

Protect Our Children

A Message from Local Pediatric Medical Providers

Dear Private and Public School Leaders and Board Members and School Supporters,

We are reaching out to you today as a group of concerned physicians in our community to respectfully urge private and public school leaders, boards and supporters to follow the recommendation made by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) regarding masks/facial coverings: **“All students older than 2 years and all school staff should wear face masks at school (unless medical or developmental conditions prohibit use).”**

Since a significant portion of the student population is not eligible for vaccination, universal masking is imperative to protect unvaccinated students from COVID-19 and reduce transmission. There are also continued concerns regarding variants, such as the Delta variant, that are more easily spread among children, adolescents and adults. The Delta variant has been shown to be transmissible even by vaccinated individuals due to its high viral load.

We echo the AAP in strongly advocating that all policy considerations for back-to-school plans amidst COVID-19 should start with a goal of keeping students safe and physically present in school. The importance of in-person learning is well-documented, and there is already evidence of the negative impacts on children because of school closures in 2020. Universal masking not only keeps students and employees healthy, but it would also greatly reduce the number of students and employees who are quarantined – the isolation of quarantine is not healthy for students and can be largely avoided with universal masking in place.

We are grateful that progress has been made toward beating this pandemic, but if we do not stay the course now, we risk losing all for which we have sacrificed.

It’s back to school time and, as many of us have friends and family in the schools, we know that “strong recommendations” to wear masks are not resulting in the universal masking that is needed to minimize the surge of COVID-19 in our community. Optional masking is not sufficient, as masks are most effective when all individuals are wearing them. Families, students and employees should not be given the choice to mask when this choice endangers the health of those around them.

Universal masking worked last school year during in-person learning. Please stay the course and implement universal masking until students of all ages are eligible to be vaccinated. This will help to reduce illness and prevent the isolation of quarantine.

We thank you for your time and all of your incredibly hard work this past year. As physicians in the community, we ask that you make the right choice to protect our students, employees and community. We continue to encourage all who are eligible to be vaccinated, as that is the best way for us to stop COVID-19 transmission for the future. But through masking, social distancing and good hygiene practices, we can decrease the spread today.

Sincerely,

Lysa Aemmer, MD, Mercy Health - Spring Valley Pediatrics	Physicians Group, Toledo Pediatrics	Physicians Group, Toledo Pediatrics
Amy Alt-Coan, MD, Mercy Health - Pediatrics	Cathy Cantor, MD, Pediatrician, Mercy Health Physician Group CMO	Benjamin Goldstein, MD, Pulmonologist, ProMedica Russell J. Ebeid Children's Hospital, Associate Director, Pediatric Cystic Fibrosis Center
Nathan Balusik, MD, McLaren St. Luke's Waterville Family Physicians	Amy Cedargren, MD, Pediatricare Associates	Roberta Guibord, DO, Family Medicine
Sanjoy Banerjee, MD, Gastroenterologist, ProMedica Russell J. Ebeid Children's Hospital	Rebecca Clark, MD, Pediatrician, ProMedica Physicians Group, Arrowhead Pediatrics	Stacy Harr, MD, ProMedica Physicians Group, Perrysburg Pediatrics
Sara Barnett-Hamen, MD, Hospitalist, ProMedica Russell J. Ebeid Children's Hospital	Susan Clay-Hufford, MD, Pediatrician, ProMedica Physicians Group, Toledo Pediatrics	Brenda Hartley, MD, Pediatrician, ProMedica Physicians Group, Toledo Pediatrics
Bruce Barnett, MD, Vice President Medical Affairs, ProMedica Russell J. Ebeid Children's Hospital	Gary Collins, MD, Pediatrician, ProMedica Physicians Group, Toledo Pediatrics	Ateeq Haseeb, MD, Mercy Health - Children's Hospital
Dennis Bartholomew, MD, Nationwide Children's Hospital	George Darah, MD, Family Medicine Physician, ProMedica Russell J. Ebeid Children's Hospital	Erin Hill, CPNP, Mercy Health Village Square Pediatrics
Stephen Bazeley, MD, McLaren St. Luke's Waterville Family Physicians	Jamie Dargart, MD, Pulmonologist, ProMedica Physicians Group, Pediatric Hematology/Oncology	Shaina Hochmuth, CNP, Family Medicine, Mercy Health - Perrysburg Primary Care
Marianne Black, MD, Franklin Park Pediatrics	Shonola DaSilva, MD, AVPMA, ProMedica Russell J. Ebeid Children's Hospital	Cailly Howell-McLean, MD, Mercy Pediatric Groups
Lindsey Bostelman, MD, McLaren St. Luke's Waterville Family Medicine	Zach Dooley, MD, McLaren St. Luke's Waterville Family Physicians	Rajat Kaul, MD, Hospitalist, ProMedica Russell J. Ebeid Children's Hospital
Holly Brine, MD, Neonatologist/Pediatrician McLaren St. Luke's	Jon Dvorak, MD, Director of Medical Operations, ProMedica Physicians Group, Pediatrics	Meghan Keaton, MD, Pulmonologist, ProMedica Russell J. Ebeid Children's Hospital
Andrea Bruss, MD, McLaren St. Luke's Waterville Family Physicians	Abdelkhalek Elagamy, DO, Pediatrician, ProMedica Physicians Group, Arrowhead Pediatrics	Diane Kielmeyer, CNP, Family Medicine, Mercy Health - Perrysburg Primary Care
Mark Bruss, MD, McLaren St. Luke's Waterville Family Physicians	Katherine Gerlach, MD, Pediatrician, ProMedica Physicians Group, Toledo Pediatrics	Rakesh Kumar, MD, Gastroenterologist, ProMedica Physicians Group
Aaron Buerk, MD, Orthopedic Surgeon, ProMedica Russell J. Ebeid Children's Hospital	Mohammad Ghali, MD, Pediatrician, ProMedica	Tiffany Lisk, MD, Hospitalist, ProMedica Russell J. Ebeid Children's Hospital
Alan Burlingame, MD, Pediatrician, ProMedica		Jacob Maciejewski, MD, Pediatrician, ProMedica

