



## **TITLE: UNIVERSAL MASK POLICY – NUVANCE HEALTH**

### **PURPOSE:**

It is the policy of Nuvance Health system to assure that all Healthcare workers (HCWs), patients and visitors comply with personal protective measures. Healthcare workers include all employees, students, physicians, residents, per diem/PRN workers, vendors, volunteers and “pool” personnel. Use of facemasks may reduce the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and is recommended by the CDC and WHO. Nuvance Health HCWs working in clinical facilities have been mandated to wear masks since April 2020, for patients it has been since May 2020 and for visitors it began with the resumption of visitation in late June 2020.

The goal of instituting universal mask is two-fold: 1) to protect patients and other staff members should the healthcare worker have asymptomatic infection or develop symptoms at work (a mask decreases the risk of spreading infection) and 2) to protect our healthcare workers should they come in close contact with an individual with either asymptomatic infection or who has symptoms that have not yet been recognized.

### **POLICY:**

- I. For Patients:

All patients will be provided a surgical or procedural mask to be used for the duration of their visit as long as not soiled or damaged. Patients who wear a mask from home on arrival will be asked to remove the mask and don a new hospital-issued surgical or procedural mask. A replacement mask will be provided if the mask becomes soiled or damaged.

  - A. For inpatients, the mask must be worn anytime the patient is outside their room (i.e., during transport) and when possible when other persons are in the patient room.
  - B. For outpatients, the mask will be worn throughout their visit to the Nuvance Health facility except when removal is necessary for clinical care.
  - C. If the patient’s mask needs to be removed for any reason (e.g., physical exam, patient unable to tolerate), the employee will use eye protection in addition to a mask per Universal Mask Policy when in direct face-to-face contact. Eye protection will be used per Personal Protective Equipment Playbook. Other PPE may be appropriate per Standard and Transmission-based (Expanded) precautions.
- II. For Visitors (see Nuvance Health Visitation Policy)
- III. For HCWs
  - A. The Universal Mask Policy applies to all Nuvance Health HCWs working at all locations.

- B. One medical face mask will be issued at the start of each shift and will be used throughout the shift. The mask will be discarded and replaced if it becomes visibly soiled or damaged. Cloth masks are permitted in administrative areas.
- C. Employees must wear the mask correctly, covering the mouth and nose.
- D. Masks must be worn at all times on Nuvance Health facilities except when working in private individual offices or in areas where employees are reliably separated by more than 6 feet from others. When walking through common areas, however, masks must be worn.
- E. HCWs should practice principles of physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, and frequent hand hygiene.
- F. Eating is not permitted in clinical areas. Drinking is permitted in designated locations in clinical areas. If employees need to drink, they will ensure that they are 6 feet away from others, perform hand hygiene, remove the mask, drink, and then replace the face mask and perform hand hygiene again.
- G. To limit the number of people in a break room, staff should stagger break times to allow for 6 feet of distance between employees who will be unmasked while eating or drinking in the breakroom.
- H. In nonclinical settings, where eating and drinking is not restricted, employees must maintain 6 foot distance while unmasked for eating and drinking. Employees will take the following steps to remove the mask:
  - Perform hand hygiene with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
  - Remove the face mask and place it on a clean surface
  - Perform hand hygiene with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before eating
  - After finishing eating or drinking, replace the mask taking care to avoid touching face or eyes
  - Perform hand hygiene with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- I. Every effort should be made to limit exit and entry to the facility during each shift to preserve supplies of face masks.

Masks must be used according to Personal Protective Equipment Playbook.

In the event the supply of surgical masks prohibits this strategy, distribution of masks will be prioritized based on the highest risk clinical activities. All efforts to conserve our mask supply are necessary to ensure masks are always available to all healthcare workers.

<b>ORIGINATOR</b> (Required)	<b>INFECTION CONTROL</b>
<b>DATE OF INCEPTION</b> (Required)	<b>6/2020</b>
<b>REVISION DATE</b> (Required)	<b>N/A</b>
<b>LATEST REVIEW DATE</b> (Required)	<b>7/14/2020</b>
<b>APPROVED BY</b> (Required)	<b>INFECTION CONTROL COMMITTEE</b>