

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Staff: PPE, Infection Control and Safety

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Will we have enough PPE to bring services back online safely, including elective surgeries?

Our recovery plan calls for a measured reopening that is contingent on many factors, including the availability of at least a 14-day supply of PPE, as per guidelines set forth by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. We plan to fully meet this requirement prior to bringing any services back online.

It is important to only use PPE, in particular N95 respirators, as needed to ensure sufficient supplies remain when we need them the most – in the care for patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 or for other patients with infections requiring respiratory protection, such as tuberculosis or measles. Our models include accounting for increasing numbers of procedures as well as continued reuse and extended use of N95s and masks, so please continue to follow these protocols. We will provide updates when supply availability improves sufficiently so that we can return to normal practices.

What happens if my facility runs low on certain PPE (i.e. surgical masks, isolation gowns, etc.)?

If product is available, BILH Supply Chain and Materials Management teams can facilitate a same-day redistribution of supplies among sites as needed.

To ensure we maintain a reliable ongoing PPE supply, our BILH Supply Chain and Materials Management teams are closely monitoring supplies by conducting regular counts of PPE across the system and talking with local entities to ensure hospitals and business units have the PPE resources they require.

Will surgical masks be offered to all staff who are required to report to a BILH facility?

Currently the state of Massachusetts requires a face covering at all times while in public. BILH's policy is to wear a mask when in our facilities. Local institutions will determine how to provide staff who do not have a mask with one.

Infection Control and Safety

As more staff return to work, how will we be kept safe?

The health and wellness of our staff is a top priority. We have begun outfitting facilities across the system with new signage, including physical distancing reminders and cues, modifying physical configurations in shared spaces as much as possible, and providing hand hygiene products throughout worksites.

As a reminder, in mid-May, BILH announced it will continue to operate under the provisions of the BILH Telecommuting for Disaster Response Guidelines through at least June 30.

Will there be capacity limits/guidelines for non-essential employees returning back to BILH workplaces?

BILH is thoughtfully planning the re-opening of our wide variety of facilities. When we do begin the transition of our remote workforce back to our facilities, we will share guidelines and policies for individual managers and departments to determine the appropriate time for staff to return to the office.

Do we have the cleaning supplies needed to keep facilities disinfected?

We have augmented our already vigilant cleaning and disinfection policies with enhanced procedures for disinfecting exam rooms in between each patient visit and we are cleaning common areas consistently throughout the day with hospital-approved disinfectants. Our supply is sufficient to continue these standard best practices, both through usual and alternative cleaning products.

How will common areas (bathrooms, kitchens, staff break rooms, copy rooms) be modified to allow for social distancing?

Local institutions will make necessary changes in order to meet facility needs and public health guidelines, including physical distancing measures and/or occupancy limits.