



## **PRESS STATEMENT**

### **Textile Industry Unites to Play Critical Role for the Nation's Production of PPE Products**

April 9, 2020

WASHINGTON—The National Council of Textile Organizations (NCTO), representing the full spectrum of U.S. textiles from fiber through finished products, issued a statement today from textile executives leading the nation's unified effort to produce critical personal protective equipment (PPE) to help hospitals and healthcare workers fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

In factories across the country, textile companies are retooling production virtually overnight to produce PPE products ranging from hospital gowns, face masks and shoe covers to scrubs. The industry is playing a critical role in the nation's manufacturing strategy and solution to help contribute to the high demand for these products.

“Coordinating with local hospitals, healthcare organizations, the entire U.S. production chain and federal agencies, the textile industry has been at the forefront of the incredible manufacturing effort, contributing to the country's rapid response to the rising needs of frontline workers,” said NCTO President and CEO Kim Glas. “This industry has taken the lead in this effort, utilizing American manufacturing facilities and workers, despite facing many challenges in this environment. Our industry will continue to do all they can to serve the American people, frontline hospital workers and patients at this time.”

U.S. apparel and textile executives, representing the entire supply chain, from fiber to finished apparel, share their involvement in the monumental task of providing PPE products during challenging times.

The quotes—for use in any articles you are developing—from textile and apparel executives below offer a snapshot of efforts throughout the entire supply chain to provide PPE products for our nation.

As a demonstration of this effort, NCTO shares a few of the many stories emerging from our NCTO members at this time:

## **Beverly Knits Inc.**

“Our team has stepped up to the challenge of fighting Covid-19 and flattening the curve,” said Ron Sytz, CEO of Beverly Knits. “We have organized a team of 25+ companies with over 4,000 American textile and apparel workers, to manufacture personal protective mask for HHS. Through NCTO and SEAMS [The Association & Voice of the U.S. Sewn Products Industry] we continue to engage with additional companies to help fight this pandemic and flatten the curve.”

## **Burlington Industries LLC**

“Burlington is proud to be a part of an industry with such compassion and call to action as we have seen over the last couple of weeks in the fight against COVID-19,” said Allen Smith, president Burlington, Safety Components & A&E – Americas. “With 40 years of experience in medical fabrics, Burlington is glad to offer its reusable woven products and technical expertise to those within and outside our industry who are stepping up to help produce lifesaving PPE. Our employees are committed to the cause and working tirelessly in North Carolina to increase production, reallocate resources and support the evolving needs as much as possible. Reusable fabrics are critical in reducing the scarcity of PPE and increasing availability on the front lines, offering responsible solutions with advanced protection, comfort and durability where it counts the most. Throughout our Elevate portfolio of brands we are also offering support through the use of A&E technical threads and utilizing our network of contacts and expertise across Cone Denim and Safety Components to make connections, offer guidance and facilitate meaningful conversations to support our communities and healthcare heroes.”

## **Cotswold Industries Inc.**

“Cotswold and Central Textiles have pivoted to making PPE substrates for single use non-woven fabrics for and also for reusable PPE,” said James McKinnon CEO of Cotswold. “We have ramped our reusable fabric production and hope to produce 100-150K/week very shortly.”

## **Gildan Activewear Inc.**

“We are pleased to join forces with various business partners in the U.S. to reopen some of Gildan’s global manufacturing facilities under a strict biosecurity protocol to produce face masks and isolation gowns in support of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Chuck Ward, president of Gildan Yarns. “We are also proud to have donated a number of N95 protective face masks to local hospitals or health and human services organizations in the U.S. to support front line healthcare providers who continue to deliver exceptional care to patients and their families during this crisis,” he added.

## **Glen Raven Inc.**

“The U.S. textile industry has emerged as a critical part of the solution in protecting our frontline workers from COVID-19,” said Leib Oehmig, Glen Raven CEO and NCTO chairman. “Through our collaborative efforts across the industry and with our employees, customers, suppliers and the medical community, the industry has retooled many operations and is supplying important PPE like masks, face shields, swabs, wipes, gowns and many other products. Glen Raven, through our business units, is actively working with our partners across many industries and have aligned our resources to focus on PPE inputs where we are in the best position to offer solutions. These include inputs for gowns, face shields, mask covers, and temporary structures. As part of our response, Glen Raven has organized a fabrication group with several of our customers who are producing face shields and gowns. This group is collaborating with hospital systems across the country to design and scale production of these important products.”

