

# **Scientific Working Meeting on Occupational Influenza Prevention and Control in Health Care Settings**

Mississauga, Ontario

October 26 – 27, 2006

## **Meeting Summary Report**

**Lisa Brosseau ScD CIH**  
**School of Public Health, University of Minnesota**

*Filter Efficiency and Facial Fit of Surgical Masks*

Dr. Brosseau discussed the regulation of filter efficiency and fit in the US. The tests used by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) for measuring filtering efficiency are more stringent than those used by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FDA only regulates the sale and marketing of masks, and in doing so does not require evaluation of fit.

Brosseau described the methods and results of her own study to measure filter efficiency and facial fit for representative surgical masks. The efficiency of surgical masks varies widely, she found, and such masks do not pass even minimum requirements for respirator fit. Even when equipped with relatively efficient filters, they allow 10-40% leakage around the faceplate.

Her conclusions, supported by the results of other studies she cited, are that:

- Surgical masks should not be considered respiratory protective devices.
- The FDA should consider a more robust regulatory approach, including the evaluation of fit.