



Date: July 18, 2020

To: City Council, City of Calgary

From: Dr. Jim Kellner, Professor of Paediatrics, for the University of Calgary COVID-19 Analytics & Strategy Group*

Re: July 20, 2020 City Council Meeting Agenda Item 12.2.1 Mandatory Face Coverings, C2020-0845

The issue of face coverings in the community is a complex subject, with limited, evolving, and at times conflicting scientific evidence to guide individual decision making and public policy. We have considered recent local and international documents summarizing evidence and recommendations including: [Mask use in community rapid review - Alberta Health Services](#) (Recommendations, page 4); and [WHO Advice on the use of masks in the context of COVID-19](#) (Recommendations, page 7). The comments that follow do not pertain to health care settings where continuous mask wearing in clinical care settings must remain mandatory for the foreseeable future.

The recommendations are made with the following assumptions:

- The effectiveness and comprehensiveness of COVID-19 testing & contact tracing in Alberta will remain very high.
- As provincial restrictions have eased on household or cohort family size, as well as on the size of indoor and outdoor gatherings, the continued recommendations for physical distancing are not always being rigorously adhered to.
- Consistent public messaging is necessary to prevent confusion and lack of compliance ([Royal Society re: Face Masks](#)).

Recommendations

- 1. Medical masks or other face coverings should be strongly encouraged or mandated in settings where physical distancing cannot be maintained including:**
 - Public transportation e.g., buses, trains, airplanes
 - Commercial, social and faith settings e.g., grocery stores, indoor malls, restaurants, places of worship
 - Gatherings of vulnerable populations e.g., elderly persons, and those with underlying health conditions
- 2. Masks are not needed and should not be mandated:**
 - Outdoors - unless there is sustained crowding or very close contact with non-household or cohort persons
 - In public spaces where physical distancing can be assured e.g., well ventilated single office room
- 3. Enforcement of mandatory or recommended mask wearing as well as public messaging to promote mask wearing must be sensitive to the possibility of vigilantism or stigmatization.** Ideally, such messaging would promote mask-wearing as one component of a multi-pronged strategy that includes hand hygiene, physical distancing, and monitoring for symptoms.
- 4. Timely changes to make policies or bylaws more or less restrictive related to mask wearing must be informed by continued careful monitoring of the level of COVID-19 infections in Calgary and Alberta:**
 - [Alberta threshold of at least 10 active cases and >50 active cases/100,000 population in a region](#)
 - Trends in other measures of health impact e.g., [hospitalizations, ICU admissions, deaths](#) (Data tab)

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