

Gov. Pritzker Announces Mask Requirement For Pre-K-12 Schools, Long-Term Care Facilities, to Prevent Spread of COVID-19 Delta Variant

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SPRINGFIELD - Gov. J.B. Pritzker officially announced Wednesday afternoon at a news conference at the Thompson Center in Chicago that there will be a mask mandate for all Pre-Kindergarten-12th-grade schools and daycares across Illinois.

Pritzker unveiled a requirement for all students, teachers, and staff to wear masks after the Illinois Department of Public Health said it will follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's new recommendations.

Employees at state-operated congregate living facilities will be required to receive the COVID-19 vaccine by October 4th to protect vulnerable residents, Pritzker said.

"Given our current trajectory in hospitalizations and ICU usage, we have a limited amount of time right now to stave off the highest peaks of this surge going into the fall," said Governor JB Pritzker. "To combat the Delta variant, Illinois is taking three key steps to protect our state's 1.8 million unvaccinated children under 12 and their families, residents, and staff of long-term care facilities, and those highly vulnerable people who rely upon state employees for their daily care. I also encourage every Illinoisan who is eligible to get vaccinated as soon as possible, as millions of their neighbors already have. This vaccine is safe, effective, and essentially eliminates the risk of hospitalization and death even from the Delta variant. In short, it's the best tool we have."

"Vaccination is the best way we can prevent further spread, hospitalizations, and deaths due to COVID-19 and the Delta variant," said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. "Data show that the vaccines are preventing severe illness, hospitalization, and death, and are effective against the Delta variant. We have the tools to turn the tide of another wave, but we need people to use them."?