

Good afternoon,

Late last week, the [CDC identified Franklin County as orange community level \(high\) for COVID-19](#). Community levels are determined by the level of new cases and new admissions in hospitals. According to Franklin County Public Health (FCPH), cases and hospitalizations in the county are spiking because of the highly-contagious Omicron BA.5 variant.

Consistent with the CDC guidance, [FCPH](#) and [Columbus Public Health](#) have issued community mask advisories recommending that individuals wear masks indoors in public places. Please note this is a recommendation, not an order. For this reason, the ESC will continue to make facial coverings optional. However, we ask that you are respectful of those who choose to wear a facial covering while in our facilities.

As a reminder, please review the posted ESC COVID-19 guidance located on our website here: <https://www.escco.org/CoronavirusStaffUpdates>. Staff also are asked to continue using the [Quickscreen tool](#) each day prior to coming to the office, and if you are ill, please stay home.

As always, thank you for your diligence as we work to provide a safe environment for all.