

Are there medical exceptions for mask wearing? Very few.

By The Washington Post

A so-called "mask loophole" has been circulating on social media. It suggests that people who don't want to wear masks should tell store workers that they have a medical condition, and if challenged they should cite the privacy section of HIPAA, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

To be clear, the Americans with Disabilities Act doesn't apply to people without disabilities, and HIPAA only applies to the flow of medical information through health-care providers and insurers.

"This social-media post doesn't relay a 'mask loophole' so much as it encourages people to exploit a law designed to provide protections to disabled people," the fact-checking website Snopes wrote.

There are very few conditions that would prevent someone from being able to wear a mask. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says people who should not wear a mask are: 1) children younger than 2 years old; 2) anyone who has trouble breathing; 3) anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

"Anyone who has trouble breathing" is ambiguous, and this seems to be where people like to point if they don't want to wear a mask. In an article in the medical journal JAMA, a legal expert and a medical expert wrote that "few medical conditions are truly incompatible with all forms of mask wearing."

People with facial deformities that are incompatible with masks is one example the authors raised. People with sensory or processing disorders was another. But less clear were the cases of people with chronic lung illnesses who weren't experiencing an acute attack. There is some evidence that masks protect the wearer to a certain extent, which would be beneficial to those with underlying lung disease. Having a chronic cough is also a really good reason to wear a mask.

For asthma, it depends on the severity. For people with mild or well-controlled asthma, masks shouldn't be a problem, according to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. For those with severe asthma that involves many hospital visits and medications, wearing a mask for long periods might not be best.

Mother arrested by Irvine Police for selling drugs

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Johnson consented to a search of the residence.

Hensley said that during a search of a bedroom shared by Combs and Johnson, Officer Marshall recovered 3.7 grams of fentanyl, 1 gram of heroin, 55.5 grams of methamphetamine, a small amount of marijuana, and assorted paraphernalia. The citation states those items were discovered in multiple purses belonging to Combs.

Combs was charged with trafficking in a controlled substance, first offense (carfentanil or

fentanyl derivatives), trafficking in a controlled substance, first offense (heroin), trafficking in a controlled substance, first degree and first offense (greater than two grams of methamphetamine), unlawful transaction with a minor under 16 years old, first (illegal content), first degree wanton endangerment, tampering with physical evidence, possession of marijuana, and drug paraphernalia - buy/possess.

Officer Conrad served the bench warrant on Combs from Estill District Court.

IPD arrests female for trafficking in heroin

An Estill County woman has been arrested by the Irvine Police Department for trafficking in heroin.

Chief John Sturniolo said on October 23, a confidential informant working for IPD traveled to 2596 Richmond Road. The informant bought two packets of a blueish power for \$50. The substance field tested positive for heroin and fentanyl.

Then on October 26, a confidential informant working for IPD traveled to 2596 Richmond Road and bought two packets of a blueish power for \$50. A citation states that it field tested positive for heroin and fentanyl.

Chief Sturniolo charged Misite Combs, 45, with trafficking in a controlled substance, first offense (heroin).

Police Activity Report

Irvine Police Chief John Sturniolo served a bench warrant for Estill County Court on Jimmy Nieves, 48, of Turner Avenue last Wednesday. Nieves has been charged with trafficking in a controlled substance, first degree and first offense (methamphetamine).

Officer James Marshall served a Fayette County warrant on Jonathan Harrison, 32, on October 30 at his residence on Broadway. Harrison had been charged with fourth degree assault (domestic violence), minor injury.

Lonnie Dakota Arvin, 21, of Eades Drive, Irvine was served with an Estill District Court warrant on Oct. 27 by Officer Jason Conrad.

Officer Conrad served warrants from Madison County and Laurel County, October 31, on Amy M. Sebastian, 44, of Corbin, Ky. Sebastian was on South Irvine Road when the war-

rants were served.

Deputy Josh King cited Peyton Rose, 22, of Richmond Road, Irvine for alcohol intoxication in a public place and first degree disorderly conduct on Saturday. Deputy King and Officer Conrad had responded to a domestic in progress on Blackburn Road.

Upon arrival, the citation states that Rose was found to be under the influence of alcohol. She was yelling and shouting profanities at neighbors and other individuals on the scene.

Richard LeMaster, 33, of Fitchburg Road, Ravenna was charged with possession of a controlled substance, third degree, drug paraphernalia - buy/possess, public intoxication - controlled substance (excludes alcohol), and prescription not in proper container, first offense.

Deputy King had

gone to Shell Mart early Sunday morning to investigate a male under the influence. He and Officers Conrad and Marshall found LeMaster inside his truck after exiting the business.

The citation states that LeMaster admitted that he had taken suboxone prior to entering the store. In plain view of his vehicle was a blank pill bottle containing several capsules identified as gabapentin. A used syringe was also laying in the truck bed on the driver's side.

Dennis W. Powell, 36, of Richmond was arrested Saturday night on South Irvine Road by Deputy King.

Earlier, IPD had received a complaint call about a suspicious vehicle being parked on Winchester Road. King said later he got behind the vehicle matching the description on South Irvine Road.

He conducted a traf-

fic stop because the vehicle's license plate was not illuminated. There was an arrest warrant for illegal trafficking in drugs for one of the passengers in the vehicle.

The officers received permission to search the vehicle. King said he located a small black container shoved into a hole in the driver's seat.

