



HEALTH BRIEFS: PHS HEALTH EQUITY SURVEY

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HEALTH IMPACTS OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IN NEW YORK CITY REACH FAR BEYOND THE VIRUS ITSELF

New findings from a recent Public Health Solutions survey draws a direct correlation between financial pressures and health as the coronavirus pandemic continues to impact New Yorkers who are struggling to make ends meet.

KEY FINDINGS

A new report released by Public Health Solutions (PHS) shows New Yorkers who are struggling to make ends meet are now delaying or unable to access preventative and COVID-19 health care at a much higher rate than their wealthier counterparts.

Key findings from the report include:

- Respondents receiving government benefits such as food stamps and unemployment assistance more frequently, when compared with those not receiving any benefits, reported canceling many forms of preventative care since March.
- Disparities in access to COVID-19 care exist between low-income respondents (defined as an annual household income of less than \$50,000) and those making over \$100,000.
- Low-income New Yorkers are working in-person more often, yet a smaller percentage have been contacted by the NYC contact tracing program when compared with wealthier respondents.

BACKGROUND

Low-income New Yorkers and communities of color have disproportionately faced the health and economic consequences of the crisis since the COVID-19 pandemic hit New York City in early March.

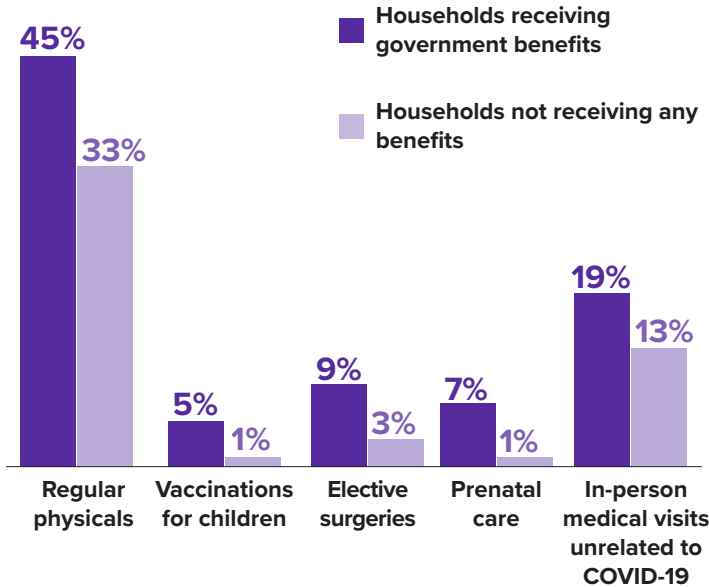
Data from the City showed Black and Latino New Yorkers were dying at twice the rate of white residents at the height of the pandemic. Also, many of the neighborhoods with the highest number of COVID-19 cases also had the lowest median incomes and largest average household sizes. It became clear that the most vulnerable communities are also struggling financially.

The latest PHS Health Equity survey shows that the health disparities caused by the virus itself and the initial economic hardships are only the tip of the iceberg. The survey takes an in-depth look at the impact of inadequate income on access to care, unique challenges for New Yorkers in direct contact with the virus, and how people are balancing in-person work with the health risks as the city reopens. The survey defines low-income as respondents with a household income of less than \$50,000 a year.

FINDINGS

New Yorkers struggling financially are canceling or delaying preventative and COVID-19 care at a higher rate than their wealthier counterparts.

- Respondents receiving government benefits more frequently, when compared to those not receiving any benefits, reported canceling many forms of preventative care such as regular physicals, vaccinations, elective surgeries and more, since the start of the pandemic.

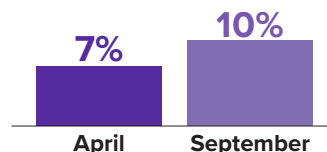


- 17% of respondents who have an income of more than \$100,000 have participated in a COVID-19 telehealth visit, compared with just 9% of low-income respondents.
- 57% of low-income respondents have not received COVID-19 medical care such as testing, doctors' visits, and hospitalization, compared with 36% of respondents making over \$100,000 a year.

Loss of employment and inadequate income are creating new barriers to care.

- 10% of surveyed New Yorkers lost their health insurance during the pandemic.

Since the prior survey in April, the percentage of respondents who lost their health insurance since the pandemic began has risen.



- 24% of Black and 24% of Hispanic low-income respondents either lost health insurance since the pandemic began, or didn't have insurance before the outbreak and still don't.

