Banner Health

Banner Health opposes lifting mask mandates

PHOENIX (Sept. 23, 2020) – Banner Health, Arizona's largest health care system, is strongly opposed to any decision or consideration to relax existing mask mandates. Evidence shows the mandates are working to slow the spread of COVID-19. Rolling back mask and distancing mandates now will reverse gains in slowing the spread.

The declining COVID-19 infection rates are the result of swift and diligent action by our city and county leaders to mandate masking, social distancing and other protective measures. Rolling those back now is not prudent. Our city leaders must hold strong and retain the mask mandates.

"Our health care heroes on the front lines and all those supporting their efforts have been lifted up during the toughest times thanks to our communities doing the right thing to slow the spread," said Peter Fine, president and CEO of Banner Health. "For their sake, and everyone's sake, we must stay the course on masking and distancing for the foreseeable future."

Banner Health hospitals in metro Phoenix have cared for nearly 50 percent of all the state's COVID-19 patients. The organization is finally seeing encouraging signs of fewer COVID hospitalizations. However, there is still worrisome community spread of the virus, and the younger age range of those infected is concerning. Banner's medical experts understand that the community is experiencing "COVID fatigue," but COVID-19 is still strong and in our midst.

Also, with flu season upon us, Banner experts say masking and getting a flu shot are the best one-two punch to stay healthy and stop the spread. The virus is still very prevalent in our community and signs point to another surge later this year, according to patterns in other parts of the world.

We know—and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirms—wearing a mask reduces the spread of infection. Retaining the mask mandates is the right thing to do.

As one of the largest nonprofit health care systems in the country, the team at Banner Health is committed to ensuring all Banner locations are a safe place for care. Headquartered in Phoenix, Banner Health owns and operates 28 acute-care hospitals and an array of other services, including: Banner Imaging, Banner Telehealth and Banner Urgent Care. Team members are dedicated to protecting the health and safety of patients, be it a routine checkup, elective surgery or an urgent health service. Waiting room and employee workstation layouts maintain proper social distancing; screenings are conducted at hospital entrances to verify that all employees and visitors are well; and, all Banner physicians are equipped to visit patients remotely. Learn more about Banner's commitment to safety at bannerhealth.com/safecare.

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