



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Survey Shows Californians Putting Their Families First, While Underscoring the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Their Health, Lives and Finances

- *In the face of a resurgence, a new survey shows the COVID-19 pandemic has affected nearly everyone in the state, with the crisis hitting Latino and lower-income Californians the hardest.*
- *More than 40 percent of Californians personally know someone who has tested positive for the virus, and more than one in four know someone who has died from COVID-19.*
- *A majority of Californians (62 percent) say they — or someone in their household — have lost their job or seen their income reduced.*
- *Californians are also “stepping up” with the vast majority reporting they are following public health best practices (90 percent report wearing masks and four out of five are washing their hands and practicing social distancing).*
- *The pandemic continues to show the importance of having health insurance, as only 21 percent of uninsured Californians feel confident that they would have access to the health care they need if they were infected.*
- *More than 1.2 million uninsured Californians are eligible for financial help from either Covered California or Medi-Cal.*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Covered California released new survey data on Tuesday that showed the impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on the health, lives, finances and concerns of Californians. The survey found that COVID-19 has affected virtually all Californians (96 percent) with a majority (52 percent) saying the pandemic has affected their lives significantly.

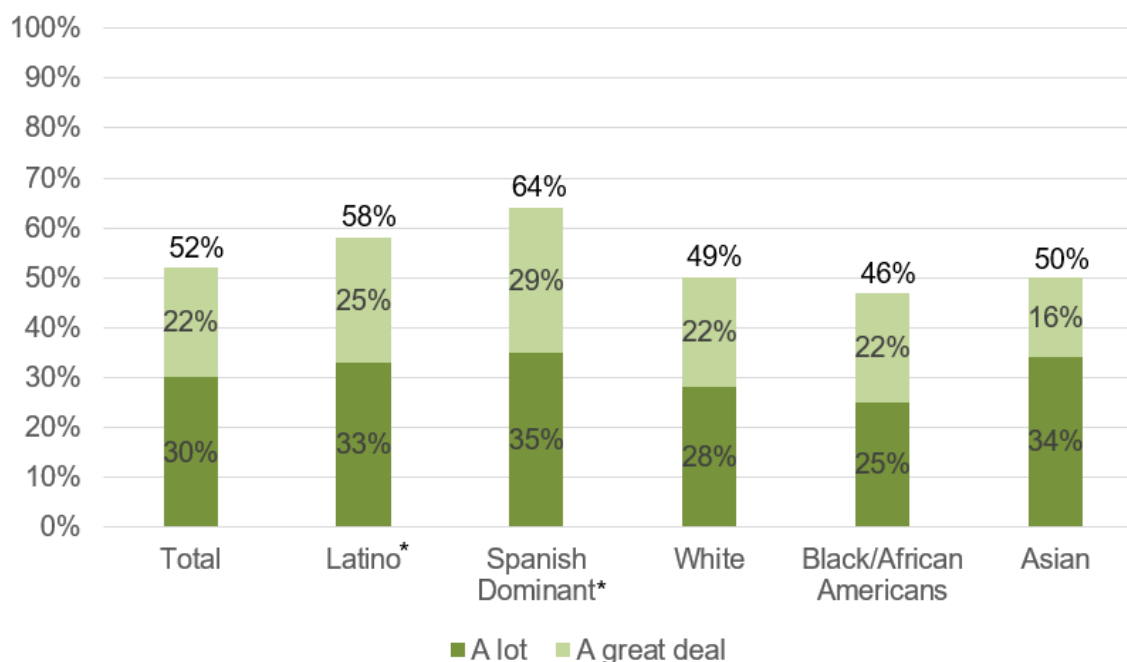
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“The pandemic continues to have a devastating impact on all of our lives, and it highlights the fact that those bearing the heaviest burden are Latino and lower-income Californians,” said Peter V. Lee, executive director of Covered California. “Those affected most by the pandemic are also those with the most to gain from getting the financial help that’s available to help 1.2 million Californians get health insurance.”

With more than 1 million Californians infected by the virus, and a death toll that is closing in on 20,000, the survey sheds new light on who is being hit hardest during the pandemic.

The survey found that 52 percent of Californians say the pandemic has affected their lives significantly, but the rates are much higher for the Latino population (58 percent), compared to 49 percent among whites, 44 percent among African Americans and 49 percent among Asian-Americans (see Figure 1. COVID-19’s Impact on Californians by Ethnicity).

