



June 24, 2020

The Honorable Gary Herbert
Governor of Utah
350 State Street #200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114

Dear Governor Herbert,

Thank you for your commitment and leadership to assuring Utah has a healthy response to the COVID-19 pandemic and a strong economy. It is clear by the rapidly accelerating cases and hospital admissions that this work is not done and now is not the time to relent on this important leadership opportunity. The Utah Public Health Association is a group of committed and concerned public health and health system professionals working collaboratively to propose next steps that could enable a functional economy while protecting public health.

We have watched as the rate of disease spread has rapidly increased in the past two weeks, as our case counts go up, and our hospitalizations increase, particularly in areas that do not necessarily have the infrastructure necessary to sustain large increases in severely ill patients. The data show that Utah is on-track to rapidly overwhelm all of our healthcare systems if this accelerated trajectory continues. Our hospitals are already struggling to recover from the state implemented pause on elective procedures and that citizens delayed needed primary and emergent healthcare. Utah's businesses and employees quickly made tremendous changes and endured shutdowns. All of this in an effort to flatten the curve, protect the public's health and preserve health system capacity.

It appears that sacrifice will be undone by the current surge of cases. Utah runs the risk of an untenable situation unless we, as leaders, alter the course.

Our goal is not to advocate for a return to a complete shutdown. We are asking for a *smart, safe, and science-based* opening of Utah's economy. With this in mind, we relay four concrete suggestions that show support for the economy while reducing risk of exposure and all that comes with it.

1. Reinvigorate and restructure the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force to:
 - a. Incorporate and actively engage state and local public health leadership, and health system representation,

- b. Include representation from key minority and vulnerable communities, and,
 - c. Engage employers to take responsibility in preventing the spread of COVID-19.
2. Develop a coordinated risk communication media campaign across public health, employers and health care providers stressing the importance of mask use, hand hygiene and continued social distancing, and includes:
 - a. Correct way and when to wear a mask,
 - b. Instructions on hand washing and use of hand sanitizers,
 - c. Tips on social distancing in the workplace, in commerce, and in careful socializing, and,
 - d. Tailored messaging to different communities by trusted members of the community.
3. Coordinate statewide contact tracing that is in partnership with public health that is:
 - a. Led by a single organization,
 - b. Using established uniform training and reporting requirements, and,
 - c. Coordinates a specified chain of command for reporting results and follow up.
4. Coordinate statewide testing efforts until the pandemic is resolved by:
 - a. Continuing and supporting free testing efforts in all local health departments,
 - b. Assigning a single organization to lead and establish a specific chain of command, and,
 - c. Ensuring specific, coordinated reporting and follow up.

Finally, there is much work over the next few weeks that must be done to prepare for school re-opening processes, the impending influenza and respiratory virus season, and the possibility of a COVID-19 immunization distribution campaign. Ensuring that public health and health system leaders are shoulder to shoulder with those in the planning phases for this work is critical.

As public health and health system leaders, proud citizens of Utah and active members of our communities, we stand ready to assist you in leading Utah through this current wave and into a healthy, safe and strong future.

Sincerely,

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