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TO: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

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RE: Respiratory Protective Devices

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It is encouraging to see an effort is being made to reduce the stringent controls over what is an acceptable respiratory protective device for use in anticipated exposure to Mycobacterium tuberculosis. While we feel this is certainly a step in the right direction, it has yet to be shown that high filtration masks are ineffective in offering adequate protection.

In any event, we are hopeful that as a result of the proposed changes to the current procedures for testing and certifying respirators, more economical and less cumbersome options will be made available for selection of respiratory protective devices. It is also our hope that these changes will be implemented in a timely fashion in order to facilitate the continual development of tuberculosis control plans in health care facilities across the nation.

cc: Carol Stamilio, R.N., CIC
Director, Infection Control

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