



**Monroe County Health Department**  
**Monroe County, Indiana**

Health Department	Futures Family Planning Clinic	Public Health Clinic
119 W. 7th Street (812) 349-2543	119 W. 7th Street (812) 349-7343	333 E. Miller Drive (812) 353-3244

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT: Penny Caudill**  
**812-349-2068**  
[pcaudill@co.monroe.in.us](mailto:pcaudill@co.monroe.in.us)

**BOARD OF HEALTH RESCINDS MASK REGULATION**

**Bloomington:** The Monroe County Board of Health voted to rescind the Health Order requiring face coverings in indoor public spaces at their meeting 3/3/22 effective at 11:59 p.m. that evening.

Carol Touloukian, M.D., Board Chairperson, said the Board is pleased to share that the goal of less than 50 cases per 100,000 was met this week. While every metric in the regulation was not met, the transmission and positivity rates are low enough to meet Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) previous and new metrics for low to medium levels.

She added that masks being optional does not equal masks are no longer needed. People at high risk or with family who are high risk and those who are unvaccinated should seriously consider wearing a mask when in indoor public spaces, particularly when unable to socially distance.

According to the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) coronavirus dashboard, Monroe County has 43 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 residents with a positivity rate of 5.8% for this week, as compared to 175 and 10.1% last week.

"We are very pleased at our progress," says Dr. Thomas Sharp, Monroe County Health Officer. "However, this does not mean that face coverings are no longer needed. Masks remain a priority public health tool to mitigate disease."

The CDC released new COVID-19 metrics on last Friday that recommends people living in areas with high community levels of COVID-19 wear face coverings when in indoor public spaces and advises people at high risk living in medium level areas to consider doing so, regardless of vaccine status. This includes those who are immunocompromised, elderly or have other underlying health concerns  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/community-levels.html>.

"There will be still be times that everyone should wear a mask," says Monroe County Health Department administrator, Penny Caudill. "You should assess the situation and your risk for getting infected and choose accordingly. Some people may not yet be

ready to go mask-free and some may choose to wear one to protect others. Please be respectful of peoples' choices".

The new CDC metrics are based on the number of new COVID-19 cases, COVID-19 hospitalizations and percentage of staffed inpatient beds for COVID-19 cases per 7-day period within each county or hospital services area. The CDC COVID-19 Community Level dashboard information may lag behind state and local data at times based on data collection periods and updating of websites.

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