

Protect Our Care: Trump's failed pandemic response and continued war on health care hurts communities of color

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MILWAUKEE, WI — President Trump's failure to take decisive action to contain the pandemic has resulted in catastrophic consequences for the United States. Almost nine million Americans have been infected by a virus that shows no signs of slowing down, while more than 226,000 people have lost their lives. Perpetual outbreaks have created dire economic consequences with 65 million people having filed for unemployment since the pandemic began. But rather than take responsibility for the worst crisis in modern American history, Trump is continuing to downplay the danger of the virus — baselessly insisting that the United States is “rounding the turn” even as cases spike and hospitals are overwhelmed.

Among those most impacted by President Trump's ongoing abdication of responsibility are Black people, Indigenous people, Latinos, and other people of color across the United States. Years of structural racism have left these communities especially vulnerable to the devastating impact of the coronavirus crisis. People of color are far more likely to suffer from chronic illnesses and face barriers to accessing health care, and are thus at higher risk for developing serious complications if they contract the coronavirus. Meanwhile, members of these communities are heavily represented on the [frontlines](#) of the battle against the virus, acting as health care workers, farm workers, and in other essential roles — putting them at higher risk of exposure.

The Coronavirus Crisis Is Disproportionately Impacting The Health Of Black People, Indigenous People, Latinos, And Other People Of Color

Across The United States, Black People Have Died Of COVID-19 At 2.3 Times The Rate Of White People. According to the COVID Tracking Project's racial disparity dashboard, Black people in the United States have [lost their lives](#) to the virus at 2.3 times the rate of white people. In fact, the Black community has one of the worst mortality rates in the country — as of October 13, one in 920 Black people [had](#) lost their life to the virus, and Black people [account](#) for one in five deaths where race is known. The intersection of systemic racism and the administration's failed response put the Black community at particular risk. Black Americans have disproportionately high rates of pre-existing conditions (like [heart disease](#)) which are associated with higher rates of hospitalizations and deaths to the virus. Black patients are [hospitalized](#) with the virus at three times the rate of white patients.

Indigenous Americans Have Died Of The COVID-19 At 1.5 Times The Rate Of White People. The COVID Tracking Project's racial disparity dashboard [reflects](#) that Indigenous groups like Alaska Natives and American Indians have died of the virus at 1.5 times the rate of white people. The APM Research Lab [reports that](#) this rate amounts to as many as 1 in 1,100 Indigenous people in the United States losing their life to the virus. In almost half the states, the incidence of the virus [is 3.5 times](#) more frequent among Indigenous people than among white people. After being cut off from traditional diets and lifestyles and prevented access to adequate medical care, American Indians and Alaska Natives [have higher](#) rates of obesity, diabetes, asthma, and heart disease than white Americans — putting them at higher risk of complications for COVID-19. It's also unlikely that available information paints a full picture of the devastating effect the virus has had on Indigenous communities — these groups are often misclassified or [excluded entirely](#) from datasets and analyses used to make health policy decisions.

Hispanic Or Latino People Have Died Of COVID-19 At 1.5 Times The Rate Of White People Across The United States. The COVID Tracking Project [shows](#) that Hispanic or Latino people in the United States have lost their lives at 1.5 times the rate of non-Hispanic white people to COVID-19. As of mid-September, Hispanic people in the United States [were the most likely](#) of any demographic group to test positive for the virus — doing so at more than two and a half times the rate of non-Hispanic white people. Hospitalization rates are also [four times higher](#) for Hispanic patients than white patients. Hispanic people are highly [represented](#) in the health

care sector and in other lines of essential work, and only [one in six](#) had the ability to telework, increasing their vulnerability to exposure.

Black, Indigenous, And Latino Or Hispanic Children Are Much More Likely To Become Ill From The Virus Than White Children. An August study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [found that](#) Hispanic children were eight times as likely as their white counterparts to be hospitalized with coronavirus, while Black children were five times as likely. Similar disparities were found among children who experience Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome, a COVID-related illness found among children: a different August report from the CDC [found that](#) 40 percent of MIS-C patients were Hispanic or Latino, 33 percent were Black, and only 13.2 percent were white. The vast majority of children who die of COVID-19 are also Black, Hispanic, or Indigenous — a September CDC report [found that](#), of deaths among people under the age of 21, 45 percent were Hispanic, 29 percent were Black and 4 percent were American Indian or Alaska Native. These groups [respectively only account](#) for 25.6 percent, 13.4 percent, and .8 percent of children in the United States.

