

Chapter 11

COVID-19 and a Professional Organization's Member Responses

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ABSTRACT

The National Association of Health Services Executives issued a national survey to determine how its membership was responding to COVID-19 at its initial outbreak. Of the 201 respondents, 84% stated they were employed full-time; 4% were students; 4% were retired; and 4% were consultants, entrepreneurs, or working outside of the healthcare industry. More than half (53.5%) were employed by a hospital or hospital system, 12% worked at a university or academic institution, 9% were employed by consulting firms, with the remaining 14% employed in a variety of settings. Fifty-nine percent of respondents indicated they were always or usually working remotely, 13% worked remotely sometimes, and approximately 28% indicated that they rarely worked remotely. The survey results revealed COVID-19 had changed the way individuals interfaced at their work environment based on the nature of the work conducted and the age of the respondents and if they had school-aged children at home.

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BACKGROUND

In December 2019, a suspicious flu-like condition was reported in Wuhan, China and started to circumnavigate the globe. By March 2020, the United States began a shut-down of services with school and employer closings. While the Federal Government was reluctant to issue formal statements that would impact the economy, deaths from COVID went from 16 cases in March 2020 to 231,024 by December 31, 2020. As of March 2022, there have been 79 million cases in the United States resulting in 952,000 deaths (Stevenson, A., & Chien, A. C., 2022). The population most severely affected were older adults and people with severe underlying medical conditions with heart or lung disease or diabetes (Stevenson, A., & Chien, A. C., 2022). Of the ethnic and racial groups and employees severely affected were African American, Latinx, and front-line workers.

The National Association of Health Services Executives

The National Association of Health Services Executives (NAHSE) is a personal membership group based in Washington, DC with over 30 chapters throughout the country. NAHSE was founded in 1968 for the purpose of promoting the advancement and development of Black health care leaders and elevating the quality of health care services rendered to minority and underserved communities through mentoring, educational programming, and policy development. NAHSE has over 2,000 members in senior leadership and middle management health care health systems, hospitals, consulting, insurance, association, and supplier firms. The membership included faculty and students from undergraduate and graduate health management programs. Sixty-percent of the members were female and 40% were male. Forty-eight percent of the members were under 40 years of age, 49% percent were between 41 and 59 years of age, and three-percent were over 60 years of age. Sixty-six percent of the membership had a master's degree, 5% have a Ph.D., 4% have a J.D., and 3% have a M.D. (Howard, 2018).

The COVID-19 Survey

One of the NAHSE organization's committees is the Research Committee which was developed in 2004 to supplement the Policy Committee initiatives. In May 2020, the NAHSE Research Committee issued the COVID-19 survey to determine how the NAHSE membership was responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the membership was canvassed on their plans to attend the 2020 Annual Meeting in Atlanta. With 64% stating the meeting should not be face-to-face and 85% of the respondents stating they would attend a virtual meeting due to the pandemic and limitations being put on company travel, the NAHSE educational program was moved to a digital platform.

In addition, the survey solicited information on how NAHSE members were faring in the pandemic. Members were asked to respond to questions about the impact of COVID-19 on their professional lives and their impressions about some of the longer-term effects of COVID on their organizations and communities. Members were also asked about their perceptions of the national response to COVID. Approximately 2,000 NAHSE members received invitations to participate in the survey, and 201 members responded (10% response rate) between June 1 to June 15, 2020.

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