

MEMO

TO: PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITIZEN RESPONSE TASK FORCE (CRTF) HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE, Chair Ann Birner

DATE: 21 JULY 2020

RE: STATEMENT RELATING TO CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, MASKS AND CITY "RE-OPENING"

The CRTF was established by the City Council and charged with "...addressing the needs of re-opening, within the confines of health care advisories." The Health Subcommittee was recently established to focus on the review and discussion of emerging scientific and clinical data in order to summarize for the CRTF and to make recommendations to the CRTF based on those data. Membership includes individuals with education and experience in medicine, pharmacy, and nursing, including the City's Health Officer. The City Public Information Officer also advises the subcommittee.

Based upon our assessment of currently available information, the Health Subcommittee has agreed upon and/or recommends the following:

- 1) We endorse the Mask Resolution approved by the City Council on July 13th and the intent to consider strategies for enforcement in the near future.
- 2) Residents and visitors should be encouraged to use masks outdoors as well as indoors, especially but not only when social distance of 6' cannot be maintained
- 3) Face shields have not been shown to prevent the spread of coronavirus as well as masks that securely fit the nose and mouth; and should be used as an addition to masks, not a replacement.
- 4) Individuals claiming medical conditions that would exclude them from complying with the City ordinance should be able to readily obtain and should have available documentation from a health care provider

The relatively low numbers of cases in our immediate vicinity are gratifying, yet we cannot let our guard down as a result. Should that happen, we as a group cannot emphasize enough our concern regarding the potential for a worsening situation pursuant to Portsmouth's re-opening. Ongoing, stringent precautions and consideration of our citizens' continued vulnerability should inform standards for the foreseeable future.

Signed (subcommittee members' names)