

To the Members of the Public Health Committee,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be heard. I am asking you all to consider the following:

1. When voting on the extension of the Governor's Executive Orders, please vote on each of the 11 orders individually. Issuing a bulk "yes" or "no" is unreasonable as the orders are very different and concern several different matters.

2. I am a Physician Assistant who sees children and adolescents in an emergency psychiatric setting. I can attest that the number of children I have seen in crisis with substance use, mental health issues, suicidal ideation and suicide attempts has been vastly higher these past two years than in the prior 13 years I have been in that setting combined. Masks, vaccines, social distancing and lockdowns have not stopped the virus but have collectively contributed to a vast mental health crisis in our children. We need to start learning to live with this virus and re-establish a sense of normalcy in the schools. Masks should not be considered the "new normal". We need to do better and we can start by making masks optional rather than mandatory.

In Appreciation,

Christine Rowland, MSPAS, PA-C

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