COVID-19

Pulse Report: Research, Impact and Response

Mecklenburg County: Strategic Planning & Evaluation Team
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September 2020
Agenda: The Socio-Economic Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic

While COVID-19 is a global health crisis, it also has social and economic implications. The following presentation will focus on all three of these areas, along with the cross-cutting issue of racial disparities. Each section will include the most recent data available, along with information related to BOCC areas of interest and any emerging issues.
“...race gaps in vulnerability to COVID-19 highlight the accumulated, intersecting inequities facing Americans of color (but especially Black people) in jobs, housing, education, criminal justice – and in health.”

- Brookings (June 16, 2020)
Economic

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Charlotte Metro Area (Mecklenburg and several surrounding counties) had experienced the 11th largest job gains of any large metro in the US (2008-2018).

Affordable Housing was already a key local challenge.

• Unemployment & Income 🧱
• Housing 🏡
• Food Insecurity 🍽
• Small Business 🏢
By June 2020, dramatically higher national unemployment rates settled into a pattern of difference by racial groups similar to before the pandemic. The unemployment rate for Black and Hispanic individuals remains higher than White or Asian individuals.

Note: Feb and March 2020 Asian rates are not seasonally adjusted.
Unemployment claims during this pandemic (represented by the yellow line) far outpace claims made during the past three recessions. There were more claims made in the first 24 weeks of the current pandemic than the Great Recession.
Unemployment & Income – North Carolina

Income Loss by Race/Ethnicity

Percent of adults in NC households with at least one person losing employment income since March 13

- Black: 55%
- White: 44%
- Asian: 41%
- Hispanic: 34%

North Carolina: 46%

Unemployment numbers have been a large focus since the pandemic began, but loss of income has been much more widespread since March than unemployment. More than half of Black households had at least one person who lost income since March 13.

At the time of this reporting the latest state data release available was from week 12 (July 16 – 21). The weekly Census survey started April 23, 2020. 


Note: Racial breakdowns treat Hispanic or Latino as a separate ethnicity, while White, Black and Asian are non-Hispanic.
Unemployment in the County had been persistently low up to the onset of the pandemic. To date, Mecklenburg County’s unemployment rate during the pandemic peaked in May 2020 at 13.6% and has since declined to 8.6%.

April saw the highest number of unemployment insurance claims since March 2020. Blacks disproportionately are affected by unemployment more so than other racial groups known and unknown.
Out of the total number of unemployment claims, Blacks have significantly had an increased in proportion of unemployment insurance claims compared to whites with significant decreases since March 2020.

Source: NC Department of Commerce: https://bi.nc.gov/t/COM-LEAD/views/RegionalUIDashboard/RegionalUIDashboard?%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&%3Aembed=y
The largest number of unemployment insurance claims over the five-month period were seen in the following categories: unclassified/unknown (43,940 claims); leisure & hospitality (35,994 claims); and trade, transportation & utilities (31,056 claims).

Source: NC Department of Commerce: [https://bi.nc.gov/t/COM-LEAD/views/RegionalUIDashboard/RegionalUIDashboard?%3AsGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&%3Aembed=y](https://bi.nc.gov/t/COM-LEAD/views/RegionalUIDashboard/RegionalUIDashboard?%3AsGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&%3Aembed=y)
Out of the total number of unemployment claims, the three hardest hit (known) industries were: leisure & hospitality; trade, transportation & utilities; and education & health services.

Source: NC Department of Commerce: [https://bi.nc.gov/t/COM-LEAD/views/RegionalUIDashboard/RegionalUIDashboard?%3ASisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&%3Aembed=y](https://bi.nc.gov/t/COM-LEAD/views/RegionalUIDashboard/RegionalUIDashboard?%3ASisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&%3Aembed=y)
There was a dramatic drop in job postings in Mecklenburg County from March-April 2020 compared to prior year (2019), with near recovery beginning in July 2020. The recently released Brookings Institute metro recovery index shows the Charlotte Metro is the second-best performer in job postings the US among very large metro areas in % change in job postings from January 2020 to June 2020.

Number of New Real-time Job Postings for Mecklenburg County

Note: Data are subject to revision. Time series data can be volatile with trends unrelated to actual changes in demand; use with caution.

The Charlotte metro area falls 2% above the national average in the Remote Work Index (measures the mix of remote-work employment regionally compared to the average in the nation).

