

# Westfield Board of Health has no authority to mandate masks (Letters)

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**By Letters to the Editor | The Westfield News**

I am writing this letter in response to the discussion of mask mandates in the Westfield Board of Health meeting on Dec. 8.

At the 35-minute mark, one of the board members stated, “I think we need to have a discussion about an indoor mask mandate for public spaces.” The rationale for this was related to the number of “cases” in the past two weeks. First, with regard to “cases,” I think it would be wise to stop treating a positive COVID test as a “case.” At what point in history have we treated asymptomatic people as a “case” for an illness?

I would like to see the following numbers included in the weekly reporting:

1. Number of individuals tested per week (not total tests, but people).
2. Number of people with symptoms who tested positive.
3. Number of COVID hospitalizations.

I’d also like to know what the definition for unvaccinated is. Are these people who have had zero COVID shots? Or are these people who are no longer considered “fully” vaccinated? It is my understanding that the definition is about to change again in the near future.

I’d also like to address the same member’s statement that “most of our neighbors have mask mandates in place.” This is simply not the case. My family travels to most of our neighbors and have not been required to wear a mask indoors in Agawam, Holyoke, Russell, Southampton, Southwick, Springfield or West Springfield. We have not traveled to Montgomery or Granville, so I can’t speak for those.

The Westfield Board of Health has called a “special” meeting for this Wednesday at 5 p.m. to discuss a city-wide mask mandate, I’d like to know where they are deriving that authority from? The state of emergency in Massachusetts was lifted as of June 15, 2021, so the Board of Health cannot appeal to the state for that authority. None of them are elected officials, nor do they have legislative powers. So again, I’d like to know what authority they would have to enact mandates in the city of Westfield.

Unelected and unaccountable government officials have run amok in the “COVID era” (and in general), and it’s time for people to stand up and remember that we are a self-governing nation.

[Source: MassLive.com](https://www.masslive.com)