

**For Immediate Release**

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**Wayne Memorial Requiring All Staff to Mask**

(Honesdale, April 2, 2020)... Wayne Memorial Hospital is asking its entire staff, including non-clinical employees, to wear masks, starting Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Staff who have direct patient contact continue to wear surgical or other clinical masks as per infection control guidelines, but now everyone must wear a protective covering over their mouth-and-nose at the very least to help stop the spread of COVID-19. The Administration has begun distributing home-made cloth masks, many made by generous people in the community.

“First, we cannot thank enough the many people who were able to sew masks for us and deliver them to us in a short period of time,” said WMH Chief Executive Officer David Hoff. “We are extremely grateful.”

Hoff said the masking action, taken to help slow the transmission of the virus, was propelled by evidence pointing to many people with COVID-19 who show no symptoms and pass it on. The Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Dr. Robert Redfield, recently estimated asymptomatic transmission could be as high as 25%.

While the CDC has called home-made masks a “last resort” at best, the national agency, along with Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases, is re-considering use of the masks and possibly advising widespread masking. Officials have acknowledged a national shortage of clinical masks, suggesting home-made masks are a valuable alternative mitigation tool.

Hoff emphasized that staff are still being asked to maintain social distancing and good hand hygiene, in addition to the masking.

Wayne Memorial Hospital initiated a number of other mitigation actions in recent weeks, including limiting access to the hospital, screening and pre-screening questioning of all visitors and temperature-taking at entryways. It has also banned or limited visitation to many patient areas.

The hospital closed several outpatient, off-campus sites in March, but continues to offer radiology, lab work, chemotherapy and other services either at the main site in Honesdale or at its off-site locations in Hamlin, Carbondale and Lords Valley.

Please visit [www.wmh.org/covid-19-novel-cornavirus](http://www.wmh.org/covid-19-novel-cornavirus) for more information and [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) for information about the disease.

Photos: Some of the 30+ masks made by the community.

