



MEDIA RELEASE

OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR GLENN JACOBS

400 Main Street, Suite 615, Knoxville, TN 37902

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Contact: Mike Donila Abbey Harris
306-1177 cell 215-4579 office
705-1681 cell

Mask Mandate Sunsets Tonight

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.—Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs provides the following statement regarding Governor Bill Lee’s decision to lift public health interventions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This is a significant development that demonstrates we are another step closer to getting back to normal. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Buchanan and her team for the uncompromising work they have done throughout the pandemic. Thankfully, now they can begin returning to normal business and get back to focusing on the many important programs they oversee everyday—like childhood nutrition, diabetes prevention, and environmental health to name just a few. It is still everyone’s personal responsibility to protect themselves and their families from the virus. We should all be understanding and respectful of how people choose to do that as we move forward.”

Background: In Knox County, more than 40% of the population age 16+ have one or more vaccine doses and nearly 30% are classified as fully vaccinated. Active COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations have drastically decreased since the beginning of the year. Infection rate is low.

Local restrictions on indoor and outdoor gathering sizes and serving capacity and curfews for restaurants and bars were previously lifted.

Earlier today, the Centers of Disease Control said fully vaccinated people can visit with other fully vaccinated people indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing, participate in outdoor activities and recreation without a mask, resume domestic travel and stop quarantining following a known exposure if no symptoms present.

Additionally, Gov. Lee announced he was removing the authority of Tennessee counties under the State Department of Health’s purview to impose mask mandates and other health restrictions and regulations. He also asked that health mandates in the six counties not governed by TDOH be removed by the end of May.

With the change, Knox County’s mask mandate—the only public health restriction still in place—will sunset at 11:59 p.m. today, Tuesday, April 27.

It is important to note that any private business or organization that desires to keep a mask requirement in place for entry will be allowed to do so and customers are expected to abide by and respect those decisions.

Questions regarding face-covering policies for students and staff of Knox County Schools should be directed to school administration or the Board of Education.

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