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IBEW Local 103 donates 20,000 PPE masks to front-line nurses

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Boston, MA Amidst a dire, statewide shortage of critical medical supplies, the region's largest electrical workers' union, IBEW Local 103, has donated 20,000 medical-grade protective masks to the Massachusetts Nurses Association (MNA) for direct distribution to front-line caregivers at Brigham and Women's Hospital.

"Words can't express how grateful I am, and how grateful all my colleagues are for these supplies," said Lauren Dayton, a registered nurse at Brigham and Women's Hospital. "They're going to help ensure that we can do our jobs safely and effectively, for everyone's sake. IBEW Local 103 didn't hesitate to do all they could to help, and it means the world to have their support through this incredibly difficult time."

Dayton helped coordinate the logistics of the donation with IBEW Local 103, along with her father, who is a retired Local 103 member. They sourced the masks from Source Squared owner Paul Kenney – one of Local 103's go-to PPE vendors.

"My father has always been so proud to be a part of IBEW Local 103, and today it's especially easy to see why," said Dayton. "It's a really special moment for me."

Mayor Martin Walsh announced the Boston Resiliency Fund initiative on March 16, which is helping to collect funding and supplies for first responders and health care workers. The fund has surpassed its \$20 million goal, and continues to pursue multiple avenues in successfully obtaining more PPE and supplies for healthcare workers and first responders.

Walsh praised the donation organized by IBEW Local 103 in support of the front-line nurses.

"Our nurses are working around the clock, on the frontlines of Boston's COVID-19 response," said mayor Walsh. "The tremendous outpouring of support we have seen every single day since the start of this public health crisis makes me so proud to be mayor of the city of Boston. I want to thank the Massachusetts Nurses Association for their tireless work and IBEW Local 103 for generously stepping up to provide this much-needed equipment that will strengthen our collective response and save lives."

As the number of novel coronavirus cases in Massachusetts continues to grow, access to supplies has become increasingly scarce. While masks should typically be disposed of after 20 minutes of use in health care facilities, many nurses are now being told to use the same masks for much longer, sometimes even for multiple days in some facilities.

“Whatever our nurses need, we’re there,” said IBEW Local 103 business manager/financial secretary, Lou Antonellis. “The bravery these caregivers are showing, and the sacrifices they are making are incredible and we need to honor and support that. IBEW Local 103 is a community-focused organization, and we’re going to continue to support them in every way possible.”

Over the weekend, IBEW Local 103 also donated thousands of additional masks to First Responders in surrounding cities and towns, coordinating trips to fire stations in Billerica, Methuen, Lawrence, Salem, Woburn, Somerville, Quincy, Weymouth, and Milton.

“The 12,000 plus members of the Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts are forever grateful to the leadership, and membership, of IBEW Local 103, for their ongoing efforts to provide PPE to first responders and nurses who are battling this pandemic,” said Rich MacKinnon, Jr., President of the Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts. “Our union brotherhood, sisterhood, partnership, and solidarity has never been more evident than in the past few weeks. PFFM echoes the call for community PPE donations, and we thank IBEW LOCAL 103 for their continued support.”

Trish Powers, the MNA Chairperson at Brigham and Women’s Hospital, echoed the urgent call for supplies and donations.

“MNA stands with our front-line caregivers who are bravely fighting this pandemic for our community, and it breaks my heart that these are the conditions they’re dealing with,” said Powers. “The MNA is working around the clock to support our nurses in any way we can, but this needs to be a community effort. Sourcing these supplies need to be our collective priority, and any and all donations will literally help save thousands of lives. IBEW Local 103 has stepped up to the plate and shown our nurses that they are not alone in this battle. Our gratitude for their support is truly boundless.”

If you would like to donate funds or supplies to front-line caregivers, visit:

Boston Resiliency Fund -
<https://www.boston.gov/news/boston-resiliency-fund-surpasses-20-million-goal>

COVID-19 PPE Procurement and Donation Fund (MA) -
<https://www.mass.gov/covid-19-ppe-procurement-and-donation-program>