

From: [Cary Hower](#)
To: [Gilbert "B.J." Bowling](#)
Subject: Resolution 2021-21
Date: Wednesday, December 15, 2021 12:03:40 PM

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Dear Commissioner Bowling,

I am opposed to the adoption of Resolution 2021-21 as a Health Ordinance in Charles County.

I am extremely disappointed to see the continued use of County resources directed toward the imposition of masks on private citizens. If statistics can be trusted at all, it is worth noting that St. Mary's, Calvert, Anne Arundel, Fairfax, and King George counties do not have mask mandates and there has been no significant difference in the trajectory of the pandemic in those regions compared to ours.

Additionally, masks have been debated for over 100 years as a tool for pandemics. In each previous pandemic, their use was disavowed after the fact or rejected completely. Why? Because there has not been a discernible benefit in cases, hospitalizations, or deaths. In the 1918 pandemic after report, face masks were determined to be useless. In the 2009 H1N1 after-action report, the NIH wrote no fewer than 4 times that anything less than a N95 mask was powerless against a respiratory virus like influenza. In fact, at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, masks were also rejected as a possible intervention because it was harder to teach the population at large how to properly use masks than it was to wash hands. There was a change, not in the data, but in the narrative in Spring and Summer 2020 when the public health officials at the CDC realized the failed policy of lockdowns and capacity restrictions did nothing to slow the spread of this highly infectious virus. You will not find one study conducted pre-COVID which showed masks as effective against influenza-like illnesses. There was only 1 randomized control trial (RCT) in 2015 on the use of cloth masks (A cluster randomized trial of cloth masks compared with medical masks in healthcare workers - PMC (nih.gov)) which showed that healthcare workers wearing cloth masks were actually infected at HIGHER rates than the control group or the variable group. There have been only 2 RCTs done on masks DURING the current pandemic. The Danmask study which showed no statistically significant reduction in transmission between the mask and control group and the Bangladesh study which should a paltry 10% risk reduction which translated to 11% decreased transmission with surgical masks and 7% in cloth masks. Is 10% effect on transmission a reasonable outcome for a population-level measure like forced masking? Would any realistic medical professional give a treatment to a patient with only a 10% chance of a positive outcome? This is the true, authentic data concerning masks. Comparing case rates to our neighboring counties at random intervals does not prove or disprove mask efficacy from day-to-day.

With this in mind, people that are wearing masks may actually be at much higher risk of catching SARS-CoV-2 since they believe donning a cloth mask will save them from an aerosolized virus. They are going about their day-to-day lives with a false sense of security.

September 2021 was the fourth deadliest month for our jurisdiction, with masks in place. While it

might be argued that things would have been worse without masks, historical evidence as noted above argue otherwise. Wouldn't focus on early treatment be a much better use of the Commissioners' time and resources? Making the availability of monoclonal antibodies widespread, advising physicians of which steroid treatments help relieve stressed airways, or even allowing physicians to prescribe off-label treatments under the principle of "Right to Try" would all respect the dignity of the citizens in our community and show true good-faith efforts to shield the vulnerable from adverse outcomes of the disease.

It has been nearly 2 years of restrictions, mask mandates, and general misery. The sense of community is lost. The trust in public health officials and our elected representatives is severely damaged. Implementing a mask mandate, passed with the force of law, seems unnecessary and perhaps counterproductive. Offering individuals a CHOICE to wear a mask is the only way to respect our freedom.

It is my understanding that the Board of County Commissioners initially passed a mask mandate to give us a sense of security amidst the turmoil and fear that has been exaggerated by the vast amount of conflicting information about this disease and protection against it. It is clear to me that many people are still afraid. It is equally clear to me that masks have not alleviated much of that fear. This fear is contributing to the already far too divisive atmosphere in this country. I can feel the fear and divisiveness whenever I go out in public to shop, worship, or seek medical care. In my opinion, the best antidote for fear is the truth. While the truth about this disease may not be fully known at this time, the truth about masks is known. I believe that if the Board of County Commissioners were to do their best to disseminate any truth that is known to the citizens of Charles County, we would all experience a substantial decrease of fear and divisiveness. We would also develop more trust in our local government than we can possibly have in the officials at the national level. With your leadership, the healing that is so desperately needed in this nation could begin in Charles County.

The Board of County Commissioners are elected to implement the will of the people. I am one of those people. I know that the views that I am sharing in this letter are shared by many in this county. Commissioner, this regulation is bad for our county and bad for our future. It would set a precedent for future regulations that, frankly, scare me more than SARS-CoV-2. I respectfully ask that you withdraw it from consideration or vote no to Resolution 2021-21, or any similar resolution, whenever it comes up for a vote, whether that be on December 15, January 12, or any other future date.

Sincerely,

Cary Hower

14170 River Road
Newburg, MD 20664

Should you care to follow up with me, I can be reached at cary.hower@outlook.com or 301-848-8345.