

**Public Hearing Notice on Board of Health Regulation to Reinstitute Indoor Masking Requirements if Montgomery County Becomes an Area of Substantial COVID-19 Transmission**

Dear Councilmembers,

First and foremost, thank you for your hard work and all your continued efforts to keep the County moving forward. I wanted to share my thoughts and opinions with regards to the possibility of reinstating indoor masking. I don't think this is something the County should mandate (though the County can mandate this in its own buildings as a 'Best Practice' that other businesses can follow).

Larger retailers are putting their own mandates in, and as long as they do that, they are choosing to enforce it. Smaller businesses that have to enforce this have a difficult time and it makes it look like the County is picking on them when they cited. Besides, can the County honestly and realistically enforce this? Are we going back to our businesses and putting the onus on them? Are we going to offer ALL our retail businesses grants to help them through this?

With all due respect, more than 70% of us have listened and gotten our shots. Mandating masking to protect those that are not interested in getting the shot is unfair. They know the risks they are taking; we can't be responsible for protecting themselves from themselves.

I have a 2 year old that will not wear a mask for various reasons, mostly because he is 2 years old and doesn't have siblings that are doing it. This past year has been horrible for his development, he has not been able to be around other children until this summer. Over the past month, he has been in camp with other 2 year olds and we see a huge improvement. We have to move forward and not back.

This virus is not going away, we have to learn to live with it. The vaccines have given us that hope, they have shown to work. Vaccinated people are still catching the virus, which we knew would happen, but they are able to fight this virus off without filling our hospitals, which is what we were told up front would be the case. How would reinstating masking help us as a whole? The transmission rates are irrelevant if vaccinated people are not the ones going to the hospitals and dying en masse.

Mandating indoor masking is a slap to the face to all the people who were on the fence to get the vaccine to begin with but got it to move forward. Living in fear is no way to live. We know the vaccine works, so let's not move backwards because of the actions of the minority. Lastly, the only thing that mandating masks indoors will do is pit vaccinated people against unvaccinated people. We don't need more division; we need to get back to being neighbors and working together.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jake Adler

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