

For Immediate Release
Monday, August 3, 2020

Henry County Mayor Releases Masking Requirements Order

At the recommendation of the local healthcare community, Henry County Mayor, Brent Greer, with the support of the Henry County COVID Response Team, has put an order in place, effective Tuesday at midnight, requiring masking in Henry County to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

“People are sick, it’s that simple,” commented Henry County Mayor, Brent Greer. “In my twenty plus years of public service, I have never faced a situation like COVID-19. In our decision-making postures, it has been very difficult to determine the right direction to take. We are all learning as we go, but that does not excuse or justify delaying making the right decisions. Though difficult and sometimes unpopular, these efforts can help our community gain a path and direction to combat this pandemic. We all have to make personal sacrifices, as well as accept the counsel and advice of the leaders that are trying to direct us through this unsettling time.”

The Executive Order of the Mayor of Henry County requires all persons in Henry County to wear a face covering over their nose and mouth while in public and publicly accessible areas.

Those people or entities in control of premises subject to the masking requirement shall post signage at public entrances informing of the requirement to wear a mask within the premises. Proposed signage can be downloaded or picked up at the Chamber of Commerce.

Greer added “We hope that this effort will not only flatten the curve, but allow us to keep our economy open and give our businesses a chance to survive. We have confidence that once we have made the progress needed and this healthcare crisis becomes more manageable, we will be able to get back on track to creating a new normal.”

Tennessee Governor Bill Lee joined the Henry County COVID Response Team meeting Monday afternoon via conference call and said “I commend Mayor Greer and his COVID Response Team for making masks a priority in Henry County as we work together to fight the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. Masks are a simple, effective habit that make a big difference and we need every West Tennessean to adopt this habit. The #MaskUpHC campaign is a powerful show of local buy-in as masks are a tool that keeps our way of life on track even through unprecedented times.”

The University of Memphis conducted a study that showed 50% of the citizens of Memphis participated in masking before their city issued a requirement and over 90% are currently participating post-mask requirement.

In a letter Friday morning, Dr. Scott Whitby pleaded with local decision makers to “take the simple steps needed to stop the spread and require Henry Countians to wear masks along with continuing to encourage washing hands, maintaining physical distance, and limiting groups and gatherings.” He added “just a month ago, we might have come to a different conclusion, but the rapidly changing nature of this disease requires daily vigilance and adaptation. A masking requirement will help us as a medical community to ensure that we can care for our community.”

C. Wright Pinson, CEO of Vanderbilt University Medical Center, wrote in support of the requirements in Henry County stating, “Requiring wearing cloth masks in public will help keep our communities safe, our businesses open, and our economy moving.”

COVID-19 has not only impacted the healthcare industry, but tourism remains a vital component of the local economy. “We have been fortunate to see a significant amount of traffic this summer, as people travel to our lake,” Greer added. “These measures will allow that revenue to continue to flow into our economy.”

According to Dr. Whitby, “As of Thursday, July 30, Henry County has 56 Active Cases listed on the Tennessee State COVID-19 website. Caseloads have erupted with a total of 94 positive patients within the last 14 days. Thirty (30) of those were reported in a single 24-hour period just Wednesday. The State of Tennessee has set a threshold of concern at 10 infections per 100,000 citizens. Henry County is now at more than twice that threshold rate reaching 20.76 yesterday.”

The first shipment of the custom masks that were developed through the “Mask Up Henry County” Campaign will be available this Thursday at the Paris-Henry County Chamber of Commerce, Paris City Hall, Paris Pediatrics and Eagle Creek Clinic. The second shipment will be available Friday, August 14th.

The order will go into effect at 12:01 AM. Wednesday, August 5, 2020, and will remain in effect until 12:01 A.M. Wednesday, August 12, 2020, unless rescinded, continued, or renewed.



EXECUTIVE ORDER OF THE MAYOR OF HENRY COUNTY

DECLARATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY IN HENRY COUNTY

REQUIREMENT TO WEAR MASKS TO MITIGATE THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

WHEREAS, the President of the United States, the Governor of the State of Tennessee, and the Mayors of numerous county and municipal governments throughout Tennessee have made emergency declarations related to the COVID-19 pandemic and have recognized it as a public health emergency; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) advise the use of cloth or other types of face coverings to slow the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, immediate action to slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community will facilitate safer operation of governmental entities, healthcare facilities, businesses, and educational institutions; and

WHEREAS, widespread use of face coverings is believed to be effective in slowing the spread of COVID-19 by reducing the chances of symptomatic and asymptomatic people transmitting the virus to others, especially when used together with other protocols including 6-foot social distancing and hand hygiene; and

WHEREAS, on July 31, 2020, Governor Bill Lee signed Executive Order 55, declaring that a state of emergency continues to exist in Tennessee, and continues to strongly urge all persons to wear cloth face coverings or other similar coverings in public settings where being in close proximity to others is anticipated, and through Executive Order 55, extends the delegated authority to county mayors in the 89 counties that do not have a locally-run health department (including Henry County) to issue orders requiring the wearing of face coverings within their jurisdictions, subject to certain limitations, for the purposes of slowing the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee law, including, but not limited to Tennessee Code Annotated §§ 58-8-104 and 58-2-110, empowers the County Mayor to declare a local state of emergency and to take whatever action is prudent and necessary to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the community; and

