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17<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Deputy Neasa Hourigan,  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ 5613/21 - To ask the Minister for Health his plans to ensure the current and future access of the HSE to stockpiles of N95 masks; his plans to ensure the provision of N95 face masks to all staff; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**-Neasa Hourigan**

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Dear Deputy Hourigan,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for response.

Respirator masks used in the HSE are primarily FFP2 (European Standard) rather than N95 (US standard). The HSE has issued guidance that respirator masks should be available to all staff who care for people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and people who are COVID-19 contacts, and to staff working in settings where there is evidence on-going spread of COVID-19. IPC teams continue to support colleagues in the correct and safe use of these masks, which can include on site IPC support, instructional videos available on the HPSC website, as well as webinars on particular topics, which have included the use of PPE.

AMRIC works closely with national procurement to understand the national supply and demand of personal protective equipment (PPE). Based on this, there is close to real time oversight of usage patterns across acute and community healthcare sectors. There is sufficient supply for healthcare of relevant PPE including FFP2 respirator masks, equivalent to N95 masks, to meet current demand and predicted demand in the near future. The increased demand for FFP2 respirator masks across healthcare in light of the recommendation for wider access to these masks is also being met at present and can be maintained at current levels into the near future.

The national procurement teams continue to seek and source additional supply of relevant PPE to maintain supply for all the staff who require this equipment.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Yvonne O'Neill", written over a horizontal line.

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Yvonne O'Neill,  
Interim National Director,  
Community Operations