During the COVID-19 Pandemic, HCA looked for ways to mitigate PPE shortages. Ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) participated in FDA approved N95 mask reprocessing through the company Battelle as part of the PPE conservation effort. The process involved daily collection of used N95 masks in a designated collection bin. On a weekly basis, the masks in the collection bin were bagged and sent to the Battelle reprocessing facility. The reprocessed masks are then returned back to the center the following week.

**Problem**

Our center’s initial July 2020 collection data showed our discard rate to be above the suggested discard rate.

**Purpose**

Reduce the center’s baseline discard rate through the review of the N95 mask collection process and staff compliance.

**Element 4: Evidence of Data Collection**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL PER WEEK</th>
<th>8/5/2020</th>
<th>8/12/2020</th>
<th>8/19/2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collected</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processed &amp; Returned</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discarded</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discard %</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>45.71</td>
<td>32.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Element 5: Data Analysis**

Discard rate continues to vary. Our discard percentage rate was calculated by dividing the number of discarded masks by the number of masks collected, then multiplying by 100.

The Dashboard report indicated that the primary reason for discarded masks was due to the masks being soiled with makeup products.

**Element 7: Solutions**

- Staff were reminded of the reprocessing requirements and processes for proper N95 mask disposal in the mask collection bin.
- Signs placed as reminders:
  - To avoid wearing make-up or oil based moisturizers.
  - Housekeeping do not throw bins away as trash.
- Additional training regarding donning and doffing the masks.
- Tracking and identifying individuals that had high mask discard rates through employee identification numbers on the masks.

**Element 8: Re-measure**

2nd Round data showed our discard rate to be 17.82%.

**Element 9: Additional Solutions**

We reduced our center’s N95 mask discard rate to <25% and met our goal with a rate of 17.82%.

**Element 10: Communication**

The findings were shared with staff, Medical Executive Committee and Governing Body.