



CHAIRMAN'S MEMORANDUM

NO. 19-98 September 11, 1998

TO: SHERIFFS, JAIL ADMINISTRATORS, COMMISSIONERS OF CORRECTION AND MEDICAL DIRECTORS

RE: UPDATE ON REQUIRED RESPIRATORY EQUIPMENT FOR TB

On March 24, 1994, the Commission of Correction issued a Chairman's Memorandum regarding federal and State requirements to make particulate respirators specific for the prevention of occupational exposure to tuberculosis available in local correctional facilities. These respirators were to be available to any employee who may come in contact with a possible TB suspect. At that time, there were very few approved respirators and there were a limited number of manufactures, see Chairman's Memorandum #94-5.

Since that time respirators have become widely available, less expensive, more easily stored and most importantly easier to wear. In 1995, the federal guidelines were updated with criteria for effective respirators listing approved equipment (see attached). Page two of the federal guidelines includes important specifications for the minimally accepted level of respiratory protection against TB -- the N-95 Respirator. In addition, you will find a list of companies that have been certified to manufacture the N-95 Respirator.

It is important to remember that respirators that were approved in the past are still certified for use. Continued use of these respirators, requires following the manufacturer's procedure for fit testing. For Respirator's certified in 1995, it is recommended that information be obtained regarding the fit testing procedure before purchasing a large quantity. Some company representatives may be willing to visit the facility and provide fit testing demonstrations to a limited number of facility trainers or medical staff.

If facility medical services are provided by the county health department or a contract correctional health care company. The respirator that they are using might be provided to employees using the same fit testing procedure.

If there are any questions as to the use of respirators, please contact Bill Gaunay, RN or Peggy Loffredo, RN of our Forensic Medical Unit at 518 485-2482 or 485-2475 respectively.

Alan J. Croce, Chairman/Commissioner