



Revised Student Fit Testing Policy – Effective September 1, 2005

Background: On July 7, 2004 the Ontario Hospital Association issued *Recommendations for OHA Members Regarding Ongoing Respiratory Protection*. Two of the recommendations referred specifically to students placed in Ontario Hospitals:

7. *Organizations should also ensure that other non-employees such as students, physicians and volunteers follow the respiratory protection program and policies of the organization.*
9. *Organizations should work with student placement institutions to ensure incoming students are trained on respiratory protection programs and if they will be placed in high-risk areas, ensure they are fit-tested to approved N95 respirators prior to starting their student placement.*

In consideration of these recommendations, the Niagara Health System previously communicated to its academic partners that effective January 1, 2005, all students placed in patient care areas must be fit tested prior to the beginning of their placement. However, due to the challenges faced by schools, colleges, and universities to fit test *all* students, balanced with our continuing commitment to student safety when completing placements at the NHS, the following revisions to the student fit testing policy have been made:

- Commencing September 1, 2005 all students placed in **high risk areas** of the Niagara Health System will be required to be fit tested **prior to** the start of their placement. High risk areas include the following:
 - Emergency Department
 - ICU
 - OR (including PARR, Presurgical Assessment Clinics and Same Day Surgery)
 - Acute Medical
 - Acute Surgical
 - Mental Health - inpatient units
 - Palliative, oncology, and nephrology units
 - Cardio-respiratory, endoscopy, bronchoscopy
 - Maternal/Child
 - The only inpatient exceptions are Complex Continuing Care and Long Term Care areas where the patient population is more stable and has been diagnosed.
- It is **highly recommended** that all other students that are accepted for placements within the NHS be fit tested, be provided with information about the advisability of fit testing, and/or be given access to a fit testing clinic. (See Appendix A)

- It is especially important that the necessity of fit testing be stressed for those students that are not placed in a “high risk” department but who may, during the course of their student experience, need to spend time in the high risk area.
- In order to assist students who may not have access to fit testing services, an external agency, arranged by the NHS, will be available to provide fit testing for those students that require testing prior to the start of the placement. The schedule of fit testing clinics, including the fee schedule, will be provided to the schools by the Coordinator of Student Resources when placement requests are received with the expectation that students will have been tested and fitted prior to the first day of their placement in the high risk area.
- Whether or not the NHS clinic is used for the fit testing and training, it will be the responsibility of the educational institution to ensure that the fit testing is completed for all students that will be placed in high risk areas and that they have been fit tested for an N95 respirator that is available in the Niagara Health System. A list of companies that provide fit testing services is available upon request.
- All NHS managers have been notified that, unless fit tested, students are not to provide care to any patients whose condition requires that this type of protective equipment be worn by their caregivers. (Students in high risk areas must be fit tested and it is the responsibility of the educational institution to ensure that this is completed prior to the start of the placement.)

N95 Respirators currently stocked by the NHS:

- Aearo/AOSafety Pleats Plus Small/Medium 50250
- Aearo/AOSafety Pleats Plus Medium/Large 50251
- Kimberly-Clark Duckbill Regular KC62126
- Kimberly-Clark Duckbill Small KC62355
- 3M 8110S (small)
- 3M 8210N (medium/large)
- 3M 8511
- 3M 9210
- 3M 1870

If the mask that you have been fitted for does not appear on this list please contact Student Resources.

For additional information about fit testing, please refer to the Health Care Health & Safety Association (HCHSA) of Ontario *Respirator Protection Fast Facts*, available at www.hchsa.on.ca/products/ffacts_e/frese146.pdf .

If you require additional information, please contact:

Lorrie Forget - Coordinator, Student Resources

Niagara Health System

Welland Hospital Site

65 Third Street

Welland, ON L3B 4W6

Phone: 905-378-4647, ext. 32265

Fax: 905-732-3187

E-mail: lforget@niagarahealth.on.ca

APPENDIX A

Student Fit Testing Clinics

For a current list of fit testing clinic dates, and to make an appointment, please contact:

Jack Benes
jackb@vaxxine.com

Fee: Total of \$30 per student:
 \$5 - Occupational Health Nurse review (required prior to fit testing)
 \$25 - fit testing and training
All fees are to be paid in cash at the time of testing.

In preparation for the fit testing clinic appointment students are asked to:

- Avoid eating, chewing gum, and drinking (except water) for 15 minutes prior to the fit test.
- Be clean shaven.
- Arrive for the fit test appointment at the time that is specified.