



March 24, 2020

UPDATED - COVID-19: PPE and Medical Supplies

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & COMMERCE

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.
- These supplies are being distributed in the United States by commercial distributors in communities identified by the Administration as being highest in need. This will include masks, gloves, gowns, hand sanitizer and surgical caps.

FEDERAL ACTION TO ADDRESS SHORTAGES OF PPE

- To address the shortages of masks, [the Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\) 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 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.
- The federal government’s [Strategic National Stockpile \(SNS\)](#) of medical supplies includes 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 4th, 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 has [announced](#) that they will be providing 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.

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

- FDA has 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 has [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.](#)
- FDA has also [released guidance](#) regarding ventilators and other respiratory devices. This guidance provides information for manufacturers about the modifications that manufacturers, hospitals and health care professionals may make to existing ventilators, how manufacturers may increase production, and how health care entities may safely utilize other types of ventilators.

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

- 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 should also 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 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 Shipments have either been completed or are in process. During this crisis alone, more than 333 tons of cargo have shipped to support U.S. repatriation efforts and states' PPE needs.**