

The following is my planned presentation on making masks mandatory to the Region of Niagara Council meeting July 23, 2010. This is still a work in process and might be fine tuned before I present tonight but the main points and content will be the same.

Thank you

Geoffrey Aldridge

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Mr. Chair and Regional Councilors

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak to you today on this very important, potentially life and death issue.

You are all here today to decide if wearing masks should be made mandatory.

We shouldn't be here but we are because our higher levels of government, federal and provincial, have abdicated their responsibilities to handle this at their levels where they have the most impact and the resources to do this. I continue to be dumbfounded that Prime Minister Trudeau and Premier Ford acknowledge that masks will reduce the spread of the virus and then only recommend that people wear masks! How can they only recommend that individuals can decide whether they will risk spreading this disease? For example at the Ontario level we recommend that people don't smoke but we have the "Smoke Free Ontario Act" that makes it illegal to smoke cigarettes in (mainly) enclosed spaces and as much as smoke may cause cancer that will take many repeated exposures and a long time to develop. The virus only takes one exposure and you can be dead within 2 weeks. Why couldn't we have had a "Virus Free Ontario (or even Canada) Act".

Just this week I heard a governor in the United States say he wouldn't make masks mandatory because you shouldn't have to tell people to do the right thing. That makes no sense since almost all laws are all about telling people to do the right thing – Don't murder, don't steal, don't harm people, stick to speed limits, wear seat belts, etc. What is different with Don't spread disease?

As a result of the inaction of these levels of government we now have hundreds of lower level authorities with less resources reinventing the wheel resulting in a hodge podge of rules and regulations. This region now has within it 2 cities with bylaws; regions and cities around Niagara have bylaws; provinces around us have laws. What a confusing message we are giving out.

The reason for wearing masks is simple. After close, personal contact the main way this Virus is spreading is through the air by people sneezing, coughing, talking and simply breathing. The evidence is indisputable that masks reduce how far and how much virus will be broadcast by a person with the

virus. It is simple common sense, to reduce how much and how far you might breathe out the virus and less people will get infected.

First Slide Please

We are fortunate in the region that the number of cases, number of hospitalizations and number of deaths is relatively low. Here are the Region's statistics. As of yesterday there have been 813 cases with 64 deaths. That means 1 in 13 cases has died. People are still getting sick, 4 yesterday, 9 the day before – that's 13. With 1 in 13 cases dying the next person to die will happen in the near future. Most relevant to this issue is that 44.4 % of cases have no known exposure. In round numbers that means that in 1 in 30 cases somebody dies from a source that cannot be identified, like a supermarket.

Next Slide Please

About the only major interaction with people my wife and I have is going out to supermarkets. We always wear masks to protect others but 80% of those people in supermarkets ignore those recommendations. You can see from the simulation being shown that the 6 foot rule in supermarkets doesn't really work. We fear for our health and lives every time we go shopping.

Now is not the time to reduce our efforts to stop the spread of this disease. With the Region about to enter phase 3 more people will be getting closer together. That is a fact and that means that more people will be getting sick and community spread which is hard to trace will increase. Look at all the crowds there were in Niagara Falls last weekend that may be coming to a supermarket that I shop at. Your decision today will impact when the next person gets sick perhaps goes into intensive care and dies.

I have identified 4 main reasons Councilors said they won't support this motion:

- 1) The main one is the difficulty in enforcement. This is true. Enforcement would be very difficult. Most bylaws have little or no enforcement. Many significant laws like speeding have limited enforcement. So if 100% enforcement is the issue why don't we cancel all those laws. One of the main reasons we have laws is to tell people clearly what they must do to respect others and as a result most laws are reasonably effective because people are law abiding. Every supermarket I have talked to said they will abide by this law if it is passed. As an additional note I talked to the city of Guelph about their experience and they say that adoption rate is very high. Last night on television, Hamilton said the same thing.
- 2) The second concern is that some people who for health reasons aren't able to wear masks will be singled out. This is a valid concern but one that should be handled by education. As much as a few people might suffer being singled out, that will not kill them. Ironically it is those same people that will benefit the most by others wearing masks.

- 3) Another question I have heard is “Why Now?”. Why don’t we wait to see if cases increase, which is the same as why don’t we wait to see if more people die? Now, is the time when prevention is most important. If you wait for cases to rise, if you wait for more people to die, implementing mandatory masks will take weeks and months to take effect during which time even more people will get sick and die.
- 4) The fourth issue I have heard is that this should be decided by the experts and that councilors don’t have the expertise to make these decisions. There are no experts! Yes, there are professionals but they are still learning. They started off saying it wasn’t a pandemic, then masks don’t work, then masks are recommended. I don’t blame them but they aren’t experts and because they keep changing their position people don’t trust them. That job now falls to you to unequivocally tell people they must wear masks. If you don’t feel qualified then abstain from the vote. If you aren’t qualified to vote for it then you aren’t qualified to vote against it.

