

PEDIATRICIAN LIFE AND CAREER EXPERIENCE STUDY (PLACES)

MESSAGE FROM THE AAP PRESIDENT



Dear PLACES participants,

Thank you for the many sacrifices you are making to protect and care for children and families.

During this unprecedented time, PLACES is all the more important to the Academy, and data are all the more vital in keeping us connected and helping us chart a way forward.

We recently collected some timely and important data on COVID-19 from PLACES participants, which we are sharing with you in this newsletter and the [June issue of AAP News](#).

These data confirm what we have been hearing from pediatricians across the country – COVID-19 is hitting our profession hard.

We will use these data to continue to make the case to Congress and the administration that pediatricians need financial relief.

In addition, the Academy has updated our guidance on [telehealth](#) and [well-child care](#) and we have embarked on an extensive communications campaign urging parents to take their children to the pediatrician.

Though so much is uncertain right now, one thing we do know is that in order for children to be protected, they need to be seen by their pediatrician.

Thank you for making PLACES a continued success and for all you are doing every day.

Sincerely,

Sara "Sally" Goza, MD, FAAP

President



A program of the American Academy of Pediatrics

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UPDATE ON PLACES DURING COVID-19

PLACES will continue!

- You and the PLACES project are very important to the Academy.
- We usually send you the main study survey by this time each spring.
- Given COVID-19, we did not think that timing was appropriate.
- We will send you the main survey later this year.
- But, thanks to many of you, we were able to collect timely and important data that we are sharing with you today.
- These data further reinforce the importance of PLACES. Thank you!

[Where to find critical updates on COVID-19](#)

COVID-19 Updates for Pediatricians
Get the latest guidance here

[Read more](#)

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ABOUT THE PLACES COVID-19 SURVEY

- The Academy wants to know how COVID-19 is impacting pediatricians across various practice settings.
- We sent a short survey on COVID-19 in April to a random sample of PLACES participants; 324/513=63% completed the survey.

What we learned from you

- Most participants told us their work is greatly impacted by COVID-19 (Figure 1).
- One in 4 primary care pediatricians and 4 in 10 subspecialists have a patient who tested positive for COVID-19.
- Two-thirds of primary care pediatricians and half of subspecialists reported decreased office hours.
- Telehealth use has dramatically increased, particularly among primary care pediatricians:

- Before COVID-19
 - 85% of primary care pediatricians **never** used telehealth.
- During COVID-19
 - 77% of primary care pediatricians used telehealth **often**.

"I am so proud of my organization for being an early adopter of telehealth and for radically overhauling our system in almost no time!"

Overall COVID-19 Impact is Great

What are the most stressful challenges you are facing during COVID-19?

"The most stressful challenges are trying to ensure the safety of myself, office staff, patients, and my family. It has been very difficult with both my husband and I working in healthcare and trying to balance life at home with our 2 children... It is all overwhelming."

Primary care pediatrician

"The uncertainty of how long this will last. The decreased volume while anticipating a surge. Worried about me or my husband (also an MD) getting infected as well as many family members who are on the front lines."

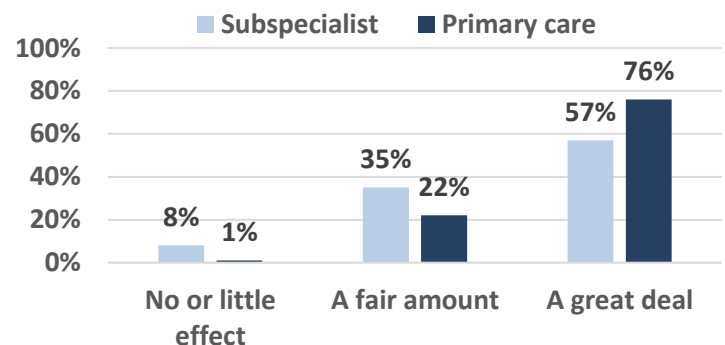
Primary care pediatrician

"The most stressful thing for me has been the constant/daily changes in policies. Numerous long emails on a daily basis. Working outside of my comfort zone. Global concern about PPE. And financial repercussions/job stability related to decrease in clinical revenue."

Subspecialist

Fig 1

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, the US health care system overall is experiencing great demands and change. To what extent would you say these changes have impacted your own work?"



