

Rachel Yoho

From: Sylvia Torres
Sent: Friday, May 8, 2020 1:57 PM
To: Rachel Yoho
Cc: Gina Peebles
Subject: FW: Face Coverings

Commissioner Cornell would like this information included in the agenda item re. COVID-19 for Tuesday. Needs to be published prior to the meeting.

Sylvia

From: Ken Cornell <kcornell@alachuacounty.us>
Sent: Friday, May 8, 2020 1:45 PM
To: Michele Lieberman <mlieberman@alachuacounty.us>; Sylvia Torres <STorres@alachuacounty.us>
Cc: Latoya T. Gainey <lgainey@alachuacounty.us>; Mark Sexton <msexton@alachuacounty.us>; kencornell@bosshardtrealty.com
Subject: Face Coverings

Sylvia & Michele,

I've been reflecting on the Board's decision on May 1st, 2020 to mandate face coverings. I recognize there is currently a difference of opinion on this decision with at least one Board member and so I intend to review this information with the Board on Tuesday May 12, 2020 during our meeting.

It reaching my conclusion, the over riding goal for me was to mitigate the potential community spread of the virus while at the same time simultaneously facilitate the reopening of as many businesses as possible under the Governor's order. It is very important for Alachua County business to reopen and be given every opportunity to succeed. Having an outbreak of the virus within our Community would be detrimental to these efforts.

To this end, I spoke at length during our Board meeting about my desire to allow the Governor's 25% occupancy guidelines to stand for both Restaurant and Retail businesses. Giving these businesses the flexibility under the Governor's order to adjust their operations in my opinion is critically important to the long term success of their operations under the new normal of this virus. While Board's majority agreed with this approach for Restaurants, they did not agree with this approach for Retail and other essential businesses so we currently have a more restrictive occupancy guideline for these businesses.

Either way, it is important to recognize that Alachua County is getting back to work and as a result, more and more businesses are re-opening. Students are returning to reenter the workforce and in general there is an increase in public activity out and about. This is a good thing, as I believe we are all ready to do the necessary things to help bring back our economy while keeping the public safe and minimizing the risk of virus spread.

On April 29th, 2020, Governor DeSantis said he was in favor of people wearing face masks. His quote was, "We're recommending face masks if you're in face-to-face interactions with people particularly in the workplace if you can't adequately social distance...If you are in a face-to-face business, that to me has got to be a business practice."

With the increase in public activity, there is an increase in potential spread and therefore my desire is to attempt to mitigate this risk. Six days prior to the Governor's announcement, on April 23, 2020 the Florida Association of Counties in conjunction with IFAS had a statewide webinar for public officials with four leading experts from the University of Florida; Dr. David Nelson, Dr. John Lednický, Dr. Glenn Morris and Dr. Ira Longini. During this webinar, Dr. Lednický stated, "masking is effective to combat aerosol spread." and Dr. Morris stated, "masking could reduce the spread by 50-60%."

During at least the first two weeks of increased public activity, in my opinion, it is critically important that we take this step of mandating face coverings in order to minimize the risk of virus spread.

In addition to the above reasons, I would offer the following addition guidance that supports in my opinion and this decision.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

CDC on Homemade Cloth Face Coverings

[CDC recommends](#) wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies), **especially** in areas of significant community-based transmission.

CDC also advises the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure.

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

Recommendation Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings, Especially in Areas of Significant Community-Based Transmission

Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19 [Learn More](#)

CDC continues to study the spread and effects of the novel coronavirus across the United States. We now know from [recent studies](#) that a significant portion of individuals with coronavirus lack symptoms (“asymptomatic”) and that even those who eventually develop symptoms (“pre-symptomatic”) can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms. This means that the virus can spread between people interacting in close proximity—for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing—even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms. In light of this new evidence, CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) **especially** in areas of significant community-based transmission.

It is critical to emphasize that maintaining 6-foot social distancing remains important to slowing the spread of the virus. CDC is additionally advising the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

This recommendation complements and does not replace the [President’s Coronavirus Guidelines for America, 30 Days to Slow the Spread external icon](#), which remains the cornerstone of our national effort to slow the spread of the coronavirus. CDC will make additional recommendations as the evidence regarding appropriate public health measures continues to develop.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/in-depth/coronavirus-mask/art-20485449>

Can face masks help prevent the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Yes, face masks combined with other preventive measures, such as frequent hand-washing and social distancing, help slow the spread of the disease.

So why weren't face masks recommended at the start of the pandemic?

At that time, experts didn't yet know the extent to which people with COVID-19 could spread the virus before symptoms appeared. Nor was it known that some people have COVID-19 but don't have any symptoms. Both groups can unknowingly spread the virus to others.

These discoveries led the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to do an about-face on face masks. The CDC updated its guidance to recommend widespread use of simple cloth face coverings to help prevent transmission of COVID-19 by people who have the virus but don't know it.

<https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/2020/04/03/coronavirus-protection-how-masks-might-stop-spread-through-coughs/5086553002/>

The study published in the [Journal of the American Medical Association](#) found that under the right conditions, liquid droplets from sneezes, coughs and just exhaling can travel more than 26 feet and linger in the air for minutes.

Findings such as these may have some bearing on the [CDC's recommendation on Friday that Americans wear non-surgical face masks](#) in public — especially in places “where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.”

“There is no virtual wall at this 3- to 6-foot distance” says Lydia Bourouiba, the study's author, who specializes in fluid dynamics and is an associate professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. These findings suggest the greatest risk is for health care workers working with infected patients, she says.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/apr/04/why-wear-a-mask-may-be-our-best-weapon-to-stop-coronavirus>

The Wölfel paper explains we must focus our efforts on stopping the spread of droplets. This is because the virus is primarily transmitted through [tiny droplets of saliva](#) ejected when we speak. You can't see them, but they are there. We also know that these droplets can go [significantly further](#) than the 6ft which is widely cited as a safe distance.

Research supported by Nobel prize-winning virologist Harold Varmus [tells us](#) that placing a layer of cloth in front of a person's face stops 99% of the droplets.

So, the science is clear. We do not know when we are sick. If we are sick, then when we speak we are projecting virus-laden droplets into the air. Wearing a simple cloth mask stops those droplets in their tracks. "I'm not going to wear a surgical mask, because clinicians need those," [said](#) Dr Harvey Fineberg, chair of the National Academy of Sciences' standing committee on emerging infectious diseases and 21st century health threats. "But I have a nice western-style bandanna I might wear. Or I have a balaclava. I have some pretty nice options." Fineberg led a committee of experts that has just released an [expert consultation](#) explaining that the virus can spread through talking, or even breathing.

I look forward to sharing this information with the full Board and discussing this further next week. Have a great weekend and stay safe,

Ken