SANTA BARBARA COUNTY EXTENDS HEALTH OFFICER ORDER REQUIRING USE OF FACE COVERINGS INDOORS TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

Indoor Masking Mandate Will Continue

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) – The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department has extended the Health Officer Order which requires the use of masks in indoor public settings. This order requires all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, to wear face coverings when indoors in public settings, with limited exceptions. This Order 2021-10.8 is effective at 5 p.m., on January 2, 2022 and continuing until 5 p.m., on February 1, 2022 or until it is extended, rescinded, superseded, or amended.

As of December 20, 2021, the COVID-19 community transmission level is categorized as “High” in California and Santa Barbara County by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). As of December 25, 2021, the County has a case rate of 33.5 per 100,000 and a test positivity of 9.5%. The CDC continues to recommend fully vaccinated individuals wear a face covering in public indoor settings in areas with Substantial or High community transmission rates.

An update to the previous framework has been outlined by local health officials to consider rescinding the indoor mask mandate. The county case rate should be 7.0 cases per 100,000 people or lower for three consecutive weeks. In addition to this, hospitalizations should be low and stable for at least 3 days. Local health officials will consider these metrics, along with any other relevant factors, including the spread of new variants.

“We are heading into the winter season facing a very different virus compared to last year. Already Omicron makes up over 60% of new infections in Santa Barbara County.” shared Dr. Henning Ansorg, County Health Officer. “We need a layered approach of protective measures to reduce transmission and severe illness. In addition to vaccination including the booster, wearing a well-fitted mask in public indoor spaces does give additional protection to the wearer and limits transmission of COVID to others. We are asking everyone to help reduce unnecessary illness and suffering by following this health order”

Additionally, CDPH updated requirements for attending mega events, like concerts and sporting events. Prior to attending an event, attendees will now require either proof of vaccination, a negative antigen COVID-19 test within one day of the event, or a negative PCR test within two days of the event.

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This Health Officer Order is consistent with the guidance from the CDC as well as the California Department of Public Health who issued a mask mandate per state Health Officer Order, which recommends that fully vaccinated people wear masks while in indoor public settings. The full Health Officer Order can be read here: https://publichealthsbc.org/health-officer-orders/.

Visit https://publichealthsbc.org/vaccine to learn where you can find a vaccination site near you or call 2-1-1.

-Stay Connected:
County Public Health: www.PublicHealthSBC.org, Twitter and Facebook
County of Santa Barbara: www.CountyofSB.org, Twitter, Facebook
2-1-1 Call Center: Dial 211 if calling from within the county; or call (800) 400-1572 if calling from outside the area.