



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 13, 2020

# ASHLAND AND BAYFIELD COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH RELEASE NEW ADVISORY REQUIRING FACE COVERINGS

**Effective Friday, July 17, 2020 at 8:00 am, Ashland and Bayfield County Public Health are issuing an Emergency Advisory which stipulates that everyone age 5 and older wear a face covering or mask when in any enclosed building where other people, except for members of the person's own household or living unit could be present.** This advisory applies to all of Ashland and Bayfield County.

“Public health research shows that face coverings are critical to slowing the spread of COVID-19. Given the number of infections in our counties and surrounding area, as well as the multitude of visitors coming to our area, we need to all be wearing face coverings every time we leave the house,” stated Elizabeth Szot, Ashland County Health Officer.

“We do not take this advisory lightly. It is on every person in our communities to do better. People should assume that everyone wearing a mask is doing it to protect you and themselves. If someone is not wearing a mask, assume they are genuinely not able to do so,” added Sara Wartman, Bayfield County Health Officer.

Per the advisory, people should wear a face covering that covers their nose and mouth when in public, which includes in businesses, health care settings, waiting in line, and on public transportation. The advisory also indicates that individuals are to wear face coverings when in someone else's home when you are not of the same family group. Exceptions are made for certain activities such as eating at a restaurant, but during those activities, 6 feet distancing of individuals not from the same household or living unit should be followed at all times. Some people may be exempted if they have a physical, mental, or developmental condition that prevents them from wearing a mask.

Szot states, “masks and distance are really the two most effective means of slowing the spread of COVID-19.” Wartman adds, “given the recent rapid increases in cases in our counties, which has happened even before school and college classes resume this fall- it is imperative we take this step now to try and slow the spread of COVID through our communities.”

If someone is unable to wear a mask or face covering in a business due to a condition or disability, people should ask that business for reasonable accommodation, like a curbside pickup or delivery option. Children ages 2 through 4 are highly encouraged to wear masks in public, children 5 and older are advised to wear masks. If your child is not able to wear a mask, only bring them to places where it is necessary they be so that your child does not get or spread COVID-19 to others.

People can cover their faces a variety of ways to comply with this advisory. Simply wear a bandana, scarf, or neck gaiter around your nose and mouth. Or you may create a cloth face covering by either sewing one or using a no-sew method on the CDC website. Medical-grade surgical masks or N95 respirators are not required or necessary for general public use.

In addition to wearing a mask, these actions will help protect yourself and others from COVID-19:

- **Stay home if you are sick or feel off.**
- **Stay home if you do not need to go out.** Working from home, virtual gatherings, and using curbside or delivery ordering are still the safest and best options to protect yourself and others.
- **Stay 6 feet from other people.** Respiratory droplets are in the air when other people cough, sneeze, talk and breathe. Staying 6 feet from others will lower the chances of you coming in contact with the virus from those droplets.
- **Assume you have come in contact with COVID-19 if you go out.** Watch for symptoms like fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. If you have these symptoms, call your doctor to be tested.

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