

## Memorandum of Understanding

The following constitutes an agreement between the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the American Federation of Government Employees, (AFL-CIO) National Veterans Affairs Council #53 (NVAC) on the Department's May 1, 2020 Memorandum entitled "Update: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Mask Use in Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Facilities."

1. The national parties agree the use of face masks or coverings in VHA Facilities for the purpose of protection from COVID 19 will be limited to the declared emergency as determined by management.
2. Bargaining unit employees shall be provided with a face mask or covering that will ensure a clean face mask or covering is available each workday. If the face mask or covering is lost, soiled, torn, damaged, wet, or otherwise not usable, employees will be reissued a Department-provided face mask or covering as soon as practicable.
3. Bargaining unit employees will have the option to bring their own face mask or covering. Personal face masks or coverings must meet regulatory requirements as updated by the CDC, OSHA, OMB, and VHA. Face masks or coverings may not be vulgar, obscene, or violate the Hatch Act. Non-protective masks and coverings are not allowed.
4. For VHA employees with **non-direct patient care** assignments: face masks or coverings, shall be consistent with regulatory guidance requirements. Examples, not limited to, include disposable masks, masks that fit properly (snugly around the nose and chin with no large gaps around the sides of the face), masks made with breathable fabric (such as cotton), masks made with tightly woven fabric (i.e., fabrics that do not let light pass through when held up to a light source), face masks or coverings with two or three layers, and masks with inner filter pockets.
5. For VHA employees with **direct patient care** assignments, and other employees with assignments that require additional respiratory protection: individual personal protective equipment (PPE) as appropriate, as directed by supervision, and as recommended by recognized authorities shall be issued. Examples, not limited to, include surgical masks and/or N95 respirators or Powered Air Purifying Respirator System (PAPRS).
6. Upon their receipt the appropriate management official shall provide a copy of this MOU to the AFGE Local Union President.

*Bruce Oliver*

Bruce Oliver, Labor Relations Specialist  
For Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

03/04/2021

(Date)

*Oscar L. Williams Jr.*

Oscar L. Williams Jr, 2<sup>nd</sup> Exec Vice President  
AFGE National Veterans Affairs Council #53

03/04/2021

(Date)

*James A. Zeveski*

James Zeveski, VHA WMC Labor Consultant  
For Veterans Health Administration (VHA)

03/04/2021

(Date)