State PPE Decontamination Machine nears Readiness

April 29, 2020 - 2019 Novel Coronavirus - Alert

A machine capable of decontaminating scarce personal protective equipment for reuse in the fight against COVID-19 will be ready to provide free service to New Mexico's frontline workers starting Saturday.

Workers in hospitals, nursing homes, clinics and other frontline medical occupations should begin saving unsoiled N95 masks for decontamination right away. Those are the disposable masks that have been in short supply during the crisis and therefore reserved for frontline workers because of their ability to filter out virus-sized particles.

The Battelle Critical Decontamination System arrived over the weekend at the Santa Ana Star Center in Rio Rancho,

and Battelle engineers began the assembly process. It is expected to be fully functional on Saturday, May 2.

The machine, which can decontaminate up to 83,000 N95 masks per day, will remain in New Mexico for six months. Battelle engineers will run the equipment at no cost to the state or to the agencies using it.

"*This is great news for New Mexico and for all our frontline health care workers,*" said Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham. "*We now can make sure every one of them has a safe and effective N95 mask every day they come to work.*"

Battelle, an Ohio-based research and development nonprofit, repurposed an older chemical decontamination technique to decontaminate N95 masks for reuse.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency contracted with Battelle for 60 of the machines and then accepted applications from the states to determine who got them based on need. New Mexico was awarded one on April 22 for six months.

The machine uses concentrated vapor phase hydrogen peroxide to decontaminate thousands of N95 respirators at a time in order for healthcare and other frontline workers to safely reuse them.

The process removes all biological contaminants, including the viruses responsible for SARS and COVID-19. Masks can be decontaminated up to 20 times without degrading their performance.

To participate, hospitals, clinics, nursing homes and other facilities with health care workers who wear N95 masks must enroll at ww.battelle.org/decon. Once enrolled, each institution will be responsible for collecting unsoiled used masks and making sure they are labeled with a facility code and name of the mask user.

Cardinal Health and FedEx will collect used masks from participating agencies and transport them to the Rio Rancho facility, then return the decontaminated masks to the facility, which will return them to individual users.

The federal government estimated in March that the U.S. would need 3.5 billion N95 masks over the course of this pandemic year. The federal stockpile had about 1 percent of that number available.

The following makes and models of N95 masks can be decontaminated:

3M Models:

- VFLEX 1804
- 1860(S)
- Aura 1870+
- 8205
- 8000
- 8210
- 9010
- 9210+

Gerson Models:

- 1730
- 2140C

Moldex Models:

- 1500 Series
- 2200

Kimberly Clark Models:

- 46727

Versión en Español

En un esfuerzo para hacer que nuestros comunicados de prensa sean más accesibles, también tenemos disponibles

una versión en español. Por favor presione el enlace de abajo para acceder a la traducción.

Casi Lista Máquina Descontaminadora para PPE en el Estado