

Strengthen Healthcare Supply Chain

BACKGROUND

TRSA represents the linen, uniform and facility services industry. TRSA members are commercial laundry/ facility services companies and their supplier partners who manufacture and supply their needed supplies and infrastructure. Both of these sectors of our membership enable life-sustaining businesses to safely operate. These include healthcare facilities, grocery stores, infrastructure maintenance, food processing, public utilities (water and energy), first-responders, federal and state governments, laboratories, pharmaceutical manufacturing, and other fundamental supply chain businesses.

Essential workers and the public depend on our industry to produce and process PPE including healthcare contact textiles (HCTs), flame-resistant and high visibility clothing, first aid and safety items and other protective garments. Many PPE products must be cleaned by commercial laundries that use specialized processes to ensure their safety and integrity. TRSA members process 90% of the HCTs (i.e., isolation and barrier gowns, bed linens, scrubs, etc.) used by healthcare facilities across the United States. As evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, laundry processing interruptions threaten the safe operation of healthcare facilities as well as other critical infrastructure businesses.

TRSA POSITION

Currently, the U.S. market opts for disposable HCTs in more than 90% of uses in which reusable HCTs would be an equivalent or superior substitute. This reliance on disposable products has caused dangerous shortages. Reusable HCTs processed by Hygienically Clean certified laundries support a more secure, safe, and sustainable supply chain in comparison to foreign-sourced disposable HCTs. During the pandemic, TRSA members addressed the HCT shortage by supplementing disposables with equally or more protective, hygienically clean, and safe reusable HCTs.

Research indicates that without daily pick-up and delivery of HCTs, hospitals would run out of resources after two days. Healthcare facilities should be compelled to strike a more balanced usage of reusable and disposable HCTs, which will promote supply chain stability.

In addition to promoting supply chain stability, reusable products are more environmentally sustainable than their single-use counterparts. One reusable gown can replace 75 single-use disposable gowns. Hospital gowns cleaned after each use create four times less solid waste than paper gowns. Reusables conserve resources and reduce pollution and waste.

ACTION

Require Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) to compel healthcare facilities to utilize a minimum of 50% of reusable HCTs in the supply chain to protect and mitigate against any future shortage of healthcare contact textiles.