
Subject: Email - Communication - Nazeem Muhajarine - Mandatory Masks on Buses - File CK 270-7
Attachments: mask_wearing_in_saskatoon_saskatoon_city_councilors_28aug20.docx

From: Web NoReply
Sent: August 28, 2020 5:47 PM
To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>
Subject: Email - Communication - Nazeem Muhajarine - Mandatory Masks on Buses - File CK 270-7

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Friday, August 28, 2020 - 17:46

Submitted by user: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

Date Friday, August 28, 2020
To His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council
First Name Nazeem
Last Name Muhajarine, PhD
Phone Number (306) [REDACTED]
Email [REDACTED]
Address [REDACTED] Main St
City Saskatoon
Province Saskatchewan
Postal Code [REDACTED]
Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable) U of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit (SPHERU)
Subject Mask wearing in Saskatoon to fight COVID-19
Meeting (if known)

Comments

Re. the proposed mandatory mask-wearing directive in Saskatoon city buses

The proposal to make mask-wearing mandatory on Saskatoon city buses is a step in the right direction, but falls short of the necessary target at this time in the course of the pandemic. Here's why.

1. Our survey (see attached data brief) finds that the majority of Saskatoon participants wear masks when they cannot physically distance outside their homes and support mandatory mask-wearing indoors. In the week of July 28-Aug 3, more than three quarters (76%) said they wore "always" or "most of the time". This shows that most of our citizens are willing to do what is necessary to keep the pandemic under control in our city.
2. Importantly, mask-wearing doesn't replace other preventive efforts. Wearing a mask is positively associated with physical distancing, hand hygiene, and not touching one's face.
3. It is clearly a minority--but a vocal minority, who make themselves heard in as many ways as possible and as often as possible--who advocate for no masks.
4. Requiring only bus riders to wear masks singles out a particular group of people and sends the wrong message by implying this is an especially risk situation (compared to other settings and other groups); further, it

is likely to have a limited impact, as it only applies to a minority of Saskatonians.

5. Many businesses and institutions (e.g., the UofS) are leading the charge by requiring mask wearing. It is time for the City to take a leadership position on this issue, especially at this time and in this year.

Nazeem Muhajarine, professor and epidemiologist, U of Saskatchewan

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

On Facemasks and COVID-19 in Saskatoon

Subsample (Saskatoon) Analysis, Social Contours and COVID-19 Survey - June (Round 2) and July (Round 3)

Mask-Wearing in Saskatoon

Since the beginning of June, we have been asking Saskatchewan respondents to Social Contours and Covid-19 survey:

“In the last 7 days, when you were inside a building (other than your home) where it was hard to maintain social distancing, how often did you wear a face mask?”

The results below are based on the subsample of 1269 Saskatoon respondents in June (Round 2) and July (Round 3):¹

- 484 (38%) said they wore a mask all or most of the time when they couldn't physically distance
- 103 (8%) said some of the time
- 259 (20%) little or none of the time
- 423 (33%) said they did not leave home or did not answer the question

For those whom this question was relevant (i.e. 846), **69%** said they wore a mask all, most, or some of the time when they couldn't physically distance inside a building. Those who are older (65+ years), women, and those with professional or advanced level education are more likely to indicate they wore masks all/most or some of the time.

Perception of personal risk was related to mask wearing among Saskatoon respondents. Those who said if they get COVID they will get very sick or die, are more likely to wear mask all/most/some of the time vs those who said they will not get very sick at all (77% vs 55%).

Saskatoon respondents concerned about spreading the virus to others or felt that COVID-19 was a “very big threat” to our community were more likely to wear mask:

- Those very concerned they would spread the virus to others were 2x as likely to wear masks frequently, compared to those who were slightly or hardly concerned (55% vs 46%).
- 88% of those who said COVID is a ‘very big’ threat to the health of their community wore masks frequently, versus only 27% who said that COVID is a “very small” threat—more than 3-fold difference.

