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California Department of Public Health Issues Updated Face Covering Guidance
Masking Required for Unvaccinated, Recommended for ALL Californians in “Indoor Public Settings”

Lake County, CA (July 28, 2021) — State Public Health Officer, Tomás Aragón, MD, DrPH, and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) updated statewide Face Covering Guidance today:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/guidance-for-face-coverings.aspx#>

This update came in light of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC’s) July 27 changes to their “Guidance for Fully Vaccinated People,” made in light of new evidence regarding the Delta Variant (B.1.617.2):

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>

The CDC is now recommending ALL individuals in areas of “substantial or high transmission” wear a face covering in, “Public indoor settings.” Lake County, with the highest Case Rate in the State of California, is clearly in the “High transmission” category, confirmed by this CDC tracking tool:

<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>

CDPH has extended the recommendation to mask indoors to ALL Californians, regardless of vaccination status, “To achieve universal masking in indoor public settings.” A Press Release issued this afternoon noted, “More than 90% of California’s population is currently in areas designated as substantial or high transmission.”

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPA/Pages/NR21-234.aspx>

Many will recall the Lake County Board of Supervisors likewise unanimously adopted a “Resolution Urging the Public to Continue to Wear Masks in Indoor Public Settings,” in Lake County:

<https://countyoflake.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=9629371&GUID=69C36050-B510-42D9-878D-0FC825193A37>

The CDC, CDPH and Lake County Board of Supervisors all stopped short of mandating masking for vaccinated individuals, except in limited circumstances (e.g.: public transit; indoor K-12 schools and other childcare settings; emergency shelters and formal cooling centers; all healthcare settings; correctional, detention and other congregate settings):

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Order-of-the-State-Public-Health-Officer-Unvaccinated-Workers-In-High-Risk-Settings.aspx>

However, Lake County’s Case Rate continues to trend upward (52/100,000 as of today, when removing the 7-day delay employed by State reporting). The Delta Variant is known to be present in Lake County, and reportedly carries 1,000 times the viral load of the “mother virus,” and has been described by CDC Director Rochelle Walensky as “hyper-transmissible,” and “one of the most infectious respiratory viruses we know of and that I have seen in my 20-year career.”

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.07.07.21260122v2.full?fbclid=IwAR13aiVCDmII9QLJzE0XzBorFMA3I7UKLD-1LWPqybLDCxcnnxQjdDNU0>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/07/22/walensky-pivotal-moment-delta-variant/>

Hospitalizations and case rates are increasing across the State. Lake County has been more affected than most localities.

It is highly sensible and strongly recommended for vaccinated and unvaccinated Lake County residents to follow recommendations to wear a mask when indoors with people outside of our immediate households. Each of us can do our part to protect immunocompromised individuals, for example, who “might be at increased risk for severe COVID,” even if they are vaccinated: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/covid-19-vaccines-us.html>

Increasing our vaccination percentage is Lake County’s best known defense against COVID, and the proliferation of variants that pose threats previously unseen for generations. Some new options for vaccination are described here: <http://www.lakecountyca.gov/Government/PressReleases/Testing072721.htm>

We cannot wait to take action. Please wear a mask today, particularly to support the health of those that may face greater health challenges than you do. Wash your hands. Maintain physical distancing. Do these things not merely out of obligation, but because we are a close-knit County that cares about helping each other out. Your personally choosing to tolerate minor inconveniences now may make all the difference for someone you know and love.

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