



Protect, Prevent, Live Well

November 19, 2009

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to recognize your Administration's leadership to protect both patients and healthcare workers during the current H1N1 pandemic.

We understand that there is a request that you modify the current federal guidance for protecting healthcare workers from H1N1 (allowing surgical masks instead of the more protective N95 respirators) and also that you suspend OSHA enforcement of the N95 respirator requirement for workers treating and caring for patients with suspected H1N1.

The American Public Health Association supports not only the current guidance¹, but the process by which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention arrived at these policies for protecting health care workers during the H1N1 influenza outbreak. In our view, the scientists, policy makers and stakeholders have been and continue to be fully engaged in a transparent and timely effort to protect both the public and the healthcare workforce.

We support the efforts of public health agencies such as HHS, CDC, NIOSH, DOL and OSHA to engage the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine to fully examine the evidence that has led to sound federal public health policy. Thank you for your support for sensible, evidence based policies for protecting healthcare workers and the public.

Sincerely,

Georges C. Benjamin, MD, FACP, FACEP (E)
Executive Director

Kate McPhaul, PhD, MPH, RN
Chair, Occupational Health and Safety Section

CC: The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
The Honorable Hilda Solis
Jordan Barab, Acting Assistant Secretary, OSHA
Melody Barnes, Director, Domestic Policy Council
Dr. Francis Collins, Director, NIH
Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director, NIAID
Dr. Thomas Frieden, Director, CDC
Dr. John Howard, Director, NIOSH
Dr. Rosemary Sokas, MOH Director, Office of Occupational Medicine, OSHA

¹ CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). 2009. *Interim guidance for infection control for care of patients with confirmed or suspected novel influenza A (H1N1) virus infection in a healthcare setting.* http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidelines_infection_control.htm