

April 22, 2021

Angie Loftus  
OSHA Chicago North Area Director  
701 Lee Street - Suite 950  
Des Plaines, IL 60016  
(847) 227-1700

Ms. Loftus,

This letter is to inform you of serious health and safety issues that are ongoing at Community First Medical Center, located at 5645 W Addison St, Chicago, IL 60634. For context, National Nurses Organizing Committee filed a complaint with OSHA in June of 2020 for several health and safety hazards and suspected violations. In December of 2020, an inspection report was generated by the Chicago North Area OSHA office - inspection number 1477929. As a result of the inspection, several violations were identified and CFMC was issued a Citation and Notification of Penalty letter. The citations were as follows:

- Failure to implement a written respiratory protection program with worksite-specific procedures for respirator use that included all provisions in 29 CFR 1910.134(c)(1)(i) - (ix).
- Failure to provide a fit test to employees required to wear respirators whenever a different respiratory facepiece (size, style, model or make) was used.
- A hazard letter was also sent regarding the directive that employees reuse disposable plastic gowns, which constitutes a hazard to employees and patients.

Since the Notification of Penalty letter was issued to the hospital on December 4, 2020, to date, CFMC has yet to fit test registered nurses for N95 masks. Employees are also still required to reuse disposable plastic gowns.

Furthermore, since the referenced complaint, additional hazards and potential violations have been identified. A complaint was filed on April 21, 2020 (complaint #42704572). Identified hazards and suspected violations are as follows:

- Hospital administration is regularly storing N95 masks in unsealed brown paper bags. The original packaging for these masks is not accessible to employees. With this, it is not clear when the masks expire or if they are currently expired.
- These N95 masks are often faulty. The straps that fasten around the head consistently break, at times exposing employees as they are interacting with patients.
- Nurses as of today, still have not been fit tested for N95s.
- Nurses on the 4th floor have been instructed by management to use only (1) gown per shift. They've been asked to use patients' rooms to store the used gowns when they are not wearing them.
- Nurses do not have access to small and extra small gloves.

Nurses at this hospital have limited access to personal protective equipment due to regular encouragement from management to reuse N95 masks and gowns. These masks may or may not fit.

These hazards affect approximately 220 nurses. This number does not include other healthcare providers and support staff the hospital employs.

Given OSHA's strong commitment under this new administration to fully investigate and enforce federal workplace safety and health standards, we stand ready to assist in any way we can to ensure prompt restoration of safe working conditions for all workers and patients at Community First Medical Center.

Sincerely,



Marti Smith, RN  
Midwest Director

Cc: Khadijah Kabba, Collective Bargaining Director, NNU  
David Johnson, Field Director, NNU  
Libby Devlin, National Collective Bargaining Director, NNU  
Eleanor Godfrey, Director, Health and Safety Division, NNU  
Honorable Kwame Raoul, Attorney General, State of Illinois  
Honorable Will Guzzardi, State Representative, 39<sup>th</sup> District  
Honorable Bridget Degnan, Cook County Commissioner, 12<sup>th</sup> District  
Sukhvir Kaur, Investigator, OSHA Chicago North Office