However, national data (as shown to the right) reflects the disparity in remote employment across race and ethnicity.

Nationally, “blacks account for 12.7% of all workers, but just 7.4% of workers within remote work occupations. Hispanic or Latinos are under-represented as well, accounting for 17.3% of all workers compared to 9.0% within remote work occupations. Asians, in contrast, make up 6.5% of the workforce overall, but 13.7% of workers in remote work occupations.”

Unemployment & Income – United States Rising Inequality
(Emerging Issue / BOCC Interest)

While minorities, women, young workers, and the less educated have been most impacted by unemployment during the pandemic, income inequality is likely to continue to rise for years to come.

“...income inequality tends to rise for five years after a country suffers an epidemic. Low-wage workers tend to be the first to lose their jobs and the last to be hired back.”
– Bloomberg

“Minorities are more likely to hold vulnerable jobs, especially in large cities. Women have sustained a majority of the initial job losses, but that may change going forward.
Younger workers are 35 percent more likely to hold a vulnerable job.”
– McKinsey & Company

“Economists found, unsurprisingly, that workers with lower education suffer much more unemployment after a pandemic.”
– Bloomberg

Develop COVID-19 recovery plans that account for the pandemic’s disproportionate economic impacts in communities of color. This includes special focus on housing programs, workforce development programs, access to food and childcare providers.

Local Response Efforts:

- The COVID-19 Response Fund is administered through a partnership between the Foundation for the Carolinas and the United Way. The fund supports a range of nonprofits assisting the people most affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

- The Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy’s Unemployment Insurance Project helps people who have lost work due to COVID-19 understand their eligibility and navigate the application process to receive unemployment benefits and remain financially stable.

- CARES Funding:
  - Grace Mar Services: Job training & placement for 1,000 individuals (online or in-person)
3 in 10 Americans missed their housing payments (either mortgage or rent) in July 2020. This is consistent with recently made available data for Charlotte. From a peak in March 2020, rent costs have been declining in Charlotte for 3 months.

Despite Reopenings, Missed Housing Payments Remain High

Q: During the first week of the month, did you make your rent / mortgage payment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>No Payment</th>
<th>Partial Payment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Apartment List Survey Data

Note: Late payments are not included in this question, so this does not reflect payments received for the month at a date after the first week of the month.

According to the US Census Pulse Survey, more than half of Hispanic and 30% of Black households have little to no confidence in their ability to pay their mortgage next month or have deferred payment of their mortgage.

At the time of this reporting the latest state data release available was from week 12 (July 16 – 21). The weekly Census survey started April 23, 2020.
While Black and Hispanic households are much less confident in their ability to pay their mortgage, there is less disparity when it comes to renters. Between 30%-40% of Black, White, and Hispanic households in North Carolina have little to no confidence in their ability to pay their rent next month or have deferred payment of their rent.

At the time of this reporting the latest state data release available was from week 12 (July 16 – 21). The weekly Census survey started April 23, 2020.
Columbia University recently released an analysis by economist Dr. Brendan O’Flaherty that estimates a large impact of unemployment on homelessness.

The analysis estimated a 40-45% increase in homelessness by the end of 2020, an increase of around 250,000 Americans.

Approaches for housing the elderly may be different post-COVID-19.

Nationally, assisted living and independent living facilities have been experiencing a decline in occupancy in recent months.

This may cause growth in home-based services for seniors. Groups like AARP have already begun calling attention to needs for policy changes to reflect this new reality.

Due to newly exposed vulnerabilities in elderly congregant care...“Medicaid should be more focused on home- and community-based care. And Medicare has to cover home health care to a greater degree.”

– AARP, June 8, 2020

Economics – Housing

Idea to Consider

Plan a “housing surge,” to quickly move people into housing during the pandemic. If eviction numbers rise rapidly, this strategy develops a pool of housing subsidies and units for rapid deployment.

Housing surges have been used to quickly rehouse people during and after natural disasters.

Local Response Efforts:

- Mecklenburg County leased hotels for homeless individuals who displayed COVID-19 symptoms and needed to be isolated.

- CARES Funding:
  - After the first $8 million from the City to create RAMP-CLT, the County provided $1.5 million in CARES Act funding, and The City provided an additional $2.2 million in CARES Act-CDBG funding.
  - Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership: Expanded the rental assistance program to service 1,000 additional households that reside outside the City of Charlotte limits.
  - Social Serve: Rental assistance, hotel stay extensions, utility payments & staffing to support an additional 535 households.

