

PRESS RELEASE



Expiration of Mask Emergency Ordinance

December 7, 2021

This evening the Anchorage Assembly passed a resolution to end Emergency Ordinance 2021-3 requiring masks in indoor public spaces. While masks are no longer mandatory after midnight tonight, the Anchorage Assembly strongly encourages the use of masks in indoor public spaces.

EO 2021-3 was set to expire after one of the following conditions were met: 1) crisis standards of care are ended at two of three local hospitals for 14 consecutive days, 2) there is no longer substantial or high community transmission per the CDC for 14 days, or 3) no later than 60 days after the passage.

According to the Anchorage Charter, an emergency ordinance can only be in effect for 60-days and EO 2021-3 would have expired automatically on December 14. However, while crisis standards of care remain available through the State of Alaska's Crisis Standards of Care Committee, they had not been utilized for direct patient care at two of three local hospitals for over 14 consecutive days, satisfying the first condition to end the emergency ordinance.

"While it may seem counterintuitive to end the ordinance with the variant looming on the horizon, the mask mandate has done what was intended and set our city back on a better path," said resolution co-sponsor Assembly Member Meg Zaletel. "If conditions change and a new public health crisis emerges, we can enact new COVID mitigations in the future."

Co-sponsor Assembly Member Pete Petersen added "we are not out of the woods just yet, but this emergency ordinance proved that when our community works together, we can slow the spread of COVID and relieve the burden on our health care workers. We encourage everyone to continue to wear masks in indoor public spaces so we can keep up this positive momentum."

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