



News Release

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Winnebago County Health Department Strongly Recommends Masking in Indoor Settings Regardless of Vaccination Status

Winnebago County - The Winnebago County Health Department (WCHD), consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Illinois Department of Public Health, strongly recommends everyone, regardless of vaccination status, wear a mask while indoors in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission. WCHD recommends that employers, retailers, restaurants/bars, fitness/recreational centers, libraries, governmental entities, healthcare facilities, and other public venues require **UNIVERSAL INDOOR MASKING** of their staff and patrons regardless of vaccination status.

Based on increasing cases (case rate of 79/100,000), increasing positivity rate (6.2%), and declining ICU availability in the hospitals serving the region, Winnebago County is experiencing a **SUBSTANTIAL** level of community transmission for COVID-19. With less than 50% of the eligible population in Winnebago County vaccinated, there is **SUBSTANTIAL** risk for transmission of COVID-19 among the unvaccinated including children under the age of 12 who are not eligible for vaccination. It is our duty to protect the future generations in our community.

In addition to masking, the Winnebago County Health Department recommends vaccination, social distancing, handwashing, staying home when sick, and sanitizing frequently touched surfaces.

The pandemic is not over and we must continue to be vigilant in our individual behaviors and our collective behaviors as a community.

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