

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

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December 14, 2021

TO: REGIONAL CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: UNIVERSAL INDOOR MASK MANDATE AND BOOSTER UPDATE

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has issued new public health guidance which can be found online [here](#). The order requires all individuals to wear a mask in indoor public settings, effective December 15, 2021 through January 15, 2022, regardless of an individual's vaccination status.

In workplaces, employers continue to be subject to the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 [Emergency Temporary Standards \(ETS\)](#) or in some workplaces the [Cal/OSHA Aerosol Transmissible Diseases \(ATD\) Standard](#) and should consult those regulations for additional applicable requirements.

The following individuals are exempt from wearing masks at all times:

- Persons younger than two years old. Very young children must not wear a mask because of the risk of suffocation.
- Persons with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents wearing a mask. This includes persons with a medical condition for whom wearing a mask could obstruct breathing or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a mask without assistance.
- Persons who are hearing impaired, or communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.
- Persons for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to the person related to their work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.

The approval of vaccines and other medicines for COVID-19 also continues to evolve. On December 10, 2021, CDPH [advised](#) that booster shots of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine are allowed and recommended for persons ages 16 and 17, in addition to previous authorization for boosters of all brands for all persons age 18 and over. Boosters of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for individuals ages 16 and 17 are recommended at least six months after original vaccination with either the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine, or at least two months after original vaccination with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

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As a reminder, actions which can be taken by everyone to help slow the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory ailments include:

1. **Get Vaccinated:** All COVID-19 vaccines currently available in California are safe and effective at preventing serious illness from COVID-19. Vaccination will protect you, caregivers, facility staff, persons in care and loved ones. Everyone age five and older is eligible for vaccination. Additionally, people age 16 and over who are at least six months after their last doses of Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna, or at least two months since their single-dose of Johnson & Johnson, are eligible for a booster shot. Booster shots are critical, as they significantly restore the antibody levels (protection) that have declined since the original vaccination.
2. **Wear Masks:** Until January 15, 2022, universal masking indoors in public settings is **required** statewide. The latest COVID-19 guidance and masking requirements for all counties can be found at [COVID19.ca.gov](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Masking-Requirements.aspx). People must follow the specific masking guidance for their local area and workplace.
3. **Get Tested:** Everyone should get tested immediately for COVID-19 if they are feeling any symptoms, regardless of their vaccination status. COVID-19 symptoms can feel like a common cold, seasonal allergies, or flu. [COVID-19 testing](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Testing.aspx) in California is free to anyone who needs it.
4. **Stay Home if Sick:** Everyone should [stay home](#) if they are feeling sick.

We will continue to keep you updated as additional information becomes available about COVID-19, vaccines, booster shots, and other public health guidance.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by:

PETE CERVINKA
Chief, Data Analytics and Strategy

cc: Regional Center Board Presidents
Regional Center Administrators
Regional Center Directors of Consumer Services
Regional Center Community Services Directors
Association of Regional Center Agencies