COVID-19 has exacerbated food access issues, especially within specific communities. At the end of March 2020, the RAND Corporation highlighted risks associated with increased food insecurity in the wake of COVID-19:

- Children who receive federally subsidized school lunches
- Undergraduates who no longer have access due to school closures
- Families who live in food deserts
- Seniors who no longer can rely on subsidized meals served in group settings
- Low-income families who have less money to spend on food
- Food supply chain workers (farmers, food processors, and retail employees) who have lost income from supply chain impacts

Family employment instability and economic hardship from COVID-19 has led to greater food insecurity across the board. However, Black and Hispanic households experience far more food insecurity than White and Asian households in the United States.

“Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, food insecurity has remained persistently elevated at record levels.

Though food insecurity among households with children decreased from April to June, it is still far above its Great Recession peak. In fact, new data show that an unprecedented number of children in the United States are experiencing food insecurity and did not have sufficient food as of late June.”

– Brookings July 9, 2020
Percent of adults in NC households where there was “often” or “sometimes” not enough food in the past week:

- Hispanic: 32%
- Black: 18%
- White: 7%
- Asian: 0%

North Carolina: 12%

According to the US Census Pulse Survey, Black and Hispanic adult households were more likely to note there was not enough food in the past week than White and Asian households.

At the time of this reporting the latest state data release available was from week 12 (July 16 – 21). The weekly Census survey started April 23, 2020.

Source: US Census Pulse Survey  [https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/hhp/#/?s_state=00037](https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/hhp/#/?s_state=00037)

Note: Racial breakdowns treat Hispanic or Latino as a separate ethnicity, while White, Black and Asian are non-Hispanic.
Despite disparities in access to food, Mecklenburg County is estimated to have the sixth lowest food insecurity rate for North Carolina counties. That still represents a substantial increase from levels in 2018 (12% to 17%) and follows a pattern seen across the state of rising insecurity.
**Ideas to Consider**

Develop model emergency food responses that include **drive-through** or **curbside food pantry pickup**, mobile food pantries, modified meals-on-wheels for seniors and restaurant-delivered meals (University of New Hampshire Carsey School of Public Policy).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Response Efforts:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Mecklenburg County is participating in a pilot program that allows <strong>Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) SNAP recipients</strong> to purchase groceries online via Amazon and Wal-Mart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The <strong>COVID-19 Emergency Food Resources Map</strong> is an online tool covering the greater Charlotte region that provides information about different emergency food resources, thus allowing for searches within a specified distance of a home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>CARES Funding:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Loaves &amp; Fishes: Purchase <strong>1.2 million additional pounds of food</strong> to serve an additional 50,000 households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Second Harvest Food Bank: <strong>Purchase equipment</strong>, such as refrigerated trucks and staffing to serve an additional 140,000 households</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

McKinsey & Company performed an analysis of vulnerability of small businesses, by sector, to financial risk and to the effect of COVID-19. The level of vulnerability was determined based on (1) profitability, (2) credit risk, and (3) use of retained earnings.

On this slide (right) is a high-level summary of information on relative vulnerability shown in more detail on the next slide. In the next slide, sectors in the top right quadrant are the most affected and have the highest financial risk.

Industries such as healthcare are largely impacted by COVID but have a lower financial risk. While construction and retail have a relatively lower impact but higher financial risk.

Vulnerability of small businesses, by sector, to financial risk and to the effect of COVID-19

Recent weeks have seen an increased number of NC small businesses that indicate it will be more than 6 months before levels of their business operation return to pre-COVID levels – now matching US response.

Recent weeks have seen an increased number of Charlotte metro area (Mecklenburg and surrounding counties) small businesses that indicate it will be more than 6 months before levels of business operations return to pre-COVID levels – now matching US response.

**Small Business – Charlotte Metro Impacts**

In your opinion, how much time do you think will pass before this business returns to its normal level of operations relative to one year ago?

+6 Months to recover:
- US: 38%, NC 33%,
- Charlotte MSA 32.6%

Economics – Small Business

Ideas to Consider

• Survey small businesses to measure the impact of COVID-19 on their operations (Providence, RI).

• Use business contacts to provide businesses with critical information and technical assistance (McKinsey & Company).

Local Response Efforts:

• Mecklenburg County has created a COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Stabilization Loan Fund and a Micro Business Stabilization Fund. The funds were created through the County’s partnerships with Carolina Small Business Development Fund and Centralina Council of Governments.

