

TOPIC: PPE will continue to be a critical component of the fight against COVID-19-- how will we know when the PPE crisis has passed?

STATE OF PLAY: WHAT'S THE LATEST

- Much of what has been written on what “success” looks like in the new normal has been focused on defining requirements for testing, sustainable case counts, and various economic measurements. Defining “success” in the PPE market, specifically in the market for masks and gowns, has gone largely unaddressed and remains an important task as the count of [new COVID-19 cases remains high](#).
- While nearly every market has been disrupted as a result of COVID-19, arguably none has seen more upheaval than the traditionally sleepy market for PPE: it has experienced robust innovation with the entrance of untraditional suppliers, while simultaneously suffering from continued cases of fraud and [unstable pricing](#).
- [Great efforts](#) have been made to get critically needed masks, gloves, gowns, and face shields into the hands of frontline workers, but [PPE shortages](#) are still occurring. The question on the minds of many business leaders and public sector actors now: how will we know when the PPE crisis has passed? What signals will tell us when we have produced enough PPE, and the market has stabilized?

THE BIG PICTURE: WHY IT MATTERS, WHAT MIGHT BE NEXT?

- As with many things, PPE shortages are likely to ebb and flow with the rise and fall of COVID-19 cases. While gaining real-time visibility into PPE supply and demand is far from a realistic possibility, there are indicators that can be monitored to gauge the status of the PPE crisis. In doing so, business leaders and public officials can begin to craft plans for success as it relates to PPE needs in their sectors and regions, respectively.
- First, a stable PPE marketplace [will require stable price levels at or near the pre-COVID crisis](#). To achieve this, additional price transparency will be key in managing the inevitable drop in prices that will occur as new supply comes online and demand decreases from initial crisis levels. Marketplaces that have done work to avoid price gouging during the crisis are well positioned to help by providing customers, be they hospitals or individuals, with data around how high or low prices for a particular article of PPE from a specific provider are relative to national or regional averages. The [World Supply Chain Federation](#) is a prime example of an organization that is seeking to provide price transparency by pulling multiple supplier information onto a single platform, helping stabilize prices in the market.



- Second, while [hospitals may report more success in securing PPE](#) than in the early days of the crisis, it is important to also understand the ongoing “level of effort” it requires to secure it and the needs of other essential organizations that rely on PPE to operate safely. For example, [funeral homes](#) have increasingly become concerned with PPE shortages as the industry deals with a record number of deaths due to COVID-19. To that end, capturing data around the length of time required to find supply is critical. While reporting PPE usage, hospitals and healthcare facilities should also consider reporting delivery and shipping data to track efforts to secure PPE. A “stable” PPE market should require that PPE orders are delivered at the same time or faster than pre-COVID crisis lead times.
- Third, a stable PPE market requires quality products that are effective for frontline workers and high-risk populations. Thus, [fraudulent claims](#) of PPE must be tracked and reported to ensure faulty products are not pushed into the market. National clearing houses such as [Project N95](#) have implemented successful and strict vetting procedures in order to mitigate this issue; nevertheless, this initiative must be supported by governmental agencies to track and ensure success.
- Fourth, as with testing and other metrics, data should be collected from hospitals and other medical settings (dentists, long term care facilities, etc) about their ability to procure necessary PPE within a reasonable period of time, and report it publicly. Virginia is particularly excelling in this area, having created a [dynamic Tableau dashboard](#) to track not only COVID-19 hospitalizations, but ventilator and PPE usage across hospitals. Other efforts to aggregate PPE demand have emerged, such as the [Demand Data Hub](#) that aims to aggregate demand from multiple COVID-19 related organizations. This will ensure that demand and supply data is accurately aggregated to reflect PPE needs in essential settings throughout time.
- Fifth, major PPE suppliers should provide regular updates on forecasted shortages, lead times, and any difficulties in sourcing raw materials that are currently, or could soon, impact PPE production. By signaling issues in the PPE supply chain early on, government and business leaders can begin to develop and deploy contingency plans to address forecasted PPE shortages or issues in the supply chain. This will enable new PPE suppliers to receive signals regarding upcoming shortages and invest early in PPE manufacturing and production. Additionally, [geography plays a vital role](#) in how PPE suppliers think about forecasting shortages as surges in COVID-19 cases are unlikely to occur all at once. Finally, the PPE crisis has not only affected essential businesses and hospitals, but [underserved communities](#) that often do not have access to the resources needed to obtain quality and affordable PPE. A systematic approach to sharing PPE from areas with low case-counts will be critical in achieving success in not only the broader PPE market, but in underserved communities as well.

Leaders can be confident that the PPE crisis has passed when 5 key areas are addressed



Stable pricing for PPE products

- **Prices stabilize** and reach levels close to pre-Covid-19 prices
- **No reports** of price gouging



Low effort to source PPE

- Medical settings can **secure PPE through traditional, pre-COVID channels**
- PPE deliveries occur at **pre-COVID crisis speeds**



Ability to track fraudulent PPE

- Fraudulent PPE incidents become **uncommon**
- **Minimal reports** of deliveries of fraudulent PPE



PPE data widely available

- States **report data from hospitals and medical settings** on PPE supplies
- **No PPE shortages** reported in > 3 days



Accurate data on forecasted shortage

- PPE suppliers **provide data on forecasted shortages** and lead times on a regular basis
- Forecasted shortages begin **to decrease**

POTENTIAL IMPACT FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION / THE QUESTIONS WE'RE ASKING

Your Organization And Workers	Government Institutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you forecast demand for PPE for your business over time? • Do you currently have stable sourcing for the required PPE for your business? Are these supplied non-fraudulent and of high-quality? • What alternative sources for PPE exist in case of an unexpected PPE shortage? Do you have a contingency plan for acquiring PPE in case of an unexpected shortage? • How will you think about PPE stockpiling for future crises, while continuing to navigate the current one? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there clear target levels for stockpiles, by category of PPE? • How will demand and changes in demand for PPE be determined over time? • How will new suppliers be supported in the medium to long term, to ensure there remains stability in PPE markets in the event of a future pandemic? • At what point should governments cease PPE procurement and shift burden back to hospital systems? • When should guidance against private sector groups purchasing certain

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When should PPE requirements be relaxed for your business? 	<p>categories of PPE be lifted?</p>
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WHAT STS IS DOING ABOUT IT

- To help attain “success” in the PPE market, Stop the Spread continues to collaborate with our partners, such as [C19 Coalition](#), [Project N95](#), and the [World Supply Chain Federation](#) to push critical PPE to the most essential areas at fair prices, helping stabilize the market.
 - [C19 Coalition](#): Brings together crucial partners and stakeholders to help build an efficient, streamlined supply chain for PPE and vital medical devices.
 - [Project N95](#): Connects suppliers and buyers of critical PPE through a stringent vetting process to supply healthcare and frontline workers with high quality products.
 - [World Supply Chain Federation](#): Established a team of teams supply chain solution to get PPE to where it is most needed by minimizing random inquiries that drive up costs, eliminating fraudulent scams, and increasing supply chain diversity and resilience.
- Stop the Spread is working with multiple manufacturers, traditional and non-traditional, to help increase the supply of critical PPE and provide quality products to the public and essential workers alike.
- If you are a manufacturer producing or looking to produce PPE, or a business in need of PPE for your business or customers, please visit our [website](#) for more information on how to [contact us](#).

LEARN MORE: OTHER EXPERTS AND SOURCES

- [CDC guidance on public use of PPE](#)
- [New England Journal of Medicine- Critical Supply Shortages](#)
- [Demand Data Hub](#)

