Alberta Health Services

Alberta Justice and Solicitor General

Memorandum

Date: April 12, 2020

To: Corrections Centre Directors

From: Dr. Keith Courtney, Facilities Medical Director, Correctional Health Services
Joanne Panasiuk, Executive Director, Correctional Services Division, Adult Centre Operations Branch (ACOB)
Shawn Rainault, Executive Director, Young Offender Branch

RE: **Continuous Masking for Correctional Officers**

Community spread of COVID-19 is increasing in Alberta. This means that the likelihood of any individual coming in contact with or being infected with COVID-19 is increasing. There is emerging evidence that asymptomatic, pre-symptomatic or minimally symptomatic individuals can transmit COVID-19.

In order to prevent transmission to both coworkers and inmates, it is recommended that Correctional Services staff mask when interacting with inmates or co-workers where a minimum distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained.

These guidelines are intended to bring consistency across all Correctional Facilities and improve safety for both staff working in Correctional Facilities and inmates, while aiming for judicious use of masks and PPE.

Recommended Approach:

1. Masking of Correctional staff interacting with inmates or coworkers <u>where a minimum 2 metres distance cannot be maintained at all times;</u>

   a. Correctional Officers should wear a surgical/procedure mask continuously, at all times and in all areas of their workplace if they are involved in direct inmate contact or cannot maintain adequate social distancing from inmates and co-workers.

   b. Correctional Officers are asked to use surgical/procedure masks in a judicious manner to help conserve supplies and ensure availability throughout this COVID-19 pandemic.

   c. The surgical/procedure mask should be immediately changed and safely disposed of whenever it is soiled or wet, whenever the Correctional Staff feels it may have become contaminated and after supporting care for any patient on Droplet +/- Contact precautions (i.e. suspected or confirmed influenza-like illness or COVID-19).

   d. Follow Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) protocols including hand hygiene and the use of additional personal protective equipment when supporting patient care.

   e. Follow previously circulated guidance related to PPE use in dedicated isolation areas.

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f. When taking a break, or eating a meal, the wearer should dispose of the mask and perform hand hygiene. Social distancing must be maintained and a new mask should be applied before returning to work.

2. Masking for Correctional Staff who do not work in inmate areas or do not have direct inmate contact:

a. All staff working within Correctional Facilities should practice social distancing and do not need to wear a mask where this can occur.
b. Masking is required if social distancing cannot be maintained or if entry into inmate areas is required.

All staff should complete hand hygiene before and after donning and doffing the procedure mask. Process is as follow:

- Wash hands thoroughly
- Secure the ties or elastic around your head so the mask stays in place.
- Fit the moldable band to the nose bridge.
- Fit snugly to your face and below chin.
- Wash hands thoroughly.

Supplies will be arriving at centres over the next few days and these guidelines will be implemented as soon supplies are available.

If you have any questions please connect with your immediate supervisor.

Thank you