



Carl Ivka
President

Barb Caruso
Secretary-Treasurer

United Food & Commercial Workers
Union Local 880
9199 Market Place, Suite #2
Broadview Heights, Ohio 44147
216/241-5930
1-800-241-5930

UFCW: CDC Mask Policy Key Step, National Mask Mandate Needed to Protect Essential Workers Amid COVID Delta Surge as Pandemic Continues

America's Largest Retail Workers Union Applauds CDC for Recognizing Danger of Rapidly Spreading COVID Delta Cases, Calls New Mask Guidance Essential to Stopping New Virus Outbreaks as Vaccination Push Continues Across the Country

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today, **United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)**, the **union for 1.3 million food and retail workers**, welcomed a new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) mask policy **recommending that vaccinated and unvaccinated Americans resume wearing masks indoors** in high-transmission states and if they have vulnerable people in their household such as young children and those who are immunocompromised. This comes amid a **new explosion of COVID infections** from the **Delta Variant**, which is 1,000 times more transmissible than earlier versions of the virus. A new report shows that **COVID cases in the U.S. have more than doubled** in the **past two weeks** and nearly two-thirds of U.S. counties now have **elevated COVID transmission**.

UFCW raised serious concerns about the CDC mask guidance in May which led to states and retailers ending mask mandates for vaccinated individuals, despite COVID risks millions of American workers still face on the frontlines as the pandemic continues.

UFCW International President Marc Perrone released the following statement:

“Today’s new CDC mask policy is a critical step that sounds the alarm about the explosion in COVID Delta cases and makes clear that wearing masks indoors is critical to stopping the spread of this deadly virus. But the reality is that the CDC recommendation does not go far enough. A national mask mandate is the only way we can finally take control of this virus and every retail CEO in the country must recognize that now is the time for all of us to mask up so we can keep our economy open and communities safe.

“With COVID cases continuing to surge, essential workers have been forced to play vaccination police because of the confusing patchwork of state and local mask policies. Urgent action is needed from states and retailers to strengthen COVID safety enforcement so the burden doesn’t fall on the shoulders or essential workers already stretched thin.

“As America’s largest union for essential retail and grocery workers, UFCW is calling on the CDC as well as elected and business leaders to do much more to strengthen COVID safety measures and remove the barriers to vaccine access leaving so many essential workers unprotected as we confront this new surge. American lives are on the line and failure to act is not an option.”

BACKGROUND:

UFCW has been the leading national voice for essential workers in grocery, retail, meatpacking, and many other frontline industries during the COVID-19 pandemic. This past spring, UFCW raised serious concerns about **mask policy changes** by national health officials and retailers across the country.

COVID NUMBERS: Today, UFCW confirmed that among the union’s members nationwide, there have already been at least:

- **482 frontline worker deaths** and at least **96,600 frontline workers infected or exposed**
- **197 grocery worker deaths** and at least **43,300 grocery workers infected or exposed**
- **132 meatpacking worker deaths** and **22,400 meatpacking workers infected or exposed**
- **67 food processing worker deaths** and **13,100 food processing workers infected or exposed**

###

UFCW International is the largest private sector union in the United States. UFCW International represents 1.3 million professionals and their families in healthcare, grocery stores, meatpacking, food processing, retail shops and other industries. Our members serve our communities in all 50 states, Canada and Puerto Rico. Learn more about the UFCW at ufcw.org.