We also found that those who wear masks frequently are more likely to also report other practices that are known to prevent the spread of the virus (i.e. risk mitigation):

- when out in public, almost all frequent mask wearers (80%) maintain physical distancing all or most of the time;
- most (74%) always wash their hands after being away from their home; and
- just over half (76%) always try to avoid touching their face when out in public.

Summary: Our timely survey shows that **more than half of Saskatoon residents** have adopted the new practice of wearing a face mask all or most of the time. Those concerned about spreading the virus to others and those who see the virus as a bigger threat to their community are frequent mask wearers. Mask wearing does not make people less concerned about other healthy practices; on the contrary, Saskatoon respondents who wear masks frequently are also very likely to follow public health recommendations regarding physical distancing, hand washing, and not touching their face.

¹ The August (Round 4) survey is currently in the field.

2. Mandatory Face Mask-Wearing

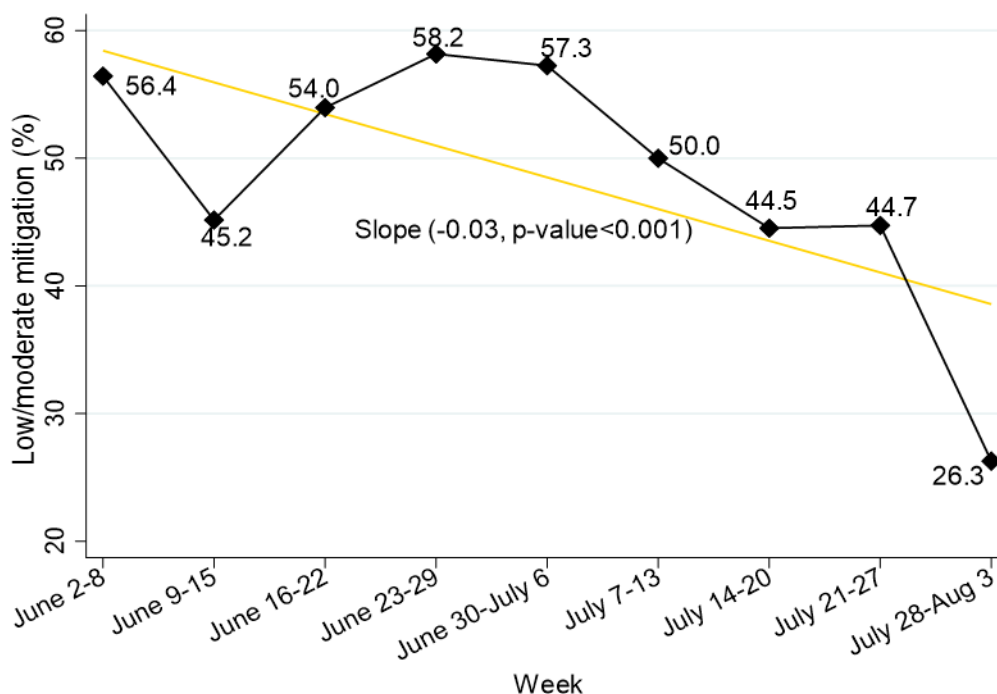
In the same Social contours and COVID-19 survey in Saskatchewan, we asked: “when should wearing a face mask be mandatory?” In July:

- 62%, a clear majority, said face masks should be mandatory inside a building at any time;
- 15% any outdoor public space; and
- 14% anytime when outside your property.
-

Only 11% responded that face masks should ‘never’ be mandatory. One in five (21%) indicated that they didn’t know or weren’t sure.

Those who indicated that mask wearing should be mandatory presented a similar profile to those who wore a mask frequently: older respondents, women, and those who perceived they would get very sick or die if they were to get the virus, were concerned about spreading to others, and felt COVID-19 was a big threat to their community.

3. Trend in Mask Wearing



This chart shows the proportion of respondents who said they wore a mask “some of the time, a little of the time and none of the time” increased from 45.2% (June 9-15) to 58.2% (June 23-29). Afterwards, the trend declined to 26.3% (July 28-Aug 3). In sum, 74% or respondents in the end of July/beginning of Aug indicated that they wore a mask all or most of the time.