



May 22, 2024

Yaneer Bar-Yam  
Co-founder  
World Health Network  
Via email: [yaneer@necsi.edu](mailto:yaneer@necsi.edu)

Dear Yaneer Bar-Yam:

Thank you for your April 26, 2024, letter with responses to the four questions on preventing transmission of infectious agents in healthcare settings for the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee's consideration.

The [2007 Isolation Precautions Guideline](#) (The Guideline) is intended to be used by persons responsible for developing, implementing, and evaluating infection control programs for healthcare settings across the continuum of care, including infection control staff, healthcare epidemiologists, healthcare and facility administrators, and nurses and other healthcare providers. The Guideline represents the minimum standards recommended to be implemented in healthcare facilities and systems and are designed to be applicable across a wide range of healthcare settings with varying capabilities.

The updated guidance describes the importance of the hierarchy of controls, a multi-level way of determining which actions will best control exposures in preventing transmission of infection. Although the document does not address engineering controls, such as ventilation controls, in detail, their importance is acknowledged, and a separate guideline will address the issue specifically. The importance of anticipating transmission through air and using respiratory protection when caring for those with new and emerging pathogens represents another lesson learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, we are taking steps to make sure that a draft set of recommendations are written to avoid being misinterpreted to suggest equivalency between facemasks and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Approved® respirators. Although facemasks can provide some level of filtration, the level of filtration is not comparable to NIOSH Approved® respirators. Respiratory protection and its effective use remain an important part of personal protective equipment to keep healthcare personnel safe. Regarding your suggestion to involve NIOSH National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory in the evaluation and testing of respirators, your suggestion is part of their research and evaluation portfolio. Development of a mobile facial scanning application is underway to apply innovative approaches to addressing respirator fit.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is committed to hearing from all interested groups, providing meaningful avenues for participation in the process, and including

the best available science in developing this public health guidance. CDC will continue to take proactive steps based on the feedback we have heard to date. Thank you for your interest in this important public health issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Daniel B. Jernigan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Daniel Jernigan, MD, MPH  
Director, National Center for Emerging and  
Zoonotic Infectious Diseases  
CDC