



News Release

For immediate release: March 3, 2023

(23-024)

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Masking requirements in healthcare, long-term care, and correctional facilities to end April 3

COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths continue downward trend nationwide

OLYMPIA -- Effective April 3, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) will end the [Secretary of Health Mask Order](#), which currently requires universal masking in healthcare, long-term care, and adult correctional facilities for people age 5 and older.

In Washington, COVID-19, RSV, and influenza disease rates and hospitalizations have continued to decline since the end of last year. The end of Washington's universal masking requirements aligns with similar announcement made today by the state of Oregon.

“Masks have been – and will continue to be – an important tool, along with vaccinations, to keep people healthy and safe,” said Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH, Secretary of Health. “We are thankful for our health and long-term care providers, staff members, patients, and all Washingtonians, for following the important public health measures put in place during the pandemic to protect one another.”

DOH [infection prevention and control guidance](#) continues to recommend masks for patients, healthcare providers, and visitors in healthcare settings. Licensed healthcare facilities are required to have infection prevention policies and programs consistent with CDC guidance.

Several [worker protection requirements](#) enforced by the state's Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) remain in effect, including that employees and contractors may choose to use facemasks or other personal protective equipment (PPE) on the job without employer retaliation. Additionally, under the state Health Emergency Labor Standards Act (HELSEA) rules, several key worker protections remain in place until the federal pandemic response declaration ends May 11.

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The current Secretary of Health Mask Order will remain in place until 11:59pm on April 2. Local or tribal governments, facilities, and providers may choose to continue to require masks in these or other settings.

DOH will continue to issue and update COVID prevention guidance for the public and key sectors, including the use of masks, vaccines, ventilation, and other preventive measures to inform individuals, families, communities, and health leaders on how to stay healthier from COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses.

The [DOH website](#) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. [Find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#). Sign up for the DOH blog, [Public Health Connection](#).

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