

Media Release

The Hon Jenny Mikakos MLC

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for the Coordination of Health and Human Services – COVID-19
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services



Sunday, 26 April 2020

STOCKPILE OF MEDICAL EQUIPMENT KEEPING HEALTH WORKERS SAFE

A massive warehouse in Melbourne's south-east is stocked with vital medical supplies ready to be distributed to Victorian health care workers on the frontline of the coronavirus pandemic.

Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos said new orders are arriving at the warehouse every day which are then quickly distributed across the state's health system and quarantine hotels to keep health care workers and staff safe.

Supplies include surgical masks, N95 masks, gloves gowns, hand sanitizer and other vital items that are key to the Victorian Government's coronavirus preparedness response.

More than 10 million gloves, 16 million surgical masks, 2 million N95 masks, 5 million isolation gowns and more than 2 million face shields and eye protection are due to arrive at the warehouse in the next two weeks.

Since the coronavirus pandemic began, stock in the warehouse has doubled. Every day 1,700 cartons of vital medical equipment and supplies, or the equivalent of four trucks, are delivered to around 60 locations – with 90 per cent of orders delivered within 24 hours.

More than 40 full-time employees work in the warehouse and an additional 120 Monash Health workers are employed in finance and administrative roles.

The 8,000 m² warehouse was opened in August last year to help allow for increased stock levels of critical hospital supplies and better value for money through bulk purchases of high-volume goods.

In response to the pandemic, the Department of Health and Human Services, Health Purchasing Victoria and Monash Health have developed a centralised approach to procurement, distribution and management of critical medical equipment and consumables to ensure supplies are distributed to where they are needed most.

The Government has also established a PPE taskforce – bringing together key people from the health sector and the department to ensure access and communications around PPE is informed by experts, clear and consistent.

The Government's \$1.9 billion health fund has allowed the state's hospitals to build more bed capacity, secure ICU equipment, staff and space to meet the expected surge in cases and boost the state's stockpile of PPE.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos

"We've been preparing carefully for the peak of the coronavirus pandemic and Victorians can be assured we have PPE and other equipment on hand, and new deliveries coming in every day."

"Our healthcare workers are our heroes on the frontline – and we're working hard to make sure they have the protective equipment they need to keep saving lives and doing their job safely."