

How we can help:

I have yet to meet a single person who enjoys wearing a mask during this pandemic. They are hot. They muffle your voice. They often make you unrecognizable. No one can see if you're smiling or frowning. Men may complain it gets caught in the beard and some women believe it will ruin their make-up. There are dozens of reasons why people do not like wearing masks.

But there is one reason to wear them that outweighs all the negatives. They will help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

With cases continuing to increase at a rapid rate in Camden County, it is important that each of us do what we can to protect ourselves, our families and our neighbors. The latest hospital reports indicate all COVID beds in Camden and Brunswick are filled. This is not a minor flu surge but the result of serious COVID cases.

Social distancing is one effective measure, but we are often in situations where proper distancing is a challenge. Even with all the Governor's restrictions in place for group gatherings, people do gather and wearing a mask is a proven way to improve our chances of avoiding and not spreading infection.

Hospitals, medical facilities, and many local and national businesses are requiring customers to wear masks as they enter business establishments. They have every right to do so. Some cities are mandating mask wearing. Most know how difficult enforcement can be but hope that the mandate will encourage or stimulate personal action and responsibility to help protect everyone.

St. Marys has not issued a mandate but strongly recommends mask wearing at the recommendation of many respected medical professionals and scientists experienced in pandemics. There are some who resist wearing masks because they view doing so is a limitation of personal freedoms or they perceive masks as taking a political stance. We cannot let mask wearing become political or controversial. This dreaded disease strikes at random regardless of one's political preference or individual views on personal liberties. The risk of getting COVID and the often dire results far outweigh the temporary inconvenience of wearing a mask in public.

As a nation, a state, a county and a community, we are in a medical emergency. Continued spikes in cases and deaths will endanger more lives, jobs, and the local, national and world economy. It is that simple.

None of us like wearing a mask. I know I don't. But it's the responsible thing to do, so I will. I ask that you join me and encourage friends and family to do likewise. As those on the front lines fight to reduce the pandemic's toll on lives, the easy task of wearing a mask in public is the one thing all of us can do to be a

part of the effort to reduce the spread. As the medical and scientific experts work round the clock to find a vaccine, our part in the solution is to wear a mask. The request could not be more simple or clear.