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ORDER OF THE HEALTH OFFICER OF THE COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT RESCINDING THE LOCAL MASS QUARANTINE & ISOLATION ORDERS

DATE OF ORDER: January 5, 2022

Please read this Order carefully. Violation of or failure to comply with this Order is a misdemeanor punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both. (California Health and Safety Code, § 120295.)

SUMMARY & RATIONALE FOR THE ORDER

Two years into the COVID-19 pandemic all aspects of life in California and in Humboldt County continue to be affected by the virus. It is for this reason that Humboldt County Public Health has continued a multi-prong approach that focuses on reducing and slowing the spread of COVID-19 through vaccination, masking, testing, contact tracing, improved ventilation, and education, as well as isolation and quarantine. In addition to these interventions, we have worked closely with our healthcare partners to increase access to prevention and treatments for COVID-19 as ways to reduce impacts on the health of our community.

On December 27, 2021, the [CDC updated their Isolation and Quarantine recommendations](#) for the general public, motivated by science that indicates the majority of COVID-19 transmission occurs within the first few days after contracting the virus. On December 30, 2021, [CDPH updated their Isolation and Quarantine of the General Public](#) to align with the updated timeframes within the recent CDC update and recommends additional mitigation measures, including continued focus on testing and masking to best contain the more transmissible Omicron variant in our community. Today Humboldt County takes steps to align with CDPH guidance that allows for shorter isolation and quarantine with testing and masking in specific situation. Ten day isolation and quarantine should continue to be followed when these specific criteria are not met.

Humboldt County Public Health continues to strongly recommend isolation of all who are positive for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status and quarantine for all who have a COVID-19 exposure and are at higher risk for spreading the disease. Isolation and quarantine are one of the best tools we have to slow the spread of this highly infectious disease and reduce impact on our community. With quarantine and isolation guidance changing often at both a state and federal level, Humboldt County is allowing our local isolation and quarantine guidance to immediately align with [national and statewide regulatory guidance](#) now and in the future with this order.

This change to isolation and quarantine does not impact the [local masking order](#) which remains in effect.

We at Humboldt County Public Health understand that shorter isolation and quarantine periods may lead to a small increase in spread of COVID-19. Given the known science on the virus and



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the impacts it is currently having on society, moving to a shorter isolation and quarantine period is our safest and best option and will reduce the inevitable impact of the Omicron variant on our county's ability to maintain critical functions of society such as schools, businesses, and healthcare. [This reduced isolation period only applies to people who are asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic with improving symptoms and who test negative on day 5 or later of their isolation.](#) Those who do not test negative on day 5 or after should continue to isolate or quarantine for the full 10 days. Everyone should continue to mask in all public places, and those who leave isolation or quarantine before 10 days should continue to wear a [well-fitted mask](#) around others, especially indoors, for the full 10 days.

Institutions and individuals may continue to adhere to longer isolation and quarantine periods for safety of their family, their contacts, or their workplace, or due to more strict guidance that oversees their setting. Individuals may isolate or quarantine for 10 days by deciding not to test or if unable to test.

[Vaccination continues to offer the best protection against COVID-19, including against Omicron variant.](#) All individuals who are over the age of 5 are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated or boosted if eligible with an approved COVID-19 vaccine. Being fully vaccinated protects strongly against hospitalization and death and being boosted reduces risk of getting COVID-19 infection, the length of time infected with the virus, and risk to those around you that you will spread COVID-19. Boosters help to reduce spread and keep businesses and schools open by reducing need for longer isolation and quarantine, therefore reducing impacts on the community.

[Individuals who are at high risk for more severe illness](#) including those who are [unvaccinated](#), overdue for booster shot, are older age, or with immunocompromising conditions are recommended to avoid contact with people who have recently completed the new shorter isolation and quarantine periods for the full 10 days. High risk individuals who test positive for COVID-19 are also strongly urged to speak to their physician about whether monoclonal antibodies would be an appropriate treatment to lower their risk of progressing to severe disease.

We are seeing a new local surge in COVID-19 cases and expect to see many more cases in the weeks to come as the Omicron variant increases locally. We recognize emerging evidence that supports that the Omicron variant causes less severe disease in some people. Currently most cases locally are still Delta, which is well known to cause hospitalization and death at the rates we have seen throughout this pandemic. Humboldt County Public Health therefore continues to recommend continuing all measures available to reduce COVID-19 transmission and lessen impact on schools, businesses, and healthcare. We will update the community with information quickly when we know more about Omicron and to what degree it is spreading in our county.

The tools that will help us get through the Omicron surge are the same tools we've become accustomed to throughout the pandemic. Vaccines, testing, masking, improved ventilation, having activities outdoors, avoiding crowded and poorly ventilated spaces as well as appropriate use of isolation and quarantine will get us through this next surge of COVID-19 cases with minimal disruption to the community and minimal health effects on individuals at highest risk.

UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF SECTIONS 101040 AND 120175 OF THE CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE, THE HEALTH OFFICER OF THE COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT ("HEALTH OFFICER") ORDERS:

1. Effective immediately, the prior local Health Officer Orders regarding mass quarantine and isolation are rescinded.
2. While transmission rates of COVID-19 remain high and the risk of COVID-19 variants are still unknown, guidance on isolation and quarantine from federal and state partners has been changing frequently often leading to confusion and delays in implementing updated guidance. Accordingly, Humboldt County Public Health advises that individuals and institutions should continue to follow appropriate sector guidance released by the United States Department of Health & Human Services ("HHS") including their sub-agency United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC"), the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA"), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration ("OSHA"), the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health ("DOSH" or "Cal/OSHA"), California Department of Public Health ("CDPH"), and California Department of Social Services ("CDSS"). The Order is rescinded in order to align with the above-mentioned authorities and guidelines and allow for clearer and faster updates from these regulating bodies.
3. The Health Officer may take additional action(s), which may include civil detention or requiring one to stay at a health facility or other location, to protect the public's health; if an individual who is subject to this Order violates or fails to comply with this Order, including state and federal guidelines.
4. This Order shall become effective on January 5, 2022 and will continue to be in effect until it is: rescinded, superseded, or amended by the Health Officer. This Order shall replace the Mass Quarantine & Mass Isolation Orders previously issued on November 8, 2021, and June 29, 2021.
5. Copies of this Order shall promptly be: (1) made available at the Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services Public Health Branch, 529 I Street, Eureka, CA 95501; (2) posted on the Humboldt County website humboldt.gov/blanketorders; and (3) provided to any member of the public requesting a copy.
6. If any provision of this Order or its application to any person or circumstance is held to be invalid, then the remainder of the Order, including the application of such part or provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected and shall continue in full force and effect. To this end, the provisions of this Order are severable.
7. Humboldt County COVID Information Line during normal business hours, weekdays 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. at **707-441-5000** or email us at CovidInfo@co.humboldt.ca.us.

IT IS SO ORDERED:

Ian Hoffman, MD, MPH
Health Officer of the County of Humboldt

Dated: _____