



COVID-19 Survey Summary: July 31, 2020

The following is a summary of social, behavioral and economic survey research on COVID-19 released in the past week, as compiled for the Societal Experts Action Network ([SEAN](#)). Most surveys cited in this report are available in the [SEAN COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).

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Pessimism about the pandemic continued to mount in COVID-19 surveys released in the past week, along with rising economic, emotional and political impacts. The number of Americans who think the situation in the United States is getting worse has more than doubled since early June. The share who expect long-term disruptions has more than tripled since spring. Households experiencing housing insecurity and food scarcity are at numerical highs in data since April, and 41 percent of adults show indications of clinical anxiety or depression, compared with 11 percent in pre-pandemic 2019.

Concerns and Contact

Nearly three-quarters of Americans think the coronavirus situation in the United States is getting worse, up 5 percentage points in two weeks and a vast 42 points since early June to a new high. More than half, 55 percent, say the situation is getting “a lot worse,” up from just 9 percent in early June.

Fifty-eight percent are worried about getting the virus, up 12 points since early June to a numerical high in data since early April. Eighty-three percent now think coronavirus-related disruptions to travel, school, work and public events will last at least through the end of 2020 before things start to improve, up 60 points from early April.

Views are far from uniform, with partisan divides widening dramatically. In early June, 14 percent of Democrats and 2 percent of Republicans thought the situation was getting a lot worse, a 12-point gap; now 86 percent of Democrats vs. 15 percent of Republicans think so, a 71-point gap. There’s also a 60-point gap in concern about getting the virus, with 82 percent of Democrats at least somewhat worried, compared with 22 percent of Republicans ([Gallup 7/13-7/19](#)).

Eighteen percent of Americans overall personally know someone in the United States who has died from the coronavirus, up a slight 4 points since last week to a numerical high in data since late April. Nearly half, 46 percent, know someone who has tested positive for the virus and 16 percent personally have been tested ([Axios/Ipsos 7/24-7/27](#)).

Economic Impacts

With [GDP down](#) a record 9.5 percent last quarter and more than a million new [unemployment claims](#) for the 19th week straight, economic damage is growing. Fifty-one percent of households have experienced loss of employment income since mid-March, a share that's steadily inched up after pausing in mid-June. Among the hardest hit areas, 66 percent of households in Nevada and as many in Los Angeles have lost income, as have about six in 10 in the Detroit metro area, New York and California overall. The biggest increases since mid-June are in Montana, where 51 percent have lost income, and Wyoming, where 47 percent have; both are up from 36 percent.

As the federal moratorium on evictions and the \$600 weekly boost in unemployment benefits both are set to expire this week, more Americans already are experiencing housing insecurity and food scarcity. Twenty-seven percent say their household either missed last month's rent or mortgage payment or have little confidence that they can make next month's payment, up from 22 percent in early June; and 12 percent say that in the last seven days there was sometimes or often not enough food to eat in their household. The share of households with insecure housing peaks at 36 percent in Texas and Louisiana, while food scarcity is most common in households in Mississippi (19 percent) and New York (18 percent) ([U.S. Census Bureau 7/16-7/21](#)).

Recently released results from a June survey show a wide racial and ethnic gap in concern about the potential cost of COVID-19 treatment – nearly six in 10 racial and ethnic minorities say they're concerned about being able to pay for the cost of care if they're diagnosed with COVID-19, compared with 32 percent of whites. In addition, people with household incomes less than \$40,000 a year were three times as likely to be concerned about the cost of coronavirus care than those with incomes of \$100,000 or more, 60 vs. 20 percent ([Gallup/West Health 6/8-6/30](#)).

