

E-Mail Received from the Office of Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health in Response to WDGPH Letter of July 22, 2020 to Premier of Ontario, Minister of Health & Chief Medical Officer of Health and Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health re Provincial Approach for Face Coverings

August 7, 2020

Dear Mr. Bridge,

I have received a copy of your letter to Premier Doug Ford, Minister Christine Elliott and Dr. David Williams regarding face coverings during the COVID-19 pandemic. I'm responding on behalf of Dr. Williams.

Thank you for writing on behalf of the Board of Health for Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH), and for sharing the Board's recommendations regarding a provincial approach for mandatory face covering. As our province reopens carefully and gradually, it is critical that all Ontarians continue to follow everyday steps to reduce risk of COVID-19 transmission, including the use of face coverings.

As public health measures are lifted and as economic activity resumes, the public will need to continue to maintain physical distancing and hand washing, along with self-isolation when experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Now that Ontario is reopening, Dr. Williams and other health experts are recommending that individuals wear a face covering where physical distancing is not possible, such as on public transit or in a small grocery store or pharmacy.

Based on community needs, some municipalities may have enacted by-laws and local medical officers of health may have issued Section 22 orders under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, mandating the use of face in commercial establishments and all indoor public places. Certain other medical officers of health may have mandated the use of face coverings through reference to emergency orders.

Public Health Ontario (PHO) has been actively monitoring, reviewing and assessing the latest scientific evidence regarding COVID-19. PHO has recently produced the *COVID-19 – What We Know So Far About...Wearing Masks in Public* evidence brief which is available at: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/covid-wwksf/what-we-know-public-masks-apr-7-2020.pdf?la=en>.

The ministry will take the WDGPH Board of Health's recommendations into consideration as we continue taking action to stop the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health of the people of Ontario.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

Sent on behalf of Dr. David Williams

Nina Arron
Director, Health Protection and Surveillance Policy and Programs
Office of Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health
Ministry of Health