



Addressing the Current Spike in Utah County

To the Utah County Community:

As a County Commission and the appointed Health Director of Utah County Health Department, we are concerned about the recent spike of COVID-19 cases in our community. If the recent trajectory of cases were to continue, our healthcare system's capacity could be at risk and the entire County may be put back into the Orange Level restrictions. While the 15-24 age group currently represents the highest number of cases (and this age group tends to have much lower hospitalization and mortality rates), the spike is not isolated to this demographic. It is spreading throughout our entire community to the point that the state has now moved Provo and Orem to the Orange Level restrictions.

We would like to acknowledge that a majority of our residents and businesses have done a great job of voluntarily complying with the guidelines and implementing changes to their lifestyle and business practices—often at great cost. The administrations of Brigham Young University and Utah Valley University are also taking decisive action to address this health crisis. Such action is far more impactful than anything county government can do on its own. We pledge to continue offering data, tools, suggestions and resources to the private sector to assist these efforts.

At this critical time, we call upon our local residents, businesses, universities, and others to continue following the State's Phased Guidelines. Our Health Department, county administration, and city administrations will focus on reviewing licensed entities and large gatherings for compliance. We also place property owners on notice that they are expected to prevent large gatherings with blatant disregard for public health guidelines from occurring on their premises.

Finally, face coverings help to prevent the spread of COVID-19. While our youngest and healthiest residents may not be as susceptible to the severe symptoms of this virus—an outbreak places many of our more vulnerable residents at risk and also threatens to limit our ability to continue the economic, educational, social and recreational activities that help this community thrive. The face covering requirement provides for exceptions, local adaptation, and is not intended to be enforced with criminal penalties. We want the message for our residents to be as clear as possible: When in public and unable to consistently maintain a safe distance, we are expected to wear face coverings.

Please join with us in doing all we can to slow the spread during these next 30 days (or shorter if certain public health metrics are achieved). It takes all of us doing our part to get through this—hopefully resulting in a return to normalcy as soon as possible. This updated Public Health Order is just one small part of a more comprehensive plan which will include additional public education, coordination with our cities, businesses, educational institutions, and further guidance from federal, state and local health experts. If we can curb this most recent spike and quickly move all of Utah County back to the yellow phase it may save lives and jobs in our community.

Utah County Health Director Ralph Clegg
Commissioner Tanner Ainge
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