



# An Open Letter from Respiratory Care Practitioners and Respiratory Therapists to Hospital Administrators Across California

April 15, 2020

As respiratory care practitioners and respiratory therapists, we are on the frontlines in the fight against COVID-19. Because of the nature of our work, we are brought into especially close proximity to COVID-19 patients. In these situations, our personal protective equipment (PPE) is the only thing that stands between us and infection.

**But many of us are not being issued crucial PPE — including N95 masks, face shields, eye protection, nitrile gloves, and isolation gowns — during procedures such as intubation that normally require such equipment because of the high infection risk.** Some of us have even faced the outrageous experience of being refused N95 masks and other PPE even as the doctors and nurses working right beside us in the very same room are wearing them. This inequality is demeaning. It is also dangerous to ourselves, our families, the other patients we care for, and the public at large.

We expect to be protected and respected in our work. To that end, we call on all hospitals throughout the state to:

- **Provide respiratory care practitioners and respiratory therapists the same PPE that doctors and nurses have for any given procedure.** Such PPE includes N95 masks, face shields, eye protection, nitrile gloves, powered air purifying respirators (PAPR), and isolation gowns.
- **Respect our input.** We are right beside the patients who are suffering the most from COVID-19 — and we have valuable, sometimes even life-saving guidance to share.

We call on you to quickly implement and enforce these measures at your hospitals. By working together, we can ensure all our health and safety.

Sincerely,

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