



Senator Virginia “Ginny” Lyons, Chair, Health and Welfare Committee
115 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont
January 18, 2022

Honored Chair, Health and Welfare Committee Senator Lyons,

ANA-Vermont supports 22-0550 which advocates wearing a mask or cloth face covering in public indoor spaces, subject to limited exceptions, until all counties statewide have a community transmission level below “substantial” as determined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Michelle Wade, President of the Vermont Nurse Practitioners Association is our Nominations Director, part of our ANA Board, and has already testified on supporting the mask mandate with parameters; hence, there is no need to take up additional committee time. It is exciting to hear that high-quality masks will now be more widely available to slow viral transmission as a statewide response. The cost of providing high quality masks can be a burden on hospitals. The ability of our state to receive high quality protective equipment for health care workers, without it being a cost burden to facilities will help keep health care providers and the public safe. You may add this letter as official testimony of ANA-VT support.

Nurses continue to be on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Senate Health and Welfare Committee is aware of the stress and trauma that the pandemic has placed on Vermont’s health care workforce. Every time people expose themselves to the virus unnecessarily, and contract COVID-19 or expose professionals to potential harm, more strain is added. Evidence-based measures to help decrease transmission of this virus are provided by the CDC and updated regularly. We need to follow the wisdom shared by current researchers to protect health care workers and the most vulnerable members of our population.

Wearing a mask in indoor public places where there is high likelihood of transmission is a rational way to decrease the transmission of COVID-19. Thank-you for fighting to ensure the safety of our health care workforce, and all Vermonters. Nurses are grateful for an approach that mitigates the spread of the Omicron variant and future mutations.

Respectfully,
Meredith Roberts
Executive Director ANA-VT