## **Greenwood Mills**

“Venturing into a completely new territory in less than a week's time was certainly a calculated risk, but one that we feel will pay off in the long run not just for our company, but for our larger community,” said Jay Self, president and chief operating officer of Greenwood Mills. “We have made the switch from denim production to masks and gowns. The first full week of production will result in about 30,000 masks. At full capacity, the company will produce 500,000 masks and 300,000 gowns per week, with flexibility depending on the demand of the products. It’s a testament to our workforce and ingenuity that we were able to make this transition happen so quickly.”

## **Hamrick Mills**

“We at Hamrick Mills have dedicated a significant portion of our manufacturing capacity to the production of scrubs, gowns, masks, and related PPE,” said Jim Hopkins, director of sales at Hamrick. “We are considered and designated as an essential business concern and are intent on doing our share to assist those in need patients, front line first responders, and the general public, during this national crisis.”

## **Hanesbrands Inc.**

“We are proud to be working with the apparel consortium and the National Council of Textile Organizations to rapidly mobilize to meet such an important and critical national need for face masks during this pandemic,” said Michael E. Faircloth, Hanesbrands group president, global operations, American casualwear and e-commerce. “Our employees and those of our consortium partners have been working around the clock to transition production from basic apparel to face mask production. This has required amazing cooperation and close coordination among the government, raw material suppliers, logistics providers and our supply chain employees. Together we are achieving a monumental task, which has resulted in the manufacture and delivery of millions of

masks already with hundreds of millions more to come soon. Apparel industry leaders, particularly the consortium members, have successfully turned on a dime to meet the greater good of society.”

### **Lenzing Fibers Inc.**

“Like many companies, Lenzing was working to understand exactly what was needed during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic and we already had fibers in a variety of PPE applications,” said David Adkins, Lenzing commercial manager-Americas Textiles. “Thanks to the information provided by NCTO and several other industry organizations we were able to better clarify market needs and determine and provide appropriate products to fit the markets requirement.”

### **Milliken & Company**

“Many of Milliken’s U.S. customers in the flame resistant, workwear, and industrial space have pivoted their operations to manufacture PPE,” shared Chad McAllister, president of the Milliken Textile Division and EVP of Milliken & Company. “When we saw a need to shift to medical grade textiles, our team quickly stepped up. As of today, we have scaled production of these new products so that together with our customers we can help protect medical workers.”

### **MMI Textiles Inc.**

“For our part, MMI has been focusing on raw materials for all 4 gown levels, both immediate inventory and future production orders, N95 and personal protection masks, face shields and any other PPE raw material,” said Amy Bircher, president and founder of MMI. “We successfully helped secure immediate raw material for Crye Precision, and they gave a shout out to us on a press conference with the Mayor of NYC. We have secured finished masks to donate to local hospitals that we imported from overseas, and also bought face shields locally to donate. MMI is stocking a variety of widths of elastic for use in a variety of PPE applications – our plan is to create a robust stock option so that customers can ultimately pull product for immediate delivery.”

### **Parkdale Inc.**

“Parkdale has been an American company since 1916 and as such we feel a sense of duty and an obligation to answer our nation's call for personal protective equipment,” said Anderson Warlick, Chairman and CEO of Parkdale. “We are proud to work with our industry colleagues as we work together to retool, re-equip and redirect our plants and supply chains so that every citizen in the United States gets a personal protection mask.”

### **Picanol of America**

“The nature of Picanol of America, Inc., business is to support the U.S. textile industry, especially our weaving customers,” said Cyril Guérin, president of Picanol. “Spare parts, electronic repair and technical services are what we offer day in and day out. Throughout this ordeal, we have not skipped a beat, though the environment is clearly challenging. Our customers produce critical fabrics to be

transformed in health care personnel uniform, mattress casing and sheets for the patients, and probably many other PPE. As long as our weaving customers will produce, we will stand by them. This has created a tremendous amount of stress on our associates but their ‘forward looking’ attitude has been an inspiration. It is all about surviving this together.”

