



December 31, 2020

Richard G. Saunders  
Executive Director  
Utah Department of Health  
288 North 1460 West  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114

In accordance with State Public Health Order 2020-27 *Updated Statewide COVID-19 Restrictions*, enclosed is the Intensive Testing Plan on behalf of the 16 institutions that make up the Utah System of Higher Education, and in partnership with Brigham Young University. This plan is the result of an extensive study of existing data, emerging best practices, and established public health expertise. We are extremely grateful for the dedicated staff at the Utah Department of Health who have been heavily engaged with USHE staff for the past several months in the development of this plan and their commitment to providing resources in support of the efforts of our colleges and universities to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

We are hopeful that this plan will inform your efforts as you work with Unified Command and other state leaders. We are aware of the many pressures from all sectors you are navigating; hopefully, this plan and engagement with your team give you confidence that we are committed to the best solutions in mitigating this pandemic.

Thank you for your leadership and happy holidays!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Woolstenhulme", with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dave R. Woolstenhulme  
Commissioner of Higher Education

December 22, 2020

## **USHE COVID-19 Intensive Testing Plan**

### ***January – June 2021***

In accordance with State Public Health Order 2020-27 *Updated Statewide COVID-19 Restrictions*, the Utah System of Higher Education (representing Utah’s 16 public colleges and universities, in partnership with Brigham Young University) has developed a rigorous testing program that involves several layers of testing strategies that strive to accurately identify students with current COVID-19 infection, determine campus COVID-19 infection trends, and most efficiently utilize available resources. The plan includes the following key components:

- Providing testing opportunities to symptomatic individuals
- Entry testing at the start of the spring 2021 semester
- Ongoing random testing of students living on or coming to campus for in-person instruction
- Quarantine and intensive testing of all close contacts of cases identified through contact tracing
- Options for additional focused testing

This program would efficiently use resources to test those most likely to be infected, provide regular surveillance to detect potential increases in campus infection rates, and help the institutions limit the spread of COVID-19 among students and staff. It is also hoped that this will be less burdensome on students and that they will be more compliant with a testing model that uses randomized testing with focused follow-up on close contacts rather than ongoing mandatory testing throughout the entire semester. Institutions shall coordinate the development and implementation of individual plans with their corresponding local health departments. Institutions shall submit a plan to the Utah System of Higher Education and Utah Department of Health.

#### **Symptomatic Testing**

Each institution will administer a diagnostic test authorized by the United States Food and Drug Administration and in accordance with Centers for Disease Control guidance to any student or employee that notifies the institution they have any of the COVID-19 symptoms. The institution will provide testing as soon as possible to these individuals but no later than 24 hours after the individual has notified the institution of their symptoms. Institutions will use their own resources (e.g., health center, electronic medical record, staff, test, etc.).

If an institution does not believe it can safely test symptomatic individuals itself, it will enter into an arrangement with another organization to provide this symptomatic testing as soon as possible upon notification and inform its students and staff of this arrangement.

### **Entry Testing**

When students return to campus in January, there is significant risk that they will return with infections and will begin spreading the infection to other students. When on-campus classes resume in January, institutions will test all on-campus residents and any student who attends at least one course that involves in-person instruction. This on-campus testing will be completed within the first 10 calendar days of the start of classes in 2021.

### **Randomized Surveillance Testing**

The goal of randomized surveillance testing is to allow institutions to understand campus infection trends and identify students with current infection. In comparison with the current mandate, the institutions anticipate significant cost savings associated with testing and believe there will be improved compliance with a randomized testing protocol.

The randomized surveillance testing will apply to all residential students and any student who attends at least one course that involves in-person instruction in the spring 2021 semester. This testing will commence after Entry Testing is completed during the first two weeks of classes. The method used for randomized sampling is designed to detect a 0.5-1.0% change in the number of infections in students that live on or come to campus.

Using a formula put forward by Steve Lacey, University of Utah, and Shane Reese, BYU, and included as an attachment to this proposal, UDOH and institution officials will coordinate on the following critical factors to determine the number of students to test each week at each institution:

- The number of eligible students on campus
- The current infection rate on campus as determined by testing
- The desired range of detectable change in COVID-19 infection we hope to see from one week to the next

### **Close Contact Testing**

Through its testing of symptomatic individuals and through its randomized surveillance testing, the institutions will identify COVID-positive individuals. The institutions will conduct contact tracing and case investigations with these individuals and identify, as much as possible, all on-campus close contacts. All of these close contacts will be notified of their exposure and directed to quarantine in accordance with state quarantine and self-isolation recommended protocols. Consistent with the State of Utah's quarantine testing protocols, institutions will test close contacts seven days after their

exposure, including close contacts who are eligible to test out of quarantine. The institutions will report to the Utah Department of Health the number of close contacts identified and the number of close contacts that are tested.

### **Focused Testing**

Institutions will be encouraged but not mandated to conduct additional focused testing to further identify and limit the spread of infection among their students and staff. This focused testing would be informed by various infection detection efforts being conducted by the institutions and may include the following:

- Wastewater testing
- Symptom check surveys
- Other randomized or mandatory testing
- Contact tracing
- Regular athletic testing

Based on this information, institutions may decide to conduct testing that could focus on:

- A specific residence hall
- A specific class
- A specific program
- Certain in-person activities (e.g., extracurricular activities)
- Other activities identified by the institution
- Staff that regularly work on-site

To the extent there are sufficient rapid antigen tests available, UDOH will supply institutions with the rapid antigen tests needed to conduct this focused testing.

Institutions conducting testing in compliance with the mandate shall inform students who are tested that the test results are not a diagnosis. Institutions shall additionally direct students who test positive to comply with CDC guidelines for individuals who test positive for or show symptoms of COVID-19 and to follow up with their licensed healthcare provider.

---

### **Estimated Costs**

To the extent that free BinaxNOW tests are available from the federal government, UDOH will provide the institutions with these tests. In addition, if needed, UDOH will purchase other rapid tests to meet the institutions' testing needs.

UDOH will provide USHE institutions with funds to help cover the costs to manage and administer this testing program. UDOH and USHE institutions will agree to a per test administration fee that UDOH will pay based on the number of tests administered by the USHE institution.

UDOH will monitor the number of tests performed by the institutions to ensure accurate distribution of tests. The institutions will report all test results through the designated UDOH reporting system.