



BOONE COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY  
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2 July 2020

To the Members of the Columbia City Council:

***On behalf of the Boone County Medical Society, we wish to strongly encourage the mid-Missouri community to wear masks in indoor spaces, especially when social distancing is not possible.***

As of the evening of 1 July 2020, Boone County has seen a significant recent increase in our cases, in our positivity rate and in our doubling rate. Overall, the county has had a total of 390 total positive cases, and currently 107 active cases of COVID-19. Of those, 18 Boone County citizens have been hospitalized, six of which are still currently hospitalized, two deaths and 238 contacts are currently in quarantine.

When reviewing statistics up to 15 June, Boone County had 216 cases, so we have had an increase of 184 in just over two weeks. Our positivity rate over the past two weeks has also increased dramatically from 1-2 percent to over 5 percent. Our doubling rate is also concerning: it took approximately 60 days to get to our first 100 cases, 30 days to get to our second hundred cases and only 14 days to get to our third hundred cases.

As you may know, the CDC recommends that all people age two and older should wear face masks in public settings when around people outside of their household, especially when social distancing is difficult. Exceptions<sup>2</sup> to these recommendations include:

- deaf individuals who may need to lip-read;
- younger children who may be unable to wear a cloth face covering properly;
- if individuals are in activities where the cloth covering will become wet (like with swimming);
- if individuals are engaged in intense physical activity, such as running;
- if individuals are working in settings which increase the risk of heat-related illnesses or safety concerns (like straps getting caught in machinery).

One study showed that certain countries that implemented mandatory face masking had lower death rates from COVID-19 than other countries that did not have such mandatory mask policies. That study suggests that, even though masks may not prevent infection, face masks may presumptively lower the viral load transmitted to others, which may allow the immune system more time to develop and adequate response.

Another study modelled the impact of mask use by the general public, showing that mask use decreases effective transmission rate by blocking some infectious contacts. The community-wide benefits are greatest when face masks are used in conjunction with social and physical distancing, and when there is high compliance with masking.

Given our recent increase in cases, and given the evidence suggesting that mask use can be an effective tool to help reduce the death rate during this COVID-19 pandemic, masking should be strongly encouraged.

***On behalf of the Boone County Medical Society, we wish to strongly encourage the mid-Missouri community to wear masks in indoor spaces, especially when social distancing is not possible.***

Sincerely,

Alan E Hillard, MD,  
BCMS President