

# Impact of Masks on Economic Activity

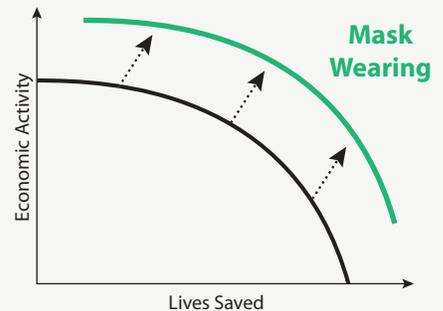
## Mask Use Positively Influences Economic Activity: Summary of Findings

### Requiring masks can protect Utahns and the economy.

Economic activity and health outcomes are tightly connected. Promoting personal protective measures like mask-wearing decreases the number of Covid-19 cases, increases consumer mobility, and increases consumer spending.

New research from the Marriner S. Eccles Institute for Economics and Quantitative Analysis at the David Eccles School of Business shows that mask use saves lives and promotes economic activity. This research supports increased mask use as an effective means for sustaining economic activity until a vaccine is widely accessible.

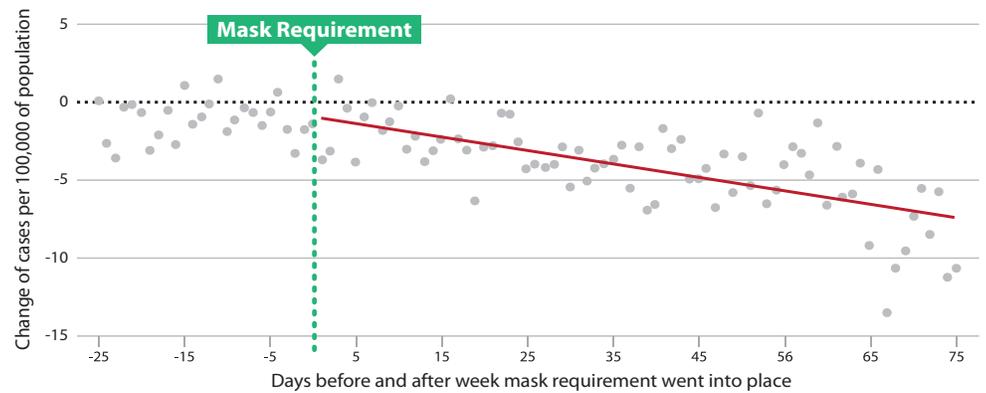
### Policy Frontier: Mask Wearing Promotes Both Lives and Livelihood



### Key Points

**1 Covid-19 cases decrease after the implementation of a mask requirement.** County-level data from across the U.S. show Covid-19 cases decrease after a mask requirement is put into place.

### Estimated Change in COVID-19 Cases in U.S. Counties with Mask Requirements Relative to Counties without Mask Requirements



Source: Case data from CDC (county-day data 200,000 observations). Seegert, Gaulin, Yang, Navarro-Sanchez (2020).

**2 Low case counts and mask requirements positively influence consumer activity.** A Utah consumer sentiment survey conducted as part of this study found people would be 13% more likely to go to a store if confirmed Covid-19 cases fell by 10%. The survey also found people would be **51% more likely to go to a store if everyone was wearing a mask** (this percent increase is similar to if a store or the state enforced mask-wearing). Alternatively, the survey found that Utahns **would be 13% less likely to go to a store if only half the people at the store were wearing a mask.**

### Utah Consumer Sentiment Survey

| How much more or less likely (as a percent) would you be to go out to a store if: | Average Response |
|---|------------------|
| The number of confirmed cases fell by 10%   | 13%              |
| The number of confirmed cases fell by 50%   | 30%              |
| The number of confirmed cases fell by 90%   | 57%              |
| Half the people were wearing a mask   | -13%             |
| Everyone was wearing a mask   | 51%              |
| The <b>store</b> enforced wearing a mask  | 50%              |
| The <b>state</b> enforced wearing a mask  | 49%              |
| Observations  | 305              |

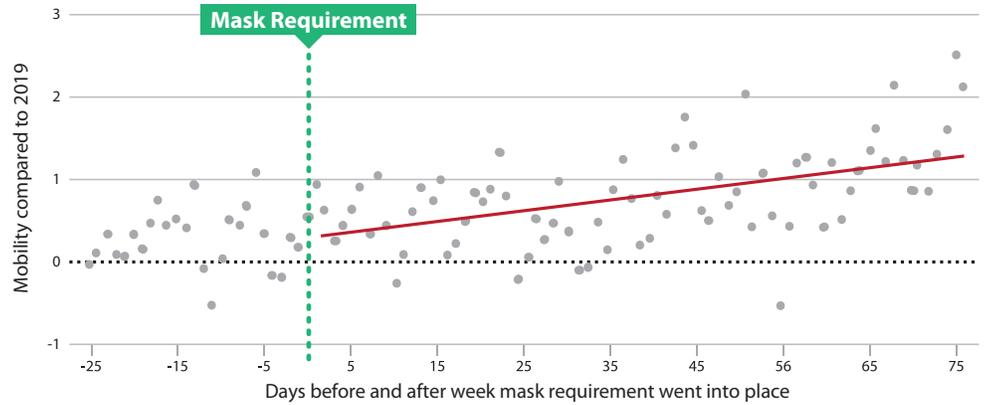
Source: Seegert, Gaulin, Yang, Navarro-Sanchez (2020).

