

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LINK TO MEDIA RELEASE

### **Orange County Officials Leave Indoor Mask Mandate in Place, Will Monitor Situation Continually**

HILLSBOROUGH, N.C. Feb. 18, 2022 — Orange County local elected leaders, after meeting with Orange County Health Director Quintana Stewart, have opted to leave the county's indoor mask mandate in place and to continue to meet and reassess the situation on an ongoing basis.

Key metrics in Orange County are dropping, including the number of cases and percent positivity for test results. Extending the mandate for another few weeks will ensure those numbers continue to fall.

"We have a community responsibility to minimize strain on UNC Hospital because it serves as a healthcare hub not only for Orange County but for our entire region," said Renee Price, Chair of the Orange County Board of Commissioners. "We want to slow the spread as much as possible to protect children under 5 and adults who are unable to take a COVID-19 vaccine."

Hillsborough Mayor Jenn Weaver, Chapel Hill Mayor Pam Hemminger, and Carrboro Mayor Damon Seils joined Price in the decision. The elected leaders and health officials will meet with other community partners in early March, including representatives from local school systems, UNC Hospitals, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and first responders.

Price urged residents to get vaccinated and boosted if they are eligible. "Most of the deaths and serious illnesses are among the unvaccinated. Vaccines provide the strongest level of protection from serious illness or hospitalizations due to COVID-19," she said.

#### **Related Links**

- Sign up for a vaccine: <https://takemyshot.nc.gov/>
- Health Department vaccine page: <https://www.orangecountync.gov/2617/Vaccine>
- Health Department mask page: <https://www.orangecountync.gov/2435/Face-Coverings>
- Current Mask Mandate Order: <https://www.orangecountync.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16840/Orange-County-Declaration-Amendment-8-11-21-Final>

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