Physicians Group, Oregon
Pediatrics
John D McBride, MD, Franklin
Park Pediatrics
Heather Meade, MD, St.
Vincent Pediatric
Hospitalists
Julie Miller, DO, Pediatric
Physical Medicine,
ProMedica Russell J.
Ebeid Children's Hospital
Robert Mills, MD, Pediatricare
Associates
Kathleen Moltz, MD,
Endocrinologist,
ProMedica Russell J.
Ebeid Children's Hospital
Jeffrey Moore, MD,
Cardiologist, ProMedica
Russell J. Ebeid Children's
Hospital
Melissa Moore, MD,
Pediatrician, ProMedica
Physicians Group,
Arrowhead Pediatrics
Janet Moore, NP, Nurse
Practitioner, ProMedica
Russell J. Ebeid Children's
Hospital
Jennifer Mullen, DO,
Pediatrician, ProMedica
Physicians Group,
Arrowhead Pediatrics
Richard Munk, MD,
Orthopedist, ProMedica
Russell J. Ebeid Children's
Hospital
Deepa Munkundan, MD,
Infectious Disease,
ProMedica Russell J.
Ebeid Children's Hospital
Ashley Muszynski, MD,
Pediatrician, ProMedica
Physicians Group, Oregon
Pediatrics
Pamela Oatis, MD, Past Ohio
AAP Pediatrician of the
Year,, Mercy Health -
Pediatrics

Colleen Olson, MD,
Pediatrician, ProMedica
Physicians Group,
Perrysburg Pediatrics
Katelyn Oostra, MD,
Pediatrician, ProMedica
Physicians Group, Oregon
Pediatrics
Richard Paat, MD, McLaren St.
Luke's Internal Medicine
Denise Padanilam, MD,
Pediatricare Associates
Drew Palermo, PA, Family
Medicine, Mercy Health -
Perrysburg Primary Care
Mary Ellen Pizza, MD,
Pediatrician, ProMedica
Physicians Group, Toledo
Pediatrics
Eileen Quinn, MD, Mercy
Pediatric Development
Michael Retholtz, DO , Medical
Director – McLaren St.
Luke's Hospitalist
Services
Hamid Riaz, MD, Mercy Health
- Family Physicians
Veronica Rosenberg, MD
McLaren St. Luke's /
Toledo Clinic Hospitalist
Jennifer Ruddy, MD,
Pulmonologist,
ProMedica Russell J.
Ebeid Children's Hospital
Beverly Scholler, MD, Medical
Director of Urgent Care
for Kids, ProMedica
Physicians Group
Amanda Sherratt, MD,
Pediatrician, ProMedica
Russell J. Ebeid Children's
Primary Pediatric Clinic
Rebecca Siders, DO, McLaren
St. Luke's Waterville
Family Physicians
Shari Sontchi, MD,
Pediatrician, ProMedica
Physicians Group,
Arrowhead Pediatrics

Ann M. Steck, MD, McLaren
St. Luke's Family
Medicine Residency
Program
Howard Stein, MD, NICU,
ProMedica Russell J.
Ebeid Children's Hospital
Dagmar Stein, MD, PhD,
Director of Pediatric
Hematology/Oncology,
ProMedica Physicians
Group
Crawford Strunk, MD,
Director, Sickle Cell
Disease and
Hemoglobinopathy Clinic,
Pediatric
Hematology/Oncology
Sharon Thomas, MD,
Intensivist, ProMedica
Russell J. Ebeid Children's
Hospital
Susan Tourner, MD,
Intensivist, ProMedica
Russell J. Ebeid Children's
Hospital
Brooke T. Traloar, MD,
Pediatrician, ProMedica
Physicians Group, Toledo
Pediatrics
Lauren Uhrman, CPNP,
Pediatric Nurse
Practitioner - ProMedica
Physicians Arrowhead
Pediatrics
Stephanie Williams, MD,
McLaren St. Luke's Fallen
Timbers Family Medicine
Shannon Wronkovicz, MD, St.
Vincent Pediatric
Hospitalists