May 1, 2020

Costco Wholesale

Canada Central Office

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Dear Canadian Costco Executives:

It is my understanding that Costco Canada is considering implementing a policy whereby all shoppers will be required to wear a mask, as is occurring in USA Costco stores effective May 4th. I am writing to express my strong objection to this policy for several reasons:

1. **Masking is Not Evidence based**

The scientific literature is very clear that the wearing of a cloth mask does not prevent transmission or infection. In his scientific review of masking, Dr. Denis Rancourt states:

*“There have been extensive randomized controlled trial (RCT) studies, and meta-analysis reviews of RCT studies, which* ***all show that masks and respirators do not work to prevent respiratory influenza-like illnesses****, or respiratory illnesses believed to be transmitted by droplets and aerosol particles.”*

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340570735_Masks_Don't_Work_A_review_of_science_relevant_to_COVID-19_social_policy>

Dr. Rancourt explains:

*“No RCT study with verified outcome shows a benefit for . . . community members . . . to wearing a mask. There is no such study. There are no exceptions. Likewise, no study exists that shows a benefit from a broad policy to wear masks in public.”*

It is my understanding that using a mask to prevent exposure to a virus as SARS-CoV-2 is akin to erecting a chain-link fence to keep out mice. It is critical that our response to SARS-CoV-2 be measured, reasonable, and supported by demonstrable evidence. The bottom line is that there is no evidence to support the use of masking to prevent transmission or infection.

Dr. Rancourt also lists the unknowns with regard to potential harm from broad public policies to wear masks. These include:

* Do used and loaded masks become sources of enhanced transmission, for the wearer and others?
* Do masks become collectors and retainers of pathogens that the mask wearer would otherwise avoid when breathing without a mask?
* Are large droplets captured by a mask atomized or aerolized into breathable components?
* Can virions escape an evaporating droplet stuck to a mask fiber?
* What are the dangers of bacterial growth on a used and loaded mask?
* How do pathogen-laden droplets interact with environmental dust and aerosols captured on the mask?
* What are long-term health effects, such as headaches, arising from impeded breathing?
* Are there negative social consequences to a masked society?
* Are there negative psychological consequences to wearing a mask, as a fear-based behavioural modification?
* What are the environmental consequences of mask manufacturing and disposal?
* Do the masks shed fibres or substances that are harmful when inhaled?

Dr. Rancourt concludes:

*“In an absence of knowledge, governments should not make policies that have a hypothetical potential to cause harm. The government has an onus barrier before it instigates a broad social-engineering intervention, or allows corporations to exploit fear-based sentiments. Furthermore, individuals should know that* ***there is no known benefit arising from wearing a mask in a viral respiratory illness epidemic****, and that scientific studies have shown that any benefit must be residually small, compared to other and determinative factors.”*

1. **Violation of human rights**

To impose a practice as mandatory masking is a significant infringement upon individual rights and freedoms, something that should be precious to every Canadian. I recognize that governments may enact laws and pursue policies that limit Charter rights and freedoms, but the onus is on the government to prove that the limit is demonstrably justifiable in a free and democratic society. Given the above scientific review of masking, there is no justifiable reason to impose masking on the general public.

Shoppers and Costco staff should be free to use or not use a mask as per their individual free will and conscious choice. Anything less is overly authoritarian and contributes to a culture where the systemic violation of our freedoms are tolerated.

If this policy is to be implemented for Costco Canada, **I will refrain from patronage** of your stores and services until such time as this policy is rescinded.

While I will miss shopping at Costco as I have appreciated the advances Costco has made in making available organic and local products produced by ethical and responsible farmers and other environmentally conscious measures, I cannot in good conscious support an organization who participates in a policy as this.

Sincerely,