



Updated February 2, 2022

**OASAS Guidance on COVID-19 Mask Wearing Requirements
in Certified, Funded or Otherwise Authorized Settings**

NOTE: This guidance supersedes the **Post COVID-19 State of Emergency Guidance to OASAS Certified Non-hospital-based Inpatient and Residential Addiction Treatment Providers** dated July 22, 2021. That document is rescinded. Please note that the **COVID-19 Infection Control Summary for Non-hospital-based Inpatient and Residential Addiction Treatment Providers** is still in full effect. This document offers guidance to accompany the emergency regulation **14 NYCRR Part 808 COVID-19 Mask Wearing Requirements in Certified, Funded or Otherwise Authorized Settings** dated December 15, 2021.

The New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) offers the following guidance for all programs certified, funded, or otherwise authorized by OASAS as a provider of substance use disorder or gambling prevention, treatment, or recovery services to continue mitigating the spread of COVID-19 in light of the continued state of emergency declared by the federal government.

- Effective immediately, all Programs shall have policies and procedures in place to ensure all staff, visitors, and individuals receiving services **regardless of vaccination and booster status** wear appropriate masks, consistent with any directives and guidance issued by OASAS and consistent with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*.
 - Staff, visitors, and clients/residents must wear a mask at all times that they are within the facility, except if they are alone in a room or office with the door closed.
 - Clients or residents who are cohorted together in a room should wear a mask when not alone in the room, including when sleeping.
 - All staff (including vendors, contractors, interns, students, etc.) must wear a mask that fits snugly and covers completely the nose and mouth.
 - Staff who have direct physical contact with patients (nurses, medical providers, medical assistants, phlebotomists, etc.) which includes the following activities (this is not an exhaustive list): administering medications, performing vital signs, giving injections, performing phlebotomy, performing physical exams, etc. must wear a surgical mask.
 - Staff who may be exposed to potentially infectious materials or body substances (via contaminated medical supplies, devices, and equipment; contaminated environmental surfaces; or contaminated air) though not doing direct patient care (e.g., dietary,

environmental services, laundry, security, engineering and facilities management, etc.) must wear a surgical mask.

- Staff who are operating vehicles in which other staff and/or clients/residents are transported must wear a surgical mask.
- All other staff who do not meet the aforementioned criteria may wear a cloth face covering that fits snugly and must cover completely the nose and mouth in lieu of a surgical mask.
- Clients, residents, and visitors (not including visitors that meet the criteria above as staff) may wear a surgical mask or a cloth face covering that, ideally, fits snugly and must cover completely the nose and mouth.
- Exemptions from mask wearing requirements for staff, individuals receiving services, and visitors
 - Masks are not required to be worn by:
 - Children under two years of age
 - A person with a disability who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, for reasons related to the disability, or
 - A person for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to workplace health, safety, or job duty as determined by an Occupational Health and Safety Administration workplace risk assessment
 - Where a mask cannot be worn due to disability or a risk to workplace health, safety or job duty:
 - a face shield should be used as an alternative whenever practical; **Note:** face shields and/or goggles are still required for all staff doing any direct care with patients or residents requiring physical contact.
 - **Any exemption from mask wearing must be based upon proof of disability or risk which is retained in a distinct record keeping system to assist with monitoring compliance.**

***The CDC has updated its masking recommendations. See the full CDC guidance [here](#) and [here](#).**

- Masks and respirators (i.e., specialized filtering masks such as “N95s”) can provide different levels of protection depending on the type of mask and how they are used. Loosely woven cloth products provide the least protection, layered finely woven products offer more protection, well-fitting disposable surgical masks and KN95s offer even more protection, and well-fitting NIOSH-approved respirators (including N95s) offer the highest level of protection.
- Whatever product you choose, it should provide a good fit (i.e., fitting closely on the face without any gaps along the edges or around the nose) and be comfortable enough when worn properly (covering your nose and mouth) so that you can keep it on when you need to. Learn how to improve how well your mask protects you by visiting CDC’s [Improve How Your Mask Protects You page](#).
- A respirator has better filtration, and if worn properly the whole time it is in use, can provide a higher level of protection than a cloth or procedural mask. A mask or respirator will be less effective if it fits poorly or if you wear it improperly or take it off frequently. Individuals may consider the situation and other factors when choosing a mask or respirator that offers greater protection.

OASAS is not requiring that programs have their staff wear KN95s or N95s but is recommending that programs inform their staff regarding updated CDC guidance and consider providing higher grade mask options (KN95s, N95s) for staff who would prefer to wear them

- **In addition to masking, staff in OASAS certified, funded, or otherwise authorized by OASAS**

501 7th Avenue | New York, New York 10018-5903 | oasas.ny.gov | 646-728-4760

1450 Western Avenue | Albany, New York 12203-3526 | oasas.ny.gov | 518-473-3460

programs must continue to follow NYS OASAS, NYS DOH, and CDC COVID-19 guidance and utilize appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as indicated regardless of vaccination and booster status.

- Patients, residents, and staff are required to wear masks, regardless of vaccination and booster status, while being transported between OASAS certified locations or transported as part of an OASAS certified service (e.g., from a residence to a day program).
- All high touch surfaces should continue to be cleaned and disinfected consistent with CDC guidelines. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- Hospital-based inpatient and residential addiction treatment programs should continue to follow guidance for mask wearing and physical distancing for patients, visitors, and staff issued by the hospital.
- Inpatient and residential facilities with positive cases of COVID-19 should continue to adhere to the protocols contained in the [*COVID-19 Infection Control Summary for Non-hospital-based Inpatient and Residential Addiction Treatment Providers*](#)
- Questions should be directed to OASAS Regional Offices, PICM@oasas.ny.gov or Legal@oasas.ny.gov.

501 7th Avenue | New York, New York 10018-5903 | oasas.ny.gov | 646-728-4760

1450 Western Avenue | Albany, New York 12203-3526 | oasas.ny.gov | 518-473-3460