Health Impacts

The number of Americans who show signs suggestive of clinical anxiety or depression also has edged up. Using measures commonly employed by healthcare professionals to screen for mental health issues, the [National Center for Health Statistics](#) estimates that 41 percent have such symptoms, up 5 points since mid-June ([U.S. Census Bureau 7/16-7/21](#)). By contrast, 11 percent of Americans showed signs of clinical depression or anxiety in the first half of 2019, according to the [National Health Interview Survey](#). As [reported last week](#), more than half of Americans now say stress and worry related to the pandemic has negatively impacted their mental health.

Preliminary data collected from Medicare claims or encounter records for services between January 1 and June 20 (and received by July 17) illustrate the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations. (Medicare is the government health insurance program that primarily provides health insurance for Americans aged 65 and older; as of early 2020, more than 62.3 million were enrolled.) Among the findings:

- Blacks were more likely than other racial and ethnic groups to be hospitalized for COVID-19, with 670 hospitalizations per 100,000 beneficiaries, compared with 175 per 100,000 among whites.

- American Indian and Alaskan Natives had the second-highest hospitalization rate for COVID-19 (505 per 100,000 beneficiaries), followed by Hispanics (401 per 100,000).
- Those eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid, who often are lower income or disabled, were hospitalized at a rate more than 4.5 times higher than Medicare-only beneficiaries (153 vs. 719 per 100,000) ([CMS 2020](#)).

Vaccinations

With vaccine development moving forward at a record pace, six in 10 Americans think it'd be a large (26 percent) or moderate (35 percent) risk to their health and well-being to take a first generation COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it's available. Just one in 10 view this as no risk at all. As human trials for several potential vaccines begin in earnest, 69 percent think participating in a trial for a COVID-19 vaccine is at least a moderate risk.

Women, Blacks and Latinos, those without a college degree and Republicans are especially likely to think that taking a first generation COVID-19 vaccine would be a large risk, suggesting that these groups may require particular outreach if a vaccine becomes available ([Axios/Ipsos 7/24-7/27](#)).

Government Response

The political mood has darkened dramatically as the virus has surged. Two-thirds disapprove of President Trump's handling of the outbreak, up from 58 percent in mid-June and 54 percent in mid-April ([ABC/Ipsos 7/29-7/30](#); similar in [AP-NORC 7/16-7/20](#)). Eight in 10 say the country is headed in the wrong direction, including majorities of nearly every demographic and political group.

In May, 55 percent of Republicans thought the country was headed in the right direction; that's dropped to 31 percent now. Views among Democrats have held largely stable, and deeply pessimistic – just about one in 10 think the country is on the right track ([AP-NORC 7/16-7/20](#)).

Views of China also have soured during the pandemic. About three-quarters (73 percent) of Americans now have an unfavorable view of the country, up 7 points since March and 26 points since 2018. Sixty-four percent think China has done a bad job handling the coronavirus outbreak and 78 percent place a great deal or fair amount of blame for the global spread of the coronavirus on the Chinese government's initial handling of the outbreak in Wuhan ([Pew 6/16-7/14](#)).

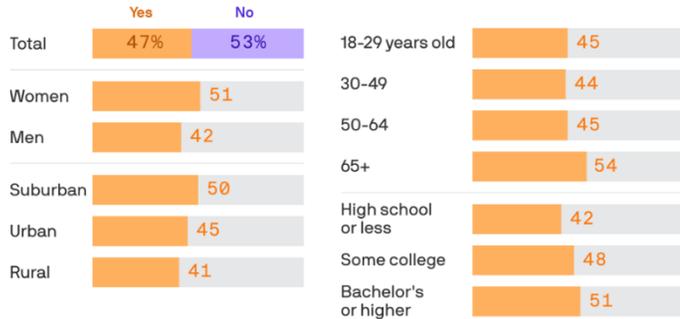
Daily Life

Three-quarters of Americans continue to think that other people are behaving in ways that make recovery from the pandemic worse. At the same time, nearly all (94 percent) think they and their family are acting in ways that make the recovery better.

