

March 30, 2020

Dear Dr. Adams,

We are asking the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Public Health Service to update the current guidelines for personal protective equipment (PPE) to require that all healthcare providers and frontline staff wear N95 masks while taking care of patients during this pandemic.

The CDC initially had this recommendation prior to the most recent guidelines. [Per the CDC's website](#), N95s are superior to surgical facemasks when dealing with droplets and also decrease risk of exposure as the facemasks are looser-fitting. As a result, bandanas and scarves offer even less protection. The U.S. should not deviate from the guidance on PPE for healthcare settings issued by the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) and endorsed by the [Center of Evidence Based Medicine](#) affiliated with the University of Oxford. Dr. Robert Kadlec from Health and Human Services even noted on Tuesday, March 3rd how the country would need a significant amount of masks related to the pandemic: ["If it were to be a severe event, we would need 3.5 billion N95 respirator masks. We have about 35 million."](#) This increased need should be addressed instead of compromising the safety of our healthcare workers.

During a pandemic it is not unexpected for shortages to occur. However, the [National Nurses United reported on Tuesday, March 10th](#): "Many hospitals and healthcare facilities have failed to provide adequate personal protective equipment to nurses working with COVID-19 patients. Some facilities are telling nurses to continue to work while asymptomatic, even though they've been exposed to the virus and might be contagious. Testing at hospitals has been sporadic." We now have more than [140,000](#) cases in the United States with more than 2,500 deaths. A large majority of healthcare workers are getting infected and are dying. The lack of preparedness is not a reason to put healthcare workers at risk.

In order to defeat this virus and restore the economy, we need to protect those who protect us. If we adjust these guidelines, the Defense Production Act can be invoked to mass manufacture N95s masks. You would not send a soldier to war without adequate protection. We have to do the same for our healthcare workers. Please update the CDC guidelines for adequate PPE.

Thank you for your consideration,

### **National Muslim COVID-19 Task Force**

American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP)  
Islamic Medical Association of North America (IMANA)  
Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)

Muslim Caucus  
National Association of Muslim Lawyers (NAML)  
American Muslim Community Foundation  
Imamia Medics International (IMI)  
Justice for All  
Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative (MuslimARC)  
Mercy Without Limits  
Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)  
North American Imams Federation (NAIF)  
United Mission for Relief and Development (UMR)  
Islamic Relief USA  
Muslims4Peace  
Universal Muslim Association of America (UMAA)

### **Additional Signatories**

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Women Neurologists Group (WNG)