



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE OF DELAWARE
LEGISLATIVE HALL
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901

An Open Letter to Gov. John Carney

Dear Governor:

As we quickly approach the two-year anniversary of the official arrival of COVID-19 in The First State, we believe it is time for your administration to reconsider its actions.

Despite repeated requests, there has never been any public disclosure indicating what COVID-19 metrics your administration prioritizes in its decision-making process, what thresholds trigger the imposition of mandates, and what levels need to be achieved to remove restrictions once they have been imposed.

Based on the latest data provided by the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), more than two-thirds of our population (age 5+) has been fully vaccinated, including nearly 77% of adults. Those most at-risk for serious consequences from COVID – our senior citizens – have a full vaccination rate approaching 93%. Additionally, about a quarter of our population, including many individuals who chose not to be vaccinated, have had confirmed cases of COVID, providing some level of naturally acquired immunity. This does not count the untold thousands of Delawareans who had asymptomatic cases of the virus that escaped detection.

According to a recent (January 19, 2022) article published in the medical journal, The Lancet:

Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) models suggest that the transmission intensity of omicron is so high that policy actions -- e.g. increasing mask use, expanding vaccination coverage in people who have not been vaccinated, or delivering third doses of COVID-19 vaccines -- taken in the next weeks will have limited impact on the course of the omicron wave. IHME estimates suggest that increasing use of masks to 80% of the population, for example, will only reduce cumulative infections over the next 4 months by 10%. Increasing COVID-19 vaccine boosters or vaccinating people who have not yet been vaccinated is unlikely to have any substantial impact on the omicron wave because by the time these interventions are scaled up the omicron wave will be largely over.

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There is ample evidence the omicron wave crested in Delaware in early January. According to DHSS metrics, COVID hospitalizations, the percentage of positive tests, and the percentage of new cases, have all trended acutely downward over the last month.

We all realize that the last two years have presented unprecedented trials for leaders at every level of government around the world. Sharp disagreements about the nature, timing, and scope of how to respond to these uncharted conditions was unavoidable. While we have frequently disagreed with the actions of your administration, we recognize the extreme difficulty of having to make these decisions in such a chaotic environment.

Pursuing our current policies -- advocating a seemingly endless series of vaccinations and continuing the mandatory use of face masks in state facilities and schools (while lifting those mandates in the private sector) -- is imprudent and appears to lack any justifiable factual grounding. After spending trillions of dollars and making disturbing intrusions into every aspect of American life, our state and federal governments need to recognize the futility and hubris of believing they can fully eradicate COVID and eliminate every element of risk it presents.

Nearly two years after we jointly began this ordeal, we have enough reliable information to chart a path forward. We respectfully ask you to objectively assess our situation and urge you to promptly end all pandemic-related restrictions, return all state workers to their normal places of employment, and restore normality for all Delaware citizens.

Sincerely,

State Reps. Steve Smyk, Tim Dukes, Jesse Vanderwende, Mike Ramone, Danny Short, Mike Smith, Charles Postles, Jeff Spiegelman, Ruth Briggs King, Rich Collins, Ron Gray, Shannon Morris