Nearly half (47 percent) say they've formed a "bubble," interacting with people outside their household who are following the same rules about minimizing the risk of catching the virus. Women, seniors, people living in suburban areas and those with a college degree are more apt than others to say they've formed such bubbles. In rare agreement when it comes to the pandemic, Democrats and Republicans are equally likely to say they've formed a bubble ([Axios/Ipsos 7/24-7/27](#)).

Have you formed a social "bubble" of people you interact with that take similar precautions to minimize the risk of catching COVID-19?

Axios/Ipsos poll of 1,076 U.S. adults conducted July 24 to July 27, 2020



Mask Use

For the third week in a row, more than six in 10 say they always wore a mask when they left their home in the past seven days. However, as [reported last week](#), far fewer of those who visited with friends and family in the past week say they regularly wore a mask when doing so – two in 10 always did, and an additional 27 percent sometimes did ([Axios/Ipsos 7/24-7/27](#)).

A new analysis shows how personal experience with COVID-19 can shape mask wearing across partisan groups. For example, Republicans who know someone who has died from COVID-19 are 14 points more likely than those who don't know anyone who has tested positive for the virus or died from it to wear a mask at all times when they leave their home, 52 vs. 38 percent. Similarly, independents who know someone who has died are 13 points more apt to always wear a mask than those without direct proximity to the virus, 65 vs. 52 percent; and among Democrats the gap is 10 points, 82 vs. 72 percent ([Axios/Ipsos 6/15-7/27](#)).

Back to School

As back-to-school discussions continue in earnest, fewer than half of colleges and universities – four in 10 – plan fully in-person, primarily in-person or a hybrid model for classes this fall, out of nearly 3,000 institutions checked by the [Chronicle of Higher Education](#) in partnership with Davidson College's [College Crisis Initiative](#). Previously, by contrast, six in 10 of 1,120 colleges then surveyed by the Chronicle planned in-person classes (covered [here](#)).

In current plans, according to the new report, about a quarter are planning to be primarily or fully online, 6 percent have other plans and 27 percent have yet to decide.

State Results

In Georgia, where Gov. Brian Kemp recently sued Atlanta officials for implementing a mask mandate, eight in 10 registered voters approve of requiring people to wear face masks when they come within six feet of others in public places indoors and 63 percent approve of a similar mandate for public places outdoors. Sixty-three percent also think that cities should be allowed

to establish rules about wearing face masks that are stricter than state rules. At the same time, 54 percent think Kemp has done a good job handling the outbreak and an identical share feel he’s been largely consistent on establishing social distancing and mask regulations. Fewer, 48 percent, think Trump has done a good job handling the outbreak ([Monmouth 7/23-7/27](#)).

In Arizona, by a 22-point margin, more think the worst of the coronavirus outbreak in the state is still yet to come than think it has passed, 57 vs. 35 percent ([CNN 7/18-7/24](#)). Asked another way, half of Arizona adults think the pandemic in the state is getting worse, vs. 31 percent who say it’s staying about the same and 17 percent who think it’s getting better ([NBC/Marist 7/14-7/22](#)). Two-thirds say Gov. Doug Ducey could be doing more to fight the outbreak in the state. Six in 10 disapprove of how Trump is handling it ([CNN 7/18-7/24](#)), and by a 13-point margin, more think presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden would do a better job dealing with the virus, 47 vs. 34 percent ([NBC/Marist 7/14-7/22](#)).

Selected State Results

(see text for detail and source links)

	AZ	FL	MI	PA	MN	NC
Worst of outbreak yet to come	57%	64%	41%			
Pandemic getting worse	50%					48%
Governor could be doing more	66%	63%	23%			
Disapprove of Trump’s response	60%	57%	59%			
Biden-Trump better on the virus	47-34%		53-34%	51-33%	55-32%	50-34%

In Florida, more, 64 percent, think the worst of the outbreak in the state is yet to come, while three in 10 think it has passed. Sixty-three percent think Gov. Ron DeSantis could be doing more to fight it. In Michigan, by contrast, half think the worst of the outbreak in the state has passed, and seven in 10 think Gov. Gretchen Whitmer is doing everything she can do to fight it. Similar to Arizona, nearly six in 10 in Florida (57 percent) and Michigan (59 percent) alike disapprove of Trump’s handling of the pandemic.

