To Montgomery County Council Members,

Please do not implement the vaccine passports that will cause undue burden on the public to carry passports for all their guests/children and for restaurants to enforce. It will create a false sense of security for vaccinated residents since they will think they are safer when in fact due to Omicron are not. People should not let their guard down and this will create a sense of ease when it is not the case. People with boosters are even getting really sick as Marc Elrich just stated during his last message he was really sick high blood sugar levels for 13 days. He also said people that are in hospital don't have full series of vaccines. That sounds like people with two shots are being hospitalized since he did not say majority is unvaccinated. This would not be a good health measure at this time to give people this false sense of security.

Hospitals are not overwhelmed. From the Bethesda beat article "The dashboard shows that 84.6% of the county's intensive care unit beds are being used, defined as "moderate utilization." The county has been at that level since Jan. 6.

It also shows that 36% of hospital beds are occupied by patients with COVID-19, defined as "high utilization."

Stoddard and other health officials, however, have said that statistic can be misleading because of "incidental cases" — meaning that some patients are taken to the hospital for another reason, like a car crash, and test positive when admitted there."

https://bethesdamagazine.com/bethesda-beat/coronavirus/local-hospitals-not-in-dire-straits-but-face-staffing-shortages-influx-of-patients/

Please don't implement since everyone will be getting Omicron with or without the passports. See from Fauci below. Also, passports not stopping spread in places that have implemented them. See NYC positivity rate is at 33% positivity rate. That probably doesn't even include people who don't test which is many. https://www.reuters.com/world/us/omicron-teaches-hard-lessons-us-schools-revamp-return-holidays-2022-01-03/

"Omicron, with its extraordinary, unprecedented degree of efficiency of transmissibility, will ultimately find just about everybody," Dr. Anthony Fauci told J. Stephen Morrison, senior vice president of the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

From the CDC website " Breakthrough infections in people who are fully vaccinated are expected, but vaccines are effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalizations, and death. Early evidence suggests that fully vaccinated people who become infected with the Omicron variant can spread the virus to others. All FDA-approved or authorized vaccines are expected to be effective against severe illness, hospitalizations, and deaths. The recent emergence of the Omicron variant further emphasizes the importance of vaccination and boosters."

Paul Allan Offit is an American pediatrician specializing in infectious diseases, vaccines, immunology, and virology. He is the co-inventor of a rotavirus vaccine.

"Dr. Offit says, Paul Offit, the director of the Vaccine Education Center at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, told me that getting boosted would not be worth the risk for the average healthy 17-year-old boy. Offit advised his own son, who is in his 20s, not to get a third dose. Even with Omicron's ability to sidestep some of the protection vaccines provide, Offit said, he believes that his son is well protected against serious illness with two shots, so a third just isn't necessary."

https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2022/01/should-teens-get-booster-omicron/621222/

"I don't want people to worry that children are in the hospital sick with COVID. The numbers are high. We average 20 to 25 kids in the hospital at one time who are COVID positive, but they're coming in going out, so it's not like these are chronic infections," said Head of Infectious Diseases at Rady's, Dr. John Bradley."

https://www.cbs8.com/article/news/health/coronavirus/cdc-record-number-of-kids-hospitalized-with-covid/509-312469a8-75a2-4f83-ac74-a21dad08bd1d

Kid between 5 and 11 are at extremely low risk of being hospitalized with COVID or dying. The risk went even lower with Omicron. The vaccine is only emergency authorized for this age group it is not officially approved.

There is only 50% of kids vaccinated under 12 and many of them will have gotten Covid by the time a vaccine passport is implemented. Which leads me to my next point on natural immunity.

"Israeli study shows that natural immunity is 13 times more effective than vaccines in protecting individuals. "SARS-CoV-2-naïve vaccines had a 13-fold increased risk for breakthrough infection with the Delta variant compared to those previously infected."

https://www.clarkcountytoday.com/news/israeli-study-shows-natural-immunity-delivers-13-times-more-protection-than-covid-vaccines/

Israel puts 6 months on their vaccine passport if you are infected with Covid. At the very lease vaccine passports should account for previous infection since you have B cells and T cells to protect you from getting serious ill from Covid just like the purpose of the vaccine. See above vaccine purpose is mainly to just prevent serious disease and death.

Based on below medrxiv previous COVID infection can increase adverse events with vaccine. This would be problematic to make kids go out and get vaccines when they were just infected.

https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.04.15.21252192v1

Omicron can protect against future covid delta variant. https://www.cnbc.com/2021/12/28/covid-omicron-appears-to-protect-against-delta-could-displace-it-study.html

It would not be a public health measure at this time to put out vaccine passports considering all of the above. The hospitals are not overwhelmed with COVID and many are coming to hospitals and testing positive but there for other reasons. The vaccines are not protecting from getting infection or transmitting it. Healthy kids are at very low risk of severe covid. Israel is already on the 4th booster. We don't know the safety of some many boosters in a short period of time especially for you healthy individual.

Marc Elrich also said people that are in hospital don't have full series of vaccines. That sounds like people with two shots are being hospitalized since he did not say majority is unvaccinated.

The science following Omicron is that we can encourage vaccinations but should not force upon people with previous infection which the overwhelming evidence shows a previous infection protects against severe illness.

Once we get through Omicron most people will have vaccine induced immunity or infection induced immunity so we should be good for at least 6 months from high risk of spread and severe illness for next 6 months. This policy should be reevaluated at that time. Summer is also usually low risk so most likely an evaluation of COVID wouldn't be needed until Fall. Please consider all these points when voting for this policy. Again, it is a burden on the residents and businesses when due to Omicron there is not much you can do to prevent vaccinated, unvaccinated and previously infected residents from getting it. It would also give vaccinated a false sense of security and make them feel safe when in fact they are not.

Thanks,

Dana Sklut