

June 27, 1994  
310 - 16th Avenue  
Baltimore, Maryland 21225-3420

NIOSH Docket Office  
Robert A. Taft Laboratories  
Mail Stop C34  
4678 Columbia Parkway  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45226

Dear Mr. Robert A. Taft,

I am a Registered Nurse at Harbor Hospital Center in Baltimore. I have worn the 3M 9970 Large High Efficiency Respirator as instructed by the Employee Health Department.

I have several concerns about its use. It is not documented as safe by the manufacturer, it interferes with communication, and it is uncomfortable to wear.

First is that the front bag it arrives in has a disclaimer about it "may not eliminate the risk of contracting disease or infection. There has been so much talk about studies and none available at the time of use and education. Even the 3M salesman at the vendors display had no written literature with him. The sense I have is that it does little more than having adequate fresh air exchanges to keep personnel safe.

Second, when I had to wear the mask for an hour while teaching I began to shout to be heard. The patient had a great deal of difficulty understanding me. I had to repeat much of my information. This patient was discharged to home while still under isolation. Therefore I could not defer my teaching to a later time. My job as a nursing case manager is to teach patients every day. If the numbers increase as the literature indicates I'll be spending more time behind my mask hollering at patients.

Third, after an hour of wearing the mask and trying to communicate to my patient I became tired and felt short of breath. It was hot from rebreathing my own moist air. The indented marks it left on my face remained for awhile and was not at all becoming. This interfered with talking to the next few patients, who wondered why I had dents in my face.

I have been a nurse since 1972 and have high standards in delivering care. I also want to keep myself and my family safe. I do not feel that these new masks are of any benefit in the care of Tuberculosis patients.

In this day of new technology there must be something else that must be better and more acceptable in caring for people. Please look at the options again. Improving air systems and making construction times faster to change room air systems seem a better and more human way to proceed.

Sincerely,

*Patricia A. Moorhouse-Getz*  
Patricia A. Moorhouse-Getz, RNC

CC: APIC

JUL 8 1994