



## APNA STATEMENT Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Protection During a Pandemic

Persons with psychiatric or substance use needs are especially vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic;<sup>1</sup> therefore, special attention must be paid to ensure their access to safe care. Because many of these services require face-to-face contact, psychiatric-mental health nurses who provide essential in-person care have a legitimate need and purpose for personal protective equipment including, but not limited to, appropriate masks and gloves<sup>2</sup>. Like all nurses, psychiatric-mental health nurses and fellow health care providers must be able and empowered to follow the infection control procedures recommended by the Centers for Disease Control as closely as possible. Further, institutions and health care systems have a duty to ensure the safety of all of their employees and make fair and equitable decisions about the allocation of resources<sup>3</sup>.

Recommendations for precautions for all persons are available [here](#), and recommendations for health care personnel providing care for persons with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 in healthcare settings are available [here](#).

### More Resources:

- American Nurses Association: [Infection Prevention & Control](#)
- World Health Organization: [Advice on the use of masks in the context of COVID-19](#)
- Centers for Disease Control: [Personal Protective Equipment: Questions and Answers](#)
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health: [Healthcare Respiratory Protection Resources](#)

*Approved by the APNA Board of Directors May 27, 2020.*

1. World Health Organization (2019, June 11). Mental health in emergencies. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-in-emergencies>

2. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2020, May 7). Letter to treatment providers. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/samhsa-ppe-letter-treatment-providers.pdf>

3. American Nurses Association (n.d.). Crisis standards of care: COVID-19 pandemic. Retrieved from <https://www.nursingworld.org/~496044/globalassets/practiceandpolicy/work-environment/health-safety/coronavirus/crisis-standards-of-care.pdf>