



Baptist Health using robots to disinfect medical masks during pandemic

Goal is to preserve N95 masks during shortage across country from COVID-19

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The shortage of personal protective equipment across the country has hospitals getting creative, and Baptist Health is turning to technology to help preserve its face masks.

The N95 masks help health care workers to protect themselves and others from the spread of infectious diseases such as COVID-19.

Baptist said it is one of the first health systems in the region to use robots to disinfect the masks using ultraviolet light. By damaging the DNA of bacteria and viruses, the intense UV light prevents them from multiplying or mutating, Baptist explained.

The LightStrike robots are designed and manufactured by Xenex Disinfection Services.

Baptist Health already uses LightStrike robots to disinfect patient and operating rooms, and now one robot at each hospital has been set aside specifically for cleaning N95 masks.

As the mask cleaning program is rolled out this week, each facility will have a room dedicated to disinfecting the masks, which will be strung along wire shelving, resembling clothes on a clothesline. After a five-minute disinfection cycle, the masks are rotated and then exposed for five minutes on the other side, allowing both their exterior and interior to be decontaminated, Baptist said.

Units with high N95 use, such as the COVID-19 units and the emergency departments, are among the first to have their masks cleaned, and there are plans for the program to expand to other departments across the hospital system.

“During an ongoing crisis like the one we are facing now, our health system is applying innovative ideas that are shown to be effective,” said Dr. David Rice, senior vice president and chief quality officer for Baptist Health. “The use of Xenex robots to disinfect our masks is just one of the ways we are rethinking how we do things so that we can benefit our patients and team members alike.”

Source: <https://www.news4jax.com/health/2020/03/31/baptist-health-using-robots-to-disinfect-medical-masks-during-pandemic/>

March 31st 2020