

May 19, 2021

VIA E-MAIL: minhsc@leg.gov.mb.ca ; Brent.Roussin@gov.mb.ca

Honourable Heather Stefanson
Minister of Health and Seniors Care
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Dr. Brent Roussin
Chief Provincial Public Health Officer
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Honourable Heather Stefanson and Dr. Brent Roussin:

We are writing to you today to bring forward our concerns about the significant number of customers not wearing masks inside grocery stores, and we would like to request a meeting to discuss solutions.

Our campaign to call for mask enforcement in stores has come from the concern that retail grocery employees (our members) at major retailers have expressed regarding the large number of people entering and shopping freely without wearing a mask in stores. Our number one priority is the safety of our members, the people whose jobs get more demanding every time tighter restrictions come into place. These are the people who continue to show up and ensure everyone can access necessities during this pandemic.

It may come as no surprise that our call for everyone to wear masks in stores has also been echoed by many customers. These are customers who are stepping up to demand safety for workers and themselves in stores by speaking to store managers, reporting infractions to the COVID tip line and speaking up about their experiences on social media. Some have even filed complaints with the retailers and have not received responses.

Grocery store employees and customers alike are reporting to us that the store managers they approach with concerns reply that there is nothing they can do and don't even approach or interact with unmasked customers.

The public health orders have allowed grocery stores to remain open this entire time due to necessity. Given that fact, we think it's imperative that grocery retailers keep the safety of their staff and customers as their top priority. We want to discuss the issue with you further to share the worker's perspective and work towards a solution.

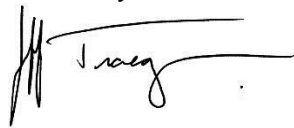
Minister Stefanson & Dr. Roussin
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We all need food; we want our members to stay safe and we're all in this together.

We represent over 8,000 Manitobans in retail and 2,000 in security. We see an opportunity here for an important and practical change in our COVID approach that will keep them - and all grocery store customers - safer when shopping.

We can all appreciate the urgency of this matter and as such we are looking forward to hearing from you both to set up a time in the very near future for us to meet and discuss ways to ensure all Manitobans are safe while in our province's retail establishments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Traeger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jeff Traeger,
President
UFCW Local 832

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Marie Buchan". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a prominent vertical stroke at the beginning.

Marie Buchan,
Interim Secretary Treasurer
UFCW Local 832

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