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COOK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH STATEMENT ON COVID MANDATES

The Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) anticipates that if key metrics continue to improve through February, the CCDPH vaccination and masking order for suburban Cook County (minus Evanston, Skokie, Oak Park and Stickney Township) can be lifted consistent with the Governor's time frame. School masking may continue to be required for all school staff, and for all students not named in the current suit.

The metrics we are monitoring include:

- Sustained improvement in hospital and ICU bed availability with decreased admissions for COVID
- Decreased case rates to a moderate level per CDC criteria (10-49.99 cases/100,000 population) for a sustained period
- Decreased case positivity rate to a moderate level per CDC criteria (5-7.99%) for a sustained period

CCDPH will continue to monitor daily all measures that will be considered in the department's decision-making process. Not all metrics need to be at target to modify the current mitigations, but substantial progress must be observed. Until that time, we continue to call for universal masking in indoor public places as part of a layered strategy required to control the spread of the virus.

Whether a mandate is in effect or not, we must remember that masks work to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Wearing a mask around others indoors helps protect yourself and those around you, which is especially important for people who are immunocompromised, who are at-risk for complications from COVID, or who are unvaccinated by choice or because they are too young.