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FAU Finds Simple Solution to Make Thousands of Face Shields for Baptist Health South Florida

FAU's College of Engineering and Computer Science and I-SENSE Team Up with Baptist Health South Florida for COVID-19 Pandemic

April 8, 2020 – With major shortfalls of personal protective equipment (PPE) for health care workers around the world, a team from Florida Atlantic University's College of Engineering

and Computer Science and Institute for Sensing and Embedded Network Systems (I-SENSE), one of the university's four research pillars, have identified a simple solution to rapidly produce protective face shields for Baptist Health South Florida, the largest health care organization in the region with 11 hospitals, including Boca Raton Regional Hospital.



The disposable face shield developed by the FAU team only requires clear polyester plastic, elastic fabric bands, and a laser cutter. Unlike 3D printed solutions, the process developed by FAU is simple and quick. Baptist Health South Florida has requested an initial order of 4,000 face shields, which the FAU team expects to have completed within a week and will be followed by another order of 4,000 face shields.

Leaders from Baptist Health South Florida approached FAU leadership to help them ramp up their acquisition of PPEs for their health care force, which includes approximately 23,000 employees, more than 4,000 physicians and more than 100 outpatient centers, urgent care facilities and physician practices spanning across Miami-Dade, Monroe, Broward and Palm Beach counties.

"Our colleagues at Florida Atlantic University are at the forefront of innovation and now more than ever we need to think 'outside-of-the-box' to come up with solutions to address this global pandemic," said Mark Coticchia, vice president for innovation at Baptist Health South Florida. "Our collaboration with FAU's College of Engineering and Computer Science and I-SENSE is a great example of academia and industry coming together to improve patient care for the greater good."

The FAU team answered the call for innovation with expediency creating a prototype within an hour. They have since enhanced the prototype, which is meant to be worn over facemasks to provide additional protection from droplets from coughs and sneezes. Face shields are designated as class I medical devices by the United States Food and Drug Administration.

The FAU team re-tooled their facilities to leverage the opportunity to make face shields much faster than are currently being manufactured and they plan to share the blueprint for this PPE broadly with other academic institutions as well as industry.

"Sometimes, simplicity can be the best solution to a problem," said Stella Batalama, Ph.D., dean of FAU's College of Engineering and Computer Science. "We are truly humbled to do our part to work with Baptist Health South Florida to protect health care workers on the frontline of this COVID-19 outbreak as well the patients they serve."

FAU is looking for public, private and industry support for this lifesaving project. For more information or to make a contribution, contact Batalama at sbatalama@fau.edu.

"We are incredibly grateful to FAU for its innovation and ability to provide this much-needed equipment to help protect our patients and employees," said Samer Fahmy, M.D., vice president of quality and informatics at Boca Raton Regional Hospital.

About FAU's College of Engineering and Computer Science:

The FAU College of Engineering and Computer Science is internationally recognized for cutting edge research and education in the areas of computer science and artificial intelligence (AI), computer engineering, electrical engineering, bioengineering, civil, environmental and geomatics engineering, mechanical engineering, and ocean engineering. Research conducted by the faculty and their teams expose students to technology innovations that push the current state-of-the art of the disciplines. The College research efforts are supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Department of Defense (DOD), the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Department of Education (DOEd), the State of Florida, and industry. The FAU College of Engineering and Computer Science offers degrees with a modern twist that bear

specializations in areas of national priority such as AI, cybersecurity, internet-of-things, transportation and supply chain management, and data science. New degree programs include Masters of Science in AI (first in Florida), Masters of Science in Data Science and Analytics, and the new Professional Masters of Science degree in computer science for working professionals. For more information about the College, please visit eng.fau.edu.

About FAU's I-SENSE:

The Institute for Sensing and Embedded Network Systems Engineering (I-SENSE) leads university-wide activities in sensing and smart systems, and is one of FAU's four research pillars. The I-SENSE mission is to catalyze a culture of research excellence in sensing and smart systems; to develop, demonstrate, and operate technological solutions with high societal impact; and to attract and support future generations of interdisciplinary researchers and practitioners. The mission is led by a robust interdisciplinary team comprising four staff members, nine faculty fellows, three postdoctoral researchers, more than 60 affiliated faculty, and more than two dozen supported students.

About Florida Atlantic University:

Florida Atlantic University, established in 1961, officially opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. Today, the University, with an annual economic impact of \$6.3 billion, serves more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students at sites throughout its six-county service region in southeast Florida. FAU's world-class teaching and research faculty serves students through 10 colleges: the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, the College of Business, the College for Design and Social Inquiry, the College of Education, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the Graduate College, the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. FAU is ranked as a High Research Activity institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The University is placing special focus on the rapid development of critical areas that form the

basis of its strategic plan: Healthy aging, biotech, coastal and marine issues, neuroscience, regenerative medicine, informatics, lifespan and the environment. These areas provide opportunities for faculty and students to build upon FAU's existing strengths in research and scholarship. For more information, visit fau.edu.

About Boca Raton Regional Hospital

Boca Raton Regional Hospital is part of Baptist Health South Florida, the largest healthcare organization in the region, with 11 hospitals, more than 23,000 employees, 4,000 physicians and 100 outpatient centers, urgent care facilities and physician practices spanning across Miami-Dade, Monroe, Broward and Palm Beach counties. Baptist Health has internationally renowned centers of excellence in cancer, cardiovascular care, orthopedics and sports medicine, and neurosciences. In addition, it includes Baptist Health Medical Group; Baptist Health Quality Network; and Baptist Health Care On Demand, a virtual health platform. A not-for-profit organization supported by philanthropy and committed to its faith-based charitable mission of medical excellence, Baptist Health has been recognized by Fortune as one of the 100 Best Companies to Work For in America and by Ethisphere as one of the World's Most Ethical Companies. For more information, visit BaptistHealth.net/Newsroom and connect with us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn.

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