

Gov. Evers: Battelle Critical Care Decontamination System ready and available for use in Wisconsin

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today announced Wisconsin's new Battelle Memorial Institute Critical Care Decontamination System™ is now ready and available for use by the state's health care workers and first responders to decontaminate their N95 respirators so they can be reused up to 20 times. The Battelle system decontaminates N95 respirators by killing viruses and bacteria using hydrogen peroxide gas, and will greatly extend the life of a vital piece of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

"The addition of our new Battelle decontamination system will greatly aid in our state's fight against the COVID-19 outbreak," Gov. Evers said. "Our front line workers are in need of these critical PPE supplies, and we are doing everything we can to supply them with the tools to effectively do their jobs while preventing further spread. I encourage all of our frontline workers to save their N95 respirators so they can be decontaminated using our new Battelle system. The Battelle system represents one of the many ways Wisconsin is working to have decontamination services readily available for health care workers and first responders."

The Battelle system will be able to decontaminate up to 80,000 N95 respirators on a daily basis. It can decontaminate respirators up to 20 times without degrading filtration performance. The usual decontamination turnaround time for users is a maximum of 72 hours, plus shipping time, as long as the site is not over its capacity for use. The Battelle system can only decontaminate respirators, and not other items of PPE. It is also not authorized for use with respirators containing cellulose-based materials.

Battelle decontamination services, including shipping, will be provided to Wisconsin healthcare organizations and professionals free of charge. Eligible healthcare providers include, but are not limited to, hospitals, nursing homes, public health professionals, human and child protective services offices, emergency managers, first responders, coroners, medical examiners, law enforcement and correctional institutions, home health organizations, pharmacists, rural health services and dental offices.

"Our Wisconsin site will be a state-wide operation, and we are hoping to get respirators from throughout the Badger state here for decontamination," said Caitlyn Farragher, Battelle's Wisconsin site lead. "We plan to run a 24-hour operation in order to ensure a timely turnaround time for all of our users."

The new Battelle system highlights decontamination efforts ongoing throughout Wisconsin to try to ensure that health care workers and first responders can be as safe as possible when performing their duties. With all of the decontamination efforts underway in Wisconsin, health care workers and first responders are being asked to save their used PPE supplies for decontamination. Throughout the past couple of weeks, outreach efforts were conducted to inform health care workers and first responders on how to sign up for the Battelle system decontamination service, and ensure their masks are safely returned to them.

"It is our goal to get as many N95 respirators decontaminated as we possibly can," said Jim Langdon, COVID-19 decontamination response lead at the State Emergency Operations Center. "We are also working to ensure that the process for submitting an item for decontamination is easy and timely for our state's health care workers and first responders."

Through a partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), the State of Wisconsin received the Battelle system this week. Battelle developed the system in 2015 to help decontaminate PPE to prevent further spread of Ebola. The Columbus, Ohio company is currently deploying the system to 60 different sites across the nation.

Beyond the Battelle system, other decontamination efforts in Wisconsin include UV decontamination sites. These sites service N95 respirators as well as other types of PPE, such as face shields, gowns, and aprons. UV decontamination facilities are currently operating in much of Wisconsin, highlighted by sites in Brown, Dane, Kenosha, and Sawyer counties.

In addition to statewide decontamination efforts, Wisconsin continues to work on building up its stockpile of PPE supplies. Last week Wisconsin received a delivery of 230,000 N95 respirators from FEMA. Gov. Evers continues to request more of these supplies to meet Wisconsin's pressing need.

For up-to-date information about Wisconsin's COVID-19 response, visit the DHS COVID-19 webpage. We encourage you to follow @DHSWI on Facebook, Twitter, or dhs.wi on Instagram for more information on COVID-19.

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