COVID-19 Impact

Recommendations to Better Protect our Vulnerable Populations
and Prepare our Programs in Times of Crises

Social Services Appropriations Subcommittee
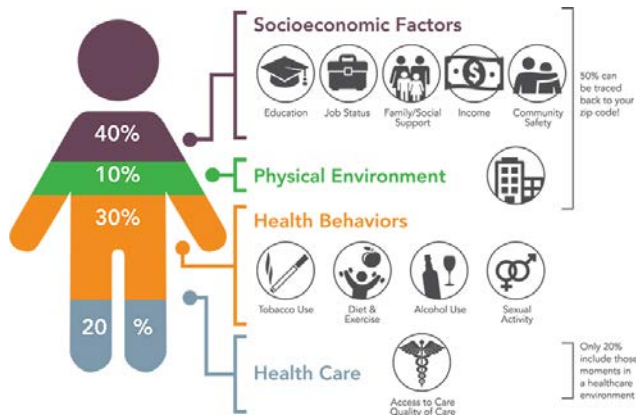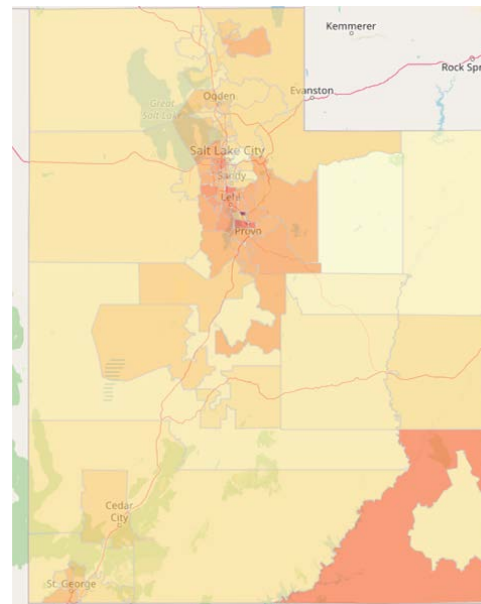
October 19, 2021

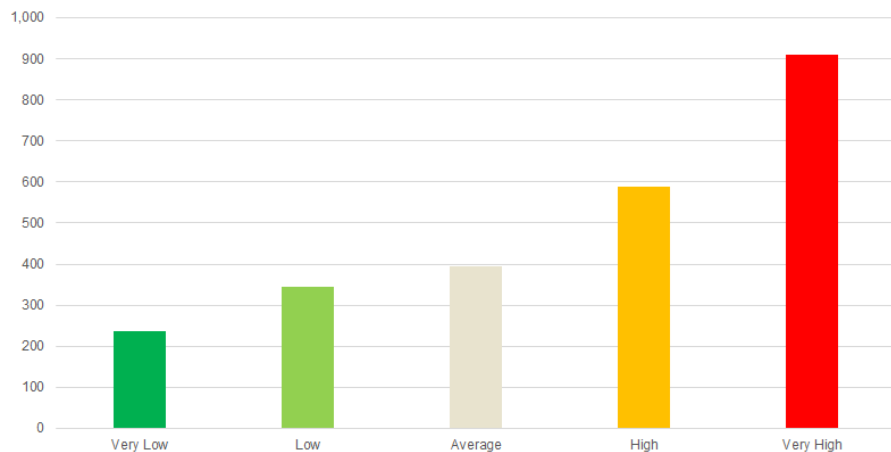**COVID-19 exacerbated existing health disparities, while also creating new ones**

Vulnerable groups are **underserved and underrepresented populations** who are negatively affected by multiple social determinants of health and, because of that, they have **limited resources and ability to cope with the effects of the pandemic.**
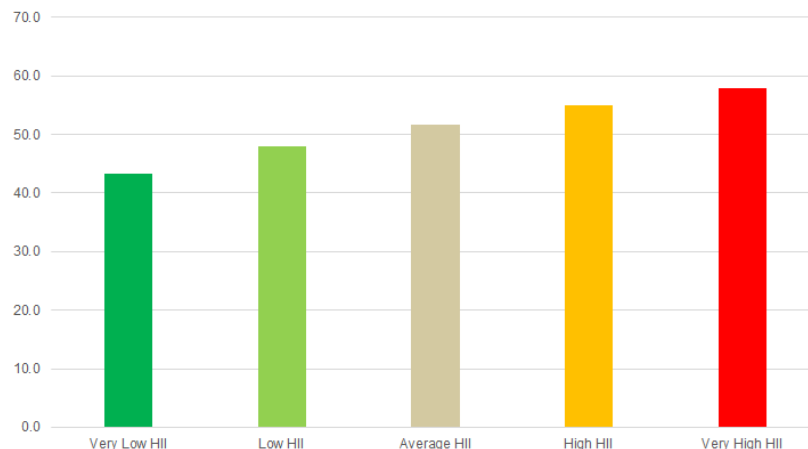
What was the Impact on Vulnerable Populations?

