Local Businesses & Organizations,

First, we would like to thank you for your tireless efforts to ensure the health and safety of the Tompkins County community. It is due in-part to your efforts that we have been able to navigate this pandemic thus far, and your flexibility has been critical in being able to adjust to the presence of the virus and get to such a high level of community vaccination.

We are sharing with you the health advisory that was issued on Friday July 30 regarding mask-wearing for residents regardless of vaccination status (attached and below) as well as a series of clarifications for your consideration:

- This is an **advisory** and includes no mandates or requirements outside of the current state mandate for unvaccinated individuals to continue to wear a mask while indoors and around others.
- This advisory is not meant to directly alter your business operations or supersede previous New York State guidance, such as patrons removing masks while seated at a restaurant or when workers are in their own offices or distanced from other individuals.
- TCHD issued this advisory following the number of local new positive cases reaching the CDC's threshold of "substantial spread" (50 cases/100,000 residents in 7 days). In absence of further New York State guidance, and with the increase in local cases, TCHD decided to encourage mask-wearing by members of the public.
- Tompkins County shared this message with our 700+ employees, encouraging (but not requiring) masking when indoors and around others. The encouragement to wear masks is an effort to stop the potential for spread of the disease while density has increased at businesses, offices, and indoor spaces across the community.
- Tompkins County is not enforcing the guidance in this advisory. It is incumbent on each resident, business, and organization to take actions that they feel appropriate based on the information provided.
- According to New York State's previous (June 15) lifting of COVID-19 restrictions:
    - With the removal of the State's minimum standard for reopening, businesses are free to choose to lift all or some restrictions, continue to adhere to the State's archived guidance, or implement other health precautions for their employees and patrons.
    - Businesses are also authorized to require masks and six feet of social distancing for employees and patrons within their establishments, regardless of vaccination status.
    - Any mask requirements that businesses choose to implement must adhere to applicable federal and state laws and regulations, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The following may be best practices for businesses related to this advisory and the current state of the pandemic – please note that at this time these are not requirements or mandates:

- Consider encouraging or requiring mask-wearing by employees and patrons regardless of vaccination status.
- TCHD has published several graphic resources and posters for local businesses: https://tompkinscountyny.gov/health/factsheets/coronavirusdownloads
- Consider encouraging or requiring your employees and/or patrons to get vaccinated. Vaccines continue to provide the most effective protection against severe disease, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19. Information on vaccine clinics can be found at: https://tompkinscountyny.gov/health/covid19popup. You can request a pop-up clinic here: https://tompkinscountyny.gov/health/covid19popuprequestform

- Information on New York State's Vaccine Excelsior Pass can be found here: https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/excelsior-pass
- In the event you have questions or concerns, contact: tceh@tompkins-co.org, or (607) 274-6688

TCHD is committed to continuing to provide timely and accurate information to the public regarding COVID-19.

Dominick Recckio
Communications Director
Tompkins County Administration
125 E. Court St.
Ithaca, NY 14850
Cell: 315-730-1189
drecckio@tompkins-co.org
www.TompkinsCountyNY.gov