

January 21, 2021

Alec Stratford
Executive Director & Registrar
Nova Scotia College of Social Workers
Alec.stratford@nscsw.org

Dear Mr. Stratford:

Re: Accessing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

I am grateful for you and your members' leadership, dedication and commitment to keeping Nova Scotians and our communities safe during these extraordinary times. Ensuring all healthcare workers have the equipment they need to safely care for their patients is a top priority for Nova Scotia.

To support your members to continue to do this work, the Department of Health and Wellness is now offering to supply private practitioners with appropriate PPE, at no cost, until March 31, 2021. This period corresponds with our current view of supplies. Clinicians working within a health authority, centre for education or physician setting already receive PPE through internal supply processes.

This letter outlines the roles of the Province and of private practitioners regarding appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

This letter also outlines the process for private practitioners to access PPE from Nova Scotia's centralized COVID-19 PPE inventory.

Roles of Practitioners and the Province

The Province has taken steps to centralize the purchasing, warehousing and distributing of PPE to support core health services, essential services and community-based health services. We are also working with partners across government and the health system to continually ensure we have the supplies and equipment needed to meet current and future needs, in alignment with evolving public health measures and protocols.

Practitioners and their staff are expected to continue following safe work guidelines and PPE use protocols to ensure the safety of practitioners, staff and patients, and to maintain sustainable PPE supplies.

The priority is access to procedure masks and hand sanitizer to support the universal masking requirements and hand hygiene for healthcare staff as well as potential situations where patients may require a mask but do not have their own.

Privately practicing social workers working in Nova Scotian communities have access to ongoing supplies of procedural masks and hand sanitizer to support working safely in accordance with established guidelines. Access to other PPE supplies (e.g. gloves, gowns, face shields) as supported by safe work guidelines may be considered upon request.

Practitioners electing to participate in this program of provincial PPE supply will not impose a PPE-related fee or surcharge for receiving services while participating in the program.

Requests to Access Nova Scotia's Centralized COVID-19 PPE Inventory

A team at the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) has been set-up to receive your application to access the central inventory of PPE. Please use the link below to submit your request.

[\(Click here\) Link to Provincial COVID19 PPE Inventory Request Application](#)

Once your request is processed, you will be notified by email of the approved volume of supply that can be accessed and instructions for setting up online ordering.

If you have any questions about your PPE request or ordering supplies email PPErequest@novascotia.ca

Distribution of PPE

The Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) has established a system for distributing PPE orders. To ensure timely and efficient delivery, account holders will be notified by NSHA to ensure the safe delivery of supplies. Orders typically ship within 48 hours of submitting the order online.

Items may be replaced by a comparable product (e.g. brand changes) deemed appropriate by public health experts or items may be removed when amounts exceed approval limits. Account holders are encouraged to check their order history before placing an order to ensure supplies arrive as expected.

Once again, we would like to extend our thanks for your work in caring for patients and keeping all Nova Scotians safe and healthy.

Sincerely,



Kevin G.S. Orrell, M.D., FRCSC, MBA (CED)
Deputy Minister of Health and Wellness

- c. Angela Purcell, Senior Executive Director, Health Workforce, DHW
Kerry MacLean, Special Advisor, Strategic Health Initiatives, DHW