I will finish off with a personal note. On June 24 I received an e-mail response from Dr. Hirji when I first started making inquiries about how the region is handling the virus. He concluded the e-mail with *“we hope you will continue to role-model to those around you that wearing a face covering is an act of responsible citizenship to protect everyone around us.”* That was 4 weeks ago and when I went to the supermarket this week 70 to 80% of those around me are not wearing masks. The message is not getting through and others are not protecting me.

*I don’t want to be a role model anymore. I want to be part of the crowd – the safe crowd.*

*I urge all of you to make masks mandatory (inside public buildings), to reduce how many get sick, how many end up in hospital risking our health care workers, reducing how many die.*

*Thank you Mr. Chair and Councillors*

## COVID Cases in Niagara



Number of confirmed cases of COVID-19

813



Number of deaths in cases with COVID-19

64



**About 1 in 13 Cases Result in Death**

New cases - today

4

New cases - yesterday

9

Days to double at current rate

125



**13 Cases In The Last 2 Days**

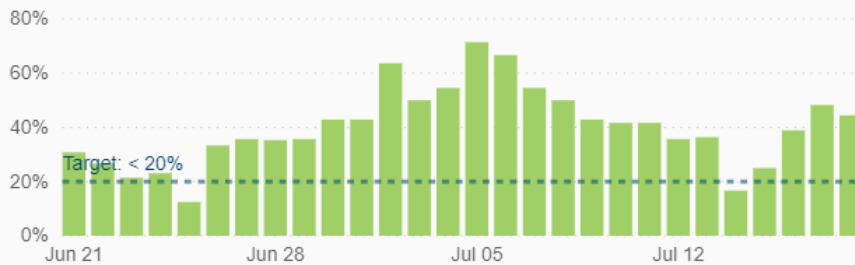
**In 4 Months 64 More People  
Could Die**

Per cent of new cases that have no known exposure



Daily seven-day rolling percentage

Current per cent



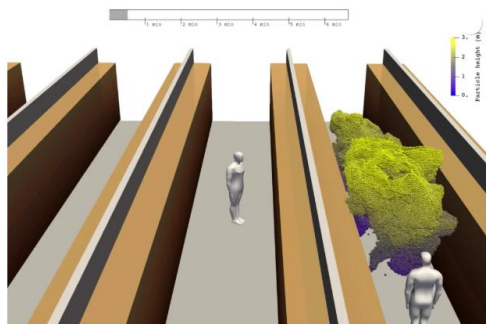
**44.4%**

July 12-18

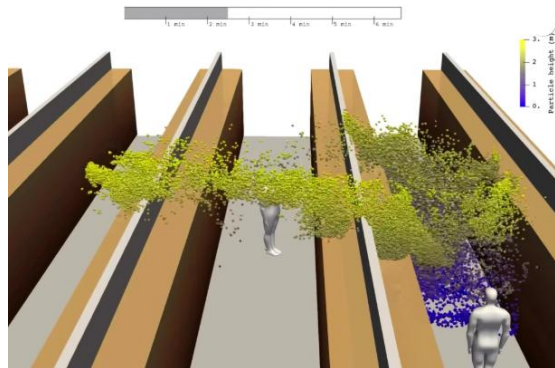
**At 44.4% 28 People Could Die With No Known Exposure - Like Supermarkets**

## A Virus Cloud in a Supermarket

Half a Minute



Two and a Half Minutes



## Masks Reduce a Virus Cloud



**From:** [PF-Mailbox-01](#)  
**To:** [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee  
**Date:** Friday, July 10, 2020 8:26:28 PM

**From:** Niagara Region Website  
**Sent:** Friday, 10 July 2020 20:26:23 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)  
**To:** Clerks  
**Subject:** Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

## Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name

geoffrey aldridge

Address

[REDACTED]

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crystal beach

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[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

Organization

[REDACTED]

standing committee

**Regional Council**

Presentation Topic

Presentation includes slides

No

Previously presented topic

Yes

Presentation only new info

Yes

Presentation Details

Previously I generally spoke about the need for a bylaw making it mandatory to wear masks inside commercial establishments. At this meeting I want to identify how the upper levels of government have let this country and province down and in that absence identify why it is so important for the Region to show leadership.

Video Consent

Yes

