



# MEDIA RELEASE

## San Juan County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 17, 2021

### **San Juan County Mask Requirements to End June 27th**

The San Juan County Health Officer Order requiring the wearing of masks by customers indoors in businesses and other public spaces will end on June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Health Officer Dr. Frank James explains his decision, "Thanks to the high vaccination rates in the islands, including in island kids 12 and older, I feel comfortable with lifting the masking order on the 27th. I'm extremely appreciative of the way islanders embraced the vaccine effort and have set our community up for a safe summer ahead."

Despite the lifting of the order, there are important things to keep in mind:

-There may still be WA State masking requirements for specific industries or workplace settings. Details at: <https://lni.wa.gov/forms-publications/F414-179-000.pdf>

-There will still be cases. The rise of the new Delta and Gamma variants, combined with low vaccination rates in some communities across Washington and beyond means that there will be ongoing risk of infection.

-Anyone caring for children 11 or under should be thoughtful and cautious about exposing those kids to high risk situations.

-Adults who choose to remain unvaccinated will be at the highest risk. The long-term impacts of COVID can be debilitating, and anyone without the protection of a vaccine should be especially careful.

-As variants continue to evolve, it is important to understand that COVID might still have surprises for us. As always, rapid steps to minimize risk, patience, and flexibility will be key.

San Juan County Health & Community Services Director Mark Tompkins highlights the work to get to this point, "It has been an extremely long and bumpy road, but I couldn't be more proud of the islands. So many pitched in, and in so many ways. There's more work to do, but this is a major milestone, and I'm grateful to the entire San Juan County community for helping San Juan County make it through."