When it comes to voting in November, six in 10 registered voters in Arizona say they’d prefer to vote by mail, vs. about a quarter who would prefer to vote in person on Election Day and 14 percent who’d prefer to cast a ballot early at a polling place. Michiganders divide between mail and in-person voting on Election Day, 47 vs. 46 percent (with 6 percent preferring to vote early in person). In Florida, four in 10 prefer to vote by mail, a third in person on Election Day and a quarter early in person ([CNN 7/18-7/24](#)).

Other, primarily election-focused state polls find that broad majorities of registered voters in Pennsylvania (88 percent) and Minnesota (85 percent) have favorable views of people who wear face masks, and more trust Biden than Trump to do a better job on the pandemic by double-digit margins – in Pennsylvania, 51-33 percent; in Minnesota, 55-32 percent ([Fox News 7/18-7/20](#)).

In North Carolina, 48 percent say the pandemic in the state is getting worse, 36 percent think it’s staying about the same and 13 percent think it’s improving. By a 16-point margin, more think

Biden would be better than Trump when it comes to dealing with the virus, 50 vs. 34 percent ([NBC/Marist 7/14-7/22](#)).

Another poll among registered voters conducted in the second half of June and first half of July found a wide range in North Carolinians' views about what actions help protect against the coronavirus – for example, more than eight in 10 thought washing hands frequently and avoiding contact with people who could be high risk are very effective, and about two-thirds said the same about avoiding public spaces, gatherings and crowds. Fewer (54 percent) thought wearing a face mask was very effective, and fewer than half (46 percent) said the same about avoiding restaurants. When it comes to sources of information about the coronavirus, nearly two-thirds said they trust their physician “a lot” and about half said the same about the CDC. Fewer expressed that level of trust in news sources, including local TV news (18 percent), national newspapers (16 percent) and national news networks (14 percent) ([HPU 6/15-7/17](#)).

In a California poll conducted earlier this month, three-quarters said people in their community should always wear a mask when they go to public places where they may be near others, including 84 percent of Democrats, 72 percent of independents and 57 percent of Republicans. Few said it was very likely that, in the next three months, they will take a public bus or transit (4 percent), fly on an airplane (6 percent), take a day trip to the beach (12 percent) or take a driving vacation (14 percent). More than eight in 10 said their lives have been disrupted “a lot” or “some” by the coronavirus, nearly as many were at least somewhat worried that they or someone in their family will get sick, seven in 10 were worried that the pandemic will have a negative impact on their family’s finances and half said worry or stress related to the virus has had a negative impact on their mental health. Worries about contracting the virus and its impact on finances were particularly acute among Latinos in the state – 61 percent were very worried about someone in their family getting sick, compared with 37 percent of Asians and 28 percent of Blacks and whites alike. Fifty-six percent of Latinos were very worried about how COVID-19 will impact their family’s finances, compared with 31 percent of Blacks and Asians and 22 percent of whites ([PPIC 7/8-7/17](#)).

In New Jersey, a new release from a poll conducted in mid- to late June shows that two-thirds in the state favored keeping restrictions in place until a vaccine or treatment is available, while three in 10 said society needs to return to normal and live with the risks. Seventy-seven percent said wearing a mask in public places should be mandatory rather than optional, including a majority of Republicans (60 percent), independents (74 percent) and Democrats (92 percent). Two-thirds in the state were at least somewhat confident that when a vaccine becomes available it will have been adequately tested for effectiveness and safe to use, and a similar share said that if a vaccine were available, they definitely or probably would get it ([FDU 6/18-6/30](#)).

