

Office of the President

February 7, 2022

To the Salem Board of Health

As we enter the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic, I want to applaud the members of the health department, the City of Salem and the countless residents and business owners who have worked so diligently to keep our community safe and our healthcare system strong. Our physicians, nurses and staff deeply appreciate every one of you.

Fortunately, the COVID infection numbers are coming down both in the community and in the hospital and the situation is evolving quickly. Our ICU capacity is back to baseline, we have seen an 75% drop in hospitalized COVID patients since early January, and community positivity rates have declined significantly in recent weeks.

The Board did the right thing in implementing the proof of vaccination measure back when it voted in December. At that time, we were not sure how bad the Omicron surge would be but knew that if it was not taken seriously enough, residents and the local healthcare system would pay a heavy price. We are grateful to the Salem Board of Health, local businesses, and residents for their consideration of these factors. As a result, vaccination rates in Salem have increased and the rate of new COVID infections remains lower in Salem than in the rest of the state. Undoubtedly the proof of vaccination measure as well as the indoor masking mandate have saved lives.

Given current trends, we would not be opposed to pulling back on COVID mitigation restrictions in the local community. As we continue to live with COVID and its future variants, we encourage the City to maintain its data-driven approach and streamline its ability to respond quickly to put mitigation measures in place as needed. We look forward to partnering with you in this vital endeavor. Thank you.

Sincerely,



David J. Roberts, M.D.

