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Statement on Mask Wearing in Public

On July 2, 2021, Governor Doug Ducey rescinded Executive Order #2020-40 granting authority to local governments including cities, towns and counties, to adopt policies regarding the wearing of face coverings in public for the purpose of mitigating the spread of COVID-19 based on local conditions. Subsequently, the Arizona State legislature passed and Governor Ducey signed into law, SB1819 which prohibits any county from issuing any order, rule, ordinance or regulation that mandates the use of face coverings to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Notwithstanding these recent changes to Arizona law, Greenlee County supports scientific evidence that the use of masks, particularly in in-door spaces, significantly reduces the spread of airborne illnesses such as COVID-19. It is therefore the policy of Greenlee County to encourage education and the promotion of best practices to accomplish mitigation.

We have been fortunate to have had fewer cases, hospitalizations and deaths due to COVID-19 than other jurisdictions in Arizona. This outcome can be attributed to strong public health partnerships and aggressive mitigation efforts including mask wearing. Our citizens are to be commended on their efforts to help keep each other safe. However, with the introduction of the delta variant of the disease into our community, Greenlee County has experienced sharp increases in the number of COVID cases in the last few weeks.

As members of a close-knit community, we have a long history of caring for each other, especially our most vulnerable. It is in that spirit that Greenlee County issues the following encouragement to practice smart and wise behavior. Greenlee County hereby strongly encourages all citizens:

1. To wear face coverings regardless of vaccination status while in public, indoor settings, especially where social distancing will be difficult to observe.
2. To be aware of your surroundings and practice social distancing.
3. To wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
4. To please stay home if you are sick and if necessary, seek medical advice and treatment.

Greenlee County asks that you do these things not because anyone has mandated it, but rather because we care about each other and we want to do our part to help keep each other safe. Arizona law does allow for private businesses to require mask wearing on their property. If a business or other entity asks that you wear a mask in their building or on their premises, please respect their choices. When we take our responsibilities to each other seriously and we are as concerned for the wellbeing of others as much as we are for our own, there is no desire or need for mandates. Thank you for your continued commitment to the health and welfare of our community. Greenlee County has been the leader in Arizona in slowing this potentially deadly disease and our numbers show it. Let us continue to be leaders.

Dated this 12th day of August, 2021

Richard Lunt

Richard Lunt, Chairman
Greenlee County
Board of Supervisors