



Thursday, February 11, 2021

Dear Illinois Department of Public Health, Illinois Attorney General, and Illinois Chamber of Commerce:

We are encouraged by the progress Illinois has made in terms of a persistent decrease in our case positivity. As we continue to press on increasing our vaccination rate, we are also moving to less restrictive mitigations and reopen activities. Given this, it is imperative that all places of commerce commit to enforcing public health measures before it is too late. **The discovery of more contagious variants in Illinois coupled with the newest CDC recommendations for tighter fitting masks or double masking underscores the need to not give any ground on this progress.** As healthcare professionals, we are particularly concerned with how universal mask requirements are being interpreted in phase 4 by the following establishments:

- **Indoor health and fitness clubs:** Unfortunately, we have already seen health and fitness clubs communicate to their clients that they can remove their masks during exercise. This is incredibly concerning as it is imperative that masks are worn at all times, especially when exercising. As the CDC guidance highlights, a face shield alone is simply not adequate.
- **Indoor ice skating rinks:** Some skating rinks are opening with no mention of masks to their clients. Meanwhile, others are stating only a face shield is required. Again, universal masking is required.
- **Indoor theaters and performing arts:** The current guidance for phase 4 states “persons should wear face coverings over their nose and mouth, except while seated within a venue.” This is incredibly confusing as it is not safe to take off a mask just because you are seated. Consistency in language regarding universal masking is critical to avoid confusion or misinterpretation.

We have made immense progress over the last 4 weeks in Illinois. To avoid an outbreak or further risk to Illinoisans who may frequent these establishments, it is essential that universal masking be not only adhered to but also enforced. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

The Illinois Medical Professionals Action Collaborative Team (IMPACT)