WHEREAS, the numbers of positive COVID-19 cases in Henry County and surrounding counties have significantly increased in the last fourteen days; and

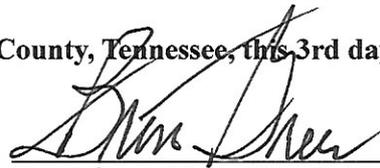
WHEREAS, after consultation with healthcare professionals with Henry County Medical Center and the Henry County Health Department; City of Paris Mayor and Paris City Manager; the Henry County Emergency Management Director; and the School Superintendents for Henry County Board of Education and the Paris Special School District, the County Mayor finds that there is a consensus that the wearing of cloth or other face coverings should be required in certain circumstances, and that such a requirement should take effect as soon as possible for the health and wellbeing of the public;

NOW, THEREFORE, PURSUANT TO THE AUTHORITY DELEGATED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER 55; GOVERNOR LEE'S RECOGNITION OF A CONTINUING STATE OF EMERGENCY AND MAJOR DISASTER RELATED TO COVID-19; and Tennessee Code Annotated §§ 58-8-104 and 58-2-110, I, Brent Greer, Mayor of Henry County, Tennessee, hereby declare a local State of Emergency in Henry County, Tennessee due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and further direct and order as follows:

1. **Wearing of Facemasks Required.** Subject to the exceptions herein, all persons in Henry County (including those within the corporate limits of municipalities located in Henry County) shall wear a cloth or other face covering over such person's nose and mouth while in public and publicly-accessible areas.

2. **Exceptions.** This requirement to wear masks does not apply:
- i. Within a residence or automobile, unless transporting others for hire;
 - ii. To any a child twelve (12) years of age or younger;
 - iii. To any person who has trouble breathing due to an underlying health condition or another bonafide medical or health-related reason for not wearing a face covering;
 - iv. To anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance;
 - v. While eating or drinking, or while seated in a restaurant;
 - vi. While outdoors, unless the person cannot substantially maintain appropriate 6-foot social distancing from others outside of the person's household;
 - vii. While working under conditions where appropriate social distancing from others outside of the person's household is substantially maintained;
 - viii. In situations in which wearing a face covering poses a safety or security risk;
 - ix. While in a house of worship unless required by that house of worship, but wearing a face covering in such locations is strongly encouraged;
 - x. While in a voting site for the purpose of voting or administering an election, but wearing a face covering in such locations is strongly encouraged;
 - xi. Persons working in areas not open to the public (such as offices or cubicles) where 6-foot social distancing can be observed, but wearing a face covering in such locations is strongly encouraged;
 - xii. While engaging in strenuous exercise and/or physical activity, provided, however, that such persons shall maintain 6-foot social distancing when not wearing a face covering; or
 - xiii. While within a facility owned or controlled by a governmental entity—in such facilities, the governmental entity which controls the facility shall determine the masking policy for that facility.
3. **Signage Required at Public Entrances.** Persons or entities in control of premises subject to the masking requirement of this Order shall post signage at public entrances informing of the requirement to wear a mask within the premises.
4. **Term.** This Order shall become effective at 12:01a.m. on Wednesday, August 5th, 2020, and shall remain in effect until 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, August 12th, 2020, unless rescinded, continued, or renewed.

It is so ORDERED, Mayor Brent Greer, Henry County, Tennessee, this 3rd day of August 2020.



Brent Greer, Henry County Mayor

July 31, 2020

Henry County Government
Brent Greer, Henry County Mayor and Henry County Commission
101 W Washington St
Paris, TN 38242

RE: Masking Requirement

Dear Mayor Greer and County Commission,

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Henry Countians have been urged to protect themselves, their loved ones, and their neighbors through social distancing, staying at home, and utilizing hand hygiene with hand washing and hand sanitizer. The Governor closed businesses, surgeries, and other services to encourage people to stay at home, and infection and death rates began to decline.

Yet, with the reopening of our communities, we have seen the tide turn and infection rates have increased dramatically with any gains we saw with the shutdown erased. With many hospitals in our state nearing ICU capacity and with the shortage of personal protective equipment and testing supplies, our medical community is concerned of the threat to healthcare workers as well as patients.

