NNU COVID-19 Survey Results

National Nurses United's first COVID-19 survey of U.S. nurses showed employers were not prepared to respond safely to this pandemic. In addition to employers' lack of preparedness and their haphazard response, we have seen government officials drop the ball time and again.

The preliminary results of NNU's second COVID-19 survey show the impact of health care employers' and governments' failures and disregard for nurses' lives. These preliminary results report on responses from nearly **23,000** nurses from 50 states plus Washington D.C. and four territories.

▶ Our survey showed there are **high rates of infection among nurses**. Of those nurses who have been tested, more than **500** nurses reported a positive result with another **500-plus** nurses still waiting for results when taking the survey.

▶ We know this is only the tip of the iceberg. The **vast majority of nurses have not yet been tested »** only about **16%** of respondents have been tested for COVID-19, leaving a large majority — about **84%** — of nurses untested.

Dangerous workplace conditions and lack of optimal personal protective equipment (PPE) have left nurses unprotected, leading to these high rates of infections. Our survey found »

▶ **87%** of respondents reported having to reuse a single-use disposable respirator or mask with a COVID-19 patient. Reusing single-use PPE is a dangerous practice that can increase exposures to nurses, other staff, and to patients.

▶ **28%** of respondents had to reuse a decontaminated respirator with confirmed COVID-19 patients. Decontamination of respirators has not been shown to be safe or effective, can degrade the respirator so it no longer offers protection, and some methods use chemicals that are toxic to breathe. Employers are increasingly implementing PPE decontamination to save money, endangering nurses' lives in the process.

▶ **72%** of nurses reported having exposed skin or clothing when caring for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients, leaving nurses and their colleagues at increased risk of being exposed to the virus at work.

▶ **27%** of nurses providing care to confirmed COVID-19 patients reported having been exposed without the appropriate PPE and having worked within 14 days of exposure. This puts their coworkers and patients in danger. Employers must ensure that nurses and other health care workers are fully protected at work and, if they are exposed, that they are put on paid quarantine to protect their families, coworkers, and patients.

▶ **33%** of nurses reported that their employer requires them to use their own sick leave, vacation, or paid time off if a nurse gets COVID-19 or is exposed to COVID-19 and needs to self-quarantine. If a nurse gets COVID-19, it should be presumed to be work-related and should be covered by workers' compensation. States should pass bills ensuring that nurses are protected with presumptive eligibility for COVID-19.

Survey results as of **May 12, 2020**.

#ProtectNurses. All Our Lives Depend On It.

California Nurses Association

National Nurses Organizing Committee

National Nurses United

051420