

# CITY OF OAKLAND



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#LoveLife

REBECCA KAPLAN  
Vice Mayor  
District At Large

DAN KALB  
Council Member  
District 1

Date: December 15, 2022  
To: Members of City Council and Members of the Public  
From: Vice Mayor Kaplan & Councilmember Kalb  
Re: **Masking in City Facilities**

Dear Colleagues on the City Council and Members of the Public,

COVID-19, Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), and Influenza are spreading among adults and children this winter season, and infection rates are projected to increase in the coming months. This early wave of respiratory viruses has led to increased hospitalizations and has contributed to stresses in our healthcare delivery systems in California and across the US. This resolution would require everyone who enters City facilities to wear masks in order to stem the spread of these respiratory illnesses, and ensure equitable access to necessary City services for all Oaklanders.

RSV is a common respiratory virus that usually causes cold-like symptoms, but may cause severe disease in infants and older adults. Emergency Department visits for children aged 0–4-years old are already the highest they have been throughout the pandemic due to RSV, impacting both pediatric hospitals and pediatric intensive care unit bed availability. Similarly, hospitalizations for the flu are above the 2021–2022 peak in Northern and Southern California. Finally, COVID-19 activity is rising, as noted by increases in wastewater surveillance and recent increases in case rate positivity. Due to rising levels of COVID-19, on December 8th, 2022, health officials [announced](#) that Alameda County moved from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC’s) “Low” COVID-19 Community Level to “Medium”, requiring universal masking at homeless shelters, emergency shelters, and cooling and heating centers. Furthermore, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has identified the existence of highly contagious variants of the COVID-19 virus and has indicated that additional variants of high consequence are to be expected.

Masks are a vital tool to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses. Wearing masks in public facilities is both a matter of public health and equitable access to public services. There is no vaccine for RSV infection, so wearing a mask can slow the spread and protect the most vulnerable. There are millions of people for whom unmasking is dangerous, including those who cannot be vaccinated, individuals who are immunocompromised, and people with various disabilities and “pre-existing conditions.”

Allowing individuals to enter City facilities unmasked puts people for whom unmasking is dangerous at severe risk, and hinders them from accessing needed services the City provides. Therefore, this resolution would require all who enter City facilities to wear masks, and for the City to provide quality masks - KN-95, N-95, and KF-94 to individuals who enter and do not have a mask.

Thank you for your consideration, and we urge your support for this important resolution.

City Council  
December 20, 2022  
File # 22-1008