

Research Update



A program of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Survey: Pandemic disrupting practices, finances of early, midcareer pediatricians

from [AAP Research](#)

Editor's note: For the latest on coronavirus disease 2019, visit <https://www.aapublications.org/news/2020/01/28/coronavirus>.

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a tremendous impact on the practices and finances of early and midcareer pediatricians, according to new data from the AAP Pediatrician Life and Career Experience Study (PLACES).

Eight in 10 primary care pediatricians surveyed in April reported that their work has been greatly impacted during the pandemic. Two-thirds have decreased their office hours, and most have greatly increased telehealth practices. Eighty-five percent reported never using telehealth before the pandemic, while 77% reported using telehealth often in the midst of the crisis (see figure 1 on next page).

Nearly all reported that their preventive care (99.5%) and sick (94%) visits have decreased since the start of the pandemic. Seven in 10 have experienced decreases of 50% or more in preventive care visits, and eight in 10 have experienced similar decreases in sick visits (see figure 2 on next page).

Six in 10 of these primary care pediatricians reported that their practice closed some offices or services. Eight in 10 are very (59%) or moderately (23%) concerned about the financial impact on their main practice setting.

“Financial impact of COVID-19 has been the most selfish stress I’ve had,” said a primary care pediatrician who participates in PLACES. “Not sure about the next paycheck. Also extremely worried about the employees and their families if we have to continue with layoffs.”

Nearly all (97%) reported receiving calls from concerned parents. Eight in 10 have tested at least one child for COVID-19, and one in four has a patient who tested positive for the virus. Nine in 10 pediatricians have found ways to separate sick and

preventive care visits, and six in 10 have changed the physical location of their patient visits, such as seeing patients in a car or a tent.

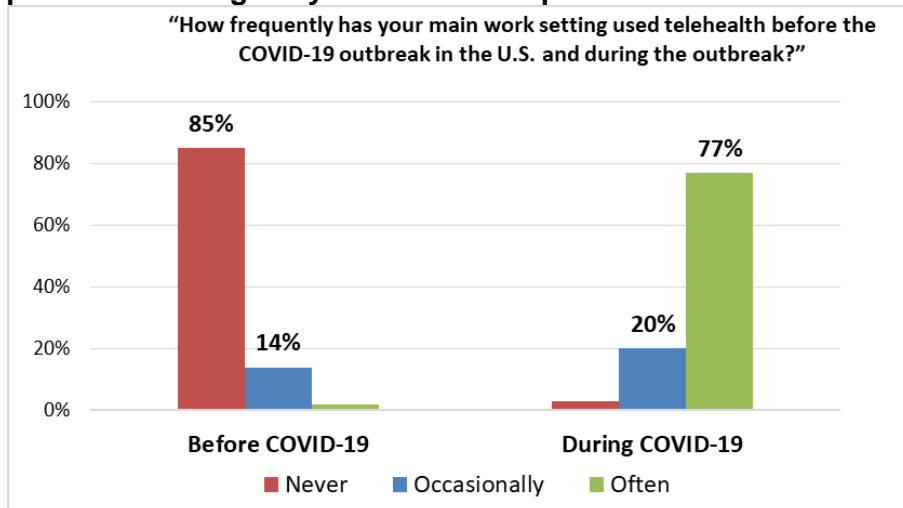
Eight in 10 primary care pediatricians are moderately or very concerned about the impact of stress on clinicians and other staff at their work setting. One in 10 has a colleague who tested positive for COVID-19. Nearly all (96%) are proud to be part of the medical community during this crisis.

“I have always loved being a pediatrician and am so proud to be part of the medical community especially at a time like this when we are on the front lines,” said a primary care pediatrician who participates in PLACES. “The outpour of love and appreciation by the families and community has been wonderful!”

“These timely and valuable data from PLACES participants confirm how hard the COVID-19 pandemic has hit our profession and the tremendous challenges pediatric practices are facing right now,” said AAP President Sara “Sally” H. Goza, M.D., FAAP. “We will use this data to continue to make the case to Congress and the administration that pediatricians urgently need financial relief.”

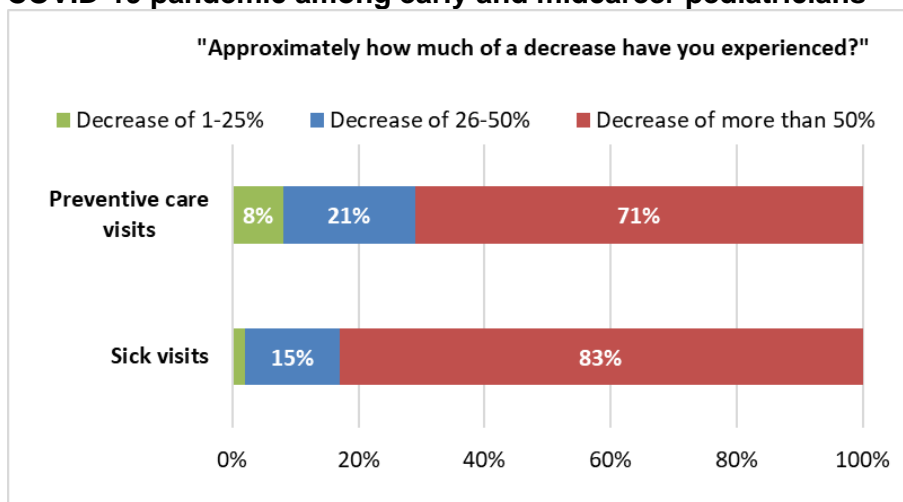
The COVID-19 survey was sent to 339 randomly selected PLACES participants who practice general pediatrics; 61% responded. PLACES is an AAP cohort study that tracks the career and life choices and experiences of pediatricians across their careers. Cohorts include 2016-’18 residency graduates, 2009-’11 residency graduates and 2002-’04 residency graduates. Each PLACES cohort has approximately 900 participants and includes both AAP members and nonmembers, and general pediatricians, subspecialists and hospitalists.

Figure 1. Use of telehealth before and during the COVID-19 pandemic among early and midcareer pediatricians



Source: AAP PLACES, 2020; n=207 primary care pediatricians. Average age=40 years.

Figure 2. Decreases in patient care visits during the COVID-19 pandemic among early and midcareer pediatricians



Source: AAP PLACES, 2020; n=184 primary care pediatricians. Average age=40 years.

RESOURCES

- The latest clinical guidance on COVID-19, information on personal protective equipment and practice management resources, including telehealth and coding is at www.aap.org. For questions or comments related to the pandemic, email COVID-19@aap.org.
- For more information on the AAP Pediatrician Life and Career Experience Study, visit www.aap.org/places or contact Mary Pat Frintner at 630-626-6664 or mfrintner@aap.org.
- Additional [Research Update](#) columns