• The Mecklenburg County Business Roundtable was formed by the County Manager to serve as a forum with the business community about reopening the economy amid the uncertainty caused by COVID-19.

• CARES Funding:
  • Small business relief grants up to $25,000 for a minimum of 50 businesses located in towns or unincorporated areas.
  • Access to Capital Small Business Recovery Program that is part of the City of Charlotte’s Open for Business Initiatives will distribute $30 million in federal CARES funding to small businesses within Charlotte city limits.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, issues like the digital divide were known to disproportionately affect minority communities. The pandemic has intensified the effects of these differences.

- Education
- Childcare
- Digital Divide
A higher proportion of White students (38%) have access to high quality remote learning compared to Black students (14%) and Hispanic students (21%). In addition, it is estimated that only 60% of Black and low-income students were regularly logging into online instruction.

“Black, Hispanic and low-income students are at a higher risk of not receiving remote instruction of average or above-average quality…and the result is learning loss from student disengagement and/or lack of access.”
Lack of attendance and lower-quality remote learning will likely lead to significant learning loss, especially for Black, Hispanic, and low-income children. 30-40 percent of minority and low-income students weren’t learning during lockdowns, resulting in up to a year’s worth (12.4 months) of learning lost.

Note: These estimates are based on a mid-year return to in-class schooling in January 2021. The loss will be exacerbated if children do not return to in-class schooling until fall 2021.


2 Includes 0.05 standard deviation reduction for black, Hispanic, and low-income students to account for recession impacts (~1 month of additional learning lost).
Childcare facility closures due to COVID-19 could have long-term implications for parents’ options to return to work.

According to the Center for American Progress, "Even before the coronavirus pandemic, slightly more than half of the country lived in a child care desert – defined as an area where there are more than three children under age 5 for each licensed child care slot."

Locally, Mecklenburg has not yet experienced many permanent childcare center closings. Local centers are struggling financially due to low enrollment and/or attendance due to either health and safety concerns or unemployed / furloughed / remote working parents.

As of July 2020, in Mecklenburg County:

• 151 childcare programs remain temporarily closed
• Enrollment in year-round centers is down 52%
• Capacity of programs serving children birth to 5 is down 13%, while enrollment in those centers is down 54%
• School-age childcare capacity has been the most affected (down 13,065 spaces in July; exact capacity reductions were not yet available as of school start)

Source: Child Care Resources (CCRI)
If childcare positions are greatly reduced with permanent closures in the future, use online platforms to match out-of-work childcare professionals with essential workers who need them and financial assistance (Long Beach, CA and Houston, TX).

Local Response Efforts:
- Mecklenburg County created childcare centers for essential workers that ran from March – June 2020 and is exploring the continuation of support to Mecklenburg County employees needing remote learning or childcare assistance.
- The Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board launched a partnership program with community-based organizations to establish remote learning facilities.

53 percent of Americans say the Internet has been essential during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Nearly a third of broadband and smartphone users are worried about paying their bills.

Over half of Hispanic and lower-income broadband and smartphone users are worried.

Before the pandemic, approximately 80,000 Mecklenburg County households did not have a computer at home or work. That is 12 percent of all households.

The darkest purple zones on the map at right indicate neighborhoods where more than 30 percent of households lack Internet access. This corresponds with areas with lower income and higher minority populations.

Source: Analysis using data from Simply Analytics and NCBroadband.gov based on Census Bureau 5-year Community Survey data. https://nconemap.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=8d455dfdf4bb496192c89ad3a4ab8574
Social – Digital Divide

Ideas to Consider

• Develop a long-term collaboration with Internet providers to provide no-cost high-speed Internet to children who receive free or reduced-price school lunches (Chattanooga and Hamilton County, TN; Philadelphia, PA).

• Partner with PBS stations to deliver daily instructional content for students during school closures (Tennessee Department of Education).

• Develop partnerships between medical providers and local libraries to provide telehealth literacy training (Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)).

Local Response Efforts:

• Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) has purchased 6,000 hotspots for students without Internet access. The CMS Foundation is working to raise 3.2 million to cover 12 months of Internet service.

• Open Broadband, a private Charlotte-based Internet service provider, is working with Crossroads Corporation, a nonprofit that serves the Grier Heights community, to bring free Internet to two apartment communities in the area, as well as upgrade the community center’s Wi-Fi connection.

