

## Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE

### **Volunteers Needed: Make Masks and Face Shields for Healthcare Workers**

*Hagåtña, Guam (March 30, 2020):* A local community group seeks volunteers to make Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), to be donated to Guam’s healthcare professionals, first responders, and others at high risk of contracting Covid-19.

The group, *PPE for Guam*, particularly seeks volunteers with sewing experience, or any volunteer with a 3D printer. In collaboration with Guam Memorial Hospital, Guam Regional Medical City, the Office of Civil Defense, local 3D-printing firm Gudwood, and the University of Guam, *PPE for Guam* recently developed DIY plans for sewn face masks and 3D-printed face shields that can be made at home, and which are preferred by local medical professionals.

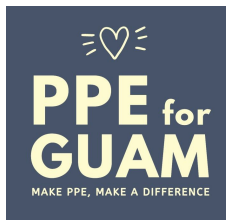
These DIY PPE will be utilized should traditional PPE run out. According to an article published this week in the New England Journal of Medicine, hospitals nationwide are already reporting a worrisome shortage of PPE, including masks and face shields. The consequences can be dire:

*In Italy, health care workers experienced high rates of infection and death partly because of inadequate access to PPE. And recent estimates here in the United States suggest that we will need far more respirators and surgical masks than are currently available.*<sup>1</sup>

“The local response has been inspiring,” said Allison Rutter, a local engineer and co-founder of the group. “In two weeks, we’ve developed multiple prototypes, tested them in local hospitals, and finalized preferred designs. Now we’re looking to expand with more volunteers,” she added. *PPE for Guam*’s designs are based on open-source solutions that were developed for the coronavirus pandemic and have already been implemented in other hospitals.

“With worldwide shortages of lifesaving protective gear, it is critical to be proactive, but it is also critical to produce reliable, high-quality safety equipment. *PPE for Guam* has done a great job partnering healthcare professionals, engineers and scientists to help guide this effort, and I encourage everyone to contribute in whatever way you can to their efforts to keep our community safe,” said Dr. Dave Weingarten, Chairman, Department of Surgery, Guam Memorial Hospital.

<sup>1</sup> Ranney ML, Griffeth V, Jha AK. Critical Supply Shortages — The Need for Ventilators and Personal Protective Equipment during the Covid-19 Pandemic. New England Journal of Medicine 2020;



*PPE for Guam* will work closely with the Office of Civil Defense to donate PPE to healthcare workers, first responders, and others at high risk of contracting Covid-19. “We truly appreciate the initiative and hard work from the volunteers at *PPE for Guam* in helping us fill critical PPE shortages experienced throughout the island and the nation. Currently our priority of PPE fill is medical health professionals and first responders. With this donation, we can start equipping support personnel who have been in the fight since day one and fulfilling outstanding requests for resources. The effort here truly embodies a whole of the community approach to emergencies,” said Charles Esteves, Administrator, Office of Civil Defense.

“We need to prepare for things getting much worse,” said Cyrus Luhr, co-founder of PPE for Guam. The CDC recommends the use of emergency, homemade PPE as a last resort when traditional, commercial PPE is unavailable.<sup>2</sup> “If Guam experiences the same shortage of PPE that other places around the country are witnessing, the protective gear that volunteers make now may literally save lives,” he added.

The University of Guam will also be contributing its expertise and 3D printers to the cause. “It is great to see how our community is coming together through collaborations like this,” said UOG President Thomas Krise. “Just last week, we were discussing how we can use our 3D printers to help provide much needed personal protective equipment to our front line healthcare personnel. And now we have another way that UOG is able to help in the response efforts.”

*PPE for Guam* welcomes anyone interested in learning more about volunteering opportunities to visit [www.PPEforGuam.com](http://www.PPEforGuam.com) or [facebook.com/groups/PPEforGuam](https://facebook.com/groups/PPEforGuam) for additional information and guidance on how to get started. “Making PPE from home is a great way to get involved and make a difference. This is our chance to protect those who protect us,” added Luhr.

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<sup>2</sup> Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of N95 Respirators: COVID-19 [Internet]. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2020 [cited 2020 Mar 29]; Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirators-strategy/crisis-alternate-strategies.html>