



**JNESO**  
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*the professional health care union*

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For Immediate Release

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### **JNESO in Favor of Masking Protocols in Schools**

North Brunswick, N.J. (Aug. 10, 2021) -- "We need to do whatever we can to protect our children and having all school-age children wear masks this fall is what will keep them safe," said Douglas Placa, Executive Director of JNESO District Council 1, the health care union that serves 5,000 nurses and techs in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

With national pediatric COVID-19 cases already at 94,000 as of this week, which is an increase of over 22,000 cases since the last week in July, this continued upward trend has nurses and the entire health care community concerned. The American Academy of Pediatrics states that children now account for 15% of COVID-19 cases in the U.S.

"New Jersey's numbers may be low now, but we have seen this before and once children are back in school in a closed indoor environment the potential for contracting and spreading the virus could grow exponentially," said Placa who noted that 13 children are currently hospitalized with COVID-19 and two are in the ICU in New Jersey.

JNESO health care workers are very concerned, particularly since pediatric ICU's in Miami and Houston are already overcapacity and many are nearing capacity in other areas of the country. The fact that an 11-month-old baby had to be airlifted to a hospital 150 miles away due to bed shortage in the Houston area brings the reality of this impending issue to the forefront.

"During the pandemic JNESO fought hard to get masks and other PPE because we knew that it was a way to help protect our members from the virus. Today, masks are part of the daily work protocol for health care workers in all areas, and for now the same should be true for schools," he said.

Placa added, "As Governor Murphy said, even the loss of one child is not acceptable. Without vaccines available right now for this age group, masking and disinfecting protocols are the only defense children have against the virus."

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JNESO District Council 1 is a healthcare union representing more than 5,000 nurses and other health care workers in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. For more information, visit <http://www.jneso.org/>