

CDC and California Change COVID-19 Guidelines

27 July 2021

The CDC guidelines for mask use to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, were changed today. CDC is recommending that all students, teachers and other personnel in K-12 schools wear masks, regardless of vaccination status. Additionally, CDC wants all people to wear masks indoors in COVID-19 hot spots.

In a conference call with reporters, CDC Director, Dr. Rachel Walensky stated, “. . . in rare occasions, some vaccinated people infected with the delta variant after vaccination may be contagious and spread the virus to others.”

She added that vaccination decreases symptomatic infection with the Delta variant by “seven-fold.” Additionally, “The reduction is 20-fold for hospitalizations and deaths.”

Meanwhile, in the Golden State, Governor Gavin Newsom yesterday announced that all of the nearly 250,000 State of California employees would be required to undergo weekly COVID-19 testing and wear masks, if they are unvaccinated. Additionally, unvaccinated healthcare workers will need to be tested weekly, starting August 23.

The California health officer released a new order, too. Healthcare workers who are not vaccinated, will also need to be tested weekly.

All of this is consistent with the trend we are seeing of universities, employers and opinion leaders supporting mandated vaccination of workers. The American Medical Association, the American Nurses Association and many other groups signed a joint statement orchestrated by Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel urging the imposition of mandatory vaccination for healthcare personnel.

The vast majority of new COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths are occurring in unvaccinated people. Although, cases have increased significantly compared to two months ago, they are no where near the levels of the winter wave we experienced. It seems that the goal of controlling cases to avoid over-burdening the healthcare system is no longer being discussed, because with over 50% of our population fully vaccinated and with hundreds of thousands with disease-related immunity, we simply will not have a huge wave of hospitalizations as we did in the winter.

Questions, of course are being raised: Why do vaccinated people need to wear masks? Why are people being pressured, if not coerced, to be inoculated with emergency authorized but not fully approved vaccines?

It seems that masking of vaccinated persons will have a low yield with an unfavorable burden-to-benefit ratio. The vast majority of cases are in unvaccinated individuals and, according to CDC's Dr. Walensky, it is rare that vaccinated people will become infected with the Delta variant and infect someone else. Does it make sense to require large populations of individuals to wear masks to prevent rare occurrences? Is the imposition of a mask mandate being recommended because “we have to do something?”

Businesses outside of healthcare should stay tuned. However, by requiring all unvaccinated state workers to be tested weekly, in California, the writing may be on the wall.