The Health Improvement Index is a measure of **social and economic disparity.** The higher the index, the greater the opportunity to advance health equity in the area.

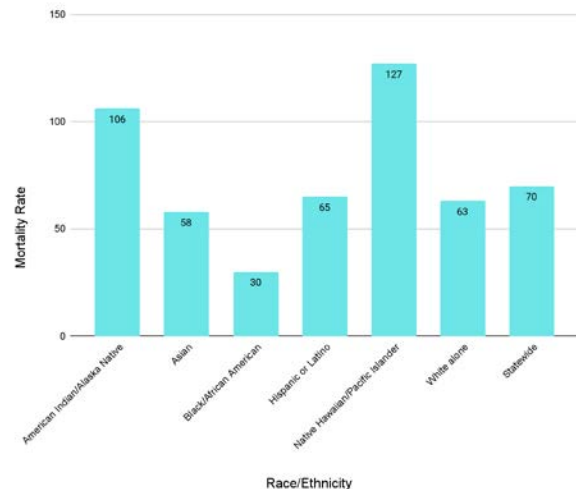Case Incidence Rate per 100,000 Mar 1 - Jun 15 by Health Improvement Index

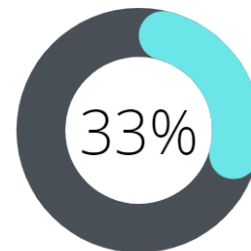Percentage Unvaccinated Age 16+, April 19 by Health Improvement Index

Racial and Ethnic COVID-19 Mortality Rate/100,000 Population

Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders have the **highest mortality rates**, followed by American Indian

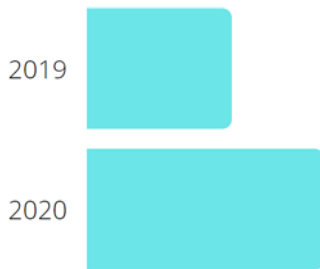**3x** The mortality rates compared to the national average for **people with intellectual and developmental disabilities**

33% Of all confirmed COVID-19 deaths are attributed to **LTCFs**

11.9% Increase in those **experiencing homelessness** from 2019 to 2020

2019
2020

Food insecurity in Utah increased from 11% (2019) to 18% (2020)

*

40% of people hospitalized had an **underlying condition**

Programs and partners that need additional funding and staffing to better prepare and protect Vulnerable Populations:

- Office of Health Disparities
- Public Information Office
- Epidemiology and Health Informatics
- Healthcare-Associated Infections and Antimicrobial Resistance Program (HAI/AR)
- Bureau of Emergency Medical Services and Preparedness (BEMSP)
- Office of the Medical Examiner (OME)
- Quarantine & Isolation (Q/I) Sites and Wraparound Services
- Healthcare Systems and Preparedness

Resources and Capacity Building to better prepare staff and the public:

- Annual Personal & Family Preparedness and Workplace Preparedness
- Annual FEMA disaster response training
- Health Equity, the Social Determinants of Health, and working with Communities
- Ongoing certifications and partnerships

Recommendations to Better Protect our Vulnerable Populations and Prepare our Programs in Times of Crises

Health and Social Service Systems	Rental/utility assistance and affordable housing, food assistance, paid sick leave, and childcare subsidies

Workforce, staffing, and programs	Community Health Workers, Community Based Organizations, the Emergency Response Program

Improving access to information and healthcare services	Telehealth services, improved internet access and digital literacy

Improved data monitoring and systems	Utilize use of Health Improvement Index Areas in data reports and monitoring