The officers said it contained a baggie of clear crystals suspected to be methamphetamine. They also located another piece of folded paper containing another crystal, also suspected methamphetamine, a baggie containing suspected marijuana, and two glass pipes.

Powell was charged with possession of a controlled substance, first degree and first offense (methamphetamine), possession of marijuana, drug paraphernalia - buy/possess, failure to wear seat belts, and rear license not illuminated.

78% of Ky. counties had moderate to high level of virus spread linked to home gatherings

By Melissa Patrick
Kentucky Health News

For a month, Kentucky has been in the White House Coronavirus Task Force's worst danger zone for case numbers, and with several days of the highest one-day totals yet being reported this week, it doesn't appear that will change any time soon.

Kentucky is in the red zone for cases, indicating 101 or more new cases per 100,000 population last week, with the 21st highest rate in the country," says the latest task force report, which covers Oct. 17-23. "Kentucky had 185 new cases per 100,000 in the last week, compared to a national average of 133."

As cases surge across the nation, it should be no surprise that both the state and national case rates are up from the previous week, when there were 158 new cases per 100,000 in Kentucky and 117 per 100,000 nationwide.

The report says the state needs a different strategy for reducing transmission than it used in the summer.

Kentucky was largely able to stay in the yellow zone for both its positive-test rate and cases from mid-July to late August, meaning it had 10 to 50 new cases per 100,000 and a positivity rate between 5 and 7.9% for most of that time.

"What worked in the summer is not working in the fall, with cooler weather and considering covid fatigue," says the White House report, which advises: "Keep mask requirements in place and ensure physical distancing, hand hygiene, avoiding crowds in public and social gatherings in private, and flu immunizations."

The report puts 93 of the state's 120 counties into one of the danger zones, up from 84 the previous week. Seven more counties, a total of 69,

were in the top two danger zones in this week's report.

The number of counties in the red zone increased from 43 to 47; the orange zone number rose from 19 to 22; and the yellow zone grew from 22 to 24.

The report says 78% of Kentucky's counties had a moderate or high level of community transmission, with 39% of them having high levels of transmission.

Gov. Andy Beshear noted at his Oct. 28 briefing that the report calls on the state to work with communities to limit both large and small social gatherings.

The report says, "Current transmissions are linked to home gatherings. People must remember that seemingly uninfected family members and friends may be infected but asymptomatic. When meeting people who are not a part of one's household, masking and physical distancing must be observed at all times, especially when indoors."

Beshear agreed: "If you're having a Halloween party, the state believes you are spreading the virus; the federal government believes you're spreading the virus. We need your help."

The reports recommends a "rapid test and isolate" competitive campaign in two counties with incentives for residents to come forward and get tested. Asked about that, Beshear said, "We think we're doing that with the red zone recommendations," along with our school and long-term care recommendations.

The red-zone recommendations calls on counties with at least 25 counties per 100,000 people in the last seven days to take more steps to thwart the spread of the virus.

Beshear added that if the state has the resources later to do this type of campaign, it will consider

it, recognizing that this approach only helps two counties while leaving the rest "high and dry."

The report also says states should "ensure retail establishments are complying with directives." Beshear said the Labor Cabinet and Alcoholic Beverage Control are working to "try to enforce that as best we can."

The report places the state in the orange zone for the percentage of residents testing positive for the virus, representing a rate of 8% to 10%, with the 18th highest ranking in the country.

Beshear has said that the White House report uses a different data

stream than the state uses, which means the state's positive-test numbers are lower. Wednesday, he said the rate was 6.07%.

Communities in the red zone had positive-test rates higher than 10% and more than 1 new case per 1,000 residents. Those in the orange zone had 0.51 to 1 new cases per 1,000, and a weekly positive-test rate of 8% to 10%, or one of those two conditions and one condition qualifying for the red zone. Yellow-zone communities have new cases between 0.1 and 0.5 cases per 1,000 and a positive-test rate of 5% to 8% -- or one of those, with the other in a higher zone.

Estill is back in red zone for Covid-19 infections

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The new Estill County Library opened to the public last Monday for the first time. It closed again after Estill County dropped back into the red.

The library is continuing its curb-side services.

Business at the courthouse is as usual, except with the judicial system. Please call the office of the circuit court clerk, Stephanie Brinegar Cassidy, (723-3970) if you have any questions.

No new corona virus

numbers were posted by the local health department on Monday. It was closed on Tuesday.

Estill Countians are encouraged to stay home as much as possible and avoid social gatherings. If you must go out to work or for food and medical needs, wear masks and maintain social distances.

Use store pick-ups whenever possible to keep from spreading the virus.

Keep washing those hands often and using hand sanitizer.

KSP arrests Estill man for trafficking in drugs

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Willis was given a Mt. Dew to drink on his way to the jail. When he got to the jail, he threw away his pop can. Trooper Robinson said that Willis immediately began experiencing severe medical issues that appeared to be from the use of heroin.

The trooper said he removed the pop can from the trash. Inside the pop can was six individually

wrapped aluminum packages that were empty but consistent with the other packages located on Willis.

Willis was charged with trafficking in a controlled substance, first offense (heroin), tampering with physical evidence, possession of marijuana, and drug paraphernalia -- buy/possess. He was lodged in Three Forks Regional Jail.

Due to press deadline, Election results next week!