![Public Health Madison & Dane County — Healthy people. Healthy places.]

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Sarah Mattes
 (608) 216-3202
communications@publichealthmdc.com

Public Health Madison & Dane County Releases New Orders Requiring Face Coverings

Effective on Monday, July 13, 2020 at 8:00 am, Public Health Madison & Dane County is issuing Emergency Order #8, which requires that everyone age 5 and older wear a face covering or mask when in in any enclosed building where other people, except for members of the person's own household or living unit, could be present. This requirement applies to all of Dane County.

"Public health research now shows that face coverings are critical to slowing the spread of COVID-19. Given the current number of COVID-19 infections in our county, we need to all be wearing face coverings every time we leave the house," said Janel Heinrich, Director of Public Health Madison & Dane County.

"However, we do not take these orders lightly. We are facing two public health pandemics—COVID-19 and racism. People of color in our county have already experienced racism and discrimination when wearing masks in public, which is unacceptable. It is on every person in our county to do better. People should assume that everyone wearing a mask is doing it to protect you and themselves. If someone is not wearing a mask, assume they are genuinely not able to do so," continued Heinrich.

Per the order, people must wear a face covering that covers their nose and mouth when in public, which includes in businesses, health care settings, waiting in line, and on public transportation. The order also requires individuals to wear face coverings when in someone else's home. Exceptions are made for certain activities such as eating at a restaurant, but during those activities, 6 feet distancing of individuals not from the same household or living unit is required at all times. Some people are also exempted if they have a physical, mental, or developmental condition that prevents them from wearing a mask.

"Masks and distance are really the two most effective means of slowing the spread of COVID-19," County Executive Joe Parisi said. "Given the recent rapid increases in cases in our county—that happened even before school and university classes resume this fall—it's imperative we take this step now to try and slow the march of COVID through our community. Nothing that's happening right now is easy, or normal, but it's what we must do – come together as a community and put everything we have into keeping one another safe," Parisi added.

If someone can't wear a mask in a business due to a condition or disability, people should ask that business for reasonable accommodation, like a curbside pickup or delivery option. Children ages 2 through 4 are highly encouraged to wear masks in public, children 5 and older are required to wear masks. If your child is not able

to wear a mask, only bring them to places where it is necessary they be so that your child does not get or spread COVID-19 to others.

"Science keeps informing our response to this virus. The recent spike in cases showed that asymptomatic cases were on the rise in Dane County and so was community spread with no known source of infection. If people are sick and don't know it, mandatory masking protects all of us," said Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway.

People can cover their faces a variety of ways to comply with this order. Simply wear a bandana or scarf around your nose and mouth, or create a cloth face covering by either sewing one or using the no-sew method on the CDC website. Medical-grade surgical masks or N95 respirators are not required or necessary.

County government is working to not only provide cloth masks to those in need but also is teaming with community partners to ensure everyone knows of the importance of wearing a mask. More information on how to obtain free masks will be available on the Dane County website soon.

You can read the full order on Public Health Madison & Dane County's website.

In addition to wearing a mask, these actions will help protect yourself and others from COVID-19:

- **Stay home if you're sick or feel off.** A number of new cases reported going out while symptomatic.
- **Stay home if you don't need to go out.** Working from home, virtual gatherings, and using curbside or delivery ordering are still the safest and best options to protect yourself and others.
- **Stay 6 feet from other people.** Respiratory droplets are in the air when other people cough, sneeze, talk, and breathe. Staying 6 feet from others will lower the chances of you coming in contact with the virus from those droplets.
- **Assume you have come in contact with COVID-19 if you go out**. Currently, just over a third of cases didn't know where they could've gotten COVID-19. Watch for symptoms like fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. If you have these symptoms, call your doctor to be tested or visit the community test site. If you are a UW–Madison student, you may also contact University Health Services.

For more information on COVID-19 and how to reduce your risk, visit our website.