

March 19, 2020

Contact: Danny Chun 847-736-0108  
[dchun@team-iha.org](mailto:dchun@team-iha.org)

## **ILLINOIS HOSPITALS ISSUE PLEA FOR MEDICAL SUPPLIES**

### *N95 Masks Critically Needed to Protect Healthcare Workers As They Care for COVID-19 Patients*

Naperville and Springfield – The Illinois Health and Hospital Association (IHA) today issued a plea to the leaders of associations for the construction industry, dentists, veterinarians, and other groups that may be able to help the state’s more than 200 hospitals protect their healthcare workers as they care for COVID-19 patients. IHA is asking the organizations to donate face masks or N95s to their local hospitals.

“Hospitals all over the state are in jeopardy of potentially running out of critically needed protective medical supplies,” said Illinois Health and Hospital Association President and CEO A.J. Wilhelmi. “With continuing uncertainties about global and U.S. supplies of face masks, we urgently need to find alternative supplies, no matter where they are, so our hospitals can continue to provide life-saving care to current and future COVID-19 patients.”

The text of Wilhelmi’s message is as follows:

*Subject: Illinois Hospitals Need Your Help - Request for Face Masks (N95s)*

*I am making an unusual, but critically important personal plea to you for help.*

*As you may be aware, Illinois hospitals and health systems are facing a critical shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as they care for increasing numbers of patients with COVID-19. Yesterday, the number of COVID-19 cases in Illinois nearly doubled to 288. We anticipate that the number of cases will increase dramatically in the coming days and weeks, exhausting all the PPE at hospitals, including gowns, gloves, eye shields and, especially, medical masks (specifically, standard surgical masks and N95s, which have NIOSH or FDA approval, including expired N95s).*

*PPE is critical to protecting our frontline healthcare workforce from infection when testing and treating patients for COVID-19, keeping our dedicated physicians, nurses, technicians and others in our hospitals where they are needed most.*

*Earlier this week, you may have seen or heard that Vice President Mike Pence asked all construction companies to donate unused/package N95 masks to their local hospitals and to limit ordering more:*

*"We would make one specific request, and that is we would urge construction companies to donate their inventory of N95 masks to your local hospital and forgo additional orders of those industrial masks...Because of what the president asked to be included in legislation moving through the Congress, those industrial masks that they use on construction sites are perfectly acceptable for healthcare workers to be protected from a respiratory disease." (See [a news story](#) on the Vice President’s remarks at a White House press conference)*

*In addition, there may be available N95 masks from dental offices or other healthcare facilities that have been temporarily shuttered because of the COVID-19 crisis.*

*On behalf of more than 200 hospitals and health systems across Illinois, I ask you to donate N95s to your local hospitals. We greatly appreciate any help you can provide to protect healthcare workers as they*

*provide life-saving care to patients during this crisis. Thanks for considering, and please let me know if you have any questions or need more information.*

###

**About IHA**

The Illinois Health and Hospital Association, with offices in Chicago, Naperville, Springfield, and Washington, D.C., advocates for Illinois' more than 200 hospitals and nearly 40 health systems as they serve their patients and communities. IHA members provide a broad range of services—not just within their walls, but across the continuum of healthcare and in their communities. Reflecting the diversity of the state, IHA members consist of nonprofit, investor-owned and public hospitals in the following categories: community, safety net, rural, critical access, specialty, and teaching hospitals, including academic medical centers. For more information, see [www.team-iha.org](http://www.team-iha.org). Like IHA on [Facebook](#). Follow IHA on [Twitter](#).