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MEMORANDUM

TO: Child Care Providers

FROM: Office of Child and Family Services

DATE: March 2, 2022

SUBJECT: Changes to Child Care Mask Guidelines

The Maine Department of Health and Human Services is announcing today that effective March 9, 2022, universal masking is no longer a statewide recommendation in child care and school settings but is optional.

Previously, the U.S. CDC recommended that all child care facilities and schools implement universal masking. That guidance was updated on February 25, 2022. The Maine CDC has completed its assessment of the U.S. CDC's revised guidance, and now encourages child cares and other entities to consider the new guidance as one piece of information in a holistic approach to deciding whether masking is appropriate for them.

This change is dependent on continued stability in COVID-19 trends in Maine, including reduced hospitalizations, reduced virus levels in wastewater, and reduced school outbreaks and absenteeism, among other quantitative and qualitative factors. It also comes as Maine and the rest of the nation enter a new phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, where vaccines, therapeutics, and other interventions highly effective at preventing serious illness and death are widely available.

Additional information, including updates to isolation and quarantine guidance, will be provided through an Updated Child Care Guidance release by the Office of Child and Family Services in the near future.