Source: AAP PLACES, 2020; n=324

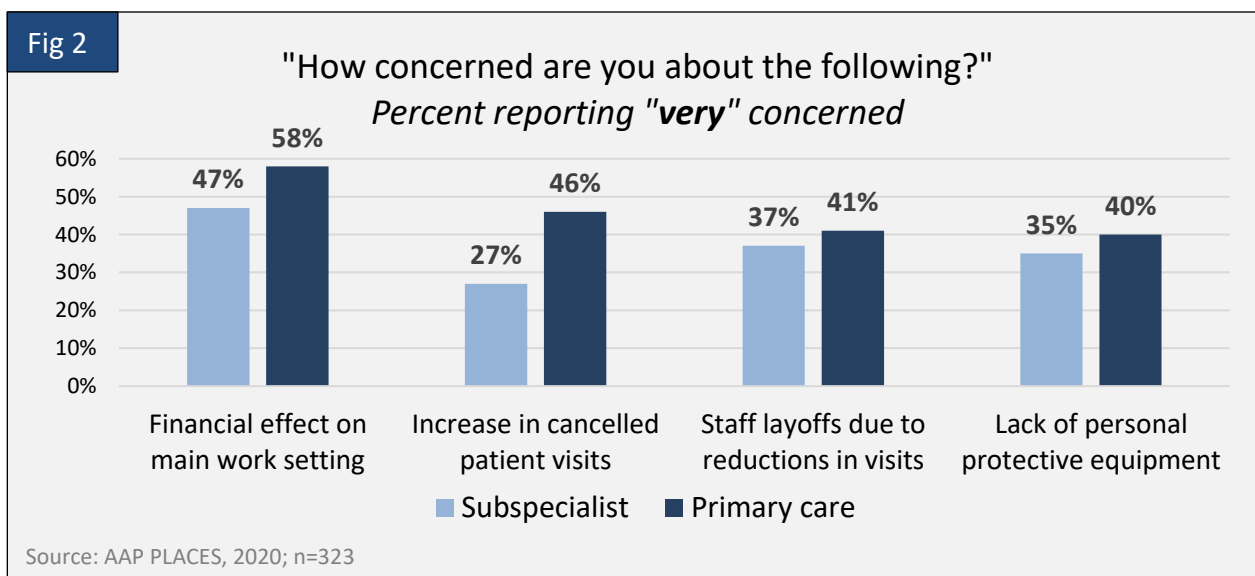
Financial impact of COVID-19 on practice

- Financial impact is considerable with many pediatricians reporting they are VERY concerned about the effect on their work setting, increase in cancelled visits, and staff lay-offs (Figure 2).
- 6 in 10 have closed some offices or services in their practice.
- **Primary care pediatricians:** Nearly all say their preventive care (99%) and sick (94%) visits have decreased.
 - 70% say their preventive care visits have decreased more than 50%.
 - 83% say their sick visits have decreased more than 50%.
- **Subspecialists:** Most say their inpatient (57%) and outpatient (79%) visits have decreased.
 - 43% say their inpatient visits have decreased more than 50%.
 - 68% say their outpatient visits have decreased more than 50%.

PLACES pediatricians conveyed many challenges they are facing during the COVID-19 pandemic

Many comments focused on financial challenges. Some of the thoughtful comments received include:

- *“The financial challenges are daunting and I am concerned about how many practices may not survive financially and what that will mean for pediatrics overall.”*
- *“I am greatly concerned for the survival of private practices. No time has been more fraught than now financially for primary care physicians. Private practices need a bailout.”*
- *“Decrease in patient volume has had a significant impact on the well-being of our small outpatient pediatric practice.”*
- *“Decreased productivity. How to support staff. Will we lose staff. Long-term effects of telehealth on productivity... decreased WRVUs and reimbursement after the crisis/90 day current coverage for telehealth.”*
- *“My medical student loans are not federal loans and we were not able to make the ‘cut’ for the PPP loan. We do not qualify for a stimulus check. So all the help offered by the government will not help us.”*



Personal impact and stress

- 29% of subspecialists and 11% of primary care pediatricians have a colleague who tested positive for COVID-19.
- Most express being very or moderately concerned about:
 - Impact of stress on clinicians and other staff at their work setting (84%).
 - Balancing personal and family needs with professional responsibilities (79%).
 - Limiting contact with household members to prevent exposure (69%).

Proud of profession

Nearly all participants (97%) reported being proud to be a member of the medical community during the COVID-19 crisis:

- *“Proud of my profession - we are creative and we have rapidly adopted telehealth! Way to go!!”*
- *“I am very proud of my profession stepping up to protect those who are at risk.”*
- *“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. The outpour of love and appreciation by the families and community has been wonderful!”*

ABOUT PLACES**AAP appreciates your valuable participation and data**

- Thanks to you, we continue to disseminate new information about early and mid-career pediatricians!
- PLACES results are used by Academy leadership and disseminated widely in AAP News, at conferences, and in peer reviewed journals.

Check out www.aap.org/places for information on PLACES, including results.

PLACES is a longitudinal cohort study that tracks the experiences and opinions of pediatricians over time.

There are 3 important cohorts:

- 2002-2004 Residency Graduates Cohort, n=898
- 2009-2011 Residency Graduates Cohort, n=898
- 2016-2018 Residency Graduates Cohort, n=918

PLACES participants are surveyed twice a year:

- Main study survey in the spring
- Shorter fall survey, focused on a topic selected by participants

Strengths of PLACES:

- Longitudinal design
- Range of content (work, satisfaction, personal dimension)
- **Commitment of participants, like you!**

A Special Thanks to the PLACES Project Advisory Committee:

Bobbi Byrne, MD; Gary Freed, MD, MPH; Laurel Leslie, MD, MPH; Amy Starmer, MD, MPH