



**For Immediate Release:
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Health Commissioner Rescinds City Masking Order Effective March 1st Based on Declining Hospitalizations and Positive Cases

**Nearly 77% of All Eligible City Residents Have Received a First or Second Dose of
the COVID-19 Vaccine**

BALTIMORE, MD. (March 1, 2022) – Beginning Tuesday, March 1st, the **Baltimore City Commissioner of Health Dr. Letitia Dzirasa** has issued a Health Order lifting the August 10, 2021, City Masking Order based on the request of **Baltimore Mayor Bernard “Jack” C. Young**. The order will be rescinded as of 6 AM Tuesday, March 1st, due to recent data trends indicating a stark decline in COVID-19 hospitalizations and data from the Maryland Department of Health signifying as of February 22nd, 76.8% of all city residents (5 years old and up) have received a first or second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and 67.4% are fully vaccinated.

“This is an important milestone in our ongoing efforts to combat this pandemic,” said Dr. Dzirasa. “With nearly 77% of all eligible residents within our city vaccinated with at least one dose of the vaccine, we are impacting the spread of COVID and reducing the number of hospitalizations in our community,” she said. “Although we are encouraged by the improvement in our COVID19 metrics, this is in no way an indication that the pandemic is over. Rather, we are entering a new phase of the pandemic,” she said. “It is also not a sign that the public health protocols and measures that we’ve put in place to date are no longer necessary. Masks and vaccines remain important tools in our fight against COVID19.”

Although the Masking Order will be rescinded, the State of Emergency for Baltimore declared on March 19, 2020, by Mayor Young will remain in place. **“I am optimistic to see our COVID numbers reducing,”**

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said Mayor Young. “However, in order to continue taking the necessary precautions to protect all city residents, especially those who remain vulnerable to COVID, the State of Emergency will remain in effect,” said the Mayor.

Residents who are eligible for the vaccine or booster can visit the Baltimore City Health Department’s website to learn where to get vaccinated at covax.baltimorecity.gov. In addition, testing continues to be encouraged to identify positive cases and reduce exposure to others. At home test kits remain available through a partnership with Enoch Pratt Free Library. Close to 60,000 test kits have been distributed through the library system to date. Test kits are available at Enoch Pratt Free Library Branches when libraries are open, while supplies are available. Approximate quantities available at each branch can be found at Enoch Pratt’s website, www.prattlibrary.org/services/at-home-covid-19-tests.

Additionally, the federal government is now providing four free test kits per household in the mail. To register for this program, you can go to covidtests.gov or call 1-800-232-0233. The health department continues to test throughout the city. Please visit the BCHD website to see weekly testing locations at coronavirus.baltimorecity.gov/testing.

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