

# *More U.S. states mandate masks to fight coronavirus pandemic*

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Washington, July 18 (RHC)-- More U.S. state governors required residents to wear face-coverings in public, siding with the view that mask mandates are necessary to fight a worsening coronavirus pandemic rather than simply a matter of personal choice.

The Democratic governor of Colorado, Jared Polis, announced he was requiring most people to wear face coverings in public indoor spaces, such as stores and businesses.

The Republican governor of Arkansas, Asa Hutchinson, issued a similar statewide mandate, while Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, also a Republican, widened his earlier directive to include more people.

About half of the 50 U.S. states have now put face-covering mandates in place.

In related news, the mayors in Atlanta and other Georgia cities deepened their defiance of Governor Brian Kemp, saying they want their requirements for people to wear masks in public to remain in place, even after the Republican governor explicitly forbade cities and counties from mandating face coverings.

Officials in at least 15 Georgia cities and counties, including Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, had ordered masks during the coronavirus pandemic, and many are venting outrage at Kemp swatting down their efforts.

Kemp doesn't disagree, saying he strongly supports mask-wearing to combat the spread of COVID-19 infections. He traveled the state earlier this month to encourage face coverings. But he has maintained for weeks that cities and counties don't have the power to require masks in public places, saying no local order can be more or less restrictive than his statewide mandates.

Georgia overall had nearly 128,000 confirmed infections and nearly 3,100 deaths overall as of Wednesday, although experts say many more people contract the illness but are never tested.

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