

**To:** All City and County Government Officials

**From:** Story County Board of Health

**Date:** August 3, 2020

**Subject:** Face Covering Resolution

The Story County Board of Health is asking all municipalities across Story County to adopt a face covering resolution. Current research strongly suggests that requiring face covering use in public places could be among the most powerful tools to stop the community spread of COVID-19.

Recent research has shown that:

- The majority of infections may be attributable to presymptomatic and asymptomatic, or “silent” transmission<sup>i</sup>
- Face coverings, including non-medical or cloth face masks and face shields, have been effective in reducing transmission of coronavirus by reducing transmission of infected droplets from the mouth and nose that spread the virus<sup>ii</sup>
- Consistent, widespread use of face coverings in public settings will dramatically lower community transmission of COVID-19<sup>iii</sup>
- Public mandates for use of face coverings appear to be highly effective at increasing compliance and slowing or stopping the spread of COVID-19<sup>iv</sup>

Many organizations or workplaces have already implemented policies requiring face coverings, but for these practices to work at a community level, EVERYONE needs to practice this measure. Areas where public health measures are not practiced are areas where the virus has a higher chance to infect others. If we can limit where those areas occur, we are reducing the risk of transmission in our community.

As local officials, your obligation is to act in the best interest of your constituents; in this case, that means saving lives. While we are not aware of a similar study specific to Story County, a recent state-wide survey found that 72% of Iowans believe that everyone should wear a mask/facial covering when out in public to reduce the transmission of COVID-19<sup>v</sup>. Across 24 relevant studies, most stakeholders found physical distancing and use of face masks and eye protection acceptable, feasible, and reassuring<sup>vi</sup>.

With schools and colleges planning to convene in the fall, the approach of flu season, and current lack of a vaccine or certain post-infection immunity, the time to act is now. Adoption of face covering resolutions should be put in place immediately to keep transmission low, prevent our hospitals from being overwhelmed, and protect our most vulnerable community members. We also ask business leaders who offer products and services to the public to require their employees and customers to wear masks whether or not it is required by local law. This vital step will help protect workers and customers.

Such requirements will greatly increase the rate of individuals wearing face coverings. This should be done in conjunction with, not as a replacement for, other mitigation practices, such as hand hygiene, physical distancing, and staying home when ill.

To aid in the development of a unified face covering resolution, and in the event that sub-delegation of authority to implement a mandate pursuant to Iowa Code 29C.6(8) as communicated from the Attorney General’s office, guidance has been provided (Appendix 1).

Sincerely,

Story County Board of Health

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<sup>i</sup> The implications of silent transmission for the control of COVID-19 outbreaks. Seyed M. Moghadas, Meagan C. Fitzpatrick, Pratha Sah, Abhishek Pandey, Affan Shoukat, Burton H. Singer, Alison P. Galvani. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* Jul 2020, 117 (30) 17513-17515; DOI: 10.1073/pnas.2008373117

<sup>ii</sup> Konda A, Prakash A, Moss GA, Schmoldt M, Grant GD, Guha S. Aerosol Filtration Efficiency of Common Fabrics Used in Respiratory Cloth Masks [published correction appears in *ACS Nano*. 2020 Jun 18;:]. *ACS Nano*. 2020;14(5):6339-6347. doi:10.1021/acsnano.0c03252

<sup>iii</sup> Physical distancing, face masks, and eye protection to prevent person-to-person transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis. Chu, Derek KChu, Derek K et al. *The Lancet*, Volume 395, Issue 10242, 1973 – 1987.

<sup>iv</sup> Community Use Of Face Masks And COVID-19: Evidence From A Natural Experiment Of State Mandates In The US. Lyu, Wei and Wehby, George. *Health Affairs*, 9, No. 8 (2020): 1–7. doi: 10.1377/hlthaff.2020.00818

<sup>v</sup> COVID-19 Wave 3 Re-Opening and Economic Recovery Summary Report. SPPG + Essman Research. *Business Record*, Jul 14, 2020. Available at: [https://134eae71-4677-40e5-ac23-f71ac6d099e6.filesusr.com/ugd/1b1b6d\\_7bbd46cc7e2a4d149602bbc91bd65e6d.pdf](https://134eae71-4677-40e5-ac23-f71ac6d099e6.filesusr.com/ugd/1b1b6d_7bbd46cc7e2a4d149602bbc91bd65e6d.pdf)

<sup>vi</sup> Physical distancing, face masks, and eye protection to prevent person-to-person transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis. Chu, Derek KChu, Derek K et al. *The Lancet*, Volume 395, Issue 10242, 1973 – 1987.

## **Appendix 1: Face Covering Resolution Guidance for Local Government Officials**

People must wear a face covering when:

- In public as opposed to being in one's place of residence, when one cannot stay six (6) feet away from others
- Inside of any indoor public settings, for example, but not limited to:
  - Grocery, retail, and hardware stores
  - Bars and restaurants
  - Fitness centers
  - Pharmacies
  - Other public settings that are not one's place of residence and when you are with persons who do not live in the household
- Outside, if keeping six (6) feet away from others is not possible
- Using public transportation or private car service (including taxis, ride share, or carpooling)

Those who are exempt from wearing a face covering:

- Persons younger than 2 years old due to the risk of suffocation
- Anyone who has trouble breathing, or is on oxygen therapy or a ventilator
- Anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove their face covering without assistance
- Anyone who has been told by a medical, legal, or behavioral health professional not to wear face coverings

Places and times where persons are exempt from wearing a face covering:

- While traveling in a vehicle alone or with household members
- While a person is alone or in the presence of only household members
- While exercising at moderate or high intensity e.g. jogging or biking
- While seated at a food establishment in the process of eating or drinking
- While obtaining a service that would require temporary removal of the person's face covering
- When federal or state law prohibits wearing a face covering or requires the removal of the face covering

Appropriate use of a face covering, including cloth face coverings and face shields, includes:

- A snug fit, but comfortable against the side of the face
- Completely covers the nose and mouth
- Is secured with ties or ear loops
- Allows for breathing without restriction
- Can be cleaned and disinfected or laundered and dried without damage or change to shape

For more information about cloth face coverings and appropriate use, visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>