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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COVID-19 Update: Changes to California’s Indoor Mask Mandate are Coming

Unvaccinated Individuals to Remain Required to Wear Face Coverings in Indoor Public Settings

LAKE COUNTY, CA (February 11, 2022) – On February 7, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) announced modifications to State-mandated COVID-19 precautions, which had been enhanced this winter to slow the spread of the Omicron Variant. Effective Wednesday, February 16, the requirement for all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, to wear masks in all indoor public settings will be lifted. In their Press Release, CDPH noted, “Since California’s peak during the Omicron surge, the state has experienced a 65% decrease in case rates.”

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPA/Pages/NR22-027.aspx>

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

State Public Health officials continue to recommend indoor masking “when [COVID-19] risk may be high.” The current hospital census remained “over capacity” at the time of their announcement. Here is a State resource on effective masking:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Get-the-Most-out-of-Masking.aspx>

Additional requirements apply for Indoor (1,000 people) and Outdoor (10,000 people) “Mega Events.”

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Beyond-Blueprint-Framework.aspx>

Masking Will Still Be Required for Unvaccinated Individuals and In Certain High-Risk Settings

Lake County residents are advised, masking will still be required for:

- Unvaccinated individuals in all indoor public settings.
- All individuals in high risk settings, including
 - Public transit (*e.g., buses; airplanes; ride-shares*) and Transportation Hubs (*bus stations; airports, etc.*);
 - Indoors in K-12 schools and childcare settings;
 - Emergency shelters and cooling and heating centers;
 - Healthcare settings;
 - State and local correctional facilities and detention centers;
 - Homeless Shelters; and
 - Long-Term Care Settings and Adult and Senior Care Facilities.
- The Board of Supervisors will discuss masking in County facilities on Tuesday, 2/15

Workplaces will continue to be required to meet CalOSHA’s COVID-19 Prevention Standards:

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/coronavirus/COVID19FAQs.html>

More changes to Statewide and sector-specific Guidance are expected soon. CDPH Guidance documents are archived here:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Guidance.aspx>

How Does COVID-19 Risk in Lake County Compare to Other Areas of the State?

Lake County lagged broader Statewide trends in entering the Omicron Surge. While new cases are likewise trending downward here, our Case Rate remains higher than the Statewide rate. 125 Lake County residents have now died since the

pandemic began, and each loss has been a tragedy for those connected to the individual that passed away. As of Wednesday, February 9, testing positivity sat at 20.0%, more than double the 8.7% Statewide rate.

COVID-19 remains prevalent in Lake County's communities, and decreased masking in public settings will bring some increased general risk of transmission.

Lessening of statewide mandates is a sign of positive trends around the State. We ask that all Lake County residents remain sensitive to the fact COVID-19 still presents significant risk, particularly to the most medically vulnerable among us.

Continuing to voluntarily take common sense measures to reduce risk will be important as we work together to navigate this next phase. Thank you all for your tremendous sacrifices and efforts over the past two years. You have made, and continue to make, a difference.

Gary Pace, MD, MPH

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