



Office of the City Manager

March 27, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: *Dee* Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager

Re: COVID-19 update: Masking for All Staff in Skilled Nursing Facilities While Working in Patient Care Areas

This memo is intended to give you an update that the City of Berkeley will be issuing a Health Officer Order requiring the continued use of masks by staff in skilled nursing facilities. This Order will be effective on April 3, 2023, at 12:01 am and will be reviewed regularly. Visitors are strongly encouraged to wear masks while visiting these facilities although this is not required by the Order. The City of Berkeley will continue to align with the State on mask policy for all other settings after April 3.

The Public Health Officer's Unit last week reached out directly to each of the 5 skilled nursing facilities in Berkeley to explain the order and give them time to prepare.

In taking this action, City of Berkeley Health Officer Dr. Lisa B. Hernandez stated "Skilled nursing facilities are a focus of concern because they serve populations that are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, due to their age and multiple underlying medical conditions."

There are 5 licensed skilled nursing facilities in the City of Berkeley. As of March 24, 2023, 74 City of Berkeley residents have died due to COVID-19. A vast majority of these deaths are older adults including 32% (24) within skilled nursing facilities. COVID-19 is still circulating in the community and we encourage everyone to continue using the proven methods to prevent COVID-19 and reduce the risk of hospitalization and death:

- Stay home if ill or COVID-19 positive,
- Keep up to date on vaccinations, including getting the updated COVID-19 booster,
- Wear a high-quality, well-fitted mask for added protection against infection,
- Gather outdoors to reduce risk or if gathering indoors, improve ventilation by opening doors and windows or running air filtration systems,
- Get tested if exposed or sick, and

- Plan how and where to access treatment and, if positive, contact a health care provider or utilize a state-supported resource right away: do not wait until symptoms get worse.

cc:

Anne Cardwell, Deputy City Manager  
LaTanya Bellow, Deputy City Manager  
Lisa Warhuus, Director, Health, Housing, and Community Services  
Dr. Lisa B. Hernandez, Health Officer  
Matthai Chakko, Communications Director/Assistant to the City Manager  
Mark Numainville, City Clerk  
Jenny Wong, City Auditor