

GREATER NEW YORK HEALTH CARE FACILITIES ASSOCIATION

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Memo 24-02

To: Administrator, DNS, Medical Director, Infection Preventionist and QA Committee

**From: Mary Gracey-White RN, Director of Regulatory Compliance and
Arlette A Drigpaul, MSN RN Infection Preventionist/Education Coordinator**

Date: January 9, 2024

Re: NYSDOH Advisories: Universal Masking and Inclement Weather

As you may already be aware, the NYS DOH released a health advisory on 1/8/2024 (found [here](#)) for **recommendations for masking** in healthcare and residential facilities. The advisory aims to alert providers and facilities to the **substantial increases in cases of Covid-19 and influenza** and **strongly recommends the use of masks**.

As such, the NYSDOH is strongly recommending facility-wide masking to prevent the transmission of respiratory illnesses and ensure a healthy workforce. The **masking** policy should apply to **all personnel while working in areas where patients/residents/clients may be present**. **Masks** are strongly recommended for **visitor use** as well.

In addition, the DOH has released a health alert for a **multi-hazard severe weather event for Jan 9th and Jan 10th, 2024** (today and tomorrow). According to the advisory, a powerful multi-hazard storm system will impact the region with very strong damaging southeast winds and widespread moderate to heavy rainfall and accumulating wet snow Tuesday into Wednesday. A combination of melting snow and heavy rainfall will lead to risk of flooding and ponding of water on roadways and low-lying areas.

Facilities are advised to use the following checklist from the DOH to prepare for the multi-hazard storm:

HEALTHCARE FACILITY PREPAREDNESS ACTIVITIES CHECKLIST	
	Ensure that adequate staffing will be available for the duration of the storm.
	Check supplies to ensure that adequate supplies of food, medical supplies and bedding are sufficient for the duration of the storm if resupply becomes unavailable.
	Review emergency facility plans and test emergency standby power to ensure systems are in good working order.
	Consider appropriately re-locating patients who have needs consistent with electric power generation (BiPAPs, accommodative devices, electronic monitoring etc.) within the facility if the facility does not have facility-wide electric power generation abilities.
	Confirm that all systems necessary for disaster planning and response are supported by generator power.
	Review emergency plans and confirm 24/7 contact information for key staff in case emergent communication is needed.
	Check eFINDS supplies (i.e., barcode scanner, wrist bands, and paper tracking logs) and ensure that staff who have been trained on the use of the system are ready and available to perform this function.
	Update business and emergency contact information in the Health Commerce System Communications Directory to ensure important alerts and notifications are received by the facility.
	Request emergency assistance through the local Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and/or local Emergency Operations Center (EOC) if needed during and following the storm.
	Report disruption of services or infrastructure to the New York State Department of Health.
	Facilities in need of evacuation should immediately notify the appropriate New York State Department of Health Regional Office.

For questions related to the masking advisory, e-mail icp@health.ny.gov.

Thank You,
 GNYHCFA Team