



Administration | MC250
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helendevoschildrens.org

August 19, 2021

Dear Dr. London,

As the school year approaches and news of the delta variant and COVID-19 outbreaks in other parts of the country spreads, we are consistently hearing questions from patients, parents, coworkers, neighbors, friends and community members about wearing masks and vaccinations. The evidence is very clear on vaccinations, they dramatically lower a person's risk of serious illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19.

I want to share with you Spectrum Health's position on masks. It's simple and applies to all ages and everywhere in the community: Spectrum Health is supportive of the CDC guidance on universal masking indoors in areas of substantial and high transmission to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. The CDC guidance includes students and staff in K-12 schools. Unfortunately, at this point, within our state, almost every county has substantial or high transmission of COVID-19.

When it comes to kids and schools, we can all agree that keeping kids safe while allowing them to thrive and learn in school is vitally important. To assure the greatest chance for in-person learning, universal masking is one of the best ways to prevent outbreaks and keep schools open and operational. We are fortunate to have vaccines available to older students, along with teachers and staff this academic year. However, not all students are eligible for a vaccine and emerging data shows that transmission with the delta variant can still occur amongst the vaccinated.

COVID-19 continues to produce suffering, disability and death within our communities. Given transmission within our state and the fact that the delta variant is so much more contagious than prior variants of COVID-19, vaccinations, masking and other preventative measures remain critical to prevent serious illness and to keep our kids in school. None of this is easy, but let's do all we can to keep our kids safe.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hossain Marandi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long horizontal stroke.

Hossain Marandi, MD, MBA, FACHE

President & Children's Health Department Chief

Helen DeVos Children's Hospital



9/10/2021

Dear Community Leaders,

We the following medical physicians, providers and executives of Spectrum Health Gerber Memorial are reaching out to offer our support and guidance in the ongoing fight against the Covid 19 pandemic. As the clinicians and executives who live and work here, we continue to see firsthand the pain and loss that this virus has had on our community. In addition, we are facing other challenges with this most recent surge of Covid 19 including high-capacity constraints and a healthcare workforce shortage. These factors are creating an unprecedented threat on the safety nets of our community – especially in our rural areas and especially for our children. We want to assure you that our dedication to see our community through these hardships is steadfast and that our guidance in doing so is based on the standard of care set by the highest experts in medicine. We especially stand with the American Academy of Pediatrics guidance for creating a safe environment for in-person learning for our youth.

Together, we call on you and plead with you, our partners in community leadership to stand with us in promoting and enacting on the guidance of medical experts to use an evidenced based layered approach to protect our community.

Please also find attached a letter that represents the viewpoint of Spectrum Health written by Dr. Hossain Marandi, the President & Children's Health Department Chief of Helen DeVos Children's Hospital. We feel that it captures our sentiments well and supports our plea to use the available resources we have to ensure the safety of our community as well as our recommendation to have universal masking required for indoor areas where transmission is substantial or high.

Best Regards,

Spectrum Health Gerber Memorial Hospital Providers:

Meredith Sprince, MD, Chief of Staff

Jeremy Kuiper, MD, Vice Chief of Staff

Melissa Bayne, DO, Secretary/Treasurer; MS Chair Ob/Gyn

Michael DeWeerd MD, Medical Executive Committee Member at Large

Jordan Sall, DO, Past Chief of Staff

David Hoffelder, MD, Emergency Medicine Services Chair

Rebecca Collaer MD, Pediatric Services Chair

Erich Schafer, MD, Surgery Services Chair



September 13, 2021

Across Mercy Health hospitals and physician offices, every day we are confronted with the frustrating reality that this pandemic is not over. Our colleagues are exhausted and worried. We're worried about the patients in our care. We're worried for our children returning to school and our immunocompromised friends and family members.

We see that worry magnified in our communities — parents unsure of how to best protect their children, adults navigating a return to in-person work, pregnant women wanting to do what's best for their babies. Many are questioning what to do to put an end to the worry.

For those of us in the medical community, the answer is clear: Get the vaccine and follow masking guidelines.

Vaccination is the single greatest tool we have to safeguard our personal health, protect those we love and bring our community out of the pandemic. That is why Mercy Health is encouraging everyone who is eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

Similarly, scientific data shows that masking is an effective tool to slow the spread of COVID-19 and protect those who are not eligible for the vaccine. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), all staff and students who are two years or older are recommended to wear face masks unless medical or developmental conditions prohibit their use. We support the recommendation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) for universal masking for all educators, staff, students and visitors to schools, regardless of vaccination status.

The medical community has been working tirelessly for more than 18 months to stop this deadly, global pandemic. And with the arrival of the COVID-19 vaccine and continuation of masking guidelines, the responsibility to end this has shifted from medical experts alone to the population at large.

We urge every business owner, education leader and Michigan resident to stand with the medical community in support of the vaccine and masking. To not do so is to shirk our collective responsibility and is disheartening to medical professionals who know that the science behind these guidelines is not a matter of opinion but an indisputable fact.

Stand with us.

Sincerely,

Gary Allore

President
Mercy Health Muskegon

Matthew Biersack, MD

President and Chief Medical Officer
Mercy Health Saint Mary's

Kristen Woods, MD

President
Mercy Health Physician Partners