

Masking in high-risk settings extended until June 11

By Paula Brown

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Ontario has extended remaining mask mandates in high-risk settings until June 11 as it manages the sixth wave of COVID-19.

The Provincial government announced the remaining mask mandate extension in a press release on April 22.

‘To protect our progress in managing this latest wave, I am maintaining masking requirements in specific public settings where individuals who are, or may be, at increased risk of severe outcomes, are in close contact for extended periods of time,’ said Dr. Kieran Moore, Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health.

The mask requirement in high-risk settings was originally scheduled to expire on April 27.

‘Continuing to follow masking requirements and keeping up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations are the best ways we can prevent transmission and protect our friends, families, and our communities,’ said Moore.

Settings where the mask mandate still applies includes public transit, long term care homes, retirement homes, shelters and other congregate care facilities, and health-care settings such as hospitals, doctors’ offices, and clinics.

Other directives from the Chief Medical Officer of Health will also remain in effect until June 11, the province said, ‘after which the ministry will issue guidance on personal protective equipment recommendations for infection prevention and control in health care settings.’

Most COVID-19 measures such as capacity limits, masking in most public settings, and proof-of-vaccination have already been lifted in the province.

Ontario also announced on April 22 it would begin to receive supplies of Evusheld, an antibody treatment for immunocompromised individuals.

Evusheld is a two-dose injection taken when an individual is not positive for COVID-19 and provides protection from COVID-19 for six months.

The Province said Evusheld will be available to individuals with the highest-risk of a severe outcome from COVID-19 in the coming weeks including organ transplant recipients, stem cell transplant recipients, CAR-T therapy recipients, and other hematologic cancer patients undergoing treatment.