



Office of the Mayor

To: Common Council Members
From: Anissa Welch, Mayor of Milton
Date: July 28, 2020
Subject: Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the Issuance of a Public Health Advisory Related to Face Mask

Summary

As many of you are aware, municipalities across the state have been passing mask advisories, mandates, and ordinances. This is due to the dramatic increase in positive COVID-19 tests as 4th of July activities and other high risk activities continue to occur and are impacting the health and well-being of folks across the State of Wisconsin.

This is a public health issue with impactful physical, mental, and economic consequences. Rock County and the State of Wisconsin are on a dangerous trend of significant increases in positive cases and they are negatively effecting health care workers and hospitalization rates, too. Rock County positives increased to 7.25% (target is 5%) and 13 new cases in health care workers (target is 5) decreasing are capabilities of providing adequate care to all patients. Hospitalizations increased from 4 to 14. This is for the week ending on July 15th.

Additionally, the City of Milton has had at least two businesses that have had to temporary close due to employee exposures. Therefore, I believe it is important that we show support to those businesses who have lost revenues due to their closures as well as showing support to those businesses who have already taken the courageous step of enacting mask mandates within their private facilities. These decisions have had their detractors and they need to know that City leadership supports their decisions to do what they feel is best for their customers and employees.

Analysis

The CDC and the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) presented new studies overwhelmingly indicating “cloth coverings are one of the most powerful weapons to slow and stop the spread of the virus-particularly when used universally in a community setting. All Americans have a responsibility to protect themselves, their families, and their communities.”

Wearing masks will limit the spread along with social distancing and hand-washing/sanitizing. It will help our economy by keeping our businesses open, protect frontline workers, keep our children, elderly, disadvantaged, and health compromised residents safer.



I believe, as mayor and council, we have an obligation to do all we can to keep our residents safe. Therefore, I am requesting we issue a mask advisory (we do not have the authority to issue a mandate communitywide) and a requirement for all persons in City of Milton facilities to wear a mask with the exception of in-person absentee voting. The advisory would not be a mandate, or enforceable, but serve as a reminder that the leadership of Milton believes wearing a mask is important for the health, safety, and economy of our community.

This has been placed on the agenda as we have included the council in many of the decisions during this pandemic. It also, gives staff time to prepare and sound policies to be created. If approved, the advisory would be issued Wednesday and policies for city facilities would commence Wednesday, too. I strongly believe that I am obligated as mayor to advise the public and communicate with them health and safety issues as well as a legal responsibility to have a safe work environment for our employees.

The county is considering a similar advisory. However, that is not scheduled to go before the board until August 14th and quite frankly, we do not have that kind of time.

Recommendation

To approve the issuance of the Public Health Advisory encouraging the wearing of masks within the City of Milton.