



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Bay Area Health Officials Urge Immediate Vaccination and Issue Orders Requiring Use of Face Coverings Indoors to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19**

*Counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Sonoma, and the City of Berkeley Indoor Masking Orders Take Effect Tuesday*

ALAMEDA COUNTY, CA – Vaccination continues to protect against severe COVID-19 illness, but with the COVID-19 Delta variant now infecting a small percentage of vaccinated people as well as many unvaccinated people, eight Bay Area health officers have issued Health Orders requiring masks indoors in public places. The Orders require all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, to wear face coverings when indoors in public settings, with limited exceptions, starting at 12:01 a.m. on Tuesday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Vaccines remain the most powerful tool in the fight against COVID-19, including the Delta variant. Nonetheless, the Delta variant is infecting a small percentage of the vaccinated in the Bay Area — who still remain strongly protected against severe illness, hospitalization, and death. In those instances of infection in a vaccinated person, a face covering prevents further spread. Bay Area health officials urge all unvaccinated residents 12 and older to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

“Face coverings are a simple and effective tool that everyone can use to slow the spread COVID-19,” said Dr. Nicholas Moss, Alameda County Health Officer. “Using face masks in indoor public spaces, regardless of vaccination status, will help us protect each other and end this summer surge.”

These Health Orders aim to reduce community transmission of COVID-19 and protect everyone. Health officials are very concerned by the substantial levels of community transmission now found across the Bay Area, especially among unvaccinated people. In part, this is due to the widespread COVID-19 Delta variant, which is substantially more transmissible than previous forms of the virus. Recent information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also indicates that even fully vaccinated individuals can in some cases spread the Delta variant to others, and so indoor use of face coverings provides an important added layer of protection.

The new Health Orders require wearing a well-fitting mask indoors in public settings. Indoor settings, whether public or private, are higher risk for COVID-19 transmission, especially when you are with people you do not live with. Health officials also recommend that all employers make face coverings available to individuals entering their businesses, and businesses are required to implement the indoor face covering order.

Today’s Health Orders are consistent with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the California Department of Public Health, which recommend that fully vaccinated individuals wear masks while in indoor public settings. Bay Area Health Officers will



continue to monitor data, including increasing vaccination throughout the region, to determine when the Orders can be adjusted or lifted.

The Alameda County Order directs that face coverings be worn over the mouth and nose in indoor public settings by all residents, with some exceptions, similar to statewide face covering requirements for unvaccinated residents. For more details see the Order here: <https://covid-19.acgov.org/face-masks>.

COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and FREE for everyone 12 and older. Visit <https://covid-19.acgov.org/vaccines.page?#availability> to learn where you can find a vaccination site near you or call 510-208-4VAX (510-208-4829). If you missed your second dose, you should still complete your vaccination series.

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