

Masks4Canada

July 28, 2020

Dear Dr. Bonnie Henry, Hon. Adrian Dix and Hon. John Horgan,

Thank you for your ongoing work and commitment during the COVID-19 pandemic. We write to you today, as health care professionals in British Columbia, to express our support for mandatory mask wearing (or use of face coverings). In addition we support the implementation of a public education initiative on the benefits of mask wearing and its proper usage in limiting the spread of COVID-19.

Our opinion is based on recent studies showing that the use of masks provides source control and may provide recipient protection ([Review1](#) [Review2](#)). Furthermore, there is no evidence of harm from use of masks. If a 60-80% public usage of masks can be achieved, we can significantly reduce the basic reproductive number (R0) ([Reference1](#) [Reference 2](#)).

The reopening of B.C.'s economy will inevitably cause an increased risk of community spread. With this in mind, a recent poll shows that 75% of B.C. residents support a mandatory mask policy in public places ([Reference 3](#)). Also noteworthy is the poll result that shows 86% of Canadians believe wearing a face covering/protective mask on public transit should be mandatory ([Reference 4](#)). Mandating mask wearing is important because previous public health interventions, such as seat belts and bicycle helmets, have required laws for increased compliance by the public.

Specifically, we recommend mandatory masking (or face covering) policies in “ACT” :

- **A**ll indoor spaces outside the home (such as hospitals, schools, shops, and businesses)
- **C**rowds (anywhere that is difficult to distance from others)
- **T**ransit (public transportation)

We recommend that persons with medical contraindications and/or disabilities, and young children be exempt from this policy. We recommend distribution of masks to populations that may be vulnerable and/or at higher risk in order to reduce inequity. We do not recommend penalties to enforce the policy. Rather, we encourage education to help the public understand how to wear a mask properly, and the importance of masks for health and economic recovery.

We believe it should be at the discretion of provincial jurisdictions as to whether mandatory masking is implemented, but in locations of high population density and/or where community spread is ongoing, it should be mandated. There may also be a role in regions where there is no community spread in order to prevent new introduction of the virus.

British Columbians have sacrificed so much to flatten the curve, and we have been successful. We are now at an important juncture in our efforts to again take control of the spread of COVID-19. Mask wearing in addition to current physical distancing measures and hand hygiene can assist in the safe reopening of public life and can prevent additional outbreaks. An immediate implementation of mandated mask policies will help protect British Columbians. We ask that you not let our sacrifices go to waste.

We would like to assist you with this discussion in any way possible. Thank you for your valuable time.

My mask protects you, your mask protects me, we all protect society.

Signed by the following BC Physicians and Dentists:

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