Public Hearing Notice on First Amended Board of Health Regulation to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 and Update Indoor Masking Guidance
Hearing Date: 01/04/2022

Written Testimony
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The proposed First Amended Board of Health Regulation to prevent the spread of COVID-19 would, as described by the public notice, continue the indoor masking requirements at any location accessible to the public in Montgomery County by doing the following:

- Rescinding the automatic termination of the indoor mask mandate upon reaching 85 percent of the population being fully vaccinated;
- Removing the requirement to end the indoor mask mandate when the County moves into moderate transmission;
- Continuing the indoor mask mandate until the Board of Health rescinds it in a formal order;
- Requiring the Board of Health to meet every two weeks to review data on community transmission and consider whether the indoor mask mandate should continue; and
- Eliminating the outdated language requiring the County Executive to provide status updates on the County's employee vaccination mandate.

I fully support the entirety of the proposed amendments. I thank the County Council for its leadership during this dire moment during the COVID-19 epidemic.

I encourage the County Council to additionally, either in the Health Regulation or in a separate document, define the term "any location accessible to the public." Some erroneously believe that buildings with locks on their front doors inherently exclude the public and thus have based their not following of the County mask mandate on this fallacious interpretation. In the definition, please differentiate between (1) public locations, i.e., buildings owned and operated by a government, (2) locations accessible to the public, i.e., neither public nor private buildings, and (3) private locations. Specific examples, such as addressing retail establishments, community centers, and houses of worship would help as well.