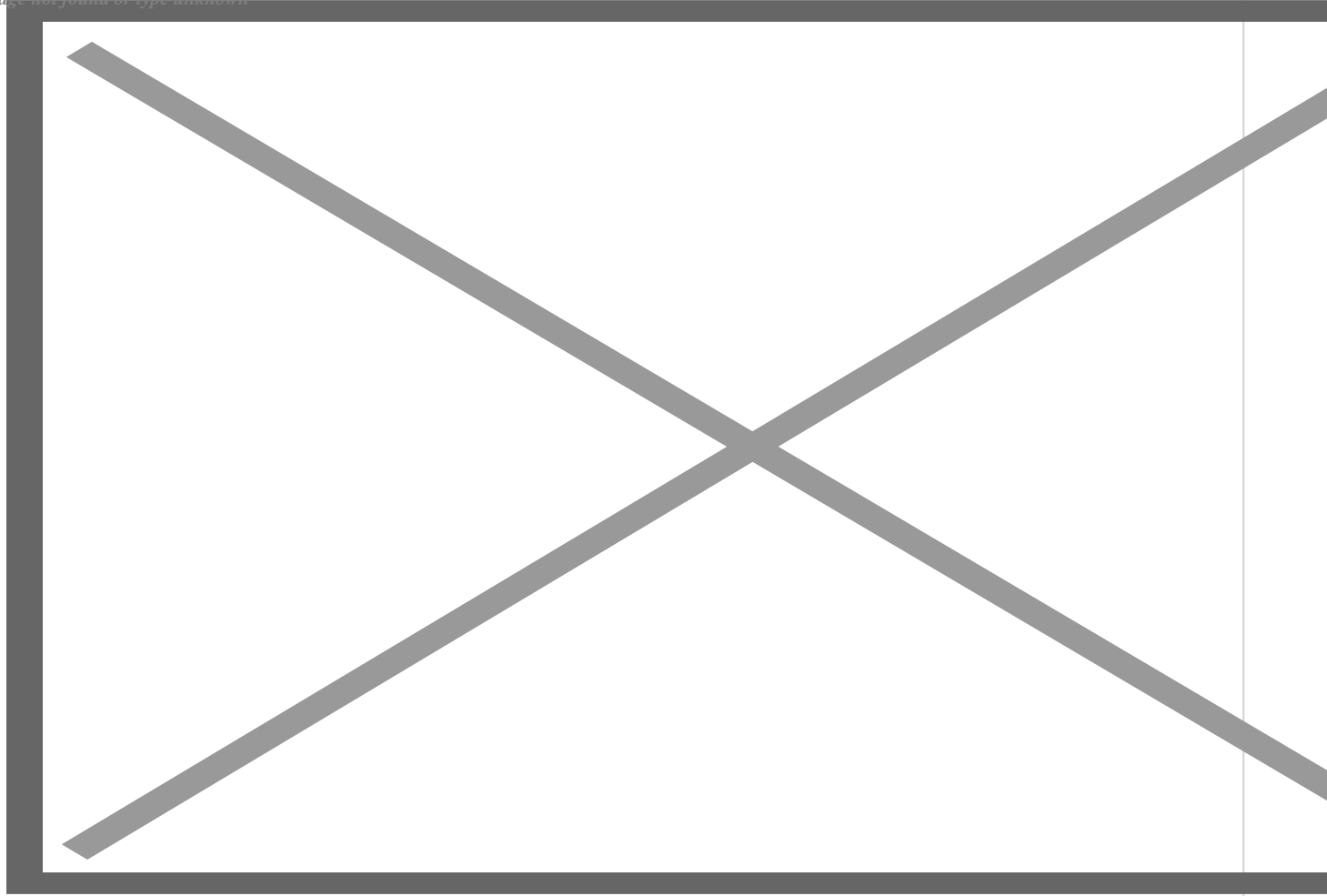


California to extend indoor mask mandate

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The U.S. state of California is extending its indoor mask mandate into mid-February amid a sharp rise in coronavirus cases that officials say could overwhelm hospitals.

Sacramento, January 6 (RHC)-- The U.S. state of California is extending its indoor mask mandate into mid-February amid a sharp rise in coronavirus cases that officials say could overwhelm hospitals.

California's confirmed cases have shot up nearly 500 percent in the last two weeks, and hospitalizations have doubled since Christmas to more than 8,000. State models forecast hospitalizations could top 20,000 by early next month, a level nearly as high as last January, when California experienced its deadliest surge.



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