



**May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020**  
**Memorandum**

**To: Jake Williams, Healthier Colorado**  
**Jace Woodrum, Colorado Health Foundation**  
**Fr: David Flaherty, Courtney Sievers, Magellan Strategies**  
**Re: Colorado Coronavirus Survey Disabled and Caretaker**  
**Population Addendum**

---

This document is an addendum to a survey summary of 1,000 adult residents in Colorado that was conducted from April 15<sup>th</sup> to April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020. The overall margin of error for the survey is 3.10% at the 95% confidence interval. Survey response data was weighted to reflect the U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 estimated demographics of the adult population in Colorado. This survey research was commissioned by Healthier Colorado and the Colorado Health Foundation.

---

### **Survey Objectives and Addendum Focus:**

The primary objective of this research project was to measure and understand the concerns, needs, experiences and viewpoints of Coloradans regarding the coronavirus pandemic. This addendum focuses specifically on insights and observations of the disabled and caretaker populations in Colorado.

### **Sample Size of Persons with a Disability**

Because of the large number of interviews for this research project we were able to interview 145 individuals who identified as having a disability. Prior to going into the field and starting interviews, many of us working on this project predicted a sample of disabled individuals no larger than 50. However, we were pleasantly surprised, and 145 interviews is a good-sized sample that allows for us to make observations to all questions with a margin of error of +/- 8.1%. To put the 145n, +/- 8.1% margin of error in perspective, we prefer not to make insights to questions with a sample less than 75n (MoE +/- 11%) or for some research projects, a sample of 100 interviews (+/- 9.8%).

### **What are the Demographics of the Disabled Population in Colorado?**

One objective of this addendum is to compare the demographics of the overall population to the demographics of the disabled population. One initial finding that jumps out is 25% of the disabled population were unable to get tested for the coronavirus compared 10% of respondents that do not have a disability. Another interesting insight is, 34% of disabled respondents say they or someone in their family has symptoms of the coronavirus compared to 16% of respondents that do not have a disability.

Looking at responses to the home ownership question, we find that 55% of disabled respondents own their home compared to 69% of the non-disabled population. Furthermore, 36% of the disabled population rent their home compared to 27% of the non-disabled population. Another interesting observation is the percent of disabled individuals who live alone or with others. Among the disabled population, 26% live alone compared to 17% of the non-disabled population.

Reviewing marital status demographics may provide an insight as to why a higher percentage of the disabled population lives alone. Among the disabled population 43% are married compared to 54% of the non-disabled population. The survey also finds 17% of disabled respondents are separated or divorced compared to 9% of the non-disabled population.

One final insight into the demographics of the disabled population in Colorado is political affiliation. Although the political affiliation of the disabled population was not a central focal point for this research project, measuring party affiliation is more about academic research and plain curiosity. Among disabled respondents, 34% identify as unaffiliated, 36% Democratic and 19% as Republican. Another 4% of respondents do not identify with any party and 4% identify with “some other party”. As a comparison, party affiliation among registered voters in Colorado is currently 40% unaffiliated, 29% Democratic and 27% Republican.

## **Healthcare Coverage for Disabled and Non-Disabled Populations**

The percentage of disabled individuals that do not have health insurance is 9%, which is the same as respondents that do not have a disability. However, there are significant differences in healthcare coverage between the disabled and non-disabled population. The percentage of disabled individuals that have their healthcare covered by their employer is 17%, which is twenty-four points lower than the 41% of the population that does not have a disability.

The percentage of the disabled population covered by Medicare is 29%, compared to 17% of the non-disabled population. The percentage of disabled individuals on Medicaid is 21% and is also higher than the 12% of the overall population covered by Medicaid. Disabled individuals are also more likely to have health insurance coverage from the Veterans Administration/Military (13%) compared to 5% of the overall population. The following table shows the source of health care coverage among 91% of the overall respondents that have health care coverage.



