



June 8, 2020

To All Nebraska Health Care Facilities and Services:

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has been notified that many health care facilities and services have received and are having staff use N95 “vented” (with valve) masks. All health care facilities and services must immediately stop the use of N95 “vented” (with valve) masks by both staff and residents/patients/clients. Included are examples of the types of N95 “vented” (with valve) masks that all health care facilities and services MUST STOP using immediately.

Following are the concerns and reasons that use of the N95 “vented” (with valve) masks must stop being used immediately in health care settings:

- Any mask with a vent MUST NOT be worn by in a health care setting by residents/patients/clients or staff.
- These N95 “vented” (with valve) masks provide no safety for the others (residents/patients/clients or staff) who are near the healthcare provider wearing them.
- N95 “vented” (with valve) masks – the valve is an “exhalation” valve, allowing the person’s (residents/patients/clients or staff) breath and potential COVID droplets to exit the mask into the environment. This is the same as not having a barrier/mask in place.
- In fact, N95 “vented” (with valve) masks most likely deliver a much more concentrated dose of exhalation from the caregiver through the vented hole, placing residents/patients/clients or staff at risk of potential COVID19 exposure.
- The vent is meant to add “comfort” for the wearer for heat situations, etc., per the information in the respirator documents.
- The N95 “vented” (with valve) masks were NEVER intended for use in health care settings by residents/patients/clients or staff.
- The N95 “vented” (with valve) masks were intended for use in NON-health care settings such as construction, painting, use of chemicals, etc.

All health care facilities and services MUST do the following immediately:

1. Each health care facility and service must check its’ inventory for the N95 “vented” (with valve) masks. If inventory includes the N95 “vented” (with valve) masks, remove them from use by residents/patients/clients or staff immediately.
2. Educate staff about why the N95 “vented” (with valve) masks should not be used in health care settings, and remove all N95 “vented” (with valve) masks from inventory, stock supplies, resident/patient/client care areas, etc., immediately.

If you have questions please contact me at Connie.Vogt@nebraska.gov or DHHS Health Care Facilities DHHS.HealthCareFacilities@nebraska.gov or 402-471-3324.

Thank you,

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PUBLIC HEALTH

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