

Masking requirements for Pennsylvania dental facilities

There remains some confusion as to whether patients should be wearing masks in waiting rooms and other public areas of dental facilities.

The ADA's interpretation of the CDC's new "COVID-19 Community Levels" guidance (Feb. 25, 2022), is that it may apply to public areas of a dental facility and that some patients would not have to wear masks should certain conditions be met.

However, the ADA also states ***that any COVID-related guidelines from state or local jurisdictions take precedence for dental offices.*** PDA has confirmed with the Pennsylvania Department of Health that the CDC's new "COVID-19 Community Levels" guidance for masking in public settings ***does not apply to health care settings (including public areas)*** and that the **DOH Guidance for Dental Health Care Personnel** from June 2020, recommending that dentists continue to follow the CDC's recommendations for health care settings, remains in effect.

CDC's most current recommendations for health care settings (Feb. 2, 2022) first and foremost recommends *universal source control*. Well-fitting masks are recommended for everyone in a healthcare setting. **This includes waiting rooms and other "public" areas.**

Though CDC recommendations are not enforceable as a regulation or ruling, Pennsylvania State Board of Dentistry regulations consider a failure to follow CDC guidelines unprofessional conduct, subject to disciplinary action.

To better assist our members who have patients questioning the masking recommendation, **PDA collaborated with ADA for another new sign that you may print and post in different areas of your office.** We also have the **previous sign** that can be used for your waiting room.

We are proud to be the trusted voice of dentistry in PA and your trusted resource for reliable information. We will keep you updated when anything changes.