

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 22, 2021**

## **Department of Health Amends Universal Face Coverings Order to Align with CDC Guidance**

**Harrisburg, PA** – Acting Secretary of Health Alison Beam today amended the existing Universal Face Coverings order, issued on November 17, 2020, to align with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) [Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#). The amended order went into effect at 12:01 a.m. on March 17, 2021 and will remain in effect until further notice.

“The vaccines that are currently available across the state and country are highly effective at protecting vaccinated people against severe and symptomatic COVID-19,” Acting Secretary Beam said. “Research has shown that fully vaccinated people are less likely to have asymptomatic infection and potentially less likely to spread the virus that causes COVID-19 to others. However, there is still more to learn about how long protection lasts and how much vaccines protect against new variants of the virus, so some prevention measures will continue to be in place for all people, regardless of their vaccination status.”

According to the CDC, there are several activities that fully vaccinated people can resume now, as low risk to themselves, while being mindful of the potential risk of transmitting the virus to others. Those activities include:

- Visiting with other fully vaccinated people indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing;
- Visiting with unvaccinated people from a single household who are at low risk for severe COVID-19 disease indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing; and
- Refraining from quarantine and testing following a known exposure, if asymptomatic.

However, it is important that fully vaccinated people continue to take precautions in public like wearing a mask and practicing physical distancing; avoid medium- and large-sized in-person gatherings; get tested if they experience COVID-19 symptoms; follow guidance issued by employers; and follow travel requirements and recommendations.

Individuals who are fully vaccinated should also continue to wear a mask, practice physical distancing and follow other prevention measures when visiting unvaccinated people who are at increased risk for severe COVID-19 disease or who have an unvaccinated household member who is at increased risk for severe COVID-19 disease and when visiting unvaccinated people from multiple households.

People are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 more than two weeks after they have received the second dose in a two-dose series or more than two weeks after they have received a single-dose vaccine. It is important to remember that the current mitigation Orders are still in effect and that physical distancing and capacity requirements for gatherings must still be followed.

**While vaccine supply from the federal government remains limited, the Department of Health is working to ensure the vaccine is provided in a way that is ethical, equitable, and efficient. To keep Pennsylvanians informed about vaccination efforts:**

- The Your Turn tool provides a way to register to be alerted when it's your turn to be vaccinated.
- A [commonwealth COVID-19 vaccination guide](#) explains the current process for getting one. Pennsylvanians with questions about the vaccination process can call the Department of Health hotline at 1-877-724-3258.
- [Vaccine provider map](#) to find a COVID-19 vaccine provider near you.
- All of the locations that received vaccine and how much they have received can be found on the COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution webpage.
- [Vaccine dashboard data](#) can also be found on the website to find more information on the doses administered and showcase demographic information.
- Pennsylvanians can provide feedback on the Pennsylvania COVID-19 Interim Vaccination Plan by clicking on the Plan Feedback Form square under Popular Vaccine Topics [here](#).

**The Wolf Administration stresses the role Pennsylvanians play in helping to reduce the spread of COVID-19:**

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, not your hands.
- Clean surfaces frequently.
- Stay home to avoid spreading COVID-19, especially if you are unwell.
- If you must go out, you are required to wear a mask when in a business or where it is difficult to maintain proper social distancing.
- Download the COVID Alert PA app and make your phone part of the fight. The free app can be found in the Google Play Store and the Apple App Store by searching for "covid alert pa".

**Updated Coronavirus Links: Press Releases, State Lab Photos, Graphics**

- [Daily COVID-19 Report](#)
- [Press releases regarding coronavirus](#)
- [Latest information on the coronavirus](#)
- [Coronavirus and preparedness graphics](#) (located at the bottom of the page)
- [Community preparedness and procedures materials](#)

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