Yiming:

   Thanks for your note. I will forward your email to dr. Robert Kadlec who is in charge of the SNS.

Best regards,

Tony

On Mar 16, 2020, at 2:53 PM, Luo, Yiming (NIH/NIAMS) [E] (b) (6) >wrote:

Dear Dr. Fauci,

My name is Yiming and I am a clinical fellow in rheumatology at NIH/NIAMS. I have colleagues and friends working in community hospitals fighting against COVID-19 and we are deeply concerned regarding the CDC interim recommendations for COVID-19 prevention in healthcare settings saying that "facemasks are an acceptable alternative when the supply chain of respirators cannot meet the demand". Currently hospitals in New York City are asking their healthcare providers to wear surgical mask while treating COVID-19

COVID-19 is highly contagious in healthcare settings with a large proportion of healthcare professionals being infected reported in early literature [1]. A recent study suggested that asymptomatic patients can transmit SARS-CoV-2 which puts potentially additional threats to healthcare providers [2].

Although surgical mask can effectively prevent droplet transmission, whether and to what degree SARS-CoV-2 can transmit through aerosol approach is still uncertain. Studies with 2003 SARS virus suggest a high level of concerns for aerosol transmission [3], and a recent unpublished study from MedRxiv revealed that SARS-CoV-2 has similar aerosol stability compared to SARS [4].

Healthcare professionals are our frontline force against the coronavirus emergency and we cannot afford even a slight probability of a large scale infections among healthcare workers due to insufficient personal protective equipment. We hope that accessing the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) and any potential mass production program are actively being considered to protect, and ultimately, save lives for U.S. people.

Sincerely,