



Describing the Problem: Experiences from Users

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Experience of SEIU members working in Healthcare



2006 and 2008 SEIU Surveys of Respirator Use

Approximately 50% of healthcare facilities surveyed (primarily hospitals):

- Only provide one brand/one size FFP.
- Conduct medical evaluation.
- Conduct fit testing.

- Less than 25% HCW wearing respirators (FFP) reported having been fit tested in the past year.

Experiences

- Lack of training on respirators and their use
- Confusion about which mask / respirator provides the necessary protection.
- Timing of respirator fit testing:
just-in-time often means won't be done
- Need respirator size not available
- User seal checks difficult with FFP
- No clear instruction on when to discard FFP

Experiences

- Cost of FFP mentioned by supervisor.
- Report some side effects from the use of FFP including headaches, shortness of breath, fatigue.
- Report difficulties communicating with patients, especially non-verbal. However, these can be overcome with practice and experience.

Where Do We Go ?

- ❖ Healthcare workers must have confidence in their hospital's health and safety plans, including respiratory protection.
- ❖ Need to include and listen to front line HCW
- ❖ Need to create a “safety culture” in healthcare. Healthcare industry generally inexperienced in the proper selection and use of respiratory protection
- ❖ Policies and behaviors can change – lessons from blood borne pathogen control.