

# Leading Healthy Communities that Care in Massachusetts

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# Facts remain the same

- COVID is harmful: Hospitalizations, long COVID, missed work and school, missed paychecks & food
- Absolute harms of COVID depend on:
  1. Number of COVID-19 cases: **Very high**
  2. Severity if infected: Vaccines & boosters
- Vaccines and boosters reduce but do not eliminate severe outcomes; not enough people are vaccinated or boosted
- COVID spreads through the air in crowded indoor settings

# Importance of leadership & policies

- Reducing the harms of COVID is not something any individual can do on their own.
- Reducing harms requires leadership on policies and delivery with a focus on equity.
- Vaccines, boosters, masks, tests, ventilation, and treatments all important.

# COVID spreads in all crowded indoor settings, including & especially schools

## The Delta variant spreads easily in indoor spaces when people are unmasked and unvaccinated

Occasionally unmasked adult infected with Delta variant worked for 2 days



12 of 24 kids infected



Schools can help stop spread by ensuring everyone:



Wears masks correctly in indoor spaces



Gets vaccinated, if eligible



Stays home if having symptoms

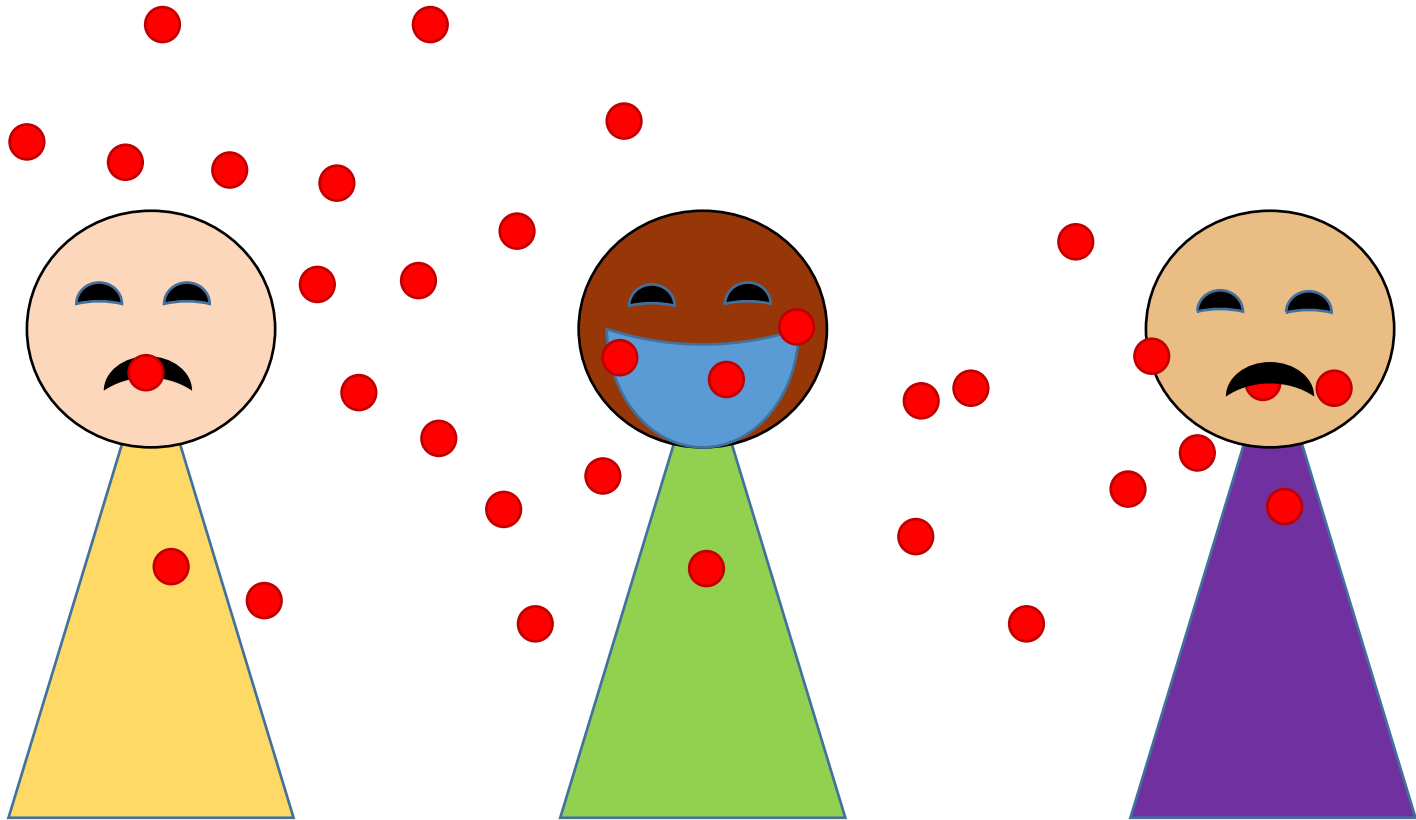


Tests routinely

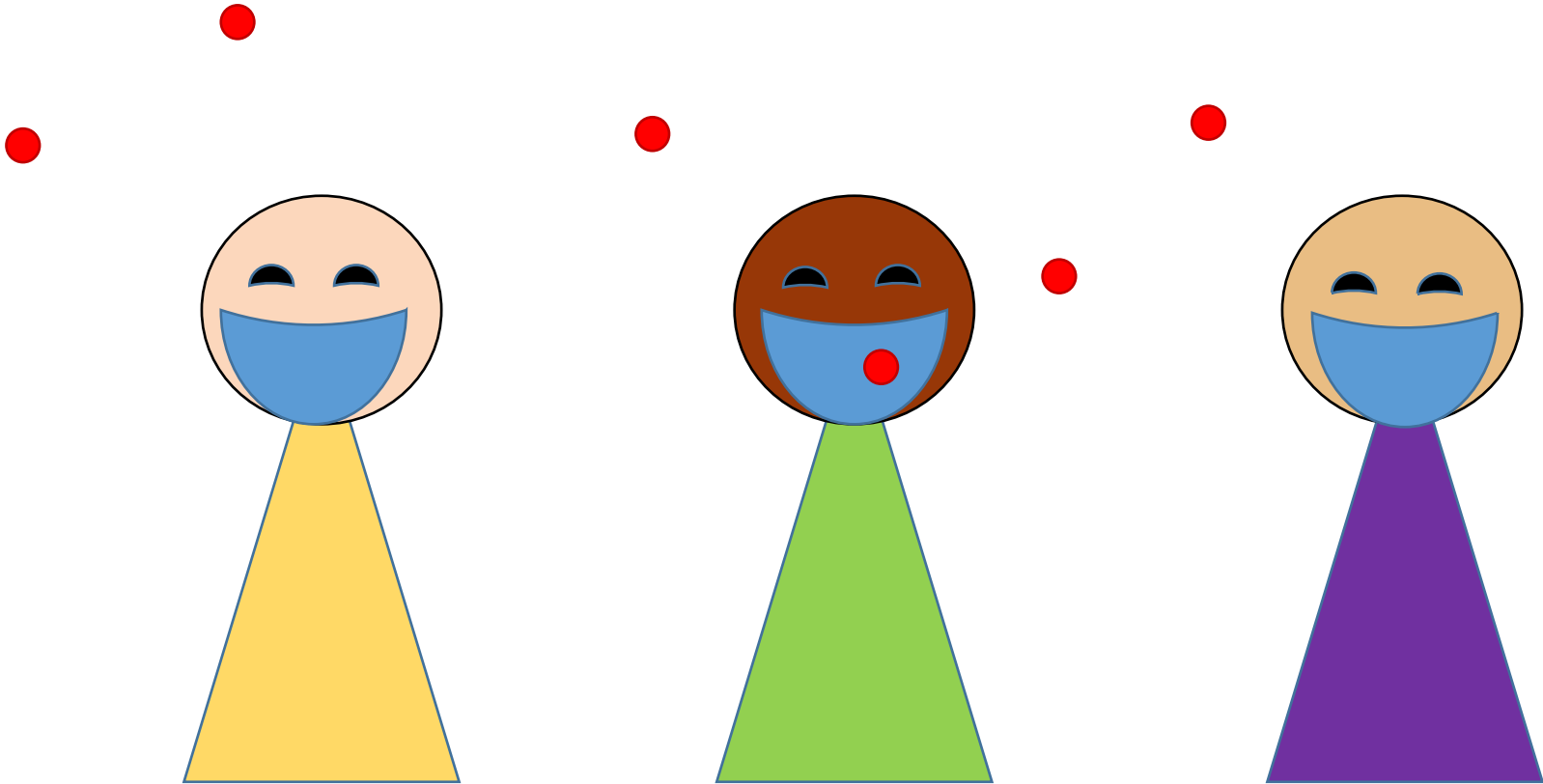
[bit.ly/MMWR82721b](https://bit.ly/MMWR82721b)

