



Dear Tri-County Health Care Patient,

We have received your request for exemption from the Minnesota Governor's Executive Order 20-21 that states *people in Minnesota are required to wear a face covering in all public indoor spaces and businesses, unless alone. Additionally, workers are required to wear a face covering when working outdoors in situations where social distancing cannot be maintained. Research has shown that use of face coverings can greatly reduce the risk of infection when combined with other prevention efforts such as social distancing and hand hygiene.*

Many studies have demonstrated that by staying home when sick, social distancing and wearing face masks when indoors or when distancing is not possible, Minnesotans can help prevent COVID-19 transmission and support the continued reopening of businesses, schools, and activities.

There are limited exceptions to this order that must be supported by prior medical documentation:

- Children under age 2 years must not wear face coverings. Children between the ages of 2 and 5 years old are not required to wear face coverings but are encouraged to wear a face covering when in public if they can do so reliably.
- Persons who have medical or other health conditions, disabilities, or mental health, developmental, or behavioral needs that make it difficult to tolerate wearing a face covering.

A viable alternative if unable to wear a mask is a face shield that covers the eyes, nose, and mouth.

Without documented cause to not wear a face covering, we are unable to ethically provide the waiver you requested. To do so under false pretenses jeopardizes a provider's license to practice medicine.

Tri-County Health Care recommends protecting all members of our communities with the proper wearing of a face covering in public when near other people, particularly when six or more feet of distancing is not possible.

We trust you understand our position and wish that you and your family remain safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ben Hess  
Chief Medical Officer