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NZ takes action on face masks not meeting quality standards

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A quality assurance check showing some face masks used in the health sector don't fully meet specifications won't have any impact on national supply



The Ministry of Health in New Zealand (NZ) has advised District health boards (DHBs) to put on hold their stocks of one type of face mask, as they do not fully meet the agreed standards for use in New Zealand healthcare settings.

However, a quality assurance check showing some face masks used in the health sector don't fully meet specifications won't have any impact on national supply.

Independent testing of Duckbill N95/P2 particulate respirators (face masks) made by QSi and produced in 2018 and 2019, show they protected the user as expected but did not meet the standard for protecting others from the person using the mask.

QSi is a NZ based company which sources raw material supplies for PPE from overseas and has been critical to providing masks to New Zealand when there was difficulty accessing masks off-shore in the early stages of the pandemic.

"The Ministry is asking that all these face masks be withdrawn from use and has placed a hold on further ordering. Initial replacement stock of around four weeks supply has already been shipped to DHBs," Sue Gordon, Deputy Chief Executive, COVID-19 Health System Response said.

"QSi is working with the Ministry on managing the current call to put these masks on hold. QSi is also undertaking their own investigation and has implemented their internal quality assurance processes. We are working together in good faith, to resolve this matter as quickly as possible. While the matter is being addressed, the current production of masks by QSi for the Ministry of Health has been paused," Gordon concluded.