From: Keeley Sheehan
To: Eggers, Dave
Subject: Continue the Pinellas County mask mandate
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2020 4:17:34 PM

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Dear Mr. Eggers,

I am writing in support of continuing the mask mandate in Pinellas County, because it is essential in protecting our citizens at this critical time.

Dr. Angus Jameson, the medical director for Pinellas County Emergency Medical Services, described the COVID-19 as an unpredictable new disease that medical experts are still studying. Although disease rates are lower than they were at the peak of the pandemic, the epidemic is far from over. Consider the following:

1. The drop in local disease and death rates are because we are wearing masks; wherever there are no masks (North Dakota/South Dakota, for example) the highest increases have been observed.
2. If we stop wearing masks the risk of increased disease and death will rise again, as we have seen in other parts of the world, requiring repeated shut downs.
3. We have just begun to re-open and re-enter bars – we risk inviting the virus to spread more freely by encouraging more interaction without masks.
4. Hillsborough County continues with a mask ordinance. In a regional economy with many people commuting between counties we need consistent mask mandates. Committing to stopping this deadly virus is the surest path to full economic recovery.
5. We are a tourist economy – people will be coming here from all over the country and world. Adherence to the mask mandate will reduce the likelihood of disease transmission brought from areas experiencing a resurgence of cases.
6. The highest infection and mortality rates are among people of color, the elderly and essential service workers. These disproportionately harmed groups need us to wear masks to protect their health and their lives.
7. Wearing a mask is inconvenient, but they are the best way to stop this disease and get our economy working again. There are many precedents for rules that protect public health, such as anti-smoking laws. Mask ordinances a life-saving policy tool.

Thank you for your time,

Keeley LaForme
Pinellas County resident