MMWR

# Masking alone: Less protection



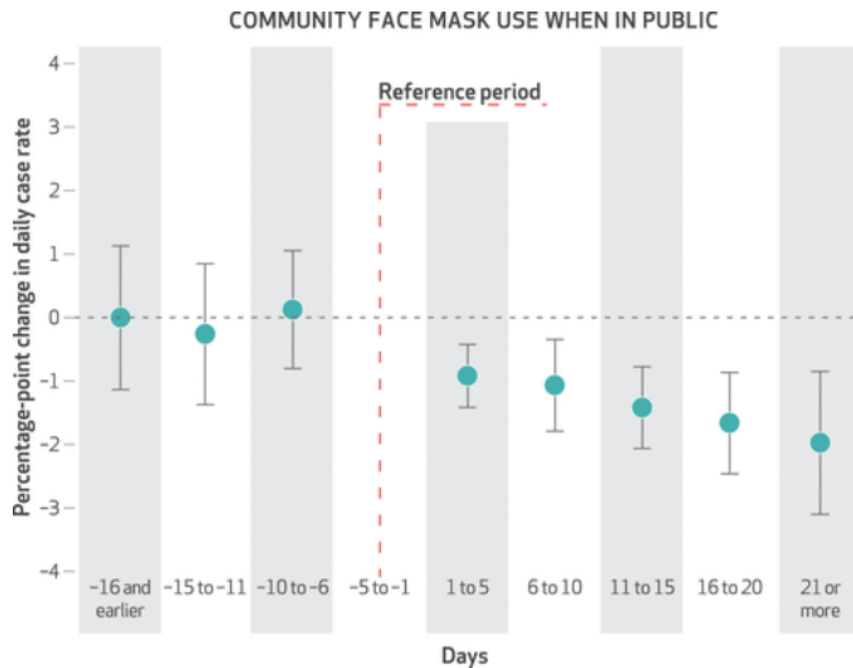
# Masking together: Most effective



# Strong evidence on state community face mask mandates & reduced COVID cases & deaths

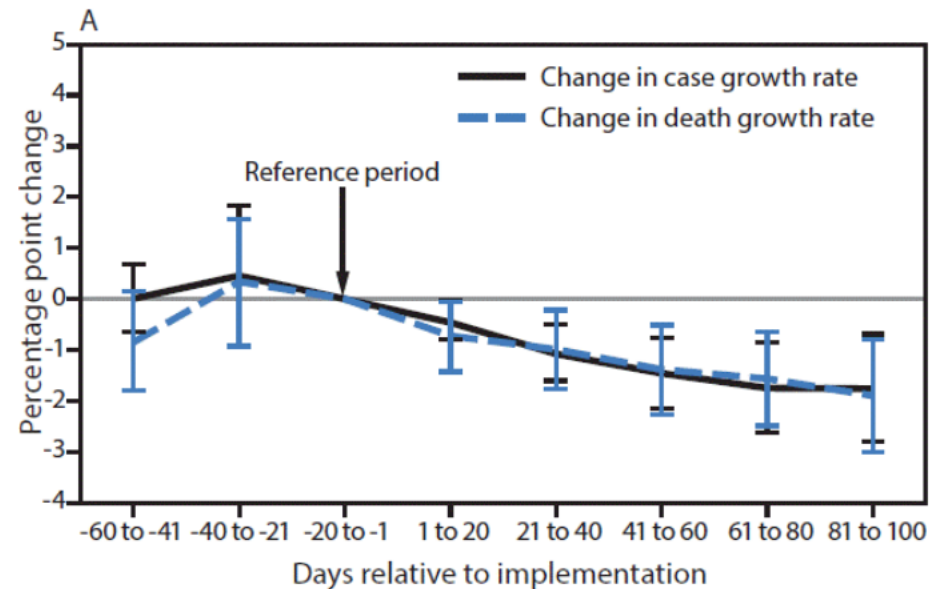
Lyu & Wehby, *Health Affairs*

State community face mask mandates and percentage point change in daily, county-level growth rate of COVID-19 cases, March 31 to May 22, 2020



Gery et al. *CDC MMWR*

State-issued mask mandates and county-level COVID-19 case and death growth rates, March 1–Dec 31, 2020



# Most parents want vaccine mandates & mask policies



Survey of 1,469 Parents of  
K-12 Students in Massachusetts

Massachusetts, 3/17 to 4/11/2022

- Just 38% of parents oppose mask policies
- 42% of parents oppose student vaccine mandates
- 18% to 28% of Black and Latino parents oppose mask policies
- 36% to 40% of Black & Latino parents oppose student vaccine mandates

