Dear Colleagues:

First off, we wanted to recognize all of your efforts during this public health crisis. Like all hospitals nationwide, UCM is managing disruptions affecting the global supply chain for personal protective equipment (PPE) and other critical medical supplies. As you’ve heard us say before, we must be responsible stewards of our supplies and manage them the best we can. To that end, we wanted to provide updated guidance on wearing PPE on an extended-use basis (vs. universal masking or re-use).

Extended use of eye and respiratory protection is the practice of wearing the same gear for repeated close contact with several different patients, without removing them or having them partially on between patient encounters. Universal masking is the practice of wearing a mask continuously, even when not caring for a patient. Re-use of equipment is removing it, cleaning it and then storing it for future use. As we face a supply shortage like all hospitals worldwide, re-use of eye protection and extended use of respiratory protection may be applied to disposable and reusable devices. We are now recommending re-use of eye shields and powered air purifying respirator (PAPR) shields as well as extended use of surgical masks, and N95 respirators as follows:

**EYE PROTECTION**

- Eye protection should be removed and disinfected if it becomes visibly soiled or difficult to see through.
- If you remove your eye protection, it must be disinfected with a PDI wipe (orange or purple) immediately. After disinfecting, it can be stored for future use.
- Eye protection must be discarded if it becomes damaged (for example, face shield can no longer be securely fastened or visibility is obscured and reprocessing does not restore visibility).
- PAPRs must be disinfected after use, as always. The lens cuff also may be disinfected and re-used.

**MASKS**

- Facemasks and respirators should not be routinely re-used after removing, but we are recommending extended use at this time. This means wearing a facemask or N95 respirator for multiple patients in a row or for an extended period of time.
- Once the mask needs to be removed, it must be discarded. If you need to displace the mask in order to eat or drink or to reach your mouth or nose, it should be removed and discarded and your hands cleaned.
- Do not replace with another mask until it is required for patient care.
- Be sure to also discard an extended-use mask when it is damaged or soaked through. We also wanted to reinforce our 24-7 staff resource line, which was started yesterday. Please contact 1-800-683-5704 if you have any questions that cannot be answered on the unit level or via our COVID-19 Resource Center on the intranet.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and collaboration as we focus on our mission to serve our patients and the community.