



2985 Drew St.
Clearwater, FL 33759

June 25, 2020

Commissioner Mike Moore, Chair
Commissioner Mike Wells, Vice Chair
Commissioner Ron Oakley
Commissioner Kathryn Starkey
Commissioner Jack Mariano

Dear Members of the Pasco County Board of County Commissioners:

BayCare Health System is a leading not-for-profit health care organization that aims to set the standard for high-quality, compassionate health care services as we connect individuals and families to a wide range of services at 15 hospitals and 400 service locations throughout West Central Florida, including Morton Plant North Bay in New Port Richey.

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected our community in dramatic ways that were unthinkable just months ago, and our health system is no exception. As we do all we can to achieve the best possible health outcomes for our patients during this difficult time, we ask that our community do what they can to mitigate community spread of this virus in Pasco County.

A few months ago, there was not as much data on whether masks reduced viral disease transmission. However, as we learn more about COVID-19, the science is becoming clearer. New studies suggest that masks are one of the best tools that we have to prevent community transmission of COVID-19. A review published earlier this month, in the notable health care journal, *The Lancet*, analyzed 172 observational studies from 16 countries and found that the available data suggests that wearing masks protects the general public from infection.

Our state leaders have consistently supported the CDC guidelines regarding wearing face coverings, and earlier this week, Governor Ron DeSantis authorized State Surgeon General Scott Rivkees to rerelease a Department of Health (DOH) Public Health Advisory that states "all individuals in Florida should wear face coverings in any setting where social distancing is not possible". Such bold action is a step in the right direction as our BayCare team members continue to see a rise in the number of COVID-19 cases here in Pasco County.

BayCare supports your order for individuals in Pasco County to wear face coverings while indoors at a public business or county government facility. By requiring face masks in public indoor spaces, we protect not only ourselves, but also our friends and neighbors from the devastating effects of COVID-19.

We appreciate your support in helping to keep Pasco County healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nishant Anand".

Nishant Anand, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer
BayCare Health System