



GEORGIA VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

New Year's Resolutions: Committing to a Safe Work Environment for All

Covid and Workplace Safety Updates: January 2022

The GVMA supports best practices for a safe workplace environment. With the new Omicron variant creating the current spike, we encourage members to revisit COVID protocols and ensure your teams are actively following recommended guidelines.

COVID-19 is caused by aerosolization of SARS-CoV-2 virus. The virus is spread on the breath of infected people and can persist for up to three hours in indoor air.

The GVMA recommends the following protocols to help keep your workplace safe:

- **Standard use of N95 masks** within the workplace and implementing that everyone in the building is properly wearing the mask at all times. Check out Project N95's website at <https://www.projectn95.org/> This is a great resource for finding PPE supplies that have products that have been vetted and the suppliers verified. As N95 masks become the standard, employers should provide N95 masks to their employees.
- Actively **train team members how to properly wear an N95 mask**. The CDC provides the following printable document. <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-133/pdfs/2010-133.pdf>
- Actively **train team members to do a seal check on their N95 mask** each time they put on the mask. This YouTube video has easy to follow instructions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CoSb-HJJ5tk>
- **Improve ventilation**. Open windows to improve air exchange
- **Install portable air purifiers** throughout your hospital. The following link from the EPA has a wealth of information on air purification. Filtration when combined with other recommended best practices by the CDC are an integral part of keeping people safe while indoors. <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/air-cleaners-hvac-filters-and-coronavirus-covid-19>
- – **Create an outdoor space or a well-ventilated indoor space with air purifiers where team members can remove their masks to eat or drink**. Stagger breaks and lunches in well-ventilated indoor spaces and remind team members the least number of people gathered for the least amount of time reduces risk
- **Enforce that team members DO NOT come to work if they are sick or if they test positive for COVID-19.**
- **Educate and encourage team members to accept COVID immunizations**. The AVMA has a great downloadable poster for veterinary teams: <https://www.avma.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/AVMA-COVID-19-vaccine-flyer-2021.pdf>