



BOARD OF HEALTH

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

February 10, 2022

As a result of the alarming rise in COVID-19 positive cases, positivity rates, hospitalizations, and deaths due to the highly transmissible Omicron variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the Essex Board of Health on December 27, 2021 issued an Order requiring face masks in all indoor public spaces to help control the spread of the disease. Now, as a result of the fact that our neighboring communities have achieved such high vaccination rates, combined with the dramatic decrease in recent statewide wastewater treatment system virus counts, positive cases, positivity rates, and hospitalizations, the Board voted to end that mask Order on this date.

We thank our residents for their diligent efforts to get fully vaccinated and for getting their booster shots. Essex has attained a town-wide average of 78% of its residents fully vaccinated and over 80% of our seniors receiving booster shots. Congratulations!

Although we have rescinded the mask mandate, we continue to strongly encourage – especially for our seniors and immunocompromised residents – the wearing of masks in indoor public spaces. We recognize that some of our residents are at higher risk of serious health issues from COVID-19, and it is important for all of us to do our part to protect our most vulnerable residents.

We also encourage the use of COVID-19 testing, including rapid testing, whenever residents have any symptoms, or are planning a visit with vulnerable persons. Tests are available for free from the federal government at <https://www.covidtests.gov/>, and are eligible for reimbursement from your insurance company, up to 8 tests per person, per month.

Unfortunately, vaccinations alone will not keep infections at a low level. Voluntary, appropriate masking and testing remain powerful tools in helping to control and prevent spread of coronavirus. We appreciate your continued cooperation in caring for each other during this unprecedented time.

Thank you,
Essex Board of Health