



## Vaccine Attitudes: Summary Report

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The [Utah Health and Economic Recovery Outreach \(HERO\) Project](#) began in May 2020 as a collaborative statewide testing and analysis project to understand the community-based spread of Covid-19. The goal of the HERO Project is to collect and utilize high-quality local data to help inform decision-makers seeking to guide Utah's citizens and economy through a safe return to normalcy. Sixteen months later, the project team is wrapping up its reporting on community testing, impacts of Covid-19 on Utah businesses and consumers, school testing, and vaccine uptake, impact, and implications. This report summarizes and synthesizes the HERO Project's work to understand attitudes on vaccination among various communities in Utah. More information on the HERO Project's past and current work can be found in the project's [previous reporting](#).

### Background

During the early summer of 2021, the HERO Project conducted three simultaneous efforts to gain insight into how Utahns perceived the Covid-19 vaccines and what had prevented people from being vaccinated, with the ultimate goal of understanding how to increase vaccine uptake in the state:

- **focus groups:** Commissioned by the HERO Project, the University of Utah Department of Internal Medicine's Qualitative Research Core conducted 26 focus groups with 180 Utahns from specific populations of interest (e.g. Hispanic Utahns, young adults, K-12 educators).
- **door-to-door surveying:** Utilizing the [CASPER methodology](#), the HERO team conducted rapid surveying of 1,018 residents of Davis, Salt Lake, Tooele, and Utah counties.
- **qualitative study:** The HERO team surveyed 2,399 Utahns living across the Wasatch Front in a web-based qualitative study utilizing a long-form survey questionnaire.

Overall, the HERO team gathered data on the perspectives of over 3,500 Utahns with a wide variety of perspectives, identities, and experiences.

### Results

Across these three distinct initiatives, respondents were asked questions about their perceptions of the Covid-19 vaccines, their behaviors in response to the pandemic, and their perspectives on strategies for increasing vaccine uptake in Utah. Respondents' perspectives yielded largely similar takeaways, regardless of methodology for data collection.

### Respondent Perceptions

Respondents conveyed a generally high level of trust in the vaccine, as well as positive perceptions regarding its efficacy. This was, expectedly, more true for those who had been vaccinated themselves than for their unvaccinated counterparts.

Respondents also shared their experiences with how they received information about the vaccine and what sources they trusted. Many respondents indicated trust in doctors and other medical professionals, as well as in organizations like the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and World Health Organization. Generally, vaccinated respondents held higher levels of trust in these sources of information, while unvaccinated respondents had less. The latter, however, indicated relatively higher levels of trust in friends, family, and coworkers. The CDC and WHO were notable exceptions to a general trend of relatively low trust in government institutions as a whole. Similarly, respondents reported a lack of trust in large media corporations and social media.

## Respondent Behaviors

In alignment with the generally positive perception of the Covid-19 vaccines amongst this sample, a large majority of the HERO Project vaccine attitude respondents were vaccinated themselves. Vaccinated individuals discussed several benefits of their status, including the ability to stop wearing masks, travel, resume social gatherings, and feel increased peace of mind regarding their safety and that of those around them.

However, a still-sizable proportion of respondents remained unvaccinated, as did many individuals that vaccinated respondents lived, worked, or otherwise associated with. When asked about the reasons for not receiving a vaccine, respondents discussed a wide range of factors. The most common included worries about current and future side effects, concerns about the quick development of the vaccine, potential effects on fertility and pregnancy, inconvenience, and not expecting to become very sick (of note, many who indicated this reason had contracted the virus earlier in the pandemic and were confident in the associated immunity, while many others had not but were simply less concerned about serious illness). In addition, a small, but somewhat consistent, proportion of respondents discussed additional factors including political ideology and worried about vaccines changing their DNA.

## Increasing Vaccine Uptake

Respondents answered questions about how to increase vaccine uptake with four common answers:



### INFORMATION

Increasing the amount of information available on the vaccines, particularly from trusted sources like doctors.



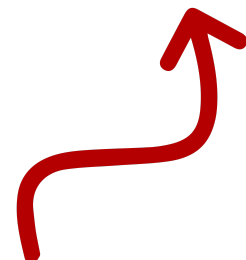
### REQUIREMENTS

Instituting vaccination requirements for participation in activities (e.g. work, travel) and/or to discontinue mask-wearing.



### SAFETY

Seeing friends, family, coworkers, church members, and other trusted individuals be safely vaccinated and hearing about their experiences.



### CONVENIENCE

Developing more convenient options for receiving vaccination, to address scheduling, transportation, and other challenges.

Notably, this insight is largely aligned to information found nationwide in [a study](#) conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation, potentially signaling that implementation strategies used in other states may have applicable insight for Utah's work to increase vaccine uptake.

## Next Steps

As decision-makers in Utah seek to confront the next stage of the pandemic—the Delta variant—and increase vaccination among Utahns, this conclusion to the HERO Project's work can provide important guidance to support an ongoing recovery of public health and economic vitality within the Beehive State.

# Acknowledgments

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