

AMAZING PEOPLE DOING AMAZING THINGS

USING ESTABLISHED TECHNOLOGY TO KEEP STAFF SAFE – UV DISINFECTION PROCESS

We are so grateful to our staff for helping us preserve our limited supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) over the past six weeks or so. The guidance for re-use/extended use provided by our Infectious Disease specialists has been a major change from what everyone is used to, and has been necessary due to the supply shortages throughout the country. Our goal continues to be ensuring the safety of our staff and patients.

When the policy pertaining to extended use of PPE was first announced, one of our staff members suggested we disinfect clinical work masks and respirators using the same ultraviolet (UV) light technology used by our Environmental Services (EVS) team to disinfect patient rooms. **Kelly Wallace**, a Surgical Tech in the Hospital's Operating Room, brought her innovative idea forward to her manager and the wheels were in motion.

Aaron Garganta, Senior Director, Facilities/Safety/Emergency Management, worked with Infection Prevention and the Coronavirus Preparedness Team to ensure the efficacy of the process. Once approved, he partnered with staff from Facilities, Materials Management, EVS, Central Sterile Supply (CSS), department managers, and others to set up the process.

"There were many logistics that needed to be worked out for this process to go smoothly for staff," Aaron says. "Not only the disinfection process itself, but organizing storage bins, racks, and other supplies in the Hospital north conference rooms." Staff from EVS were originally performing disinfection of masks and respirators, but that responsibility soon moved to staff from the Hospital's Central Sterile Supply team. When the process was first implemented, it was available only to medical and clinical staff of Exeter Hospital. Shortly thereafter it was extended to Rockingham VNA & Hospice staff, and it will soon be extended to staff of Core Physicians as well.

HOW IT WORKS (see photos at right)

Masks are labeled with the employee's name and brought to the designated disinfection area in the Hospital north conference rooms, where they are hung on racks in preparation for UV cleaning. The masks are then disinfected with the UV light machine using an established protocol developed in conjunction with Infection Prevention. Once cleaned, masks are placed in individually labeled containers and bins, and placed on clearly marked racks. Employees retrieve their masks at the beginning of their next shift.

A huge shout out to **Kelly Wallace** for bringing this idea forward, and to all who have been involved in operationalizing the process. It is yet another example of our amazing employees working **together as one** to help ensure the safety of our staff.



Mike Sarcione, Manager, CSS, and **Nicole Higginbottom**, Senior Secretary, Inpatient Surgical Services.

