

---

## Andrew Brannan

RN, BScN

2nd December 2022

## Doris Grinspun

CEO, Registered Nurses Association of Ontario  
4211 Yonge St, Suite 500  
Toronto, ON M2P 289  
[dgrinspun@rناo.ca](mailto:dgrinspun@rناo.ca)

Dear Doris Grinspun,

I strongly disagree with your call for universal indoor mask mandates.<sup>1</sup> The mandates were scientifically groundless in 2020, 2021, and even more so in 2022-2023.

Historically, large studies on the benefits of universal masking during flu season to prevent the spread of respiratory illness have been largely inconclusive. Any benefits seem to be marginal, and not statistically significant.<sup>2</sup> On November 29th 2022, a large randomized controlled trial published in the Annals of Internal Medicine on the use of surgical masks versus N95 confirmed what we could extrapolate from pre-Covid studies on masks and the flu: limited efficacy not accounting for downsides.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup><https://rناo.ca/policy/action-alerts/its-mandates-we-need-not-recommendations-premier>

<sup>2</sup> Long, Y. et al. (2020) "Effectiveness of N95 respirators versus surgical masks against influenza: A systematic review and meta-analysis," *J Evid Based Med.* 2020; 1- 9.  
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/jebm.12381>

"A total of six RCTs involving 9,171 participants were included. There were no statistically significant differences in preventing laboratory-confirmed influenza, laboratory-confirmed respiratory viral infections, laboratory-confirmed respiratory infection, and influenza-like illness using N95 respirators and surgical masks. Meta-analysis indicated a protective effect of N95 respirators against laboratory-confirmed bacterial colonization (RR = 0.58, 95% CI 0.43-0.78). The use of N95 respirators compared with surgical masks is not associated with a lower risk of laboratory-confirmed influenza."

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M22-1966> COVID-19 occurred in 52 of 497 (10.46%) participants in the medical mask group versus 47 of 507 (9.27%) in the N95 respirator group (hazard ratio [HR], 1.14 [95% CI, 0.77 to 1.69]).

---

You state, “Mandating masks in all indoor settings will reduce illness...” But countless comparisons of masked-up vs mask-free jurisdictions over the last three years do not demonstrate significant difference in excess mortality as a function of mask-prevalence.

In conclusion, the call for a return to mask-mandates against all available evidence is not merely unscientific but immoral.

I urge the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario to return to the foundational principles of nursing, which includes the promotion of health and human flourishing on scientific and holistic grounds.

Sincerely,

Andrew Brannan

**RNAO Number:** 22KM3224

**CNO Number:** 0390575