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Pritzker Administration to Distribute 60,000 Cloth Face Masks to State Agencies, Boards and Commissions to Protect Returning Workforce

SPRINGFIELD – The State of Illinois will distribute more than 60,000 cloth masks to State agencies, boards and commissions to protect the health and safety of employees returning to the workplace. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), Central Management Services (CMS), and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency are spearheading the effort. All State employees are required to wear face coverings and practice social distancing while at their worksites.

"As more of our economy reopens and Illinoisans returns to work, the single best thing you can do to help our state is wear a mask everywhere you go. The administration's top priority remains protecting the health and safety of the people of Illinois; and by providing 60,000 face coverings for the hardworking men and women who help keep state government running, we are ensuring our state workers have the tools they need to stay safe," **said Governor Pritzker.**
"If worn properly, using a face covering has been shown to help reduce the spread of COVID-19," **said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike.** "We have learned that people may be most infectious up to two days before they begin showing symptoms. But if an infected individual is wearing a face covering, it can help prevent the droplets from their mouth or nose from reaching others around them. By wearing a face covering, you are respecting those around you and helping reduce the spread of COVID-19."
The Illinois Department of Central Management Service (CMS) developed the State's Return to Work guidelines and surveyed each State agency, board and commission under the jurisdiction of Governor Pritzker to gather information about their site-specific return to work plans. Under the guidelines, all state employees must have the accurate personal protective equipment (PPE) needed to safely return to their worksite. The Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA), overseeing the State's logistics response for COVID-19, used this information to supply each employee with two cloth face masks.
"The health and safety of employees is our top priority, especially within the workplace," **said Janel L. Forde, Director of CMS.** "The State continues to make a coordinated effort to supply employees with the guidance and resources they need to protect themselves and each other while providing critical services to keep Illinois up and running."
"The advice and guidance we are giving State agencies, boards and commissions is the same advice and guidance we are giving each and every business across Illinois. Implementing a face covering policy is a simple yet effective way to protect your workers and customers," **said Alicia Tate-Nadeau, Director of IEMA.** "IEMA urges all business owners to carefully evaluate their emergency operations plans to ensure they address the needs of a COVID environment. Proper planning for all hazards or emergencies, su ing our workers, customers and our bottom line."

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The masks were obtained from a private party source via the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Employees were supplied with cloth masks to reserve medical grade PPE for health care professionals on the front line of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
For more information about Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois Plan, visit coronavirus.Illinois.gov.

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