

**From:** [Hunt, Thomas GCPE:EX](#)  
**To:** [Ho, Theresa HLTH:EX](#)  
**Cc:** [Wigmore, Matthew GCPE:EX](#)  
**Subject:** KMs on masking guidelines  
**Date:** January 6, 2023 9:41:19 AM

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Hi Theresa,

Here is the situation and some KMs. I've included Matthew on here too now that he's back to handle issues and media.

**Issue:** Dr. Anna Wolak's tweet discussing an update to the [MoH masking guidelines webpage](#).

**Background:**

- On January 5, 2023, BCCDC inquiring about previous language that read: "Public health recommends wearing masks in **all** public indoor spaces".
- This was accidentally edited. A technical issue caused a draft version of the website from mid-November to be added to a recent update scheduled for December 30, 2023. When there was an update to some LTC language on December 30 and it was published, that draft language went live too.
- MoH reverted the page and restored the LTC update and old language that we had in early November.

**Recommendation:**

- Due to a technical issue, an old version of the webpage, from a time when masking was required, was accidentally made viewable to the public.
- The Government took immediate action to restore the webpage to the current guidelines once the error was discovered.
- Public Health guidance has not changed.
- Wearing masks in public indoor settings is not required by public health. Wearing a mask is a personal choice.
- There are important times to wear masks and we all need to continue to put masking into the context of our lives. It's a good idea to wear a mask when it's needed.
- For example, if you are in a crowded indoor setting with people you don't know, wear a mask.
- If you have symptoms of respiratory illness and it is essential for you to be in close contact with others, wear a mask.
- Wearing a mask is just one of several layers of protection we have against COVID-19, which includes: practising good hand hygiene, regularly cleaning surfaces and staying up-to-date on all your immunizations.
- Vaccines continue to be the primary tool in our toolbox for managing COVID-19 in the long term. We encourage everyone to get vaccinated with whichever dose they are eligible for – including the bivalent boosters – as soon as possible.
- In addition, if you have symptoms of respiratory illness, stay home and limit close contact with others until you no longer have a fever (without needing fever-reducing medications) and are well enough to participate in your usual daily activities.

- Postpone non-essential close contact with those who are at a higher risk of developing severe illness or complications from COVID-19 or influenza (e.g., people age 70 and older, long-term care residents and immunocompromised individuals) and avoiding non-essential visits to high-risk settings, such as long-term care homes and hospitals, until you are feeling better.