2022 Annual Meeting of the HOD: June 1 Speakers' Update

From: Bobby Mukkamala, MD, chair, AMA Board of Trustees

Masking policy at the 2022 Annual Meeting

The following policy regarding masking at the upcoming Annual Meeting was adopted by the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees on Tuesday evening, May 31:

Per CDC guidance, masks should be worn indoors in public in counties with a high COVID-19 community level. For the Annual Meeting, this means that medical grade masks are expected when not actively eating, drinking, or speaking at a microphone.

This policy applies to all AMA-sponsored meetings of the House and all section meetings, including business sessions and assembly meetings, reference committee hearings, and associated gatherings.

The decision regarding masks is based on several facts:

- Medical grade masks have been shown to provide protection against COVID.
  - Medical grade masks are, at minimum, a surgical mask, with respirators (N95, KN95, and KF94) providing the highest level of protection. We encourage attendees to wear the highest quality medical grade mask they can tolerate.
  - Cloth masks are not as effective and are not acceptable alternates.
- Approximately 2200 people can be expected to attend the Annual Meeting. Many will have embarked from areas with high COVID-19 community levels or will traverse crowded airports, with possible exposure throughout their travels. We cannot reliably or rationally expect circumstances to improve in the week remaining until section meetings begin.
- As of May 26, Cook County, the location for the Annual Meeting, was designated high COVID community level by CDC, as are other counties in the U.S. from which we expect attendees.
- We recognize these precautions only protect attendees during formal AMA events, and that transmission can occur in the social gatherings that surround them. As such, we request all attendees be mindful for their safety and the safety of others outside of these events as well.
Protection against COVID is most effective using layers of precautions. Masking is but one component of our health and safety plan. Our requirement for vaccinations, plans for testing, distancing to the extent possible, and the provision of disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizers constitute a combined approach that we hope will best protect the health of our attendees.

Your AMA will have a limited supply of masks, but attendees are encouraged to bring their own well-fitted masks.

Should someone become ill or experience symptoms during the meeting, a list of nearby facilities will be available, including Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Rush Medical Center, and the University of Illinois. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response offers a website to aid in locating testing and treatment.

Finally, we would note that multiple candidate interviews are conducted throughout the Annual Meeting, and we encourage both candidates and their interviewers to adhere to the masking policy. Neither candidates nor those conducting interviews should be exposed to unnecessary risks.

Questions may be directed to hod@ama-assn.org.

-- Responses should be directed to HOD@ama-assn.org

Additional Speakers' updates

For additional speakers' updates visit the updates overview page.