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5eb9fa2f8ac4df11937f6a49/t/62701d22d154c200ece53cd1/1651514663367/Crossstabs+2022+04+Barr+Education+2.pdf>

		OVERALL	RACE, 4-WAY			
		Overall	White	Black	Latino	Asian
UNWEIGHTED COUNT	Unweighted count	1469	679	250	255	251
SUPPORT / OPPOSE: Providing rapid tests for families to take home	Strongly support	62%	62%	59%	64%	63%
	Somewhat support	25%	24%	31%	25%	28%
	Somewhat oppose	4%	4%	5%	5%	3%
	Strongly oppose	6%	8%	2%	4%	4%
	Don't Know / Refused	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%
	Total	1469	1032	94	191	120
SUPPORT / OPPOSE: Requiring all students and staff to wear masks <b>Mask mandate</b>	Strongly support	29%	24%	45%	43%	39%
	Somewhat support	27%	26%	35%	24%	32%
	Somewhat oppose	14%	15%	8%	15%	11%
	Strongly oppose	24%	29%	10%	13%	13%
	Don't Know / Refused	5%	6%	2%	5%	5%
	Total	1469	1032	94	191	120
SUPPORT / OPPOSE: A vaccine mandate for all students <b>Vaccine mandate</b>	Strongly support	32%	31%	29%	33%	46%
	Somewhat support	21%	19%	30%	22%	28%
	Somewhat oppose	10%	10%	12%	12%	4%
	Strongly oppose	32%	34%	24%	28%	18%
	Don't Know / Refused	5%	5%	5%	5%	3%
	Total	1469	1032	94	191	120
SUPPORT / OPPOSE: A vaccine mandate for all teachers and staff	Strongly support	42%	40%	32%	47%	53%
	Somewhat support	20%	18%	33%	20%	23%
	Somewhat oppose	9%	9%	12%	8%	8%
	Strongly oppose	25%	29%	17%	18%	14%
	Don't Know / Refused	4%	4%	6%	7%	2%
	Total	1469	1032	94	191	120
SUPPORT / OPPOSE: Allowing students who may have been exposed to COVID to remain in class if they test negative	Strongly / Somewhat support	76%	79%	63%	69%	81%
	Strongly / Somewhat oppose	20%	18%	31%	26%	17%
	Don't Know / Refused	4%	3%	5%	5%	2%
	Total	1469	1032	94	191	120



# One-way vs two-way masking

**Table 1. Time to Infectious Dose for an Uninfected Person (Receiver)\***

		Receiver is wearing (% inward leakage)				
		Nothing	Typical cloth mask	Typical surgical mask	Non-fit-tested N95 FFR	Fit-tested N95 FFR
Source is wearing (% outward leakage)		100%	75%	50%	20%	10%
Nothing	100%	15 min	20 min	30 min	1.25 hr	2.5 hr
Typical cloth mask	75%	20 min	26 min	40 min	1.7 hr	3.3 hr
Typical surgical mask	50%	30 min	40 min	1 hr	2.5 hr	5 hr
Non-fit-tested N95 FFR**	20%	1.25 hr	1.7 hr	2.5 hr	6.25 hr	12.5 hr
Fit-tested N95 FFR	10%	2.5 hr	3.3 hr	5 hr	12.5 hr	25 hr

\*The data for % inward and outward leakage of cloth and surgical masks were derived from a study by Lindsley et al (2021). Data for non-fit-tested N95 FFRs come from a study by Brosseau (2010). Data for fit-tested N95 FFRs are derived from the OSHA-assigned protection factor of 10 for half-facepiece respirators. Also, note the following:

# What can leaders do today?

- Few state and local leaders are implementing COVID mitigation as it has been politicized. In this context, evidence-based leadership of institutions, employers, teachers, or others is *more* important than ever
- Lead on caring about one another & community, vulnerable populations.
- Communicate: There is a surge, importance of vaccines, boosters, and masks.
- Hold vaccine & booster drives, time off to get vaccinated and boosted, focus on equity.
- Require masks or if can't require
  - Lead culture of communal masking for each other
  - Designate some spaces or times where masks required
- Move events outdoors
- Provide n95 masks & tests for community

# What can leaders do over the longer term?

- Prepare to implement booster requirements
- Develop thresholds for turning mask mandates on and off in surges
- Improve ventilation
- Plan for outdoor events

**Thank you**