Conservation and Safe Re-use of Surgical Masks

General Principles:
- PPE is a vital resource to protect our healthcare personnel.
- Conservation and appropriate use are essential to managing large-scale outbreaks, such as COVID-19.
- Hoarding and theft, by the general public and healthcare providers, is a risk and should be anticipated. Securing sites where PPE is stored is important.
- Reduce PPE use through cohorting, staff assignments, and other measures to limit number of patient-provider contacts requiring PPE.
- Once a mask is put on, it should remain on for the duration of your shift. If you do need to remove it during the shift, conserve mask for re-use per instructions below.
- Masks need to be replaced when soiled and after aerosol-generating procedures.

Safe Mask Re-use
In concert with recent CDC guidance on crisis capacity use of PPE

- One healthcare or support service provider will use the same mask throughout their shift.
  - Masks do not need to be changed between patients or patient rooms regardless of patient type, chief complaint, or diagnosis
  - Masks should be kept on throughout the shift to avoid transmission between potentially infected by asymptomatic healthcare workers.
  - Masks do need to be replaced if soiled and after aerosol-generating procedures.

- Mask will be kept on, properly positioned over nose and mouth, at all times for duration of shift, or as long as possible (see below for mask removal/preservation)

- Masks must not be touched, pulled down, malpositioned, or worn as a necklace.

- If the mask gets torn, wet, visibly soiled, or hard to breathe through, it should be removed and discarded.

- THE OUTSIDE OF THE MASK SHOULD BE TREATED AS POTENTIALLY INFECTIOUS
  - Avoid touching the outer surface of the mask.
  - EVERY TIME the mask is touched hand hygiene must be performed.
If the mask must be removed for any reason prior to the scheduled change, use these steps to preserve the same mask for reuse:

- **Do not touch** the outer surface of the mask when removing.
- Carefully fold the mask so that the outer/dirty surface is folded inward on itself
- Place mask in a paper bag or unsealed bag which is labeled with your name
- Perform hand hygiene after touching the mask
- Masks should **NEVER** be placed on counter, computer, sleeve, or worn on the body anywhere besides the appropriate position on the face

If masks are unavailable: Use a face shield that covers the entire front (that extends to the chin or below) and sides of the face with no facemask.