

Good morning, School Board Members, School Superintendents & COVID-19 Coordinators,

The long-awaited day is finally here! As of late Thursday afternoon, CDC downgraded **Hancock County to "Moderate" transmission risk**. This means our cases per capita has dropped below 50 and our percent positivity is below 8%. Hancock county is now one of 10 Ohio counties that are considered "moderate". 44 are still considered "high" and 34 are "substantial". The state of Ohio as a whole is now considered "substantial". This is great news, and we are all hoping that we can continue this downward trend and keep COVID-19 at bay.

This also means that we can start relaxing our masking requirements/recommendations in our School, business, and social interactions. Individuals who are feeling well, are not currently experiencing COVID-like symptoms, and/or test negative no longer have to wear a mask indoors or when in common areas. It is still recommended that anyone who does not feel well to wear a mask when indoors and try to socially distance when around others. In addition, we should continue practicing good hygiene, sanitation, and common courtesy as we had throughout this pandemic. Furthermore, the federal order on wearing masks on buses has also been lifted (link attached below).

[Order: Wearing of face masks while on conveyances and at transportation hubs | Quarantine | CDC](#)

[Order: Wearing of face masks while on conveyances and at transportation hubs | Quarantine | CDC - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued an Order pdf icon [PDF – 11 pages] on January 29, 2021 requiring the wearing of masks by people on public transportation conveyances or on the premises of transportation hubs to prevent spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. This Order was effective as of 11:59 p.m. February 1, 2021 and was published in the Federal Register ...

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That combined with all our other efforts should help keep our numbers down. Even though our cases are declining, **we are still encouraging everyone who is able/eligible to get vaccinated against COVID-19, as this is the best protection against the virus.** As a reminder, HPH is still offering walk-in clinics through the end of February on Monday, Thursday, and Friday from 9 to 11:30AM for anyone that is interested. Or by calling our Clinics at 419-424-7441 to schedule a convenient appointment.

We are hopeful that our cases will continue to drop through the month of March. We will be monitoring them closely and will be adjusting our recommendations and protocol accordingly. Have a wonderful school week, and fantastic March.

Karim Baroudi, MPH, REHS
Health Commissioner
Hancock Public Health