

PHMDC: Extends face covering order amid high COVID hospitalization rates and concerns over new variant

Posted on Monday, Dec 20, 2021

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Public Health Madison & Dane County is issuing [Face Covering Emergency Order #6](#), effective at 12:01am on January 3, 2022, immediately after the current order expires. The Dane County Order requires face coverings among people ages two and older when in most enclosed spaces open to the public where other people are present. The order will expire on February 1, 2022.

“We saw the impact a more infectious variant of COVID-19 could have in our community when the Delta variant pushed case rates higher across the state and the country,” said Janel Heinrich, Director of Public Health Madison & Dane County. “As the state warns us of an Omicron surge that will overwhelm an already strained healthcare system, we must continue to equip ourselves in every way possible to slow the spread.”

The Midwest region of the US, including Wisconsin and Dane County, has experienced a surge in people testing positive for COVID. The number of people testing positive for COVID in Dane County has increased to an average of 255 people testing positive per day. Case averages in December 2021 are at the highest levels of 2021, along with the number of people hospitalized in Dane County hospitals with COVID. Dane County remains in CDC’s highest level of community transmission.

“As we ask you to continue masking-up indoors, I want to thank everyone for adhering to these guidelines,” said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. “Your actions

- masking and getting vaccinated - are helping to prevent greater illness and suffering. It's been a long haul for all of us, and I appreciate your efforts to help keep everyone safer."

For those who are fully vaccinated, do not delay getting your booster dose as soon as you can. You are eligible for a Pfizer and Moderna booster if you received your second dose at least six months ago and you are eligible for a Johnson & Johnson booster if you received your dose at least two months ago.

"The best strategy we have to tackle this virus includes creating layers of protection. First, get boosted or vaccinated, then wear a mask indoors, wash your hands, and keep your distance. The more layers the better," said Satya Rhodes-Conway, City of Madison Mayor.

The Order requires face coverings among people ages two and older when in most enclosed spaces open to the public where other people are present. Wearing multi-layered, [well-fitting masks](#) is especially important due to the easily transmissible Omicron variant. The order does include an exception if all individuals in an enclosed space are fully-vaccinated.

"There continues to be evidence that masks help prevent disease transmission," said Jerry Halverson, MD, Chair of the Board of Health. "With Delta and Omicron circulating, and our hospitals near capacity, it is important for all of us in the community to continue to take this easy action."

The Order will be in effect until February 1, 2022 at 12:01 a.m. View [Face Covering Emergency Order #6](#) for additional information.

For more information about the COVID-19 in Dane County visit publichealthmdc.com/coronavirus. You can also follow @publichealthmdc on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).