



Mr. Michael Wood
Administrator, Oregon OSHA
350 Winter Street NE
Salem, OR 97309

RE: Surgical Smoke Evacuation Needed to Protect Healthcare Workers from Potential COVID-19 Transmission

Dear Administrator Wood:

On behalf of our members across Oregon, we want to thank you for your work to ensure compliance with Governor Brown's "Stay Home, Safe Lives" (NO. 20-12) Executive Order. We join the Governor in the belief that keeping Oregonians safe should be our state's top priority during the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.

We are writing to you today to urge you to issue a statewide recommendation for all surgical facilities to evacuate surgical smoke during all surgeries where electrocautery and lasers are used in order to protect workers from a potential COVID-19 transmission.

We know that viruses can be transmitted through surgical smoke, and we do not know yet whether COVID-19 is one of those transmissible viruses. Therefore, out of caution and care for the entire surgical team, it is critical that our healthcare workforce be protected from unnecessary and dangerous exposure to all surgical smoke. We believe that surgical smoke evacuation should be utilized in all smoke-generating surgeries. The American College of Surgeons (ACS) agrees, having recently advised surgeons through its COVID-19 Considerations for Optimum Surgeon Protection Before, During, and After Operation that surgical smoke be evacuated. A complete copy of all of ACS surgeon protection suggestions is attached.

Research studies have demonstrated the presence of viruses (e.g., human papilloma virus) in surgical smoke with documented transmission to health care providers. According to limited data from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), SARS-CoV-2 RNA has been detected in blood specimens, and it is unknown whether the virus is viable or infectious in extrapulmonary (outside the lungs) specimens. In similar coronaviruses, viable and infectious SARS-CoV was isolated from blood specimens, although infectious MERS-CoV was only isolated from the respiratory tract.

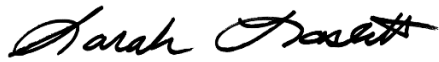
Our members, along with other healthcare providers, are working to serve all of us on the frontlines of this public health emergency, and we believe it is imperative that our critical healthcare workforce be protected. Accordingly, we believe Oregon should use every tool at our disposal to protect healthcare providers from potential exposure, and we urge Oregon OSHA to include surgical smoke evacuation as one of those tools.

Now more than ever, Oregon surgical staff deserve to have their health protected in the operating room. Statewide guidance for surgical facilities to utilize surgical smoke evacuation during all surgeries where electrocautery and lasers are used will help provide that protection.

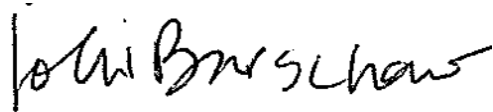
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Linda Groah".

Linda Groah, MSN RN CNOR NEA-BC FAAN, AORN
CEO/Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah Laslett".

Sarah Laslett
Executive Director
Oregon Nurses Association

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jodi Barschow".

Jodi Barschow, DNP, MSN, RN-BC
Executive President
Oregon Federation of Nurse Health Professionals

CC: Tina Edlund
Senior Health Policy Advisor
Oregon Governor Kate Brown