



## **IMPACT and Masks Now Illinois Joint Statement: Wear Masks In Public**

As leaders of Illinois Medical Professionals Action Collaborative ([IMPACT](#)), and [Masks Now Illinois](#) we are releasing a joint statement to strongly encourage the residents of Chicago to wear masks when leaving their homes. The importance of controlling the spread of coronavirus/COVID19 cannot be understated.

We applaud the city's effort to secure [1 million cloth masks](#) to protect those that are most vulnerable, such as our city's homeless population. However, we are disappointed to see many people venturing out of their homes without face coverings and without maintaining social distancing. In a viral pandemic, wearing face masks in public must become the new normal, just as we consider wearing seat belts and putting our children in car seats. Wearing a mask is the right and necessary thing to do to protect ourselves, our loved ones, and our community. The [CDC recommends](#) wearing a face-covering in public settings, especially where there is still significant [community transmission](#). This includes everyone except children under 2, those who have trouble breathing, or those who are unable to remove their mask. It is important to note that this not only applies to enclosed spaces but also on the sidewalk or in your neighborhood. [Six feet](#) is the average length of an extra-long yoga mat, a dog leash, or the height of a high school locker. It may not be easy to always maintain that distance on Chicago sidewalks, especially as the weather gets warmer and more people are venturing out of their homes. Wearing a mask is important when in the vicinity of anyone outside of your immediate household because you, and others can potentially spread coronavirus before showing symptoms. Wearing a mask can potentially decrease expulsion of droplet material as demonstrated in a recent [New England Journal of Medicine article](#). Universal masking has been an essential part of successful reopening in other countries.

As our city starts to [reopen](#), it is essential that we work together. It is crucial that we all take personal responsibility to potentially reduce viral transmission in whatever way we can. In addition to social distancing and hand washing, wearing a [mask or cloth covering](#) on your face (covering your nose and mouth) when you leave your home is an easy and effective method to reduce viral transmission. However, for this strategy to work, everyone has to wear a mask.

Much is still to be learned about this novel coronavirus, and initial statements that masks were not effective have now been replaced with more stringent mask guidelines as scientists and physicians have learned more about this virus and how it is transmitted. [Wear a mask](#) to protect others, and they wear a mask to protect you. It's truly an example of being [#AllinIllinois](#).

[IMPACT](#): The Illinois Medical Professionals Action Collaborative Team was co-founded by local physician leaders in the Chicagoland area

[Masks Now Illinois](#): A grassroots movement of individuals who sew and other volunteers who have come together to make masks for frontline healthcare workers and at-risk community members.

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