• E2D, based in Mecklenburg County, has an established program to provide technical training and donated reconditioned equipment to local students.

• CARES Funding:

  • Charlotte Mecklenburg Library will pilot the deployment of MeckTech Home Kits (i.e., laptops and computers) for those in need (i.e., unemployed, health and human services clients, library customers and seniors).

Health

The pandemic’s health effects go well beyond those directly linked to the coronavirus.

- Environment 🌱
- Health Access 🍓
- Delayed Care 🙏
- Mental Health 🧠
Further evidence of the large economic impact of the pandemic was seen in dramatic reductions in traffic. Measured from March 26 to April 29, traffic fell more than 40% at some monitoring points. As a result, air quality has improved—demonstrating the potential benefits that can be achieved by reducing emissions from the transportation sector post-pandemic.

- Traffic on I-77 and I-277/74 declined by approximately 40%
- The follow list of particulate matter contribute to overall air quality: Fine Particulate Matter (PM$_{2.5}$), Carbon Monoxide (CO), and Nitrogen Dioxide (NO$_2$)
- All were all lower in concentrations by the percentages shown (left)
- Monitoring site concentrations exhibited greater declines that were near major highways (Near Road) than the area-wide monitoring sites

**Environment – Mecklenburg County Air Quality**

% Change (Decline) During Stay-at-Home Order March 26 to April 29

Traffic @ I-77 (Exit 1-A) 46%
Traffic @ I-277/US 74 44%
NO2 Near Road Monitor 43%
NO2 Area-Wide Monitor 20%
PM 2.5 Near Road 12%
PM 2.5 Area-Wide 9%
CO Near Road Monitor 12%
CO Area-Wide Monitor 6%

Source: Data Collected by Mecklenburg County Air Quality from March 26, 2020 to April 29, 2020.
Ozone is another pollutant that showed a decrease of 8-9% from expected values when measured from March 26 to April 29.

The graph (right) shows actual and expected Ozone concentrations from measuring stations at Garinger High School and University Meadows Elementary.

*Weather has an impact on Ozone levels. Mecklenburg County Air Quality used meteorological data to predict expected ozone values. Ozone concentrations were lower across the County than meteorologically predicted. Actual results were 8-9% lower than expected values, indicating that the traffic reduction was a factor.

Source: Data Collected by Mecklenburg County Air Quality from March 26, 2020 to April 29, 2020.
The job loss associated with COVID-19 has caused concern for rising numbers in uninsured individuals.

It is estimated that nearly 27 million individuals in the US could lose their job and employer sponsored health insurance (ESI) and become uninsured.

Of those 27 million, nearly 80% (21.1 million) would be eligible for either Medicaid or marketplace subsidies.

“However, some people will fall outside the reach of the ACA, particularly in January 2021 when UI benefits cease for many and some adults fall into the Medicaid coverage gap due to state decisions not to expand coverage under the ACA.”

As a non-expansion state for Medicaid, North Carolina is likely to see a larger number of individuals falling into the coverage gap come January 2021.
Prior to COVID-19, Mecklenburg County saw a decline in the percent of its population without insurance after the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. However, there were substantial disparities.


*In 2017, the Census table that is the source for this data shifted from tracking adults age 18-64 (from 2014 to 2016) to tracking adults age 19-64 (in 2017 and 2018)

Racial Disparities: 2018 Adult Uninsured Population (Ages 19-64) by Race/Ethnicity

- American Indian and Alaska Native: 19%
- Asian: 8%
- Black or African American: 11%
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race): 30%
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders: 11%
- Two or more races: 9%
- White, not Hispanic: 8%
Idea to Consider

The federal Healthy People 2030 Initiative highlights three critical components of health access for individuals, organizations, and communities to focus on:

- **Coverage** - Increasing health insurance coverage
- **Services** - Supporting individuals and families in identifying a regular and ongoing source of care (e.g. a provider or facility)
- **Timeliness** - Providing healthcare quickly after a need is recognized.

Healthy People 2030 also recognizes the persistence of disparities in access to healthcare and highlights addressing these disparities as a key issue worthy of focus over the next decade.

Local Response Efforts:

- **Mecklenburg County’s FY2021 Budget** includes funding to address health disparities within the community and conversations have begun with regards to reducing health disparities.

