



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

Statement by Senator Shelley Mayer in Response to CDC's Updated Mask Guidance

SHELLEY B. MAYER February 25, 2022

Today's announcement by the CDC makes it clear that the extreme risks from COVID-19 have diminished significantly nationally and we need to move towards coexistence with the virus consistent with scientific findings. In light of the **CDC's decision**, I believe it is now time to adopt new rules in New York State with respect to masks. To that end, I urge Governor Hochul to immediately:

1. Remove the mandate of masks in compliance with CDC recommendations in schools and preschools in those counties of NYS identified by the CDC as at low or medium levels of risk;
2. Provide detailed guidance to parents, school districts, teachers and other staff with respect to the factors that would trigger reintroduction of a mask mandate in schools on a regional or county-wide basis;
3. Encourage parents and guardians of children 5 and up to get children vaccinated as soon as possible, including getting booster shots, where medically appropriate; and
4. Direct schools and preschools to adhere to CDC guidance regarding continued use of masks by individuals at higher risk of severe illness in accordance with CDC guidance.

Many parents and education stakeholders are concerned that the ongoing requirement of masks in schools is no longer necessary or scientifically justified. Others fear that the removal of the mask mandate poses ongoing threats to young children unable to be vaccinated, or to teachers and staff who are not able to receive the vaccine. I am hopeful these disagreements can be voiced civilly and respectfully as we move ahead.

I have deferred to the CDC for expert guidance during the duration of the COVID pandemic, and today's announcement should prompt Governor Hochul to take action in accordance with that guidance.