

April 24, 2020**Immediate Release****Contact:** JoAnn Cavanaugh, Director Public Relations**Office:** (716) 706-2061 | **Cell:** (716) 228-4886 | **Email:** jcav@chsbuffalo.org

Catholic Health teams up with small local manufacturer to produce 5,000 much-needed protective gowns for healthcare workers

A unique local business opportunity will result in the production of 5,000 much-needed medical gowns to help protect Western New York healthcare workers on the front lines.

Faced with a nationwide shortage of disposable isolation gowns from existing supply chains, Catholic Health reached out to The Factory Buffalo, a small WNY-based clothing manufacturer, to explore a potential opportunity to create reusable protective gowns. Owner Molly Worth worked with Catholic Health to develop the product prototype, then teamed up with business partner Tom Burns of QSG Technologies to accelerate and scale production.

“In this unprecedented environment, we are looking for creative solutions every day,” said Catholic Health President & CEO Mark Sullivan. “We are so grateful for local partners like Factory Buffalo and QSG Technologies who are willing to step up and answer the call.”

The Factory Buffalo worked closely with infection control experts at Catholic Health to design a sample reusable gown that’s both extremely protective and highly functional. Caregivers at our COVID-19 Treatment Facility at St. Joseph Campus were given an opportunity to test the prototype, which they loved for its light weight and breathability – a welcome improvement when tasked with wearing head-to-toe PPE over an entire shift, which can become warm and uncomfortable.

Twelve thousand yards of rip-stop nylon fabric will be used to create the 5,000 gowns over the next month. The reusable gowns, which can be cleaned and sanitized, are also highly water resistant for maximum protection.

Worth sourced the fabric from a company in North Carolina and QSG Technologies purchased eight new sewing machines and is hiring 15+ employees to work on the project. Some of the new hires will come from Buffalo’s refugee community, which contains a pool of skilled sewers.

The first batch of finished gowns are scheduled to come off the factory floor the week of May 4.