



**CABARRUS
HEALTH
ALLIANCE**

Cabarrus Health Alliance
Dr. Bonnie Coyle, MD, Health Director
300 Mooresville Rd. | Kannapolis, NC 28081

For Immediate Release: August 26, 2021

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PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY: FACE COVERINGS AND MASKS

The Cabarrus Health Alliance (CHA) is issuing a Public Health Advisory to all residents and visitors, regardless of vaccination status, to wear masks indoors (and not in your own home) or in crowded outdoor areas where social distancing is not possible.

The Delta variant is more than two times as transmissible as the original strains of COVID-19 and is causing large, rapid increases in infections. Cabarrus County has experienced a 200% increase of new COVID-19 cases in the last 2 weeks, and is averaging 800 new cases per week. The percent of positivity has spiked drastically from 2.4% to 14.2% in two months.

“Our community and our health care system cannot sustain the rapid rise in cases,” said Dr. Bonnie Coyle, CHA Public Health Director. “Vaccines are still the best protection against COVID-19, but masks also play a part in controlling the spread, along with washing our hands, social distancing and proper cleaning of public spaces. But to truly see case counts and hospitalizations decrease, we need the support of our community and partners to individually or institutionally implement these masking recommendations.”

According to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS), while the original virus spread from one person to an average of two or three people, the Delta variant is spreading from one person to an average of six people. Since June 2021, the Atrium Health region has experienced an 800% increase in hospitalizations placing Atrium Health Cabarrus in a similar situation to many hospitals in the region, where available bed space is extremely limited. As of this week, 30% of current Atrium Health admissions are for COVID related illness.

Cabarrus Health Alliance and Atrium Health leadership anticipate an even more drastic spike in two weeks due to relaxed efforts to prevent the spread (masking, social distancing) of a more infectious variant, combined with children returning to school and gatherings associated with upcoming Labor Day holiday and major sporting events.

To ensure masks are as protective as possible, NCDHHS recommends that you:

- Make sure your mask fits snugly against your face and covers your nose and mouth. To help with a snug fit, you can use a mask with a metal strip along the top of the mask.
- Use two or more layers for your face covering. You can do this by wearing a cloth face covering with two or more layers or by wearing one disposable mask (sometimes referred to as a surgical mask or a medical procedure mask) underneath a cloth mask.
- Do not wear two disposable masks.
- Make sure you can see and breathe easily.

To prevent getting or spreading COVID-19

- Get the vaccine. This is the most effective protection against COVID-19.
- Wear a face covering, when indoors or in places where social distancing is not possible.
- Wash your hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze.
- Avoid close contact with individuals who are or maybe sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Get tested if you are a close contact and are experiencing symptoms.
- Avoid touching your nose, eyes and mouth.
- Clear and disinfect commonly touched spaces.

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Media Opportunity

When: Thursday, August 26, 2021 at 1:00pm

Where: Cabarrus Health Alliance, 300 Mooresville Rd. Kannapolis, NC 28081

Who: Dr. Bonnie Coyle, Cabarrus Health Alliance Public Health Director

Please contact Marcella Beam if you plan to attend the Media Opportunity with Dr. Bonnie Coyle.