*“Which of the following options best describes your main source of health insurance coverage? Is your health insurance...” (Among those covered by health insurance.)*

	<u>Disabled*</u>	<u>Not Disabled**</u>
Health plan from employer .....	17%	41%
Medicare .....	29%	17%
Medicaid/Health First Colorado .....	21%	11%
Health plan from spouse employer .....	9%	11%
Health plan they purchased themselves .....	3%	9%
Health plan/coverage from parents.....	3%	5%
Health plan from military/VA Admin. ....	13%	3%
Other .....	4%	3%
Refused .....	1%	0%

\*128n, have a disability and have health insurance coverage, MoE of +/- 8.6%.

\*\*755n do not have a disability and have health insurance coverage, margin of error is +/- 3.4%

### **Employment Status of Disabled Population Before Coronavirus**

Another interesting insight is the employment status of the disabled population before the coronavirus. Some interesting observations that stand out quickly is that 21% of disabled respondents are unable to participate in the work force. Another insight is the unemployment rate among disabled individuals (9%), which is more than double the unemployment rate of people that are not disabled. This data shows the disabled population in Colorado faces more challenges than that non-disabled population in finding full-time and part-time employment.

	<u>Disabled</u>	<u>Not Disabled</u>
Total employed .....	35%	68%
Employed full time with a salary .....	22%	49%
Employed part time, paid hourly .....	9%	12%
A worker or contractor paid by the job .....	4%	7%
Total unemployed .....	9%	4%
Unemployed and seeking employment.....	7%	3%
Unemployed and not seeking employment.....	2%	1%
Retired .....	23%	18%
Homemaker or stay at home parent .....	6%	4%
Student .....	5%	4%
Have disability and can't work.....	21%	0%
Refused .....	0%	2%



## **Biggest Worries About the Coronavirus Among Disabled Population**

An initial question in the survey asked respondents what worried them the most about the coronavirus outbreak. The responses among disabled individuals were similar to the overall population, touching upon fears for friends and family dying, people not taking enough precautions, and the long-term damage to the economy.

*"In your own words, what worries you the most about the coronavirus outbreak at this time?"*

*"My worry is that the government will open up business too soon and cause another coronavirus wave." – Single female, 18-29, white, Logan County*

*"What worries me the most is that lockdown will be lifted too early. More people will get infected. People don't do self-isolation. I'm worried that this will happen if we open up too early." – Single male, 18-29, white, Larimer County*

*"During this outbreak, I am most worried about losing my job. My company isn't making much money at this time because it is difficult for me to work at home. I am worried that the company will not have enough money to continue." – Unmarried female living with partner, 18-29, white, Pueblo County*

*"That my family will get sick and die, that my friend's parents will get sick and die, and that Trump and his administration will turn the government into a dictatorship." – Single male, 30-34, white, Adams County*

*"I think the thing that is most worrisome to me is that things will be opened sooner than they should and there will be a second wave with a higher infection rate." Married female, 35-39, white, El Paso County*

*"It would be the government oversight. There is too much government. They are forcing the population to do undemocratic things, like implementing stay at home orders and forcing people to wear masks. It should be voluntary and not forced. There are more serious issues than this virus." – Married male, 35-39, white, Delta County*

*"Lack of basic affordable food also since I have a compromised immune system and no transportation because I cannot afford to fix my car. I have to rely on neighbors to get to the store which puts us all at risk." – Widowed female, 50-54, white, Otero County*

*"That it is here for a long-term basis. More people will be out of jobs, finances will deteriorate, and any vaccines or cure will still take a long, long time to accomplish." – Single male, 55-59, white, Weld County*



*"The people are not wearing masks. They are not keeping distance from each other. They are not cooperating with the rules. They are not helping at all." – Widowed female, 65+, white, Garfield County*

## **The Impact of the Coronavirus on Mental Health**

The survey measured the negative impact of the coronavirus on people's mental health. Among respondents that do not have a disability, 16% said the virus has had a major negative impact and 35% a minor negative impact, for a total "negative" measurement of 51%. Among respondents with a disability the negative impact of the virus on mental health was larger, with 59% saying the coronavirus had a negative impact on their mental health (33% major impact/26% minor impact).

