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Subject: California Department of Public Health Respirator Stockpile

For the past several months, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has been examining the mix of respirator models currently constituting its stockpile targeted for emergency use by health care professionals in the event of a pandemic outbreak. This review was triggered when the predominate respirator in the CDPH stockpile, the 3M model 8000 National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)-approved N95 filtering facepiece respirator, was determined not to fully meet the needs of hospital-based health care workers.

In response to the fit issues related to the 3M model 8000 respirator, Cal/OSHA requested that NIOSH investigate the problems facilities had reported. The NIOSH investigation included an evaluation of NIOSH compliance and fit characteristics. In the NIOSH report issued May 2009, NIOSH states, "No issues of non-conformance to the approval requirements for this respirator model were identified in any of the assessments performed under this investigation." Specifically the NIOSH report states, "At this time there is no evidence of a defect in the respirators or any indication that the respirators will not achieve the expected level of protection when used in accordance with the respirator standard (e.g., successful fit test, training, etc.)."

With the assistance of 3M's analysis of California's stockpile, CDPH is pleased to announce the implementation of a plan to expand the mix of respirators in the State stockpile to include additional 3M respirator models. These changes are designed to best address the needs of California's health care professionals.

Sincerely,

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