

From: clerk@hamilton.ca
To: [Kolar, Loren](#)
Subject: Fw: Mandatory masks add barrier for deaf community
Date: July 8, 2020 4:07:39 PM

From: a michaluk [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 4:05 PM

To: Office of the Mayor; Wilson, Maureen; Nann, Nrinder; Farr, Jason; Merulla, Sam; Collins, Chad; Jackson, Tom; Pauls, Esther; Ward 8 Office; Clark, Brad; Pearson, Maria; Johnson, Brenda; Ferguson, Lloyd; VanderBeek, Arlene; Whitehead, Terry; Partridge, Judi; Public Health Services; Human Rights, Access and Equity Office; info@ontariodeaffoundation.com; info@chs.ca; Richardson, Dr. Elizabeth; clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: Mandatory masks add barrier for deaf community

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities, 2005 defines a disability as:

any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, **deafness or hearing impediment**, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,

Hello folks,

To accompany some of your Covid stats:

Approximately 357, 000 Canadians are deaf and 3.21 **million** who have hearing loss. And about 1 out of every 25 Canadians have impaired hearing. Anybody you know in your family that struggles to hear? How about yourself? What changes do you think will occur as you age if they haven't already? And how do you think those who rely on lip reading and facial cues are faring these days with the masks??

My brother is profoundly deaf, so I'll fill you in. The masks are a disaster for him and many others with hearing loss. I, of course understand why they are necessary but mandatory?! As of this writing, 91% of Hamilton's cases have been resolved. We are not Toronto, nor are we Kingston. Can't we make our own decisions and not be 'influenced' by others as if we were back in highschool?

And correct me if I'm wrong but very little mention of this aspect of mask wearing has occurred on a public scale.

Dr. Elizabeth, is this not part of health that you are 'officer' of?!

Yes, we are all in this together, as humans on a planet who should all have a sensible say in what is happening. Yet instead, by choosing to put one health issue above others, we are putting at risk people's ability to communicate. They need groceries and hospital care and have appointments just as we do. To try and control all aspects of Covid's trajectory at the expense of millions of people's mental/physical health including the seniors you are trying to protect, is a head scratcher. My parents are two of the 'most vulnerable citizens at risk' and I cannot emphasize enough how much they are struggling over worry for their son. And these concerns will in their own way, 'overwhelm' the health care system.

Please offer more compassion around this issue! Lip reading is a miraculous thing outside of a pandemic but if masks are made mandatory in public spaces what do you think these folk's day to day will look like??

And as I suggested to the mayor and his office, and to Paul Johnson (whom responded with no response), practice with someone. Have someone wear a mask, put on some noise reducing headphones (still not the same) and see how much you hear.

Let me know how it goes.

Andrea Michaluk
Hamilton

ATTN: Masks may curb COVID, but add barrier for deaf community.
Mask-wearing makes communication near impossible for those who rely on lipreading to communicate.
<https://www.healthing.ca/opinion/masks-curb-covid-but-add-another-barrier-for-deaf-community/>

Invisible disability': Masks making it harder to communicate, deaf and hard of hearing say

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/masks-and-barriers-communicating-deaf-and-hard-of-hearing-1.5579166>

"The trouble is you think you have time" - Buddha

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sent from my iPoof

RE: from Hamilton City Website

"It is important we continue to mitigate the spread of the virus by adhering to all of the Public Health measures we have in place. The Board of Health report recommending a mandatory face covering be worn in public indoor spaces will help our efforts in protecting the community from further spread. With Stage 3 of the province's reopening plan on the horizon, this additional measure will help avoid mass spread of the virus and ensure that we can keep moving forward."

-Mayor Fred Eisenberger