

November 6, 2020

Mayor Paul Grenier and Berlin City Council
168 Main St.
Berlin, NH 03570

Dear Mayor Grenier and Berlin City Council:

On behalf of the Androscoggin Valley Hospital Medical Staff, we wish to express our fervent support for a mandatory mask ordinance within the City of Berlin. As you know, within the past two weeks, there have been more positive cases of COVID-19 in Northern New Hampshire than the previous seven months combined. Amongst many of our community members, panic quickly followed the positive test results. By implementing a mandatory mask ordinance, our City can help best ensure the health and wellbeing (both physical and mental) of our citizens and visitors to the region.

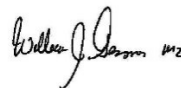
You have likely seen or heard the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control, as outlined in a *Journal of the American Medical Association* (AMA) editorial, which scientifically confirmed the benefit of wearing masks. However, what does not appear in that Journal is the recent concern and fear of Berlin residents who worry that they or an immuno-compromised family member may have been exposed to someone who has the virus. Nor does the article address the despair by which a number of our residents feel gripped, as they wonder if their spouse, child, parent, or even themselves are carrying COVID-19, while not displaying any symptoms. Finally, the article fails to highlight our collective urgency that we, as a medical community, feel to protect the citizens of Berlin, part of a County whose residents already have the shortest length of life and least healthy behaviors statewide.

Our City government and healthcare communities are two of a number of institutions to which our residents look for guidance and support. On behalf, and with unanimous consent, of the active medical staff in this community, your decision to institute a mask ordinance at this time would be a testament to your leadership and best serve the citizens of Berlin.

Thank you,



Jerry Rittenhouse, MD
President, Medical Staff
Androscoggin Valley Hospital



William Gessner, MD
Chief Medical Officer
Coos County Family Health Services