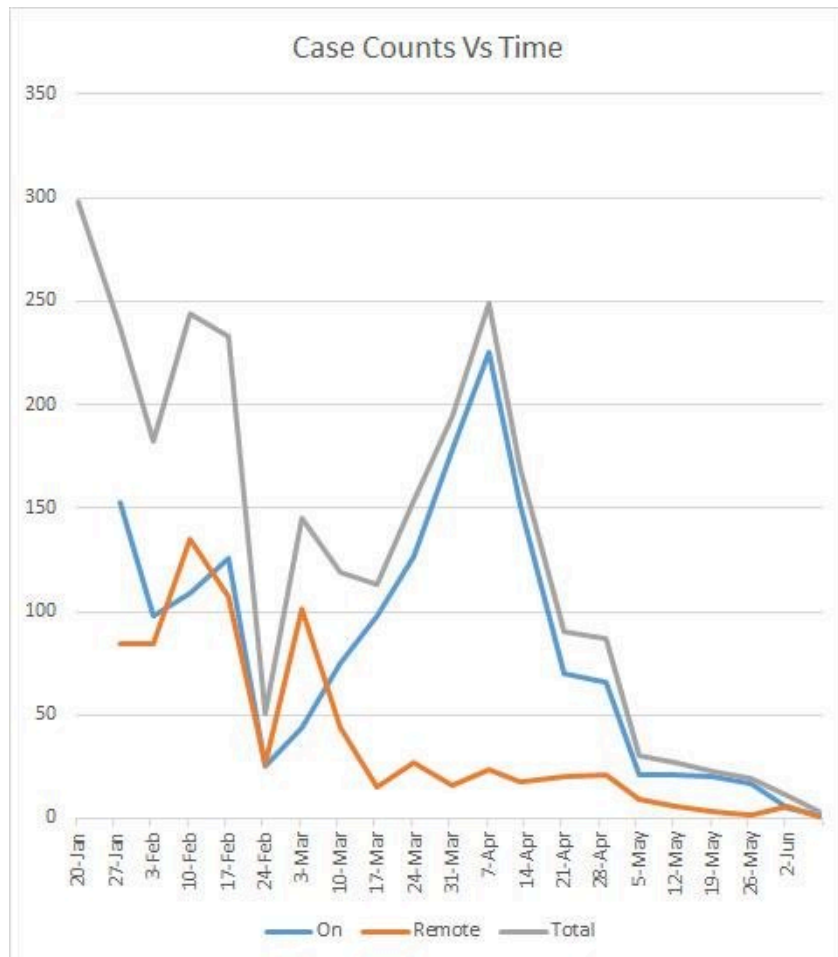


**Pandemic Response and Recovery Team (PRT)**  
**University Council Report – June 9, 2022**

The Pandemic Response and Recovery Team (PRT) has recommended to President Stoicheff that the current USask mask mandate be paused effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. It is anticipated the pause would be in effect until the 2022 fall term (and re-evaluated – see below)

Factors informing the recommendation to pause the USask mask mandate effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, include:

- A. Reported provincial COVID cases and hospitalizations are decreasing.
- B. Pressures on the healthcare system/resources have stabilized and are decreasing. Current CoVID cases are being managed by our provincial healthcare system and resources.
- C. Saskatoon CoVID wastewater levels have moderated and are low <https://water.usask.ca/covid-19/>.
- D. While adherence to reporting may also be a contributing factor, USask CoVID case counts are decreasing (2022 calendar year weekly numbers: high January 20<sup>th</sup> = 298; low June 7 = 3 cases) and are low - see figure:



- E. Seasonal variation of the pandemic - approaching a valley - in addition to lower number of individuals indoors and on our campuses during this period.
- F. There is no provincial public health mask mandate (or other provincial CoVID public health directives). However the Saskatchewan Health Authority and federal airport facilities continue with mask use.
- G. There are no current mandatory mask measures at Saskatchewan Polytechnic and the University of Regina. Masks measures are also absent, or will be discontinued June 30<sup>th</sup>, at many peer institutions across Canada (Dalhousie, McGill, Ottawa, Toronto, McMaster, Western, Calgary, Alberta, UBC)
- H. Public Health expertise concurs with the recommendation to pause the USask mask mandate as indicated.

It is important to emphasize that **individuals should feel free to continue using masks if they need or want to wear a mask (and be supported in that individual decision)**. We will continue to provide masks to visitors, students, staff, and faculty if requested. In addition, there are specific units/areas for which the mask mandate will continue, for example the Clinical Learning and Resource Centre (CLRC). Further settings are currently being evaluated and a more complete list of areas for which mandatory mask use will continue will be shared before June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

The situation will continue to be closely monitored by the PRT over the summer, and the mask mandate pause will be re-evaluated prior to September in anticipation of the fall term. We will also further engage with Public Health to guide future measures, including re-implementation of any other protective measures. There will be an announcement regarding potential CoVID preventive measures in a timely manner before the 2022 fall term.

Two (2) subjects deserve particular emphasis:

- 1. It continues to be essential that individuals self-monitor and stay home if symptomatic (even if CoVID test results are negative), and of course, if a CoVID test result is positive (even if asymptomatic).**
- 2. All USask faculty, students, staff, and visitors should be fully vaccinated, and receive their booster vaccination(s) as eligible. Because of the uncertainties and future realities of the pandemic, proof and verification of vaccination status may become necessary in the future (but is not required at this time).**

Thank you, and may you have a safe and restful summer!

Pandemic Response and Recovery Team (PRT)

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