

Mayo Clinic COVID-19 expert on virus resurgence and what it will take to reduce widespread transmission

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As COVID-19 continues to spread rapidly in some parts of the U.S., more states are announcing mask mandates in an attempt to avoid seeing such resurgence. It's a move that Dr. Gregory Poland, a Mayo Clinic

COVID-19 expert, says is key to help slow the spread of the virus.

"Part of what we're seeing in this resurgence along the southern rim of the U.S. is a lack of mask-wearing and physical distancing. We have watched, in real time, what happens when we ignore or don't implement those kinds of precautions," Dr. Poland says. "We have also watched countries, in real time, that have realized they've got a major problem and mandated public mask-wearing and very quickly have seen those cases be suppressed down to manageable levels where we could go back to work, we could go back to school, we could do the things that we want to do."

Minnesota and Ohio became the latest states to require [face masks](#) in all businesses, stores and indoor public spaces where people gather. Such mandates have proven effective in a number of studies, including, as Dr. Poland explains, one from the *Journal of Health Affairs*.

"States that put in mandates saw a 2% drop, per day, in the number of cases occurring. Now that 2% might not sound big, but when you look at that as a whole, that means that intervention alone has about a 20% affect in decreasing numbers of cases, and that's probably a minimal estimate."

Dr. Poland says putting together, mask-wearing, physical distancing and [hand washing](#)/sanitizing creates a "web of interventions" is highly effective in stopping the spread of the virus.

"I think if we do the right things here, despite the resurgence, we can get this dampened back down and push this off until we have these just-on-the-brink vaccines ready to go," says Dr. Poland.

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