



### **UPHA Statement in Response to Surge in COVID-19 Cases**

As COVID cases surge across our state, we urge the public, state and local leaders to take immediate action. For over 100 years, the Utah Public Health Association has been working to advance the health and equity of Utahns. We believe individuals, families and communities can and must work together to stay healthy and safe. Together we can make informed choices, and adopt sound, evidence-based policies.

We support the recommendations of the CDC and others to keep the public safe and stop the spread of COVID; in addition, we stand with the American Academy of Pediatrics, CDC and Utah Department of Health in their guidelines to support a safe return to school. In order to ensure the success of our students, our economy and our state we recommend the following actions.

For our public officials, including the Governor, legislative leadership and county councils, we urge you to:

- Reinststate a policy of universal mask-wearing to limit the spread of the virus;
- Allow officials within local health departments to issue data-driven public health orders, including maks mandates;
- Adopt the recommendations of the Utah Department of Health that all students, teachers and staff returning to school wear masks, practice physical distancing and regular hand-washing; and
- Invest in Utah's public health infrastructure to continue vaccine and COVID prevention outreach efforts, particularly for marginalized or under-resourced populations.

For members of the public, including parents, caregivers and students, we urge you to:

- Get vaccinated! All who can get vaccinated should do so. If you have questions about the vaccine or how to get it, please contact your local health department.
- Wear a mask! Mask-up in public spaces and indoors, especially around those whose vaccination status is unknown or among those who may have been exposed to COVID.
- Contact state legislators and your county council or commission to express your support for our public health leaders and public health safety measures, including mask-wearing in schools and public spaces.
- Stay home if you do not feel well, so you protect others, including our essential workers. Get tested if you have any symptoms of COVID.

Through data-informed action we can keep our kids, families and communities safe. The health of our state's population is achieved when we work together to support one another.