COVID-19 SURVEY REPORT-WEEK EIGHT

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.

Weekly, members of the AAFP National Research Network, as well as audiences from the Robert Graham Center, are invited to participate in this survey. This brief report includes the highlights from the survey that was open May 15-18, 2020.

TELEHEALTH IN PRACTICE, QUALITY OF LIFE MEASURE, TREATMENT PROVISION, RESPONDENT SPECIALTY

How long will you be able to continue providing care under the current circumstances? (n = 57)

- Over 6 months: 56.14%
- 1-2 months: 7.02%
- 3-4 months: 17.54%
- 3-4 weeks: 7.02%
- Do not provide care: 3.51%
- Closed: 1.75%
- 1-2 weeks: 1.75%

What is your current specialty? (n = 59)

- Family Medicine: 96.61%
- Dentistry: 1.69%
- Other: 1.69%
- General Internal Medicine: 0.00%
- Emergency Medicine: 0.00%
- OBGYN: 0.00%
- Pediatrics: 0.00%
- Pharmacy: 0.00%
- Behavioral Health: 0.00%

How would your practice/center be described? (n = 59)

- Primary Care Only: 54.24%
- Academic Center-Based Residency Program: 13.56%
- Multi-Specialty Group: 11.86%
- Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC): 11.85%
- Academic Practice: 11.86%
- Integrated Health: 10.17%
- Community-Based Residency Program: 8.47%
- Rural Health Clinic: 8.47%
- Other: 6.78%
- Affiliated with Academic Medical Center: 5.08%
- Community Health Center: 1.47%
- Fellowship Program: 1.69%
- Federally Qualified Health Center Look-Alike (FQHC LA): 0.00%

What are your plans for reopening your practice as stay-at-home restrictions are lifted in your community? (n = 56)

- We have no plans in place yet: 1.79%
- We have a set date for reopening but have not developed clinical workflows for doing this yet: 8.93%
- We have new clinical workflows in place for reopening but have not reopened: 48.21%
- We have new clinical workflows in place and have reopened: 0.00%
- We have already reopened but did not have any new clinical workflows in place before we did so: 0.00%
- We never stopped seeing a majority of our patients in person, no change: 10.71%
- Other: 30.34%

Are you offering treatment (including OTC treatment, prescription medications, supportive care) to patients with suspected COVID-19 or COVID-19 type symptoms? (n = 59)

- No: 16.95%
- Yes: 83.05%

What treatments are you using? Select all that apply. (n = 49)

Supportive care

- Education and reassurance: 93.66%
- Psychological counseling if needed: 77.44%
- Pharmacological treatment for comorbidities: 77.44%
- Nonpharmacological treatment for comorbidities: 66.22%
- Inhaled beta 2 agonists: 32.08%
- Nebulizers: 32.08%
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs): 32.08%
- Antihistamines: 24.99%
- Bronchodilators: 24.99%
- Renal carotenoids: 20.41%
- Azithromycin: 17.53%
- Other immunomodulators: 15.32%
- Immune modulators: 12.94%
- Other supportive measures: 11.18%
- Chloroquine or hydroxychloroquine: 9.15%
- Oral corticosteroids: 7.72%

Cantril’s Ladder is a measurement system for quantifying life satisfaction

Authors: Filippi, Wade, Callen. Robert Graham Center

DATES: MAY 15-18, 2020

Questions? Email NRN@AAFP.ORG
COVID-19 SURVEY REPORT-WEEK EIGHT

THEMES

Themes are identified through responses to the following question: Could you please tell us about any financial impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on your practice, if any?

PATIENT VOLUME: Respondents (48.28%) indicated that patient volume continues to be lower than pre-COVID levels. A few of those respondents (10.71%) indicated that patient volume is improving, in turn, helping revenues.

After a consistent trend upward of 5-8 percent in-office visits, our April office visits were down 25 percent and May is trending similarly.

FINANCIAL STRAIN: Of the respondents who discussed financial aspects directly (53.45%), the majority (96.77%) reported continued financial strain within their practices with varying degrees. A portion of respondents (22.58%) applied and received federal funds. They stated that those funds helped, but the extent to which those funds will secure business viability varied.

Although we received a PPP loan, we are still operating at a loss of $90,000 in April. We hired back all of our staff as per the SBA guidelines for loan forgiveness, but are seeing about 220 fewer patients per month, and offering no premium services (colonoscopy, mammography) that generally brought in higher revenue.

STAFFING: Respondents who mentioned staffing changes (27.59%) described tactics, e.g., furloughs, lay-offs, reduced salary, and reduced hours, used or planned in efforts to cut costs. A small percentage (12.50%) of those who discussed staffing changes did not employ these methods due to reserves.

We are still not able to practice normally, only emergency care. Our staff is still out on furlough.

REMOTE CARE: Respondents who commented on telehealth and/or telephone visits (15.52%) stated that those visits helped augment the number of patients seen, but they did not make up for lost in-person volume. In addition, questions remained regarding actual reimbursement.

Revenue is way down. Can’t schedule as many telehealth visits as we had face-to-face visits. We care for a large refugee population and trying to do phone or video visits with a translator is a nightmare.

AAFP NEXT STEPS AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

As long as primary care practices and clinicians operate at a decreased capacity, basic patient care will not be met, foregoing services such as chronic care and primary screenings, which both save lives and costs downstream.