Figure 1. COVID-19’s Impact on Californians by Ethnicity



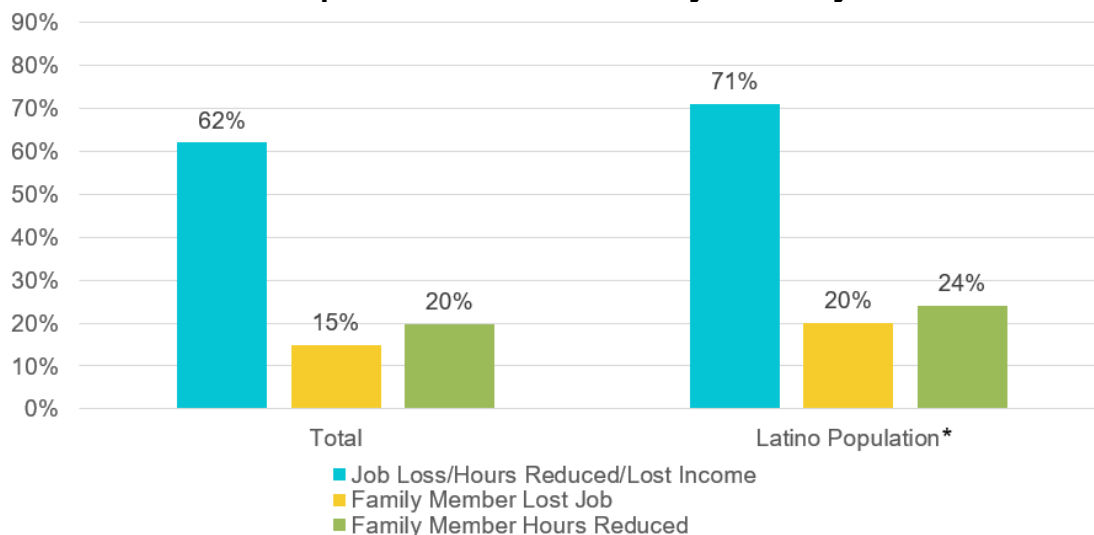
The survey also found similar disparities when it comes to Californians who are exposed to COVID-19. Overall, 42 percent of Californians report knowing someone who has tested positive for the virus, and 28 percent say they know someone who has died from COVID-19, with markedly higher rates reported by Latinos (33 percent) compared to 27 percent among Whites, 23 percent among African Americans and 18 percent among Asian-Americans.

Similarly, while 62 percent of Californians say they have experienced job loss or a reduction in income due to the pandemic, Latinos are the most likely to report these

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disruptions (71 percent) compared to 59 percent among whites, 58 percent among African Americans and 51 percent among Asian-Americans (see Figure 2. Economic Disruption Due to COVID-19 by Ethnicity).

Figure 2. Economic Disruption due to COVID-19 by Ethnicity



When this result is extrapolated across the state’s population, it would indicate that 25 million Californians may have suffered a job loss or reduction in income due to the pandemic. For those who need health care coverage, a smaller paycheck or the loss of a job means they could be eligible for financial help through Covered California or Medi-Cal.

The survey also found that Californians at the lowest end of the income spectrum were most likely to have suffered financially. Of those who earned between \$25,000 and \$35,000 in 2019, 40 percent say they had migrated into a lower income bracket, compared to 27 percent who earned between \$35,000 and \$50,000 and just 15 percent of those who earned more than \$50,000.

“These survey data add personal dimensions to the dry mortality data of disproportionate Latino deaths,” said Dr. David Hayes-Bautista from the UCLA Schools of Medicine and Public Health. “Through this survey we can appreciate the concerns of Spanish-speaking farmworkers, truck drivers and construction workers who see their jobs disappear, their paychecks shrink and their access to life-giving medical care fade away as this pandemic ravages the state’s essential workers.”

The pandemic also highlighted the important role that having health care coverage plays in providing Californians with peace of mind. Californians with health coverage were two to three times more likely to be confident that they would have access to care than those who are uninsured. For uninsured Californians, four out of five (79 percent) are not very confident that they would have access to the care they need if they are diagnosed with COVID-19.

