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Important Message on Masks

November 17, 2022

Dear UTFA Colleagues,

We write to share with you the urgent message sent today to U of T health sciences students, staff, and faculty members by deans in the health sciences faculties.

The deans strongly urge the "wearing of a high-quality, tight-fitting mask when indoors in health sciences buildings at the University of Toronto." UTFA urges *all* our members in the health sciences and beyond to heed this important call and to wear high quality masks in *all indoor spaces at the University.*

UTFA vigorously applauds the principled leadership demonstrated by these deans.

This intervention by the deans is especially welcome following a lack of progress at the Central Health and Safety Committee with the senior Administration. UTFA continues to advocate that the senior Administration demonstrate respect for science and best practices in health and safety—including by employing a University-wide mask mandate and an education campaign on the significant risks associated with SARS-CoV-2 (re-)infections—rather than follow inadequate minimum standards set by the provincial government.

Sincerely,

Terezia Zorić
UTFA President

Jun Nogami
UTFA Vice-President, Salary, Benefits, Pensions and Workload

From: dlsph-core-fac-l: DLSPH CORE FACULTY LIST On Behalf Of dlsph dean **Sent:** November 17, 2022 9:12 AM
To: **DLSPH-CORE-FAC-L@LISTSERV.UTORONTO.CA**
Subject: Important Message on Masks

Dear health sciences students, staff and faculty members,

This is an urgent request that we, your health sciences deans, are asking from our communities to help support our partners.

We work in close partnership with our health care system. The doctors, nurses, and other health professionals across the GTA are also our faculty, our students, and our partners. Thus, we are deeply concerned by the rapid increase in viral illness in our population, the strain that it has put on our healthcare systems, and the recognition that we need to support our partners during this challenging time.

That is why we strongly urge you to begin wearing a high-quality, tight-fitting mask when indoors in health sciences buildings at the University of Toronto.

Those who are lecturing or speaking publicly may want to remove their masks while talking. You may want to remove your mask if you are in your office or eating or drinking. But otherwise, please begin masking while you are indoors in our facilities. We thank everyone in advance for taking this step to help our health-system partners.

The evidence is clear that masks are highly effective in slowing the spread of COVID-19. Masks also help protect against the flu and RSV – two other viral illnesses overwhelming providers who are already facing remarkable challenges.

During the course of the pandemic, we have been moved by the ways in which our communities have gathered to face so many challenges together. We ask everyone to join together once more by wearing masks and getting all your seasonal shots to help relieve the burden on each other and our partners in care. In order to support this, the University of Toronto is offering vaccination clinics across our campuses during the month of November. Free masks are available on all three U of T campuses for pickup.

We urge everyone to be kind to yourselves and to each other during this extremely challenging time for our healthcare colleagues.

Sincerely,

Adalsteinn (Steini) Brown
Dean, Dalla Lana School of Public Health

Lisa Dolovich
Dean, Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy

Linda Johnston
Dean, Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing

Gretchen Kerr
Dean, Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education

Laura Tam
Dean, Faculty of Dentistry

Charmaine Williams
Interim Dean, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work

Trevor Young
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