



Workers at Blue Mountain Hospital wear the masks made and donated by community members.

Contributed photo

Covering the need

Volunteers make masks for health care workers

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

COVID-19 continues to dominate every aspect of life, but community members in the county are fighting back by providing health care workers with the masks and gowns necessary to continue their work.

Sylvia Ross, the director of Blue Mountain Home Health and Hospice, said that 70 people — from local community members to those who live out of town and have family working at the hospital — are making masks or gowns for the Blue Mountain Hospital.

So far, the hospital received a few hundred masks, and Ross said the hospital is distributing them as fast as they come.

“It is these moments that matter most in this community, and to the United States right now. As we continue to see a national shortage of (personal protective equipment) in conjunction with a pandemic, we are relying on these great people to keep us safe,” Ross said. “I have had tears in my eyes at times sorting and counting these masks and imagining all of the time and late nights at sewing machines that so many people have selflessly poured out.”

Jessica Moore has provided a little over 120 masks for the hospital.

“I own Backwoods Soap Company, and I teach knitting classes, and all of that is shutdown now,” Moore said. “I am not a seamstress at all, and I haven’t had my sewing machine out in probably three years.”

Moore reached out to the hospital, and they provided her with a pattern for a simple face mask that can be used to go over the N-95 respirators. This would allow the N-95 mask to be used multiple times.

“I think people are feeling helpless, but as small as this may be, it at least has given me something that I can do to help health care workers,” Moore said.

Moore is not the only one in her home working on masks. Her husband and two kids have helped in any way that they can.

“One of the gals, Katie Hensley, at the hospital asked me if my daughter sews and if she has been sewing too,” Moore said. “I told her that every time I stand up she asks me, ‘Can I sew this quick little bag?’ because she has been making little bags from the scraps not used for making masks.”

Hensley let Moore’s daughter borrow her sewing machine, and now the daughter is sitting beside her mom, helping when she can or working on her own little projects.



Contributed photo

Jessica Moore has provided a little over 120 masks for Blue Mountain Hospital.



Contributed photo/Jessica Moore

Jessica Moore works with her kids, Tymber and Danner, to make masks. They cut wire and trimmed threads.

While Moore receives a great amount of support at home, the community has also helped by providing donations and working together to provide masks and gowns.

When Moore started sewing masks, she thought she had a good stash of supplies but burned through her inventory quickly. A common item shortage has been the elastic bands used to secure to the ears of the person wearing the mask.

She received donations from members in the community who donated fabric and elastic for her.

“Getting supplies has been a challenge, but people donating them have been awesome,” Moore said. “I am thankful for our health care workers and everyone in our community.”

As the need for masks remain persistent, Moore and volunteers are working hard to meet the demand for health care workers at Blue Mountain Hospital.

“I always find joy standing back and looking at the big picture of how strongly this community pulls together when there is a need. Not surprisingly, we had a need, and our community does what our community does: rose to the occasion,” Ross said.

Email Ross at ross@bluemountain-hospital.org for additional information on how to help.



Contributed photo

The masks donated from the community can be used over the N-95 respirator masks.



Contributed photo/Jessica Moore

Jessica Moore’s children Tymber and Danner help her make masks for Blue Mountain Hospital.

How to make a cloth mask at home

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

The national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is now recommending that people wear simple cloth masks when going out in public.

Although the masks may provide some protection against contracting the virus, health officials emphasize that maintaining 6 feet of physical distancing from others is still the best way to prevent infection. If someone is infected, wearing a mask could prevent transmission to others.

Health officials report a shortage of surgical masks and N95 respirators and recommend that those items only be used by health care professionals.

The CDC provides tips and several methods to make masks for personal use, including two options that do not require sewing: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>.

Cloth masks can also be worn by health care professionals over N95 respirators to extend their life.

Blue Mountain Hospital District is providing the instructions below to people interested in donating cloth masks to the hospital. The design includes pleats, which allow the mask to stretch over a respirator.

Since elastic is in short supply and high demand, the hospital is also sharing a link to a different design that can be made without elastic: <https://www.instructables.com/id/AB-Mask-for-a-Nurse-by-a-Nurse>.

The hospital also provides patterns for gowns. The hospital will only use approved patterns. Email Sylvia Ross at ssross@bluemountainhospital.org for patterns and more information.

Supplies 8-inch-by-16-inch rectangle of cotton or cotton-blend fabric (pre-washed so the mask doesn’t shrink)

5 inches of 1/8-inch elastic or 6 inches of 1/4-inch elastic

6 inches of wire (20 gauge or 22 gauge)

Iron
Thread
Sewing machine

Instructions

1. Fold fabric in half to form an 8-inch-by-8-inch square and press with iron. This folded edge will be the top of the mask.
2. Top stitch close to the folded edge.
3. Straight stitch across the top, 1/2-inch down from the folded edge, to create a casing for the metal wire.
4. Baste both sides of the mask, leaving the casing for the wire open on at least one side (so you can thread the wire through at a later step).
5. Start the pleats by folding from the top edge down 2 inches. Fold the top edge of the fabric backward.
6. Make three pleats approximately 1/2-inch deep and pin in place on each side.
7. Baste pleats on each side with a straight stitch.
8. Press pleats with iron and straight stick over side of pleats to secure in place.
9. Insert 6-inch wire through top casing and then zigzag stitch around remaining raw edges.
10. Trim excess fabric edges and threads.
11. Pin edges of elastic just below corners of mask. Use one piece of elastic for each side of the mask. Secure at top and then bottom of mask on each side to create a loop.



Fold fabric in half to form an 8"x8" square and press



Top stitch close to the folded edge



Stitch across top edge to create 1/2" casing for metal wire



Baste each side, leaving the wire casing open on at least one of the sides



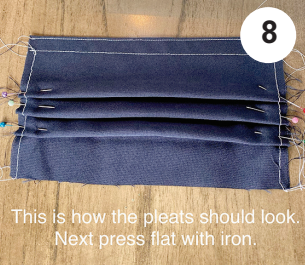
Start the pleats by folding from the top edge down 2"



Make 3 pleats approximately 1/2" deep for each and pin in place on each side



Baste pleats on each side with a straight stitch



This is how the pleats should look. Next press flat with iron.



Insert wire through top casing. Then zig zag stitch around remaining raw edges. Trim as needed.



Almost done! Trim excess edging and threads before securing ear loops.



Pin edges of elastic or cording to corners of mask, leaving enough space at edges to stitch in place.



Finished! Good job and thank you for your support.