

**To:** Montgomery College Community

**From:** Dr. Jermaine F. Williams, President

**Subject:** **Changes to Face Mask Requirement**

**Date:** March 24, 2022

I continue to be impressed by the resilience of the Montgomery College community. Students, faculty, and staff have lived through the past two years with courage, creativity, and grace as you embraced new health protocols and adapted to new ways of learning, teaching, and working. Health and safety decisions throughout the pandemic have been and will remain guided by science as well as local, state, and national health agencies.

Based on updated guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as well as local and state health officials, Montgomery College will relax our face mask requirement in a phased manner. In considering this decision, my leadership team and I consulted with the College Council and the leaders of the unions representing full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and staff. Effective Monday, March 28, face masks will be optional for students, faculty, staff, contractors, vendors, and visitors inside College buildings and facilities, with the following important exceptions:

- Masks will continue to be required in all classroom settings, including laboratories, learning centers, and other instructional spaces. Instructors may remove their masks while teaching provided they use good judgment to maintain appropriate distance from students. While the College does not have a distancing requirement, considering distance is encouraged.
- Masks will continue to be required in the Montgomery College Center for Early Education.
- Masks will continue to be required on the MC shuttles.
- Masks should be worn by anyone with symptoms of COVID-19, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19.

Although masks will become optional for many indoor spaces, including libraries, gymnasiums, performing arts centers, offices, workspaces, and meeting areas, some of us may be more comfortable continuing to wear a mask. In addition, employees may request that visitors to their own individual offices or workstations wear masks while visiting. We ask that community members cooperate respectfully with these requests. The College will continue to provide KN95 masks at Public Safety offices, Raptor Central locations, and by orders placed by departments through the Office of Facilities service desk. KN95 masks provide effective protection against the spread of the coronavirus and other viruses. Please respect and support those who choose to wear masks. You can find answers to frequently asked questions about changes in the face mask requirement at the College's [Return to Campus webpage](#).

As the College has pivoted before, note that, if COVID-19 cases begin to rise, we may need to take whatever action is necessary to keep our community safe, including restoring face mask requirements. Based on the CDC's new metrics, Montgomery County is currently in the low transmission range. Combined with the high rate of fully vaccinated faculty, staff, and students, this shift to optional mask wearing is made with confidence. It is our hope that these positive trends continue and support further relaxing of enhanced COVID-19 safety protocols.

We must all remain vigilant, including staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccines. The College strongly encourages everyone to be fully vaccinated and receive a vaccine booster. The vaccines and boosters are critically important for preventing serious illness and hospitalization. Also, the College continues to ask that everyone take the College's daily COVID-19 symptom [self-assessment](#). If you experience COVID-19 symptoms or have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19, you are encouraged to get tested at one of the [county's testing sites](#).

The College will continue to monitor current conditions and guidance from public health authorities. As health conditions evolve and change, the College may adjust protocols and directives accordingly. I encourage everyone to keep abreast of current information via the [testing and quarantine webpage](#). Please direct questions to [PublicHealth@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:PublicHealth@montgomerycollege.edu).

Finally, I want to thank Director of Public Health and Environmental Safety Chevelle Glymph for her work and leadership at the College. She arrived at a critical time and brings a wealth of experience to her role. Going forward, please watch for the College's health-related decisions and messages to come from Director Glymph.

Thank you for your attention to these critical health matters and thank you for your dedication to our student success mission.