



Eastern
Health

NEWS RELEASE

Eastern Health Partners Receive Health Canada Certification for Locally Manufactured Personal and Protective Equipment

June 29, 2020 – St. John's, NL: Eastern Health is working with local partners, Memorial University of Newfoundland and TaskforceNL to test and manufacture personal protective equipment (PPE) following certification for locally-produced face shields and gowns by Health Canada. This is the first time medical gowns will be developed in this province and is in addition to the recent approval of face shields as a Class I device.

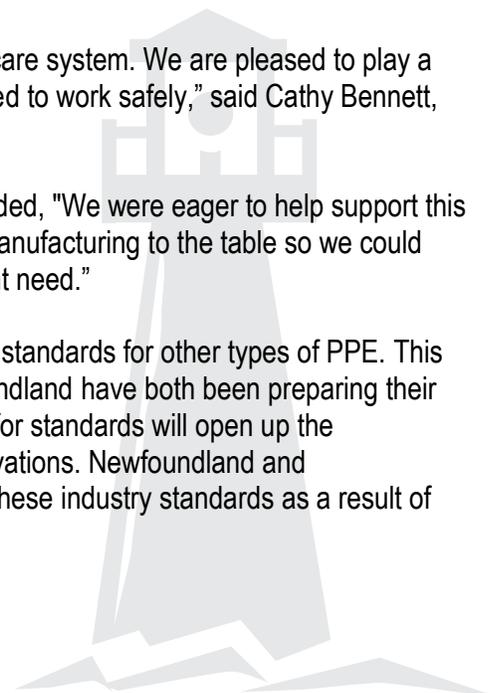
“This is a significant step forward to securing PPE for use in our province and shows strong desire among all those involved to quickly mobilize the right expertise and resources to produce PPE right here at home,” said David Diamond, President and CEO of Eastern Health. “At Eastern Health, as part of our innovation strategy, we have established effective partnerships to advance products and services which will benefit our patients, clients, residents, employees and physicians. As we have been working through the COVID-19 pandemic, we collaborated with TaskforceNL, Memorial University of Newfoundland and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to work on the local manufacturing of PPE, a significant step forward in establishing our self-sufficiency during this global outbreak.”

This certification provides the ability to produce and manufacture gowns and face shields for the health-care setting and supports sustainability of the PPE supply in Newfoundland and Labrador. Eastern Health has contracted local company DF Barnes to oversee and manage the local manufacturing efforts along with TaskforceNL. They bring considerable expertise in manufacturing, health and safety and quality assurance/quality control throughout the certification process.

“As volunteers, we came together in TaskforceNL to support our health-care system. We are pleased to play a part in ensuring our front-line health-care workers have the PPE they need to work safely,” said Cathy Bennett, Team Leader for TaskforceNL.

Sean Power, Vice President of Business Development for DF Barnes added, “We were eager to help support this valuable work and bring our expertise in quality assurance, safety and manufacturing to the table so we could mobilize the right team and work with local companies to fill this important need.”

Eastern Health and its partners continue to work to meet Health Canada standards for other types of PPE. This work is essential and Eastern Health and Memorial University of Newfoundland have both been preparing their respective labs to conduct testing to these standards. This ability to test for standards will open up the province for additional opportunities in PPE development and other innovations. Newfoundland and Labrador is one of the few places in the country which is able to test for these industry standards as a result of these improvements to the labs.



“As Newfoundland and Labrador’s university, Memorial plays a vital role in supporting innovators and visionary ideas,” said Dr. Vianne Timmons, president and vice-chancellor, Memorial University. “Our talented researchers and technical employees are rising to meet COVID-19 challenges and opportunities with incredible enthusiasm. Memorial is proud to collaborate with our community partners to conduct critical research in our facilities and laboratories that is benefiting the people of Newfoundland and Labrador during this time.”

This new supply of PPE is in addition to the work Eastern Health continues to do with its innovation partner, PolyUnity, to produce face shields. These have already been certified by Health Canada and are currently being used throughout Eastern Health facilities.

Funding to upgrade labs for standards testing has been provided through the Living Lab funding provided by the Government of Canada, through the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. This funding was announced on February 14, 2020 as part of Eastern Health’s innovation strategy. The support from funding partners will result in Newfoundland and Labrador being able to produce its own face shields and eventually, other PPE.

“I congratulate Eastern Health, Memorial University and TaskforceNL for their collaborative efforts and ingenuity,” said the Honourable John Haggie, Minister of Health and Community Services. “The shortage of personal protective equipment is a global concern. Being able to manufacture items such as gowns and face shields right here in Newfoundland and Labrador is another example of local entrepreneurship in our health-care system.”

The goals of Eastern Health’s [Innovation Strategy](#) are to improve health-care services and programs through the application of innovative solutions; maximize health systems efficiencies and minimize associated costs by leveraging the innovation ecosystem to build partnerships and generate revenue; and generate economic development in the province and increase employment. To read the Innovation Strategy, please visit the new website for [Research and Innovation](#).

For updates pertaining to Eastern Health’s ongoing services due to COVID-19, please visit Eastern Health’s website at www.easternhealth.ca/covid19, Facebook page and Twitter feed. General contact information is available at: www.easternhealth.ca/contactus.

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About Eastern Health

Eastern Health is the largest, integrated health authority in Newfoundland and Labrador employing approximately 13,000 dedicated employees, over 600 medical staff, and is supported by approximately 2,000 volunteers, including members of numerous auxiliaries and fundraising foundations. With an annual budget of approximately \$1.5 billion, the authority offers the full continuum of health and community services including public health, long-term care, community services, hospital care and unique provincial programs and services. Serving a population of over 300,000, Eastern Health’s geographic boundaries extend from St. John’s west to Port Blandford including all communities on the Avalon, Burin and Bonavista Peninsulas.

Media Contacts:

Tracey Boland
Media Relations Manager
Eastern Health
T: (709) 777-1412
TraceyL.Boland@easternhealth.ca

Kathy Dicks-Peyton
Media Relations Manager
Health and Community Services
T: (709) 729-6986, 699-1982
kathydickspeyton@gov.nl.ca

Caron Hawco
TaskforceNL
T: (709) 770-3429

Dave Sorensen
Manager, communications
Memorial University
T: (709) 685-7134
sorensen@mun.ca