



MEMORANDUM

TO: All Residents
FROM: John Dwyer, President/CEO
RE: Covenant Woods guidelines for masking
DATE: May 17, 2021

We have had some questions relative to Covenant Woods’ protocols relative to the Governor’s easing of indoor masking requirements he announced on Friday in response to the Thursday pronouncement by the CDC. An excerpt of the Governor’s press release, issued May 14, 2021, is found on the reverse of this memo for your information. For the full text go to: www.governor.virginia.gov and click on Full article.

The release specifically speaks to Covenant Woods as we are considered a health care facility in Manor East and congregate living setting in independent living. It states as follows:

“The CDC guidelines state that fully-vaccinated individuals do not have to wear masks in most indoor settings, *except on public transit, in health care facilities, and in congregate settings*. Businesses retain the ability to require masks in their establishments. Employees who work in certain business sectors—including restaurants, retail, fitness, personal care, and entertainment—must continue to wear masks unless fully vaccinated, per CDC guidance. Those who are unvaccinated or not fully-vaccinated are strongly encouraged to wear masks in all settings.”

As my memo last Friday stated, Covenant Woods is working diligently to gather information from many available sources for guidance on what we can do to reduce restrictions. I realize everyone’s frustration as we have endured reduced freedoms to which we have become accustomed over the past year. There is no denying, however, our efforts have been very successful in keeping our campus safe.

Effective tomorrow, May 18, fully vaccinated residents in IL will no longer have to mask or socially distance in hallways and common areas such as the foyers, living rooms, parlors, the library, etc. Current protocols related to masking and distancing in dining venues as well as screening and masking of visitors and staff remain unchanged. All restrictions relative to visitors to IL remain in place, including not being in dining venues or common areas of the building. Please be sure to advise your friends and loved ones who plan to visit campus there is no change as relates to them for the present. Unvaccinated residents are expected to continue to mask and socially distance in all public settings, except no mask required outdoors as long as socially distanced.

Effective Thursday, May 20, any fully vaccinated IL residents attending Covenant Woods sponsored indoor group activities in IL also will not have to mask or distance. Unvaccinated IL residents in attendance will need to mask and 6 ft socially distance.

Our local health department has advised they expect additional announcement(s) from Governor Northam on or before May 28 which they believe will provide for more relaxation. We are hopeful this will entail a reduction in 6 ft distancing for unvaccinated residents as well as perhaps greater capacity allowances and relaxed masking requirements in seated dining venues. We are excited to be able to relax some of the restrictions, at least in the IL area of our campus. Thank you for your patience and cooperation.

Excerpted from
Governor Northam's press release

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The state of emergency in Virginia will remain in place at least through June 30 to provide flexibility for local government and support ongoing COVID-19 vaccination efforts. Governor Northam will take executive action to ensure individuals have the option to wear masks up to and after that date. Masks will continue to be required in K-12 public schools, given low rates of vaccination among children.

Virginia has administered nearly 7 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines. More than 4 million people have received at least one dose of the vaccine, representing over 63 percent of Virginia's adult population. Governor Northam has said he remains confident the Commonwealth will meet President Biden's goal of having 70 percent of adults vaccinated with at least one dose by July 4.

COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and the percent of positive tests continue to fall throughout the Commonwealth. Virginia is currently reporting a positivity rate of 3.5 percent, which is lower than at any time since the start of the pandemic. The Commonwealth's seven-day average of new cases is 555, the lowest number in over 10 months. Virginia is currently recording its lowest number of COVID-19 hospitalizations at 684. For additional data on COVID-19 on Virginia and vaccination efforts, please see the Virginia Department of Health's data dashboards.

The full text of Seventh Amended Executive Order Seventy-Two and Order of Public Health Emergency Nine, which takes effect on May 15, can be found at www.governor.virginia.gov