



July 21, 1994

NIOSH Docket Office  
Robert A. Taft Laboratories  
Mail Stop C34  
4676 Columbia Parkway  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45226

To Whom it May Concern:

It is in appreciation for attempting to respond to those of us who so strongly believe in the application of scientific principles to the issue of respiratory protection used in healthcare.

I am a Certified Practitioner of Infection Control in an acute care facility located in a rural community in upper New York State. Our County has seen four cases of tuberculosis in two years. These few cases could not have been prevented by a mask, but rather were community acquired, identified and diagnosed because of clinical presentation and heightened awareness of the resurgence of TB.

Heightened awareness by the public and recognition of signs and symptoms by healthcare givers are key to prevention and control of TB. To this end, ongoing mandatory education is ongoing.

At issue is applying industrial type standards and measurements for respiratory protective equipment to be used to deliver healthcare. The risk of impairing patient care and/or patient communication has the potential to outweigh the risk of transmission of the disease. There appears to be a risk wearing one of the currently approved masks which appears as a "warning on the packaging and reads 'may cause illness or death.'" The warning alone precludes employee compliance, presenting yet another problem. Allowing a selection for masks and your proposed classification masks since selection dependant upon conditions of use is a reasonable approach.

Last but not least is the issue of dollar constraints in hospitals today. The expenses involved with implementing the presently recommended mask are difficult to justify given the incisivness of all the agencies involved and the few cases we have experienced.

Thank you for being sensitive to our concerns.

Sincerely,

Emily D. Queior  
Infection Control Coordinator

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JUL 26 1994