

December 2, 2021

Executive Office of Governor Phil Scott
109 State Street, Pavilion
Montpelier, VT 05609

Dear Governor Scott,

As the governor and advisory council of the Vermont Chapter of the American College of Physicians (ACP), representing more than 400 internal medicine physician specialists and medical students in our state, we are writing on behalf of our chapter to urge you to use evidence-based measures such as wearing masks to prevent and contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Our chapter is part of ACP, which nationally represents 161,000 internal medicine physician specialists and medical student members. Our members are primary care and hospital-based physicians who confront COVID-19 daily and who provide care to millions of Americans with ongoing health care needs unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are deeply concerned about the rising tide of COVID-19 cases and COVID-19 related hospitalizations in the state. There is an urgency to undertake effective measures to limit the spread of the disease. The universal indoor use of personal face masks that cover the mouth and nose is one of many measures necessary for achieving epidemic control. Adoption of indoor masking on a state level, when combined with other infection control measures (access to rapid testing, staying home when ill, and staying home for 10 days if known to be COVID-19 positive regardless of symptoms), can reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

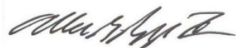
As internal medicine physicians, we see the devastating toll COVID-19 has taken on our patients and their families, all of which could be mitigated if public health measures are put in place to limit the spread of this disease. Specifically, we urge you to implement the following recommendations as part of a comprehensive public health strategy to stem the spread of the disease:

- Require indoor masking in public facilities such as work, schools, manufacturing and retail establishments, public transportation, and in other settings at high risk of COVID-19 transmission. Indoor masking requirements can be linked to county-level transmission data.
- Adequately and appropriately enforce indoor mask requirements in a manner that does not negatively impact access to care and other health equity measures.
- Subsidize or directly provide face masks to the public.
- Increase access to rapid testing.

- Provide clear communications to Vermonters about the risks of highly contagious variants such as Delta and Omicron, the need for infection mitigation measures in public facilities and informal gatherings, and the importance of indoor masking and prompt testing for anyone with symptoms.

We are counting on your support to take the necessary action to protect the health and welfare of Vermonters. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Allen B. Repp, MD, MSc, FACP, SFHM

Governor, Vermont Chapter of the American College of Physicians

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