October 20, 2020

The Honorable Clint Hickman and

Members of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors

Maricopa County Board of Supervisors

301 West Jefferson Street

Phoenix, Arizona 85003

Dear Chairman Hickman and Members of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors:

As leaders in the health care ecosystem, we thank you for supporting public health with the mask mandate, the most effective safety protocol to minimize infection with the exception of a shelter in place mandate.

We understand there is a small but vocal minority calling for the elimination of the mask mandate in Maricopa. We urge you to continue maintaining the mandate. To lift the mandate would be a devastating blow to the progress we have seen in the past few months of declining COVID infection and death rates in Arizona, once an epicenter of the pandemic.

Until a vaccine is widely available, masks and social distancing are the most effective tools we have to save lives, short of widespread shelter in place orders that would devastate the economy.

* Multiple scientific studies have been published demonstrating proper mask usage reduces infection[[1]](#endnote-1). There have been no scientific studies that show masks do not reduce COVID infection.
* Our own experience in Arizona reflects the effectiveness of widespread mask usage. We came dangerously close to exceeding hospital capacity in Arizona over the July 4th weekend. Since the mask mandate was implemented, hospital inpatient rates and deaths due to COVID have continued to drop. A recent CDC report expressed that masks played a crucial role in controlling the outbreak in Arizona this past summer.[[2]](#endnote-2) The United States has struggled more than any other county with mask mandates, enduring almost 21% of total deaths with only about 4% of the entire world population.
* According to a Harvard CAPS/Harris Pool, 79% support a mask mandate (July 2020).

Science supports mask wearing. Removing the mask mandate before a vaccine is available will cost lives. We urge you to maintain the existing mask mandate.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical matter.

Sincerely yours,

1. The World Health Organization, June 2020, Institute for Health Metrics, June 2020, Health affairs-Wyi Lyu & George Wehby, June 2020 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. The Center for Disease Control, October 2020 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)