



July 7, 2020

Hon. Gary R. Herbert  
GOVERNOR  
STATE OF UTAH  
Utah State Capitol

Sen. Stuart Adams  
President  
UTAH STATE SENATE  
Utah State Capitol

Rep. Brad Wilson  
Speaker  
UTAH STATE HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES  
Utah State Capitol

Dear Governor Herbert, President Adams and Speaker Wilson,

The Utah Hospital Association deeply appreciates each of you for your leadership and concern for the citizens of the State of Utah during the long months of the COVID pandemic. Thank you for your steady guidance.

As Utah has re-opened our economy, we have been pleased to see the resurgence of economic activity and return of many normal activities. Unfortunately, we have also seen a serious increase of infection. That increase is bringing impacts on hospitals and health care professionals which are unsustainable. Although average length of hospital stay and the mortality rate are improving, we are alarmed at the caseload we project in the coming weeks and months.

Two weeks ago today, Utah's hospitals launched #MaskUpUtah to promote wearing masks among Utahns. We had hoped that with time, a large enough segment of our society would begin wearing masks. Unfortunately, it is not happening quickly enough. Thus, we hereby petition the Governor to adopt a rule requiring Utahns to wear masks.

We note the following in support of this request:

1. A report from Goldman Sachs's Chief Economist (see the link below in both written and video format) finds that masking 90% of people can reduce an R-naught infection rate of 1.6% to .6% over time. Masking has been the weapon of choice for successfully combatting and subduing the spread of COVID in east Asia and other places. **The positive correlation between 90% of citizens wearing masks and the reduction of infection is beyond question.**

The Goldman report says, "...we estimate that a national mandate could cut the national average growth rate of infections by nearly 1.0pp to 0.6-0.7%."

**"Thus, the upshot of our analysis is that a national face mask mandate could potentially substitute for renewed lockdowns that would otherwise subtract nearly 5% from GDP."**  
[Emphasis added.] <https://www.goldmansachs.com/insights/pages/face-masks-and-gdp.html>

2. The Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce has made a similar request and has urged its member businesses to request of the Governor that wearing masks be mandatory. The Chamber stated

“Public health and economic health are inseparably connected, not competing alternatives, and both are required to sustain healthy and economically viable families, businesses, and communities. To this end, we have drafted a statement calling upon state leaders to update health guidelines for the yellow, orange and red risk levels, to include the requirement to wear a mask in public places when social distancing is not feasible.”

3. The HERO project recently found through 8,500 randomly selected Utahns’ antibody tests, that we have an asymptomatic incidence rate of only 2.4 for each confirmed COVID case. This is vastly less than estimates of there being unconfirmed cases of 10 to 25 times the known number of infected. This means that we are a long, long way from herd immunity.<sup>1</sup>
4. Last week, Republican Governor Greg Abbot of Texas ordered the wearing of masks in the face of the dramatic increase in Texas’ infection rate.

UTAH HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION



Greg Bell  
President and CEO

---

<sup>1</sup> “The HERO project is a collaboration between the U.’s David Eccles School of Business, University of Utah Health, Study Design and Biostatistical Core of the Center for Clinical and Translational Science, the Governor’s Office of Management and Budget, and the Hope Corps, to better understand how SARS-CoV-2 is really impacting the state of Utah.

“From May 4 to June 10, [field workers collected antibody samples](#) from 8,500 randomly selected Utahns, age 12 and older, from Davis, Salt Lake, Summit and Utah counties. The results, Alder said, were a bit surprising and the number of people who have been infected with the virus is “lower than anticipated.”

“While officials with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have said there may be as many as 10 undetected cases of COVID-19 for every one case that is detected, that is not the case in Utah. “Study results show that for every case detected so far in Utah, there are probably about 2.4 additional cases that have gone undetected.

“The downside of that is that we have a highly susceptible population,” Alder said, adding that if Utahns don’t adhere to public health messaging now, “we have the risk of this getting out of hand ... and all that really hard work we did at the beginning of the pandemic in Utah getting lost.”

<https://www.deseret.com/utah/2020/7/3/21311566/coronavirus-researchers-findings-show-most-utahns-are-highly-susceptible-to-covid-19-infection>