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February 11, 2022

Dr. Jennifer Green
Health Director
Cumberland County Department of Public Health
1235 Ramsey Street
Fayetteville, NC 28301

Dear Director Green:

It has come to my attention that the recent decision by the Cumberland County Board of Education to make masks optional in schools and related school buildings may be in violation of the Cumberland County Department of Public Health's Order to Abate the Transmission of COVID-19.[1] This order initially took effect on August 27, 2021. Since that time, we have learned much about the virus that causes COVID-19, SARS-CoV-2, as well as how this virus transmits and the relative risks associated.

We have continued to hear from public health and government leaders how we must follow the science. I agree and would now respectfully urge you and your Department to follow the science and reconsider the abatement order.

Since August 2021, we have learned the extent of the protection masks provide remains unknown.[2] In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Protection (CDC)'s own studies have shown that masks, on their own, do not provide any additional protection to children, but that alternative mitigation measures, such as open windows or increased ventilation, are just as successful in preventing transmission.[3] What we have also learned – and unfortunately witnessed in our homes, churches, schools, and communities – is that masks do have a detrimental impact on our children and their social, emotional, and mental growth and development.[4] Other countries have completely forgone mask mandates in schools due to these demonstrated adverse consequences for children.[5]

In addition to following the well-established science, I would further urge you to follow the parents. Our parents know what is best for their children. As a father myself, I don't need any science to know that is the truth. Our local Cumberland County Board of Education made the

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[1] COVID-19 Indoor Mask Order, https://www.cumberlandcountync.gov/docs/default-source/health-documents/covid-19-files/order-to-abate-the-transmission-of-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=dfaefea7_2.
[2] David Zweig, The CDC's Flawed Case for Wearing Masks in School, THE ATLANTIC (Dec. 16, 2021).
[3] David Zweig, The Science of Masking Kids at School Remains Uncertain, N.Y. MAG. (Aug. 20, 2021).
[4] David Zweig, The Science of Masking Kids at School Remains Uncertain, N.Y. MAG. (Aug. 20, 2021); Marty Makary & H. Cody Meissner, The Case Against Masks for Children, THE WALL ST. J. (Aug. 8, 2021); Dr. Drew, The Mental Health Impact of Masking & Quarantining Children: Dr. Lucy McBride on Ask Dr. Drew, YOUTUBE (Nov. 23, 2021).
[5] Questions and answers on COVID-19: Children aged 1 – 18 years and the role of school settings, EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR DISEASE PREVENTION & CONTROL (last visited Nov. 11, 2021). *Id.*

decision to make masks optional based on both the existing science and their current roles as parents, educators, and local leaders.

I would respectfully urge you to follow their lead, and revise the August 2021 abatement order, in light of both the recent evidence and respected parental input.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard Hudson

Richard Hudson
Member of Congress