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**Public Health and Economic Emergency Commission Adopts Plan to Protect High-Risk Populations**

**SALT LAKE CITY** – On May 7, the Public Health and Economic Emergency Commission, by unanimous vote, recommended the governor move forward with a plan to address high-risk populations developed by the Governor’s Office of Management and Budget. Additionally, on April 30, by unanimous vote, the Commission adopted the “Protecting High-Risk Populations Project” in the Utah Leads Together Plan, which includes a targeted plan to help those who are most vulnerable to COVID-19.

The Commission made the recommendations after carefully reviewing data points for high-risk populations. It reached a consensus that high-risk groups need to continue to take extreme precautions. The Commission emphasizes that the moderate (orange) phase does not apply to vulnerable populations. High-risk individuals should continue to follow the guidelines listed in the high-risk (red) phase.

As of May 7, 93.4 percent of individuals who have passed away in Utah were age 65 or older and/or in a high-risk category. High-risk categorization is based on underlying medical conditions as defined by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html) and adopted by the Commission’s Medical Advisory Team Working Group.

Utah’s COVID-19 Patient Fatality Data as of May 4:

* 72.5 years is the average age of fatality, with the median age being 73.5 years of age.
* 76 percent of fatalities had at least one underlying health risk factor.

Additional high-risk populations include those living in nursing homes or long-term care facilities.

The Commission is continuing to collect data to understand factors that contribute to higher hospitalization rates for high-risk groups. Employers are required to make accommodations for vulnerable employees.

“The Public Health and Economic Emergency Commission is taking action to protect Utahns who are at a higher risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19,” said Jefferson Burton, co-chair of the Commission. “As we carefully transition to a lower risk status and continue to thoroughly consider new data, it is critical that we prevent the spread of the virus to individuals who are more vulnerable.”

“The most important steps we can take involve protecting the most vulnerable among us as we move from the urgent phase,” said Sen. Dan Hemmert, co-chair of the Commission. “Data now suggests most people will recover, and that the greatest danger of grave illness lies mainly with the elderly and those with underlying health conditions. Now is the time to strategize using the data and find long-term solutions. We must remain committed to fighting COVID-19 with every means possible.”

The Commission will continue to provide updates and public health recommendations based on data trends.

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**Notes**

**Public Health and Economic Emergency Commission Members**

* Jefferson Burton, Department of Health, co-chair
* Sen. Dan Hemmert, co-chair
* President Stuart Adams
* Rep. Mike Schultz
* Steve Starks, Larry H. Miller Corporation
* Dr. Michael Good, University of Utah Health (nonprofit hospital)
* Brian Dunn, Steward Healthcare (for-profit hospital)
* Derek Miller, Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce
* Mark Bouchard, Community Leader
* Brandy Grace, Utah Association of Counties

**Commission’s Medical Advisory Team Working Group**

* Dr. Michael Good, University of Utah Health
* Brian Dunn, Steward Health Care
* Dr. Arlen Jarrett, Steward Health Care
* Dr. Mark Briesacher, Intermountain Healthcare
* Dr. Ralph Costanzo, HCA/MountainStar
* Jefferson Burton, Utah Department of Health
* Richard Saunders, Utah Department of Health
* Brian Hatch, Davis County Health Department
* David Blodgett, Southwest Utah Public Health Department