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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Shelby County Health Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 1, 2020

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Shelby County Health Department Stops Distribution of Face Masks Provided by the State of Tennessee

SHELBY COUNTY, TN – The Shelby County Health Department (SCHD) has stopped the distribution of the black, knitted face masks provided by the State of Tennessee for distribution to the public.

The masks, manufactured by Renfro Corp., were treated with a chemical called Silvadur. Silvadur is an anti-microbial agent applied to fabrics to reduce the growth of odor-causing bacteria. According to the manufacturer, only trace amounts of the chemical are applied to the fabric and the chemical diminishes each time the mask is washed.

Until more information is made available about Silvadur and its application to the masks, SCHD has stopped all distribution of the masks and is asking partnering agencies to also stop distributing them.

Anyone who has one of the masks and has safety concerns about it, should stop wearing it and wear an alternative facial covering.

Facial coverings are recommended to be worn in settings where social distancing is difficult to maintain. A cloth facial covering may be as simple and inexpensive as a bandana or scarf tied around the back of the head to cover the nose and mouth. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has information and guidance about facial coverings, including instructions for making a cloth facial covering, on its website here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>.

For more information about COVID-19 and the use of facial coverings, please call the Shelby County Health Department's COVID-19 hotline (**833-943-1658**) or visit the Health Department's COVID-19 webpage: shelbytnhealth.com/coronavirus.

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