



Chisago County Health and Human Services Public Health Division



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Can a Homemade Cloth Facemask Help Slow the Spread?

****MEDIA ADVISORY****

By now, we are seeing more and more people taking the advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) which encourages people to wear a cloth face mask when out in public. On Friday, April 17, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz announced a statewide mask drive to help our frontline workers. Is wearing a homemade cloth face mask an effective way to help slow the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus)?

The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies), especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. The CDC has found that people who get this virus can react very different and some of those that get it may never even know they have it. These “asymptomatic” people, if still going out in public for their essential needs do not realize that they are carriers of the virus and without proper protection from them and others the virus may easily spread. This means that the virus can spread between people interacting in close proximity—for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing—even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms.

Cloth face masks are just a small piece of the puzzle when controlling the spread of this virus. They are not as effective as N-95 respirators and should not replace the rules that public health officials still have in place (e.g., social distancing, stay at home, cover your coughs and sneezes).

As a reminder, the cloth face masks recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders.

As mentioned above, the Governor has announced a statewide cloth face mask drive. His request was for all the people who are making cloth masks to consider donating them to your local fire department. The time to drop off this donation will be Saturday, April 25th from 10 AM till 2PM.

The fire department will then take these donations and get them to the healthcare workers within Chisago County whom need them. This will be a joint effort with Emergency Management and Chisago County Public Health to get these to those in need.

If you have any of these masks, or are making them, please consider making a donation to your local fire department on April 25th to assist us in helping others.