

A million days' free PPE for clinicians at highest risk, thanks to ingenuity, teamwork, and scuba

As of today, MasksOn.org has manufactured and distributed 25,000 reusable protective mask kits to frontline health care professionals in all 50 states.

BOSTON, MA, UNITED STATES, July 29, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As of today, [MasksOn.org](https://mason.org) has manufactured and distributed 25,000 reusable mask kits for high exposure clinical procedures, resulting in 1 million protected days for frontline health workers.

The product is made by modifying snorkeling masks, allowing for quick production. MasksOn.org is able to provide them free to clinicians because the staff works without pay and solicits donations to pay for scuba gear and the necessary factory modifications.

The mask kit was the brainchild of [Drs. Jacqueline Boehme](#) and Alex Stone, both anesthesiologists, a specialty that exposes doctors to aerosolized droplets from patients. Dr. Stone is also a scuba enthusiast and so was familiar with gear for the sport, including snorkel masks that offer great visibility and a secure seal.



MasksOn Founder Jacqueline Boehme MD wearing MasksOn kit

"Rather than converting manufacturing facilities to make PPE, I thought, 'Why not use a product that's already available?'" Stone said. "We were starting with literally nothing but an idea – and there was such urgency to move fast."

"Clinicians performing high-risk procedures do not have the protection that they need. Hospitals are instructing clinicians to reuse their N-95 masks – single-use masks that are designed to be disposed of after every patient encounter," Boehme said.

Full-face snorkeling masks, along with the special adapter used with the MasksOn mask kit, can be sanitized so that healthcare workers can use them over and over – and even share them

safely with colleagues. MasksOn estimates that every one of their kits can substitute between 100 and 1000 N-95 masks when FDA-approved products are not otherwise available.

Boehme and Stone recruited Sanjay Vakil and Eugene Mann, Google staffers who had been involved in several tech start-ups.

“We’ve come very far, very fast,” said Vakil. “That is because we have so many super-smart people volunteering their time. We work nonstop, but we know that our work is keeping healthcare workers safe and allowing them to do lifesaving work. We’re experiencing a national tragedy that’s making many people feel helpless. It’s tremendously satisfying to be able to contribute.”

MasksOn was conceived as a short-term effort, but as the infection rate remains high nationally and [shortages of PPE recur](#), the nonprofit is strategizing to continue operating well past its original goal of providing protection for 1 million clinical days.

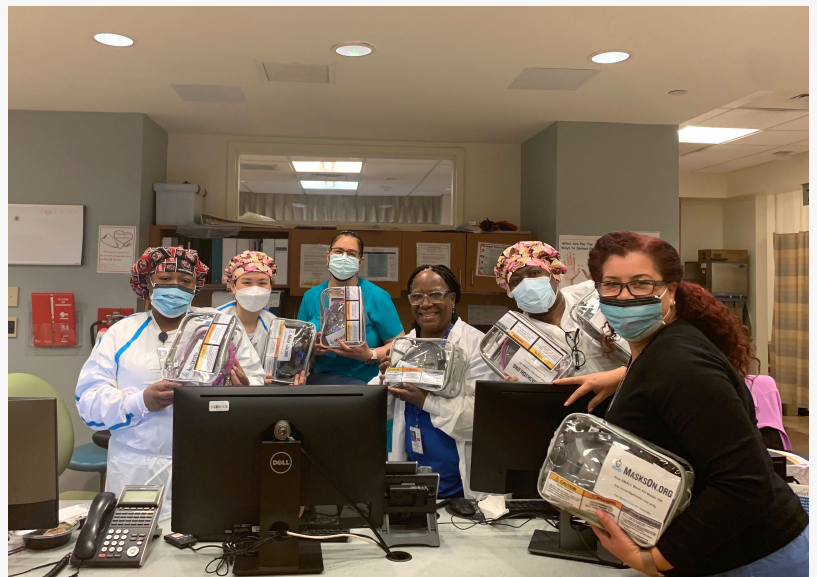
The kits were tested extensively before they were offered to clinicians. Initially, MasksOn had hoped that 3D printers could be used to make the adapter necessary for medical use. When that proved insufficient, the nonprofit turned to a crack team of designers across Fikst and OnShape to rapidly develop an injection molded design. Massachusetts-based Lightspeed Manufacturing stepped up to assemble and ship the kits.

“Our donors have been more than generous, contributing \$2.3 million that has gone directly into acquiring, modifying, and shipping these kits,” said Boehme. “That’s \$2.30 a day for a healthcare worker to be doing their vital work safely. But demand continues to grow. Fundraising is our next major task.”

With over 25,000 mask kits shipped to over 5,000 institutions in all 50 States, MasksOn has



Alex Stone MD demonstrating MasksOn kit



Clinicians with MaskOn Kit

expanded its efforts to assist clinicians abroad. The aid organization Partners in Health is evaluating the kits to support their COVID relief work in Haiti.

They are looking for help anywhere and everywhere. Vakil's wife, Naoka Carey, formerly ran a nonprofit and is onboard to help with fundraising, publicity, and other functions. Their 18-year-old son, Han Vakil, organized a corps of drivers to act as couriers for MasksOn. The volunteer list is long, reaching across families, friend groups, and even the country.

"I have never seen a health disaster that compares to COVID-19, but I have also never seen so many people come together unselfishly to solve a problem," said Stone. "This is a difficult time to be a doctor. I'm grateful to be part of something that gives me so much hope."

To find out more or contribute, visit www.maskson.org.

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