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Summary of Governor-elect initial COVID Task Force planning calls for developing recommendations

The Governor-elect's COVID Task Force was divided into 3 groups with separate 3-4 hour meetings:

- Business & Citizen's subgroup
- Medical, Health & Logistics subgroup
- Education and Government subgroup

Kris Hansen leads the groups in discussion to formulate a set of recommendations to address the COVID-10 situation when the governor-elect enters the office in January.

The recorded sessions and minutes can be found at [Keep Montana Open - montanacomeback.com](https://www.KeepMontanaOpen.com)

My quick take on the three meetings are as follows:

The Business & Citizen's group had a common desire to develop safe operating guidelines that all could live with and then self-police adherence in place of local and/or state mandates. The action item was to write a sensible outline for what the business community would support if one is necessary. Early closure hours are the most detrimental to date and least effective. They are using a plan drafted by Missoula as a starting point.

The Medical, Health and Logistics group discussed the value of data. There was a good deal of discussion as to what the value of the data being shared was and if it was worth the time spent by public health and others to report this data if it wasn't actionable. There were differing opinions on the value of reporting for various scenarios and the accuracy of the data. The group considered what the value of testing and vaccinating everyone or if there should be a risk analysis matrix to determine who should be tested and vaccinated. Widespread vaccination and testing considerations were based on the high cost associated. The action items for this group were as follows:

- Medical and scientific foundations for decisions
- What is the virus? What makes it so unique?
- Science of the mask/negative health of the mask/which ones are most effective and why

- Explanation of vaccine/ herd immunity.
- How does exposure contribute to immunity?
- Hospital capacity/decision points for staffing/rational testing/transfer

The Education and Government group discussed constitutionality of mandates, the value of data and what needed to be published (the idea being that is could be misleading and produce fear) and how messaging needs to change once the vaccination program rolls out.

Action items that were assigned to this group:

- State level constitutional analysis to base the plan on.
- Review of publication of data. What, when and how it is being distributed on daily public channels. (Media's demand for data drives much of what is published and leads to hype.)
- Mask guidance after being vaccinated. How does it change? Post infection guidance – is immunity after infection equivalent to vaccination immunity. (Current CDC guidance is 3 months post infection doesn't need to quarantine. In fact, most questions here have been addressed by the CDC)
- The ability of local health departments to prioritize resources for testing and tracing. (Is it the best use of testing for everyone exposed to get one?)
- Re-evaluation of group sizes.
- Evaluate the CDC's recent change on the recommendation in quarantine times.