*“Mask requirements can increase consumer confidence by making economic activity safer—in this way, health and economics reinforce each other.”*

### 3 Consumer mobility increases after mask requirements are in place.

Data measuring consumer mobility (or movement within an economy) show people are willing to increase their mobility and economic activity if they feel safe.

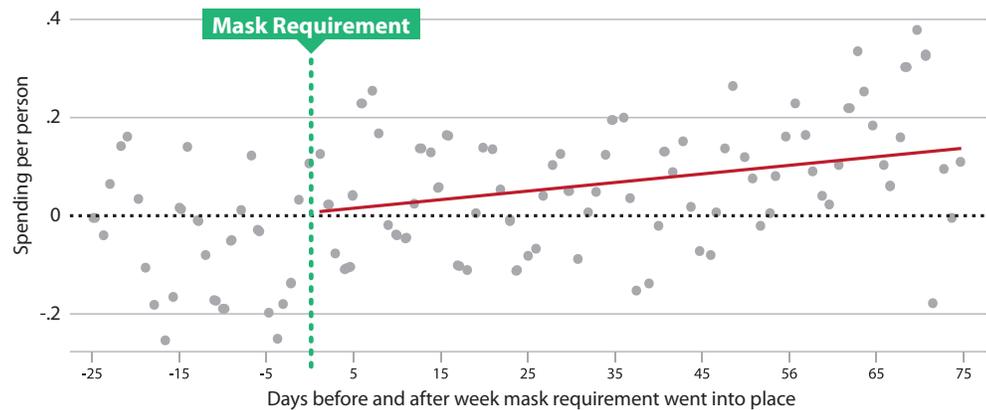
#### Estimated Change in Mobility in U.S. Counties with State Mask Requirements Relative to Counties without Mask Requirements



Consumer mobility measured by cellphone GPS locations.  
Source: Seegert, Gaulin, Yang, Navarro-Sanchez (2020).

### 4 Spending increases in counties with mask requirements. Data show consumer spending increases in counties with mask requirements relative to counties without mask requirements.

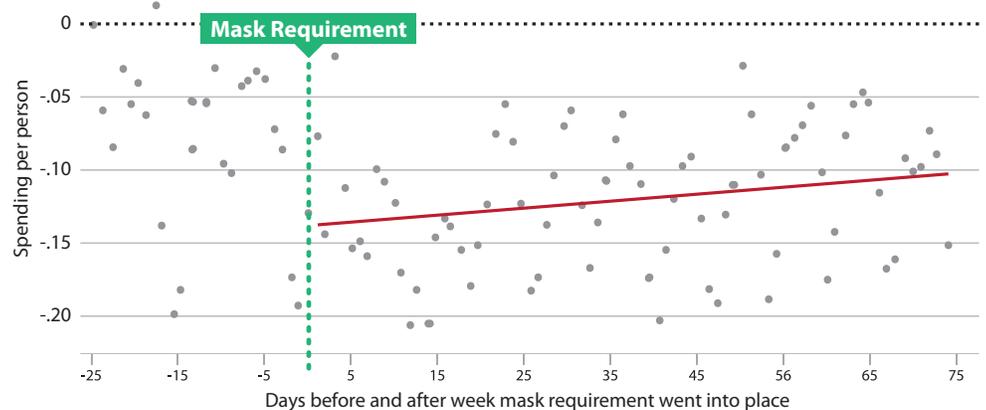
#### Estimated Change in Spending in U.S. Counties with Mask Requirements Relative to Counties without Mask Requirements



Consumer spending measured by credit card spending.  
Source: Seegert, Gaulin, Yang, Navarro-Sanchez (2020).

### 5 State mask requirements are more effective than county-level requirements. The study found that consumer spending actually decreases in counties with county-level mask requirements compared to areas under state-wide requirements.

#### Estimated Change in Spending in U.S. Counties with County-Level Mask Requirements Relative to Counties without Mask Requirements



Consumer spending measured by credit card spending.  
Source: Seegert, Gaulin, Yang, Navarro-Sanchez (2020).

**Methodology:** This research was conducted by Nathan Seegert, Mac Gaulin, Mu-Jeung Yang, and Francisco Navarro-Sanchez. Results are derived from data examining consumer mobility (measured by millions of cellphone GPS locations), spending data (measured by credit card spending), and Covid-19 case data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). All U.S. counties (3,142) were used in the analysis. 136 counties in 29 states have county-level mask requirements; 37 states and DC have state-level mask requirements. The spending data ends September 25th, and the consumer mobility data ends November 3rd. Consumer sentiment survey findings are from October 2020. Research is pending peer review and publication. More information can be found at <http://nathanseegert.com/corona>.