



Yakima Health District

Media Release

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Board of Health Recommendation Inconsistent With State and Federal Guidance

YAKIMA, WA – In yesterday’s Board of Health Meeting, the Yakima Health District Board of Health made the following recommendation: “The Board of Health recommends to our Health Officer that masks not be worn by children.”

Despite this recommendation, Yakima County will continue to follow the rules and orders of Washington State. The Health Officer does not have the authority to refuse to follow or neglect to obey or enforce the rules, regulations, or orders of the State Department of Health. Local Health Officers have the authority to place stricter guidance in their respective communities, such as has been done in King County. However, they do not have the authority to be less restrictive than state and federal guidelines.

In the [Order of the Secretary of Health 20-03](#), it specifically states, “Face covering requirements lawfully imposed by another public agency or official are to be followed if they are more protective than the requirements in this order. If they are less protective, then this order must be followed.”

State mask guidance mandates that all unvaccinated individuals must wear masks while out in public, and all must continue to wear masks while at school. Given that only those that are 12 and older are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, everyone 2-11 years old must wear a mask when in public, and everyone 12 and older who attend K-12 must wear a mask while at school.

Quote

“I am disappointed that the Board would ask me to do an action that is inconsistent with State Orders and Rules. We understand that many are eager to have the opportunity to no longer wear a mask. However, our state and federal guidelines are advising that masking must continue in specific situations. The best thing we all can do as members of this community to get to the point where we no longer must mask, is get vaccinated. The vaccine is extremely effective and is our tool to overcome the pandemic.” Dr. Larry Jecha, Interim Health Officer

“In Yakima County there are still a lot of opportunities to get vaccinated every day. We encourage individuals to take advantage of these resources and to visit YakimaVaccines.org for more information.” Andre Fresco, Executive Director, Yakima Health District



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Additional Information

[Amended Order of the Secretary of Health 20-03](#)

[Amended Governor Proclamation 20-25.13](#)

[OSPI: FAQs for Returning to School](#)

www.YakimaVaccines.Org

www.YakimaVacunas.Org

[Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#)

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