43% of white respondents making more than \$100,000 a year have received a COVID-19 test compared with

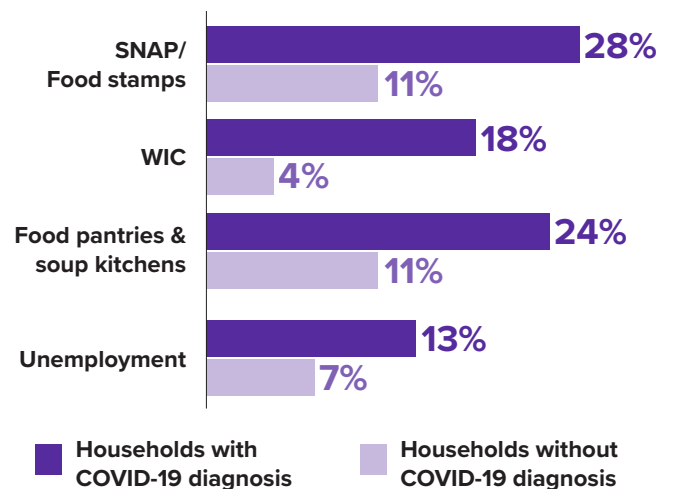


20% Black and **18%** Asian low-income respondents

The coronavirus threat and economic challenges are intertwined

- 27% of respondents with a confirmed or presumed COVID-19 diagnosis in their household reported losing their health insurance, compared with 8% of respondents without a diagnosis.
- 19% of respondents making more than \$100,000 a year reported that they or someone in their household had been contacted by the New York City contact tracing program, while just 6% of low-income respondents were contacted.

Respondents with a confirmed or presumed COVID-19 diagnosis in their household more frequently said – when compared with those without a diagnosis – they recently applied for or utilized government benefits.

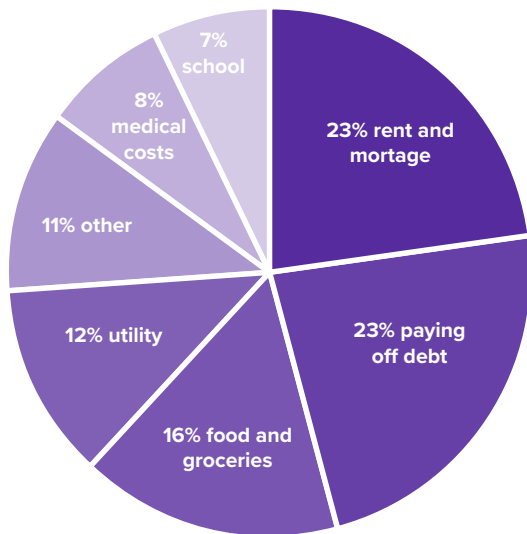


New Yorkers with the fewest resources continue to face greater COVID-19 health risks as the city reopens

- Half of low-income Hispanic respondents are working in-person, compared with just 16% of white respondents making over \$100,000.
- 35% of Black respondents reported sending their child to school at least once per week because they work and can't afford childcare, compared with 9% of white respondents.
- 41% of low-income respondents complete all of their work hours at their place of work, compared with 20% of respondents making more than \$100,000 a year.

These health and economic challenges are not going away any time soon, and New Yorkers need help to get back on their feet.

Low-income respondents say their top concerns for the next month are:



- More than half (54%) of low-income respondents without health insurance are unsure if they can get health insurance in the next 30 days.
- A quarter (25%) of low-income respondents anticipate needing SNAP over the next several months.
- 50% of all respondents feel less secure about money compared to their situation before the pandemic began in NYC in March.
- 20% of Black respondents, 20% of Hispanic respondents, 12% of Asian respondents, and 11% of white respondents are unemployed.

CONCLUSION

Even during a sustained and unprecedented public health crisis, access to health care – including care and resources for COVID-19 – remains limited for many, and especially for low-income New Yorkers and communities of color. Disparities in access to COVID-19 care have exacerbated longstanding health inequities and dramatically worsen health outcomes in the long-term for vulnerable New Yorkers. It is more important than ever to expand social safety net programs and ensure health care access to secure health equity for all New Yorkers.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

1,000 New York City adult residents from varying income levels across all five boroughs were surveyed through an online questionnaire. The survey was conducted September 16-29, 2020, in partnership with Kantar, the world's leading evidence-based insights and consulting company.

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ABOUT PHS

Health disparities among New Yorkers are large, persistent and increasing. Public Health Solutions exists to change that trajectory and support vulnerable New Yorkers in achieving optimal health and building pathways to reach their potential. PHS is unique in our ability to provide boots-on-the-ground services in high-need communities, serve as a conduit of accountability for hundreds of community-based organizations tackling major public health issues across the five boroughs, and bridge the gap between healthcare and communities. We focus on a wide range of public health issues that overwhelmingly affect the ability of underserved New Yorkers to live their healthiest life. These issues include food and nutrition, health insurance, maternal and child health, reproductive and sexual health, tobacco control, and HIV/AIDS. Visit www.healthsolutions.org to learn more.