

HERO

Healthcare Worker Exposure
Response & Outcomes



HERO Hot Topics: We asked, you answered, and this is what we learned.

The HERO program team regularly surveys healthcare workers on timely topics of interest and returns results back to participants while also sharing with the public, researchers, partner organizations, the scientific community, and media. Taking the pulse of the healthcare worker community provides insights into the challenges workers face and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on their health, wellbeing, community, and family members.

BY SHARING HEALTHCARE WORKER VOICES, WE HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH 3 GOALS:

- 1 Bring awareness to the challenges they face, at work and at home
- 2 Identify solutions to better support those on the front lines of pandemic
- 3 Guide future research

HOT TOPIC THEMES



Are healthcare workers vaccinating their children?



Financial burden



Is anger affecting healthcare workers?



Vaccine willingness



Employer vaccine requirements



Impact of remote school and childcare



Moral injury



ARE HEALTHCARE WORKERS VACCINATING THEIR CHILDREN?

As the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has issued emergency use authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for children in different age groups, did parents in the HERO Registry choose to vaccinate their children?

WHEN DID WE ASK?

June 2021 & November 2021

WHAT DID WE ASK?

We asked parents in the HERO Registry in June if they planned to vaccinate their children when vaccines were authorized and available. In September, we asked again.

HOW MANY RESPONDED?

2,000+ in June and 4,000+ in September 2021

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

In both polls, we found that healthcare workers were much more likely than the general population to vaccinate their children. In the first poll we found significant differences between job type. In the second poll we found that parents with children under age 5 working in healthcare were twice as likely to vaccinate their children right away than parents not working in healthcare (57% vs. 26%)

YES, I WILL VACCINATE RIGHT AWAY (JUNE 2021):

Physicians: **80%**

Physician assistants and nurse practitioners: **73%**

Emergency medical technicians and paramedics: **66%**

Registered and licensed practical nurses: **51%**

[Learn More](#)

"I'm excited for life to become much safer for these kids."



IS ANGER AFFECTING HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Healthcare workers have faced tremendous stress over the pandemic and are frustrated and angry for a variety of reasons inside and outside of work. Are healthcare workers feeling angrier, and if so, is it affecting their work?

WHEN DID WE ASK?

September 2021

WHAT DID WE ASK?

We asked HERO Registry members to identify the statement that best reflected how they felt.

HOW MANY RESPONDED?

6,600+

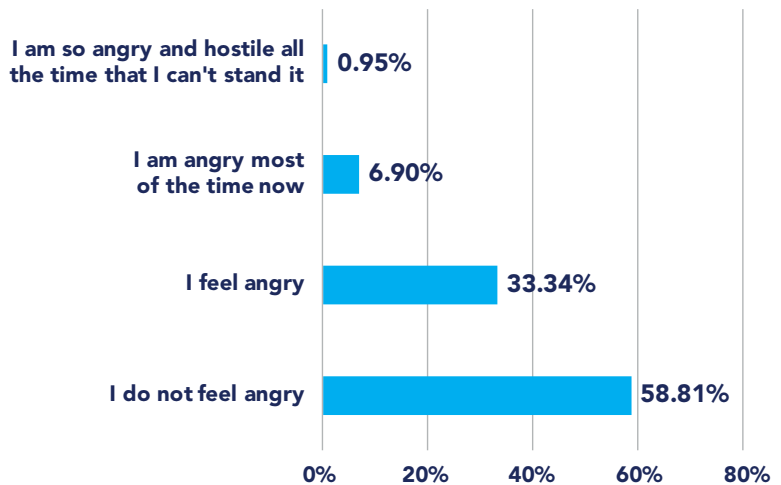
"I feel less empathy and less compassion because of this anger and frustration."

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

The HERO poll found that anger differed by role with more than 55% of physicians and nurses reporting feeling angry - a percentage higher than in other jobs.

[Learn more](#)

READ AND IDENTIFY THE STATEMENT THAT REFLECTS HOW YOU FEEL (N=6,623)



EMPLOYER VACCINE REQUIREMENTS

As employer requirements for COVID-19 vaccination increase, what can we learn from healthcare worker experiences?

WHEN DID WE ASK?

July 2021

WHAT DID WE ASK?

We first asked respondents whether or not their employers currently require vaccination and then asked whether or not requirements were influencing their decision to get vaccinated.

HOW MANY RESPONDED?

2,700

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Only 13% of those responding said that they were currently required by their employer to be vaccinated.

Of those who were required to be vaccinated by their employer, 13% said "Yes, I have been or will be vaccinated, but only because of this requirement" and 16% said "Yes, I have been or will be vaccinated sooner than I would have been without this requirement." Of those who were not yet required by their employer to be vaccinated, 3% said "I would be vaccinated only because of this requirement" and 9% said "I would be vaccinated sooner than I would have without this requirement."

[Learn more](#)



<5% of HERO participants reported concerns about vaccines.

5% of those **not required**

to be vaccinated plan to refuse

vs.

<1% of those **required**

to be vaccinated plan to refuse

"I work in food, so I see it as my duty to those that I'm serving food to, to be as safe from COVID-19 as I can be."
-Healthcare Food Services Worker & HERO Member



MORAL INJURY

“Moral injury” is used to describe the damage done to the conscience or moral compass of people who might witness, be unable to, or fail to prevent acts that go against their own moral beliefs, values, or ethics. We asked HERO members about how moral injury was affecting them during the pandemic.