Considering all aspects of this crisis, it is with empathy for the decision makers that we would overwhelmingly advise a masking requirement be put into place so that our community can improve. Our advice is based on observations within Henry County, the surrounding counties, and the overall availability of resources in our community. As of Thursday, July 30, Henry County has 56 Active Cases listed on the Tennessee State COVID-19 website. Caseloads have erupted with a total of 94 positive patients within the last 14 days. Thirty (30) of those were reported in a single 24-hour period just Wednesday. The State of Tennessee has set a threshold of concern at 10 infections per 100,000 citizens. Henry County is now at more than twice that threshold rate reaching 20.76 yesterday. This week, our community, health department, and hospital have reported more cases than when our community shut down in April. The exponential growth potential of this virus will easily overwhelm our capacity to care for the sick if the trend continues. We have learned much about the behavior of this virus over the past few months and we know with certainty, assembling large groups indoors rapidly transmits the virus and creates hazardous outbreaks. We are now able to quantify the likelihood of someone in a group carrying the virus and in a group of 1000 people that likelihood approaches 100%. It will be years before all the information about this pandemic is digested. It is, however, no longer true that we don't know much about how it spreads or the consequences of trying to prevent spread. The following is a current summary of literature on this topic and its findings:

- **Lancet** – Face masks are associated with protection, even in non-health care settings
- **International Journal of Nursing Studies** – Community mask use by well people could be beneficial, particularly for COVID-19 where transmission may be asymptomatic

- **Health Affairs** – State mandates to wear masks helped reduce the spread of Coronavirus and as many as 450,000 cases may have been averted in those areas
- **German non-profit research institute IZA** – Local and regional mask mandates reduced the number of cases by as much as 13% over a period of 10 days and the daily growth rate of new infections by 40%
- **British Medical Journal Global Health** – Households where masks were used before symptoms developed decreased transmission by 79%
- **CDC studying the outbreak on the USS Theodore Roosevelt** concluded that face coverings made individuals less likely to get infected and that masking along with other measures could mitigate transmission

This is not a comprehensive list with much research to come but clearly points toward masks having an important place in lessening disease in communities along with other measures of distancing and hand washing.

This is why we are urging the Henry County Commission to take the simple steps needed to stop the spread and requiring Henry Countians to wear masks along with continuing to encourage washing hands, maintaining physical distance, and limiting groups and gatherings. Just a month ago, we might have come to a different conclusion, but the rapidly changing nature of this disease requires daily vigilance and adaptation. A masking requirement will help us as a medical community to ensure that we can care for our community.

We are more than glad to talk with you and the County Commission to provide an ongoing assessment of this very fluid pandemic. Rest assured, the medical community wishes more than anything to see this wave pass with a return to normal and healthy life in Henry County. At this point, however, we must manage things as they are and not as we wish they were. Science and evidence are telling us that without following these simple steps and requiring masking, we will escalate this crisis in our county, resulting in more suffering and even deaths.

We appreciate your service to the community and the difficult decisions you as leaders are asked to make. There is only one way we will all get through this – as a united community, protecting each other and our loved ones.

Sincerely,

Scott Whitby, M.D.



*C. Wright Pinson, M.B.A., M.D.
Deputy Chief Executive Officer and
Chief Health System Officer*

July 31, 2020

Mayor Brent Greer
Mayor, Henry County
101 W. Washington Street
Paris, TN 38242

Dear Mayor Greer,

I am writing in support of requiring cloth face masks to be worn in public by the citizens of Henry County to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. In our battle with the pandemic, we know that wearing masks, along with physical distancing and hand hygiene are our best tools to fight the spread of the virus.

Middle Tennessee and West Tennessee are experiencing an alarming surge of COVID infections with record numbers of new cases being reported nearly each day. Today, Nashville area hospitals, are facing concerns about capacity. At our downtown Nashville campus, and particularly Vanderbilt University Adult Hospital, the number of COVID positive patients in our care is at an all-time high. The public should share in our concern because available hospital bed space to care for the critically ill is essential.

There is abundant clinical evidence now that consistently wearing cloth masks help us keep each other safe. On our campuses and in our hospitals and clinics wearing a mask is mandatory for all employees, patients and visitors.

Requiring wearing cloth masks in public will help keep our communities safe, our businesses open and our economy moving.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "C. Wright Pinson".

C. Wright Pinson, MBA, MD
Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Chief Health System Officer
Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Paris-Henry County, Tennessee

New Mask Ordinance Guidelines

Effective August 5, 2020

All persons in Henry County shall wear a cloth or other face covering over their nose and mouth while in public and publicly-accessible areas.



Some exceptions where masks are not required and social distancing is being practiced...

Within a residence or automobile (unless transporting others)

Children 12 years of age and younger

Those who have trouble breathing

People with disabilities who are unable to put on or remove a face covering

While eating or drinking, or while seated in a public restaurant

While outdoors unless social distancing can not be practiced

While in a house of worship or voting (unless required)

Offices or cubicles not open to the public

While exercising or engaged in physical activity

For more information,
visit www.maskuphc.com.

WE NEED YOU!
#MaskUpHC

STEP UP • MASK UP • WASH UP

Help Prevent COVID-19 Spread



Wear Face Covering

Wash Your Hands



Use Disinfectant

Practice Social Distance



We Recommend Wearing A Mask In Our Community.

Masks are required by Executive Order.



STEP UP ✦ MASK UP ✦ WASH UP

www.maskuphc.com

WE NEED YOU!

#MaskUpHC

STEP UP ✦ MASK UP ✦ WASH UP



AGENCY

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