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## PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

March 29, 2023

David M. Bayne, MPH  
Director

Dimyana Abdelmalek, MD, MPH  
Health Officer

Dear Thurston County Health Care and Long-Term Care Partners,

The Secretary of Health Masking Order is set to end on Monday April 3, 2023. Although the order is ending COVID-19 is still circulating in our community and I am continuing to recommend masking in health care and long-term care settings, especially in patient care areas and areas where people at high risk of severe disease are likely to be. Additionally, there is existing COVID-19 guidance and requirements that remain in effect for health care and long-term care facilities which include the following:

- 1) Licensur guidance regarding required infection prevention policies and programs.
- 2) Washington State Department of Labor and Industries worker protection requirements [Coronavirus/COVID-19 Workplace Safety & Health \(wa.gov\)](https://www.wa.gov/health-topics/coronavirus/covid-19-workplace-safety-health).
- 3) The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Conditions of Participation for [COVID-19 Infection Control Standards](https://www.cms.gov/medicare/coverage/conditions-of-participation).
- 4) The Washington State Department of Health [Interim Recommendations for SARS-CoV-2 Infection Prevention and Control in Healthcare Settings \(PDF\)](https://www.wa.gov/health-topics/coronavirus/covid-19-interim-recommendations)
- 5) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [Infection Control: Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 \(SARS-CoV-2\) | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/s0501-covid-19-guidance.html).

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to present challenges to our community, and I anticipate that each facility will use the available guidance and stakeholder input to operationalize appropriate measures to protect the health and safety of staff, patients and residents. Thurston County Public Health and Social Services will continue to support healthcare and long-term care facilities in Thurston County with technical support informed by updated COVID-19 guidance as well as Thurston County trends and infection control experience as we navigate this next phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. Facilities can contact the COVID-19 team by calling 360-867-2610.

Thank you for your continued efforts to keep those who work, live and receive care in our medical facilities safe and healthy.

Dimyana Abdelmalek, MD, MPH  
Thurston County Health Officer