International Results

In Brazil, which continues to trail only the United States in total number of coronavirus cases, a slim majority (51 percent) now favors young people returning to work as long as they wear masks, up from 43 percent since early July to the most in data since mid-April. Forty-five percent say they’ve had to leave the house to go to work in the past two weeks, up 7 points in the same period. At the same time, six in 10 think the country is not yet ready to fully reopen trade

and all businesses, double the number who think the country is ready for this. Four in 10 say they or someone close to them has gotten sick from the coronavirus, essentially unchanged in the past month.

Approval of President Jair Bolsonaro, who recently announced that he's now COVID-free after testing positive July 7, has held relatively steady since June – 43 percent approve of his administration, 46 percent disapprove. Despite scant evidence of its effectiveness, Bolsonaro has been a vocal proponent of the use of chloroquine for COVID-19 and says he took it himself after contracting the virus. Overall, 43 percent of Brazilians say they'd do the same if they got infected, including seven in 10 of those who approve of his administration compared with 15 percent of those who disapprove ([DataPoder360 7/20-7/22](#)).

In Great Britain, more than half of working adults (53 percent) say they've travelled to work in the past seven days, up from 44 percent one month ago and 36 percent the month prior. Nine in 10 of those with school-aged children say it is very or fairly likely that their children will return to school or college when the new term begins. However, more than six in 10 are at least somewhat worried about it. Among the more commonly cited concerns include fears about their children catching the coronavirus and about how coronavirus-related changes in schools and colleges will impact their mental health and well-being.

Use of face masks continues to rise – seven in 10 of those who left the house in the past week wore a face covering, up from 61 percent last week and 52 percent the week before. This differs by country – in Scotland, where masks are now mandatory while shopping, 93 percent of those who've gone shopping in the past week have worn a mask, up markedly from 32 percent at the end of June. That compares with 54 percent in England (up from 30 percent) and 47 percent in Wales (up from 26 percent).

Among the more than six in 10 in Great Britain with a health condition or illness who had been receiving care prior to the pandemic, 31 percent say their treatment had started or continued as normal, an additional three in 10 received some treatment but not all and 21 percent say their treatments were canceled. Among those whose treatments have been reduced or canceled, a quarter report that their health has gotten worse ([Office for National Statistics 7/15-7/19](#)).

In Israel, a quarter of those age 21 and older say their mental condition has worsened during the coronavirus crisis; 42 percent report feeling stress and anxiety, up from 33 percent in mid-May; 21 percent have experienced feelings of depression, up from 16 percent; and 21 percent have experienced a sense of loneliness, essentially unchanged. More than half, 55 percent, are concerned about their ability to pay their monthly expenses and two in 10 say they or someone in their household has reduced their food intake during the crisis to save money. These rise among Arab Israelis; 65 percent are concerned about their ability to afford their expenses and a third say someone in their household has reduced their food intake. Trust in the government to handle the crisis has declined to 47 percent from 69 percent in May. While eight in 10 say they're largely complying with coronavirus guidelines, two in 10 find them unclear ([Central Bureau of Statistics 7/12-7/16](#)).

In the Philippines, a poll conducted shortly after quarantine was relaxed in most areas of the country found that worry about the coronavirus remained high – 86 percent of Filipinos are at least somewhat worried about the virus and half say the COVID-19 crisis has brought them great stress, both little changed since May. While about seven in 10 say their families have received financial assistance from the government since the start of the pandemic, the number who have experienced involuntary hunger remains elevated – 21 percent say their family has experienced hunger due to a lack of food at least once in the past three months, compared with 9 percent last December, prior to the pandemic. In terms of preventative behaviors, three-quarters say they always use a facemask when going out of their house, 65 percent always wash their hands several times a day and 59 percent say they always keep a distance of one meter from others outside their homes ([SWS 7/3-7/6](#)).

Additional U.S. and international poll results are available at the [COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).

Summary for SEAN by [Langer Research Associates](#).