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| To: | Post-Secondary Institutions' Health Programs |
| From: | Health Authority Practice Education Committee (HAPEC), in partnership with the Provincial PPE/N95 Sub-Working Group |
| Purpose: | To remind partners about current approaches for respirator fit-testing for students during the pandemic, as communicated in previous provincial resources. |
| Date: | November 19, 2020 |

What do I need to know?

The Practice Education Guideline on [Respiratory Protection](#) that has been guiding student education practices in BC for many years still applies. However, together, both Post-secondary Institutions (PSIs) and Health Care Organizations (HCOs) are ensuring that N95 Fit-testing requirement is not being broadly applied to all students in health programs, but rather that this requirement is focused on particular circumstances and students, as outlined below.

When is N95 Respiratory Protection Required?

An N95 respirator and eye protection (i.e., goggles or face shield), gloves and gown are required for procedures that are aerosol generating for patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 or airborne diseases (i.e. TB). Fit testing is required if the following procedures **must be** performed in order to successfully complete the student practicum:

- Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures (AGMPs) on patients with known risk factors
- Providing care for patients on airborne precautions

More information on AGMPs can be found [here](#).

Fit Testing Requirements

All HCO staff, students, and clinical instructors that are required to wear a respirator (e.g., N95) as personal protective equipment (PPE) must have a valid fit test (i.e., within the previous 2 years as per the [BC Ministry of Health Policy Communique](#)). *Fit testing is specific to the individual and the model of respirator.*

Examples of students who may require fit-testing to meet their learning objectives are on-car paramedic students and respiratory therapy students. For further considerations, please see [Appendix A](#). In circumstances where employees, students, and clinical instructors do not have a valid fit test, they must not perform tasks requiring the use of respirators.

Roles and Responsibilities for Student Fit Testing

As per the Practice Education Guideline on [Respiratory Protection](#) and the BCCDC/BC Ministry of Health [Student Practice Education Guideline for Healthcare Settings during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), it remains the responsibility of PSIs to ensure that students requiring the use of respirators are fit tested, and the responsibility of the HCO to provide students with appropriate PPE during the education placement on HCO sites.

In a collaborative effort, HCOs and PSIs will attempt to minimize the placement of students in an environment where a respirator would be required, such as utilizing engineering and administrative controls, offering alternate learning experiences including simulation, or changing patient assignments. For situations where PSIs or vendors cannot complete fit-testing, and the student does not have a valid fit-test, and their upcoming placement learning objectives require the use of an N95 mask, HCOs will explore the feasibility of supporting fit-testing for students on a case-by-case basis.

N95 Respirators to Use (in order of priority)

| Surgical Setting (i.e. OR)* | | Non-Surgical Setting* | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Small/medium face | Medium/large face | Small/medium face | Medium/large face |
| 3M 1860S | 3M 1860 Reg | 3M 1860S | 3M 8210 |
| 3M 1804S | Halyard 46727 | 3M 1804S | 3M 1860 Reg |
| - | 3M 1804 | - | Halyard 46727 |
| - | - | - | 3M 1804 |

* [Surgical N95 vs Standard N95 Respirators](#)

Ordering Respirators for Fit Testing

PSIs requiring respirators for use in student fit testing may order direct from local vendors and state it is for a PSI supporting health care.

Questions?

For feedback or queries, please contact your Health Organization Student Practice Education contacts, or studenteducation@phsa.ca.