WHEN DID WE ASK?

April 2021

WHAT DID WE ASK?

We asked healthcare workers whether they agreed with two statements:

- I am troubled by having witnessed others’ immoral acts.
- I am troubled by having acted in ways that violated my own morals and values.

“It is very hard to work in healthcare during this time, putting myself and my family at risk, while watching so many I know blatantly disregarding recommendations for safe behavior.”

–Healthcare Worker & HERO Member

HOW MANY RESPONDED?

2,000+

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Overall, 32% of healthcare workers agreed with the statement, “I am troubled by having witnessed others’ immoral acts” and 10% of respondents said they agreed with the statement “I am troubled by having acted in ways that violated my own morals and values.” Younger participants, aged 18-29 years, were more likely than older people to agree with both statements. Many participants offered comments about disappointment in the public, rationing care in overcrowded conditions, watching people die, and rules restricting visitors to sick and dying patients.

[Learn more](#)

32% “I am troubled by having witnessed others’ immoral acts”



10% “I am troubled by having acted in ways that violated my own morals and values”



FINANCIAL BURDEN

While some healthcare workers caring for COVID-19 patients saw their work hours increase, many others experienced furlough or cuts to their pay or benefits. We wanted to better understand how healthcare workers’ financial situation was affected by the pandemic.

WHEN DID WE ASK?

January 2021

WHAT DID WE ASK?

How has the pandemic affected your financial situation?

- Worried about meeting financial obligations
- Reduced income
- Reduced work hours
- Furlough or forced leave of absence

HOW MANY RESPONDED?

2,000+

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Reduced income was the most common financial impact, reported by 22% of participants. The stories of healthcare workers suffering from financial impact ranged from having to leave their jobs to care for their families to having to handle the unexpected loss of a family member’s job. Others incurred unexpected costs associated with being sick from COVID-19.

[Learn more](#)



22.3% reported reduced income



17.9% reported reduced work hours



9.1% reported furlough or forced leave of absence

3% reported being more worried about meeting financial obligations





VACCINE WILLINGNESS

People working in healthcare were among the first to receive emergency-use authorized vaccines for COVID-19 in December 2020. We wanted to measure their willingness to take the vaccine before and after emergency-use authorization.

WHEN DID WE ASK?

October & December 2020

WHAT DID WE ASK?

We asked participants whether or not they were willing to be vaccinated before vaccine trial results were available in October 2020 and then again in December 2020 following publication of positive trial results.

HOW MANY RESPONDED?

2,000+ in October
1,500+ in December
(998 overlapped)

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

As trial data about vaccine safety and effectiveness was made public in November we found that of the people who participated in both polls, 13% shifted their “no” answer to “yes.” The overall number of healthcare workers reporting “yes” in December went up to 76% overall. The largest shift in opinion was seen in physicians (64% - 90%) and nurses (46% to 66%). Fewer than 5% people reported concerns about vaccines in general.

[Learn more](#)

<5%

of HERO participants reported concerns about vaccines



IMPACT OF REMOTE SCHOOL AND CHILDCARE

The pandemic especially challenged the 40% of all U.S. households with children under 18 as schools and daycares closed, changed schedules, or switched to virtual formats. But for healthcare workers, these changes caused extra challenges and made the balancing act between work and home even harder.

WHEN DID WE ASK?

September 2020

WHAT DID WE ASK?

We asked participants how their ability to work had been impacted by changes in schools and childcare facilities.

We asked participants about these factors:

- Not available to work all the hours needed
- Struggling with childcare issues
- More distracted while working
- More anxious while working

“I am working nights and weekends to help my children with e-learning and I am exhausted.”

–Healthcare Worker & HERO Member

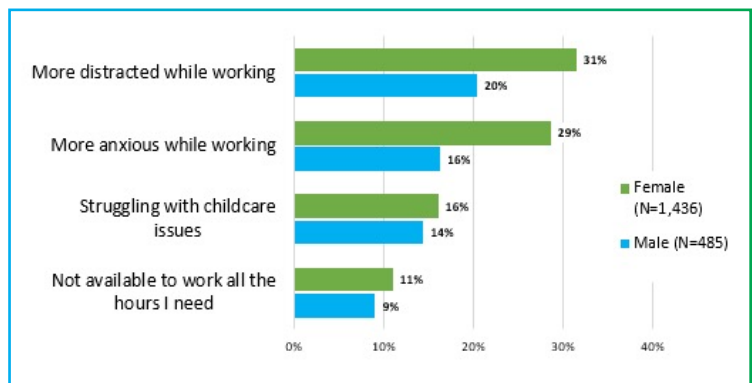
HOW MANY RESPONDED?

2,000+

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

As a result of changes to school or childcare, 28% of HERO participants felt more distracted at work and 25% felt more anxious. In addition, 15% were struggling to find and pay for childcare, and 10% were not able to work the number of hours they needed to work. Participants without children also commented that struggled too as they picked up extra shifts to help their coworkers with children.

[Learn more](#)



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For more information
visit: heroesresearch.org