

TEAMMATE SCRIPTING TOOL

Masking Optional

Masking Guidelines for Advocate Health Care and Aurora Health Care

Optional masking is currently in place across all Advocate Health Care (Illinois) facilities. Effective Monday, April 17, all Wisconsin facilities will move to optional masking.

Masking Optional Guidelines

- Masking is **highly encouraged** in the following areas/patients:
 - Congregate areas for patient care where many patients are together in one space. Examples include behavioral health setting, inpatient rehab
- Masking requirements **may apply** in Oncology and Transplant units/departments
- Masking continues to be a **requirement** as part of our PPE for patients in transmission-based isolation (e.g., Droplet precautions)
- Masks will continue to be provided at all entrances.

Scripting for Masking Optional: Explaining the change

- *"Thank you for asking. We have moved to Masking Optional at our facility because our community transmission level, which is the presence and spread of COVID-19, has been lower for several months. The CDC guidelines consider optional masking as safe for healthcare facilities who are in communities at these lower levels."*
- *"Please know it is optional so if you prefer to continue to mask please do so and we continue to have masks available at our entrances."*

Scripting for patients/visitors who make negative comments about masking

- Some patients/visitors who are happy to no longer mask may make comments such as *"thank goodness that stupid rule is gone"* or *"they finally realized masking doesn't work."*
- It is important to remember that masking is an effective way to prevent spread AND it may be reinstituted in the future during high levels of respiratory disease such as the flu.
- It will be important to avoid reinforcing the negative comment. The following scripting to these comments can help:
 - *"We know masking has been difficult for many and we are glad the transmission levels are lower now and we can safely relax the masking requirement for all of our patients and visitors."*

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Scripting for patient who choose to mask and asks clinical care team to mask during patient encounter

- Some patients may choose to continue to mask and prefer that their clinical care team wears a mask during the patient's clinical care encounter.
- We want to ensure patients feel safe and as such expect our physicians, nurses and other clinical teammates to wear a mask if requested by the patient during their care encounter.
- The following scripting can be used in response to this request:
 - *"Yes we are happy to wear masks during your time with us. We want to be sure you feel safe during your care."*