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Re: Mask Mandate

We, as a unified group of physicians practicing in Lethbridge, Alberta, call upon the city leadership of Lethbridge to reconsider their recent council vote to extend masking requirements until December of 2021. Current evidence points to a great downturn in the number of cases and positivity rate for covid-19 infections. Bolstered by an increased number of individuals vaccinated (greater than 70% of the eligible population has received one vaccine dose, and over 25% of the population has received a full course of two vaccinations), and declining case numbers, provincial health leadership has seen it a reasonable intervention to allow more broad opening as of early July 2021. This decision was made in consultation with the provincial chief medical officer of health, as well as the scientific and medical leadership committees involved with making recommendations for management of the covid-19 pandemic in Alberta.

Locally, we presently have fewer than 5 total admitted cases of Covid-19 related illness in the Lethbridge Regional Hospital. Services have fully resumed for all facets of routine medical care. Well over one year of preparation and planning have gone into the response plan, should further waves emerge. With this in hand, we are surprised at the local resistance to embrace provincial-led initiatives for reopening. Clinically speaking, we rely on hard data to inform our decision-making processes. The current decision by Lethbridge City council regarding ongoing masking is not reflecting the current status of the pandemic within our province or city, medically speaking.

We call upon our mayor and city council to revisit their prior discussion of Bylaw 6239, with a recommendation to adopt parallel stance to province led initiatives. Safe reopening, and protection of vulnerable individuals through more limited interventions than what is proposed by our city council, are both made possible via the vaccination efforts already in place.

Sincerely;
Specialists in Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine

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