



**ORDER OF THE HEALTH OFFICER OF THE COUNTY OF CONTRA COSTA  
RESCINDING PRIOR ORDERS ALLOWING FULLY VACCINATED PERSONS AND  
GROUPS TO REMOVE THEIR FACE COVERINGS INSIDE PUBLIC INDOOR  
SETTINGS IN SPECIFIED SITUATIONS**

**ORDER NO. HO-COVID19-62**

**DATE OF ORDER: DECEMBER 28, 2021**

**Summary of the Order**

This Order of the Health Officer rescinds specified exceptions to Health Officer Order No. HO-COVID19-51, the face coverings order applicable in public indoor spaces, that allowed fully vaccinated public speakers and performers, and fully vaccinated groups of 100 or fewer persons, to remove their face coverings under controlled conditions, effective at 12:01 a.m. on December 29, 2021.

UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTIONS 101040 AND 120175, THE HEALTH OFFICER OF THE COUNTY OF CONTRA COSTA ("HEALTH OFFICER") ORDERS:

**1. Basis of Order.** On August 2, 2021, the Health Officer issued Health Officer Order No. COVID19-51 ("Prior Order"), which requires all persons to wear face coverings in indoor public settings in Contra Costa County ("County"), with certain exceptions, to prevent the spread of the virus that causes Coronavirus Disease 2019 ("COVID-19"). The Prior Order was amended on September 1, 2021, to exempt performers and public speakers in venues where everyone eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine is fully vaccinated; and on October 14, 2021, to exempt groups of 100 or fewer fully vaccinated individuals who regularly gather, under controlled conditions. When both of these exemptions were approved, COVID-19 case rates and hospitalization rates were declining. In mid-October, when the second of these exemptions was approved, the County was one of the most highly vaccinated counties in the country, and studies showed that a fully vaccinated person, if infected with SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19), was less likely than an unvaccinated person to either transmit the virus or develop the disease. In light of these metrics and studies, the Health Officer determined then that it was no longer necessary to strictly follow the recommendation by the U.S. Centers for Disease



Control and Prevention (“CDC”) that fully vaccinated people wear face coverings indoors in areas of substantial or high transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

Since the issuance of the Prior Order, the protection offered by all three of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in the United States has been found to wane after a period of time, and the CDC now recommends boosters at six months after a person’s second dose of an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) or two months after the Johnson & Johnson single dose vaccine. Additionally, COVID-19 case rates have increased dramatically with the arrival of the Omicron variant of SARS CoV-2 in the County.

The Omicron variant was first detected in a person in the County on December 18, 2021. From that day to December 24, 2021, the rolling seven-day average case rate in the County more than doubled, from 13.8 cases per 100,000 people to 30.3 cases per 100,000 people. Hospitalizations of COVID-19 patients have also increased, from 32 patients hospitalized on December 18, 2021, to 52 patients hospitalized on December 26, 2021. Cases and hospitalizations involve both unvaccinated and fully vaccinated people. Of 2,319 reported cases in the County in the week leading to December 24, 2021, 62 percent were in people fully vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine, and 12 percent of the 2,319 cases were in fully vaccinated people who had also received booster shots. These numbers represent a marked increase in infections of fully vaccinated people from the previous week, when 57 percent of 1,097 cases involved fully vaccinated persons, and 8 percent of those cases involved individuals fully vaccinated and boosted. The numbers and rates of fully vaccinated people being hospitalized with COVID-19 is also increasing. In the week leading into December 18, 2021, 31 percent of newly hospitalized COVID-19 patients in the County were fully vaccinated, and 11 percent were fully vaccinated and boosted. Of COVID-19 patients admitted to County hospitals in the week leading to December 24, 2021, 52 percent were fully vaccinated and 10 percent had received booster shots. It is anticipated that the case rate and hospitalization rate will continue to rise over the next few weeks due to the highly contagious Omicron variant.

COVID-19 vaccines, including booster doses, continue to offer the most effective protection against hospitalization and death from all variants of COVID-19 circulating in the County. Based on the increase in the number of people who are fully vaccinated becoming infected with the COVID-19 virus, exempting groups of people from the face covering requirement applicable to public indoor spaces based only on their fully vaccinated status can no longer be justified. On the contrary, continuing to allow for these exceptions could lead to additional exposures, cases and hospitalizations. For this reason, it is necessary to rescind the orders that allowed for these exceptions.

## **2. Prior Orders Rescinded.**

- a. Health Officer Order No. HO-COVID19-56 is hereby rescinded.
- b. Health Officer Order No. HO-COVID19-59 is hereby rescinded.

## **3. Effective Date and Time.** This Order takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on December 29, 2021.



4. **Copies; Contact Information.** Copies of this Order shall promptly be: (1) made available at the Office of the Director of Contra Costa Health Services, 1220 Morello Avenue, Suite 200, Martinez, CA 94553; (2) posted on the Contra Costa Health Services website (<https://www.cchealth.org>); and (3) provided to any member of the public requesting a copy of this Order. Questions or comments regarding this Order may be directed to Contra Costa Health Services at (844) 729-8410.

**IT IS SO ORDERED:**

Chris Farnitano, M.D.  
Health Officer of the County of Contra Costa



By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ori Tzvieli, M.D.  
Deputy Health Officer

Dated: December 28, 2021

