

# Background on Use of KN95 Respirators When N95s Aren't Available

Due to the shortage of N95s and the disrupted supply chain, the MNA requested all credentialing and certifications associated with the manufacturing and material used in the production of KN95 masks prior to the actual purchase. We did this to ensure we were purchasing the best product available at the time. This information was reviewed by a Certified Industrial Hygienist who helped MNA conclude that in fact the material was FDA approved and the best product we could purchase.

The utilization and distribution of KN95 masks are only meant for use by nurses if and when their employer fails to provide them with the required N-95 respirators.

We have provided members with information on both the need to fit the mask securely as well as suggestions on how to do so given that hospital fit testing has largely been inaccessible. You can find more information on these masks as well as other PPE on our web site at [www.massnurses.org/Covid-19](http://www.massnurses.org/Covid-19).

If employers, as well as the state and national government, had done their jobs ensuring an adequate supply of personal protective equipment, we would not need to utilize this product. However, in a situation where it is a decision between KN95 or a surgical mask, the KN95 is a safe and viable option. Nurses and healthcare professionals are risking their lives and their families lives every day without access to appropriate equipment and we as an organization are doing whatever we can do to keep them safe.

We are doing this at a time when the industry is withholding access to proper PPE or forcing nurses to reuse masks that have gone through an unproven decontamination process with no understanding of its effectiveness or the long-term health consequences.

Adding insult to potential injury, when nurses are inevitably exposed to the virus, the hospital industry has the temerity to claim that the exposure is due to community spread, and thereby try to avoid responsibility for compensating their victimized heroes. As we continue to place these dedicated caregivers in these untenable situations, the least we can do is acknowledge their sacrifice by ensuring occupational presumption and the protections they and their families deserve.