

12/13/20

TESTIMONY ON NEW COVID EXECUTIVE ORDER:

I am writing regarding the recent executive order that would limit the number of people inside a building at an indoor youth sports event to 10. **Please keep ice rinks operating with the current safety precautions which is allowing safe operation and kids to have a safe place for recreation.** High school hockey is especially important to allow with the current restrictions because it provides the players with one of the few outlets they have for a competitive sport and recreational fun. This is critically important for their physical and mental well being.

I am asking you to please consider modifying the limit on the number of participants to allow at least this indoor sport to continue. While I understand the urgency to act in response to the worsening COVID environment in our County, and support many of the changes in the updated Executive Order, I believe shutting down indoor youth sports would do more harm to our community than good.

**Hockey has been operating since mid-summer under strict and effective health guidelines and restrictions. These protocols have been working.** While individual participants have been diagnosed with COVID there has been no evidence to my knowledge of community spread related to the operation of skating rinks or the playing of hockey. In the few instances where team members have been identified as testing positive for COVID the entire team is shut down for a minimum of two weeks, which has worked to prevent spread at rinks.

An alternative to the proposed restrictions would be to eliminate parents and spectators from attending games - only allow players, coaches, refs and the minimal number of adults needed to run the games safely. While the health threats from COVID are severe, so too are the impacts on our children from increasing isolation and lack of physical activity. The elimination of youth sports will have severe impacts on our children's mental and physical health, while providing little, if any, increased safety from the spread of COVID.

**Thank you for your attention and for all your work to keep County residents safe during this difficult year.**

Sincerely,

Kathy Wagner Hill