



April 2, 2021

Bethany Wait, MD  
Elkhart County Health Officer

Dear Dr. Wait:

We respectfully request that you continue the mask mandate in Elkhart County and do not make it optional or an advisory recommendation. As you know, we are all tired of wearing masks, but it is simply too early to remove the mandate, and we are so close to being in a much safer position as a county.

With the State of Indiana opening up vaccine access to everyone over age 16 effective just yesterday, we need to allow time for a significant portion of our citizens to have the opportunity to get at least the 1<sup>st</sup> dose of the vaccine. Our vaccine clinic was scheduled about 3 weeks out prior to opening access to everyone, so it will take at least a few weeks more for citizens to have access to the vaccine.

In addition, we are concerned about the recent rise in our new cases and positivity rate in our County and the presence of Covid-19 variants that can spread more easily. Masks and social distancing are the best deterrents to the spread of the virus until we have the chance for everyone to have access to getting vaccinated.

Thank you for seriously considering this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randal E. Christophel".

Randal E. Christophel, MBA, FACHE  
President and Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel A. Nafziger MD MS".

Daniel A. Nafziger, MD, MS  
Chief Medical Officer  
Infectious Disease Specialist