### **Schneider Mills**

“Schneider Mills has been very active in the past few weeks in responding to many customer needs for fabric during the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. We have responded to hurried orders of fabric for the outdoor shelters you see outside medical facilities across America,” said Curt Parker, vice president of operations at Schneider Mills. “Demand in lightweight rip-stop fabrics being used for medical gowns and light weight tents has increased as well. We are continuing to supply to the medical tape industry for 3M. We are responding to a new customer for barrier fabrics in the medical end uses. We are pleased to be doing all we can to support our country in this war with COVID-19. Our employees are putting forth great efforts in these changes as they occur rapidly.”

### **Shuford Yarns LLC**

“Shuford makes yarn for several medical applications such as diabetic socks, gloves, cuffs for surgical gowns, towels going to the military through the Federal Prison industry. Shuford has been given a number of opportunities to participate in making yarns for PPE, surgical gowns etc...,” said Marvin Smith, president and CEO of Shuford. “We are working with a car manufacture who is making PPE for several hospitals in their local area. We also internally are using some of our people who are taking fabric from a few of customers and making PPE to give to people in our community. With all the negatives in our country, our people have found ways to have a positive in our community.”

### **Standard Textile**

“Our healthcare customers are on the front line of treating patients and saving lives, and we’re relentlessly working to ensure our customers and our communities have continuous access to essential supplies needed to safeguard the health of clinicians, patients, and their families,” said Gary Heiman, president and CEO of Standard Textile. Heiman is fiercely committed to manufacturing as much reusable PPE and other healthcare products as possible—as quickly as possible—to alleviate the stress placed upon the healthcare industry and support the fight against COVID-19. “My concern is we are missing urgent collaboration opportunities with federal or state governments to allow us to serve healthcare workers who are at the frontline of this crisis,” said Heiman.

### **The Brickle Group**

“The Brickle group will be starting production on a general everyday mask produced utilizing our filtration felt from our nonwoven division Bouckaert Industrial Textiles,” said Max Brickle, president of Brickle. “We have developed a supply chain of New England textile manufacturers to be

able to produce these masks. The masks we are producing domestically are machine washable meant for everyday public use, not medical use. We are also involved in importing hospital grade PPE for the New England region.”

### **The LYCRA Company**

“The LYCRA Company, the only spandex producer in the U.S., is proud to produce and supply LYCRA® fiber, nylon, and other quality fibers to our value chain customers during these unprecedented times,” said Julien Born, president, apparel for The LYCRA Company. “Now more than ever, the medical community and other frontline workers are in critical need of well-fitting Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that helps keep them safe. We are encouraged by the quick action of many of our customers who have shifted production to produce masks and other protective devices. And with the inclusion of LYCRA® fiber, we hope to help our customers create a better wearer experience, so frontline workers can focus on what matters most - the health and wellness of our communities.”

### **TSG Finishing LLC**

"We have just completed production trials on multiple non-medical woven upholstery fabrics which are now eligible for Level 1 and Level 2 (PPE) for gowns," said Brian Rosenstein, CEO of TSG. "We are getting ready to run full production on these. The collaborative efforts of NCTO, IFAI, and INDA have been astounding. I am sure none of us feel we can move fast enough given this environment, but feel the entire textile industry has been very expeditious with response."

### **Unifi Inc.**

“We have more than 100 customers producing masks, gowns and other personal protective equipment needed by our first responders, medical personnel and military in the fight against COVID-19,” said Tom Caudle, president & chief operating officer of Unifi. "At Unifi, we're proud to play a part in the fight by providing the fiber they need.”

### **Wearbest Weavers LLC**

“In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the shortage of necessary medical supplies, the mill has been successful in creating and pivoting their production to PPE textiles. I am very proud of our team effort to turn around our production so quickly,” said Greg Thomases, vice president of Wearbest parent company Swavelle. “We are fortunate to have a U.S. mill that provides us the capability to produce PPE product. We’ve accomplished a lot in just a few weeks and plan to continue innovating through this unprecedented time. Our hope is to help meet the needs of thousands of frontline healthcare workers.”

###

NCTO is a Washington, DC-based trade association that represents domestic textile manufacturers, including artificial and synthetic filament and fiber producers.

- U.S. employment in the textile supply chain was 585,240 in 2019.
- The value of shipments for U.S. textiles and apparel was \$75.8 billion in 2019.
- U.S. exports of fiber, textiles and apparel were \$29.1 billion in 2019.
- Capital expenditures for textile and apparel production totaled \$2.5 billion in 2018, the last year for which data is available.

CONTACT: [Kristi Ellis](#)

(202) 684-3091

[www.ncto.org](http://www.ncto.org)