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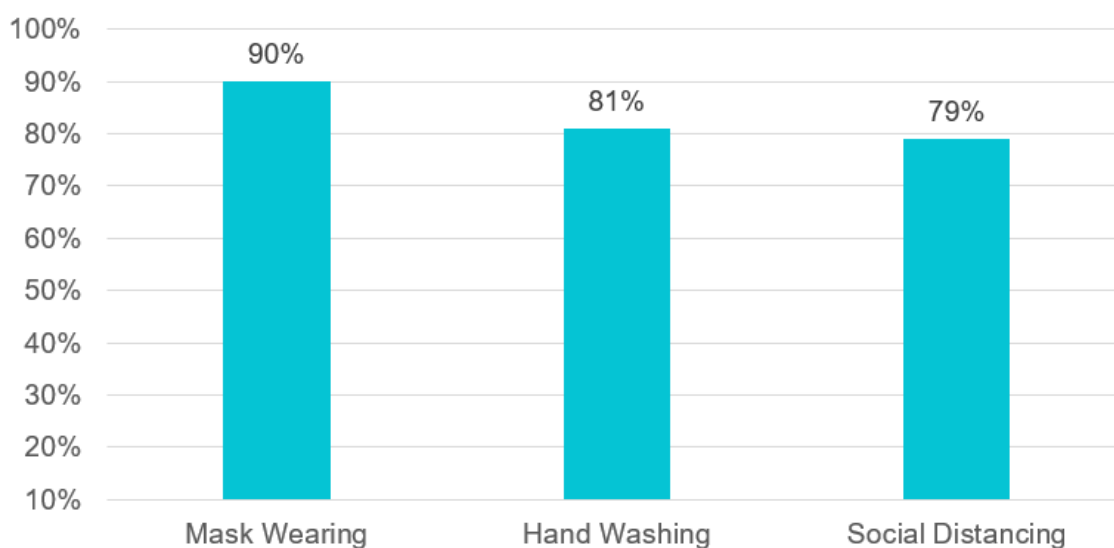
In addition, only 15 percent of uninsured Californians report they are satisfied with the health care they have access to — a figure driven even lower by the COVID pandemic. This compares to higher rates among those who are insured through Covered California and the individual market, who report the highest level of satisfaction in the state (45 percent satisfied compared to 42 percent for those with employer-sponsored coverage and 29 percent for those with Medi-Cal).

“The COVID pandemic has brought home the importance of having insurance coverage,” said Lee. “The fact that there are so many uninsured Californians living in fear underscores the importance of getting the word out that financial help is available to 1.2 million uninsured Californians, and they should sign up today.”

Eligible consumers can sign up through Covered California during the current open-enrollment period and potentially qualify for financial help from the federal government, the state of California, or both. Consumers can visit www.CoveredCA.com and find out if they are eligible for either lower-cost private plans through Covered California or free coverage through Medi-Cal (which is open year-round). Californians who sign up for health insurance through Covered California by Dec. 15 will have coverage that begins on Jan. 1, 2021.

While the survey presents some bleak findings, it also found that the vast majority of Californians are taking the necessary steps to protect their family, friends and community. The overwhelming majority of Californians say they are following core COVID-19 guidelines — particularly mask wearing, frequent handwashing and social distancing (see Figure 3. Californians Adhering to COVID-19 Safety Guidelines).

Figure 3. Californians Adhering to COVID-19 Safety Guidelines



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“This data reinforces the fact that some Californians — particularly Latinos and those with lower incomes — are bearing far higher burdens during this pandemic, both in terms of health and financial impact,” said Dr. Erica Pan, California’s acting public health officer. “As we respond to an unprecedented and swift surge in cases and hospitalizations, combined with colder weather and upcoming holidays, I am encouraged and proud the majority of Californians recognize that public health prevention measures like wearing masks and keeping physical distance are critical to slowing the spread. We know this has been a long and difficult eight months fighting the pandemic together, but we are 40 million strong, and together we can defeat this virus.”

The online survey of more than 3,000 Californians was offered in English and Spanish between Oct. 28 and Nov. 11.

Click here to see the complete results of the survey, [“Californians and COVID-19: Impacts, Responses and Reasons for Hope.”](#)

Click here for the [survey’s chart pack](#).

About Covered California

Covered California is the state’s health insurance marketplace, where Californians can find affordable, high-quality insurance from top insurance companies. Covered California is the only place where individuals who qualify can get financial assistance on a sliding scale to reduce premium costs. Consumers can then compare health insurance plans and choose the plan that works best for their health needs and budget. Depending on their income, some consumers may qualify for the low-cost or no-cost Medi-Cal program.

Covered California is an independent part of the state government whose job is to make the health insurance marketplace work for California’s consumers. It is overseen by a five-member board appointed by the governor and the Legislature. For more information about Covered California, please visit www.CoveredCA.com.

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