

On February 12, 2023, NYS Department of Health lifted the mask mandate for healthcare facilities, including Article 28 diagnostic and treatment centers such as the University Eye Center. The ending of the mask mandate comes as New York has seen a steady decline in COVID transmission rates, hospitalizations and deaths over the past two months. Our community level is now at a level of **low**. [CDC COVID community level](#)

NYSDOH is advising that healthcare facilities follow the updated [CDC's masking guidance for healthcare personnel](#)

The following is the new mask policy effective February 13, 2023:

- **Masks are now optional for visitors, patients, students, faculty and staff members in all areas of the College.**
- *There is no longer a requirement to wear a mask on clinic floors, elevators, teaching labs or in the lobby. **While not required, any member of the community may continue to wear a mask based on personal preference.***
- All SUNY members should continue to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 (that cannot be attributed to another health condition), stay home if feeling sick, and get tested.
- Screening of patients will continue in the lobby.
 - If any asymptomatic patient reports a recent exposure to COVID-19, they will be required to wear a mask for the duration of their visit.

Although no longer required, masks (ASTM level 2 or better) are strongly advised for individuals in healthcare settings who:

- have mild symptoms of a respiratory infection (e.g., those with runny nose, cough, sneeze) and tested negative for COVID-19.
- had close contact with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19.
 - Masks are advised to be worn around others for at least 10 days from exposure date.

If COVID-19 or other respiratory illnesses are not suspected, then as with all patient care, standard precautions should be followed.

Please note: *This masking policy is subject to modifications based upon future NYSDOH and CDC recommendations. In addition, mandatory mask wearing will be reinstated if the community transmission level returns to “high” for two consecutive weeks. Should the College see a significant spike of cases among students and/or faculty/staff, revisions to this policy may occur.*

Reminder: Those SUNY community members with a role in the UEC (i.e., faculty, residents, staff, students who work on floors 5,6,7,8 or 10) **and declined the flu vaccine are required to wear a surgical mask full time in all patient-care areas for the duration of the flu season** (as declared by the NYS Commissioner of Health – historically through May)

Those who have declined the flu vaccine administration may re-address this at any time, get vaccinated and submit proof of documentation at any point in the future.

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