

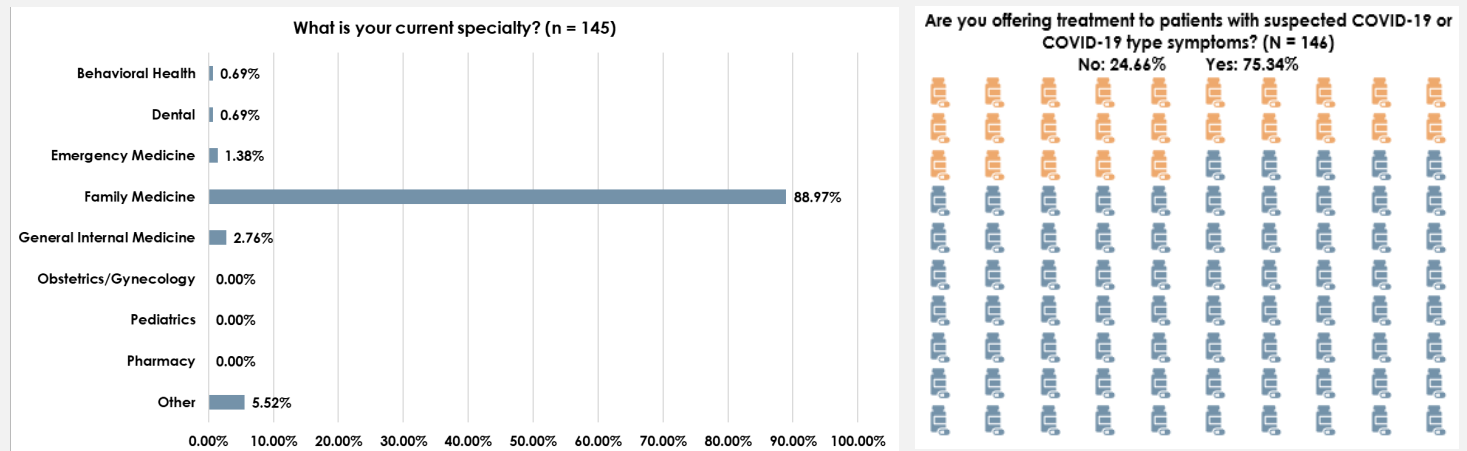
COVID-19 SURVEY REPORT-WEEK ONE

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this research is to understand the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on financial, personal, and professional futures of primary care clinicians.

On March 27, the AAFP National Research Network and the Robert Graham Center opened a survey and invited their members to complete it each week. This brief report provides highlights from the survey that was open March 27-30, 2020.

RESPONDENT SPECIALTIES AND TREATMENT PROVISION



THEMES

PATIENT VOLUME: The majority of respondents (59.31%) reported extensive decreases in patient volumes, in turn, causing sharp reductions in revenue.

FINANCIAL STRAIN: Decreased revenue was a concern and many respondents (17.93%) strategized about immediate and long-term financial needs, such as keeping operations open and functional, paying physicians and staff, continuing quality care, and creating new revenue streams.

It is devastating. We are planning on holding paychecks to our own providers for at least the next month to keep our large practice functional. We have goals to reduce staff hours by 50 percent to match the similar drop in clinic visits overall.

STAFFING: In order to save costs, respondents (15.86%) noted that staffing changes were commonly used, e.g., cutting hours, cutting pay, laying off and/or furloughing office staff and physician.

REMOTE CARE: Telehealth and telephone usage were both employed as an alternative to in-person visits. Both remote strategies provide ongoing patient care and generate revenues, while respecting physical-distancing recommendations. Usage varied among respondents for

telehealth (using, implementing, and not using) and telephone (associated with older, rural, and underserved patients) visits (40.00%). Reimbursement coverage and rates remained a challenge.

We are an FQHC; it has decreased our numbers by about 35 percent (chronic care visits) which are trying to switch to telehealth. With poorer patients this is not always possible.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE): Few respondents (2.76%) indicated difficulty in obtaining PPE where providers chose between endangering staff and patients or closing practices; others noted increased supply costs for PPE (2.07%).

I have had to close my practice, as staff and I do not have adequate PPE to protect us and our patients.

PERSONAL STRAIN: Respondents reported different stressors based on their individual circumstances, such as not working (no income and unable to support themselves/others) and currently working (afraid of transmitting COVID-19 to patients and family members and needing additional work to supplement income) (4.14%).

AAFP ACTION ITEMS AND NEXT STEPS

Initial survey findings provide important early signs of repercussions from the COVID-19 pandemic on physicians and practices. Specifically, **drastic revenue reductions have greatly impacted the ability to serve patients and immediate action is needed to address business viability.** This report provides compelling initial evidence that the health care system will need to transform to develop new models of patient care.