

## Creating Healthy Work Environments VIRTUAL 2021

### A Surgical PPE Task Force Can Improve PPE Selection During a COVID-19 Pandemic

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**Purpose:** COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus associated with significant mortality and morbidity. Due to their contact with patients, healthcare workers (HCW) particularly those at the front line are at increased risk of infection. Of the many concerns frontline nurses had during the Covid-19 pandemic was proper use and selection of PPE. The concerns identified were: 1) Inconsistent use of PPE, 2) Lack of knowledge related to proper donning and doffing of PPE and 3) Conflicting recommendations for donning and doffing. A 60-member Surgical Services PPE Task Force consisting of perioperative RNs, Surgical Technicians and Patient Care Technicians was formed to assist the front line staff with proper donning and doffing. Through survey and daily reports of opportunities data were collected in infection control behaviors and practices among front line staff. The impact of the Surgical Services Task Force will inform future preparation for pandemics and disasters. The purpose of this project was to ensure safety of front line staff by 1) requiring a systematic approach for donning and doffing; 2) validating compliance with PPE protocols, 3) supporting HCW during donning and doffing; 4) offering guidance, answering questions and reporting risks.

**Methods:** The objective of the project was to measure degree of compliance on type and use of PPE among front line staff in a pediatric and adult hospital, frequency of unsafe doffing and degree of satisfaction of keeping front line safe and report of confidence and competence from front line staff in donning and doffing. A team was formed consisting of the educator for the perioperative areas, and the director and manager for Hospital Education. Literature review, feedback from front line staff and management informed the plan. Furloughed perioperative staff formed the PPE Surgical Task Force and served as a highly reliable source of educational and coaching support on the units assigned to care for patients who were Covid-19+. The members of the PPE task force collected information on the safe performance of PPE donning and doffing skill from a checklist. Survey Monkey was used to collect the data. All data was reviewed by key personnel. A time series plot will be used to analyze the accuracy of donning and doffing over time during the intervention. The key project personnel will analyze qualitative information from the surveys using thematic analysis. Each member of the PPE Surgical Services Task Force attended a 2- hour class in which donning and doffing guidelines were reviewed and competency was verified. Communication guidelines were shared. Data were collected on compliance with donning and doffing, satisfaction, competence and confidence.

**Results:** Survey Monkey data revealed high satisfaction rates among managers and front line staff in most areas of the academic medical center. Over 5-week interval staff improved in PPE selection and their self reported confidence. Gaps were in doffing of face shields and required frequent cueing.

**Conclusion:** *This project determined the feasibility and efficacy of an educational intervention to improve donning and doffing skills for frontline staff caring for patients with infectious disease and confirmed the positive effect of having trained observers.*

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**Title:**

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**Keywords:**

Covid-19 pandemic, Front line staff and PPE Task Force

**Abstract Summary:**

The impact of the Surgical Services Task Force on the front line staff caring for patients with COVID-19 was studied. The purpose of this project was to ensure safety of front line staff and confirm the positive effect of having a trained observer who can assist with donning and doffing.

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