- The state is preparing to deploy over 100 community health workers (CHWs) in the community; 26 (CHWs) and two supervisors will be assigned to Mecklenburg County. Atrium and Novant will deploy resources as well.

Source: [https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/Access-to-Health-Services](https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/Access-to-Health-Services)
As of the middle of May, approximately half of respondents to a Kaiser Family Foundation survey reported that they (or someone in their family) delayed medical care due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Delayed Care – North Carolina by Race/Ethnicity

Percent of adults in NC households who delayed getting medical care because of the COVID-19 pandemic in the last 4 weeks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Delayed Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

North Carolina: 34%

There is little difference among racial and ethnic groups in decisions to delay getting medical care.

Source: US Census Pulse Survey  [https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/hhp/#/?s_state=00037](https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/hhp/#/?s_state=00037)

Note: Racial breakdowns treat Hispanic or Latino as a separate ethnicity, while White, Black and Asian are non-Hispanic.

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Ideas to Consider

• The CDC recommends individuals and families take the following steps to **safely access care**:
  • Follow national and local guidance
  • Practice safe behaviors outside the home
  • Plan to ensure required medicines do not run out.
• **Expand access to telemedicine** to provide essential medical services during the pandemic (Centers for Disease Control (CDC)).
• Leverage partnerships with libraries to provide **training to residents in use of telemedicine software** (The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)).

Local Response Efforts:

The two major hospital systems in Mecklenburg County, Atrium and Novant, are actively **publicizing ways for residents to safely access the care they need**, including telemedicine options.
According to a national survey from the Kaiser Family Foundation, an increasing number of adults are reporting that COVID-19 is negatively affecting their mental health. The number of individuals who say that stress and worry has impacted their mental health is up 14 percentage points in July compared to survey data from May 2020.

The negative impact of COVID-19 on mental health has been felt the most by women, young adults, black adults, and those who have been impacted financially.

Percent of adults who say they feel that worry or stress related to coronavirus has had a **negative impact** on their mental health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 18-29</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 30-49</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 50-64</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 65+</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self/spouse lost income since COVID-19</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self/spouse has not lost income since COVID-19</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty affording HH expenses due to coronavirus</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No difficulty affording HH expenses due to coronavirus</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the US Census Pulse Survey, mental health issues show a different racial and ethnic distribution, with Hispanics and Whites above the state average.

At the time of this reporting the latest state data release available was from week 12 (July 16 – 21). The weekly Census survey started April 23, 2020.
Ideas to Consider

- Prioritize younger adults, racial/ethnic minorities, essential workers, and unpaid adult caregivers in intervention and prevention efforts.

- Promote health & wellness and to help keep residents’ spirits up during COVID-19 by building a coordinated website that provides resources on staying connected, reducing stress, eating well, exercising and learning new skills (Louisville, KY).

Local Response Efforts:

- Cardinal Innovations has a COVID-19 Resources website that lists North Carolina and Mecklenburg mental health services.

- CARES Funding:
  - COVID-19 Behavioral Health Initiative: Projected funding support of $1.8 million to support up to 3,000 individuals impacted by COVID-19. Services through seven nonprofit partners include: referral hotline, promotion/communication plan, service intervention, and evaluation.
General:
• Mecklenburg has recovered in some ways faster than other areas (e.g., job postings).
• Issues like digital divide, affordable housing and economic mobility are amplified more than ever.

Economic:
• Unemployment claims have varied across black and white demographic groups.
• Unemployment peaked in May in Mecklenburg, and has subsided some since then, but many more households have lost income, even if they have remained employed.
• As federal benefits run out and eviction prevention periods end, there is growing worry about the numbers of people who may lose housing.
• Food insecurity is relatively low in Mecklenburg among NC counties, but the increase since 2018 has been substantial and represents a sizable number of people.
• The pandemic’s affect on small businesses has been different depending on the sector of the business, but a growing number of NC small business owners see recovery taking more than six months.
Social:
• There also has been a wide range in the quality of instruction from district to district and classroom to classroom.
• Childcare providers face many challenges, and while most are holding on, there is a risk of losing childcare spots permanently.
• The move to remote learning may lead to greater disparities in educational attainment for children who live in households without stable access to internet.

Health:
• There is a clear relationship between air quality and transportation.
• While the crisis is based on a pandemic, the effects on healthcare, mental health and environment are complex and interconnected with loss of income and insurance.
COVID-19

Pulse Report: Research, Impact and Response

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