their requests to: HHS.SOC@HHS.gov.

- HHS has reported to Committee staff that all 50 states have requested some form of PPE from the SNS, and that shipments either have been completed or are in process. **Additional requests continue to come in from states. More than 333 tons of cargo have reportedly shipped to support U.S. repatriation efforts and states' PPE needs during this crisis. The SNS continues restocking as shipments go out.**