

# Many healthcare workers face risk for poor outcomes with COVID-19

April 30 2020

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More than one-quarter of health care workers with patient contact are at

risk for poor outcomes from COVID-19, according to a study published online April 28 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

David U. Himmelstein, M.D., and Steffie Woolhandler, M.D., M.P.H., from City University of New York at Hunter College in New York City, analyzed the most recently available data from the National Health Interview Survey and March 2019 Population Survey to examine the number of U.S. [health care workers](#) providing direct [patient care](#) who have [risk factors](#) for a poor outcome if they develop COVID-19.

The researchers found that 3.66 million of 13.79 million health care workers with patient contact (26.6 percent) are at risk for poor COVID-19 outcomes due to age or chronic conditions. Of those at risk, 7.5 percent are uninsured, including 11.4 and 20.8 percent of those with diabetes and chronic lung disease other than asthma, respectively. Furthermore, 8.8 and 25.2 percent are unable to afford medication and are worried about medical costs, respectively. A total of 28.6 percent of all health care personnel with patient contact do not have paid [sick leave](#), including 30.5 percent of those at risk for poor COVID-19 outcomes.

"Millions of health personnel are assuming substantial risks to serve their communities," the authors write. "Depriving them of adequate income, sick leave, and insurance dishonors that service and threatens the well-being of both health workers and the public."

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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Citation: Many healthcare workers face risk for poor outcomes with COVID-19 (2020, April 30) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-04-healthcare-workers-poor-outcomes-covid-.html>

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