Respondents were also asked if they were concerned about lasting negative impacts on their mental health. Among respondents with a disability, 24% said they were very concerned and 35% somewhat concerned. Among respondents without a disability, only 12% were very concerned about lasting negative impacts to their mental health, and 33% somewhat worried.

## **Individuals with Disability Describe Moods, Emotions & Mental Health**

Respondents were asked to describe how their mood, emotions and mental health have been affected by the response to the coronavirus.

*"In your own words, please describe how your mood, emotions or mental health have been affected by the response to the coronavirus."*

*"I have become extremely depressed since the outbreak due to loss of financial funds and being unsure of where I will get money for food." – Single female, 18-29, white, Larimer County*

*"My mental health has been greatly affected by the coronavirus. I have lost a lot of contact with friends and co-workers which is rough, but I have also lost contact with my family." – Unmarried female living with partner, 18-29, white, Pueblo County*

*"It has been very stressful for me and my fiancé because we are both health care providers. We might bring COVID-19 at home. It can affect the people, and we need to take precautions. That is very stressful. We are not able to see our friends and family." – Unmarried male living with partner, 18-29, white, Logan County*

*"I have mostly been extremely angry at the callous deflection our "beloved" government has had towards the virus before taking it serious, and then turning it into an economical free for all, all the while toying with the idea of sacrificing even more lives to keep the economy up. They will kill millions..." – Single male, 30-34, white, Adams County*



*"I'm feeling worried and depressed because normally I work with high school students, and I did not get to see them." – Separated or divorced female, 40-44, white, Boulder County*

*"I have more anxiety because food is hard to find, and cleaning supplies are hard to find. I am worried about my family catching the virus." – Married female, 45-49, white, Teller County*

*"I am experiencing higher levels of anxiety, do not concentrate on things very well, not really depressed but, kind of a background tension that makes me feel less energized than normal." – Separated or divorced female, 50-54, white, Arapahoe County*

*"I get very, very sad and depressed when I hear on the news daily that more and more people have been infected, and more people have also died. I feel very, very worried that another "Great Depression" has begun, and that it would take years for all of us who survive to get back on our feet and rise again." – Single male, 55-59, white, Weld County*

*"Need to get out and work and get around safe. [My] mental health will be okay but need to make money now and pay the bills." – Separated or divorced male, 60-64, African American, Denver*

*"I feel isolated. I don't feel safe to go out at all. I don't have a mask, so I'm confined at home." – Widowed female, 65+, white, Garfield County*

## **What are the Demographics of the Caretaker Population in Colorado?**

The survey identified 180 individuals, or 18% of the overall sample that described themselves as a caretaker for someone with a disability or a senior citizen, again exceeding our expectations before the survey. Some initial observations that we find interesting is 22% of caretakers were not able to get a coronavirus test compared to 12% of the overall population. The percentage of caretakers that have experienced symptoms of coronavirus is slightly higher than the overall population, 24% to 18% respectively.

Looking at racial demographics, we find that 28% of African American respondents are caretakers compared to 17% of white respondents. Among Hispanic respondents, 20% identified as a caretaker. Our sample also finds 57% of caretakers to be female and 42% male. Caretakers are more likely to have a young adult or child in the household, with 37% of this population identifying as a caretaker compared to 26% of people who are not caretakers.

Home ownership is high among caretakers at 75% compared to 65% of individuals who are not caretakers. One interesting finding is the regional concentration of caretakers in Colorado, with 33% of caretakers living in a suburban area compared to 43% of non-care takers. Caretakers are slightly more likely to live in an urban area (37%) compared to non-



caretakers (31%). Finally, the survey finds 61% of caretakers are married compared to 51% of non-caretakers.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this survey addendum was to provide a more detailed analysis of the disabled and caretaker populations in Colorado. The full survey summary, topline, crosstabs, verbatim responses and presentation can be found at [www.HealthierColorado.org](http://www.HealthierColorado.org).