Healthcare Workers Of Color Have Been Especially Hard Hit By The Pandemic. Hispanic people [account for](#) 17.1 percent of the United States' health aide workforce, while almost [1 in 5](#) health workers are immigrants. Black women and Latina women [make up](#) large portions of the United States' direct care workers. Amid the President's failure to contain the virus and shore up supplies of PPE, health care workers of color have been put in particular danger: these workers [are 20 percent](#) more likely than white health care workers to care for patients with COVID-19, are more likely to report inadequate PPE, and are [nearly twice](#) as likely as their white counterparts to contract the virus. A Kaiser Health analysis of deaths among health care workers found that [62 percent](#) were people of color, while a survey by National Nurses United [has found](#) that while only a quarter of nurses in the United States are people of color, nurses of color account for half the deaths among nurses to COVID-19.

- **People Of Filipino Descent Make Up Only 4 Percent Of Nurses In The United States, But A Third Of COVID-19 Deaths Among Registered Nurses.** A September report by National Nurses United [illustrates](#) the disproportionate toll suffered by Filipino workers in the health industry. Filipinos are [four times as likely](#) as any other group to be nurses, and a quarter of Filipino adults in the United States works in hospitals or other medical fields. But while only about 4 percent of registered nurses in the United States are of

Filipino ancestry, this group [accounts for](#) more than 31 percent of deaths among nurses, of which there have been more than 200.

Nursing Homes With Higher Shares Of Black And Latino Residents Have Been Hit Especially Hard By The Virus. Nursing homes with significant numbers of Black or Latino residents — “no matter their location, no matter their size, no matter their government rating” — [have been twice as likely](#) as nursing homes with overwhelmingly white populations to be hit hard by the virus. More than 60 percent of nursing homes where at least a quarter of the residents are Black or Latino had reported at least one case as of September 10, which was [double](#) the rate of homes where these groups account for less than 5 percent of the population. Though it’s impossible to determine the full scope of the pandemic’s impact on people of color in nursing homes and assisted care facilities [due to](#) the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services’ failure to collect comprehensive racial data on cases and deaths, a Kaiser analysis [has found](#) that COVID-19 deaths were more common among nursing homes with shares of Black or Hispanic residents that were 20 percent or greater than in homes with lower shares.

The Coronavirus Crisis Is Taking A Devastating Economic Toll On Communities Of Color

The Pandemic Has Had An Outsized Economic Impact On Asian-Americans. Pew Research reports that the unemployment rate for Asian-Americans [may have been](#) as high as 20.3 percent in May, compared with 13.5 percent for white workers. The US Department of Labor [recorded](#) an unemployment spike of 450 percent among Asian Americans from February to June. Anecdotal evidence also [suggests that](#) Asian-Americans experienced the economic implications of the pandemic earlier and more acutely than other groups, in part because of racist and xenophobic rhetoric (like that used by President Trump). The likely interaction of racial discrimination and the pandemic [had resulted](#) in the closure of roughly 233,000 Asian-owned small businesses between February and April, representing a decline of 28 percent. In contrast, non-Hispanic white-owned small businesses [declined by only](#) 17 percent in the same time period.

The Pandemic Has Had Devastating Economic Consequences For Hispanic People In The United States. As the country shut down in April, unemployment among Hispanic people rose to 18.9 percent, [higher](#) than that of any other racial or ethnic group at the time. In comparison, the unemployment rate among non-Hispanic white people was only at 14.2 percent. Latinos as a group were [less likely](#)

than any other demographic to be able to work from home when the pandemic hit, and the most likely to have lost their jobs, having been highly represented in industries that suffered the worst losses as the pandemic broke out. In the service industry, for example, Latina women [constituted](#) 30 percent of the workforce while Latino men constituted 20 percent of the workforce. That sector lost nearly 30 percent of its jobs between February and May.

- **Hispanic Women Experienced Especially High Rates Of Job Loss.** Hispanic women have [experienced](#) especially high rates of job loss, their unemployment rising from 5.5 percent in February to 20.5 percent in April. Nearly half a million Hispanic women [have left](#) the workforce entirely since the pandemic began.
- **Hispanic People Have Experienced A Slower Recovery Than Other Groups.** Eight months into the pandemic, Hispanic people still [have more ground](#) to make up to reach pre-pandemic employment levels than any other group. As of September, 72 percent of Latino households [say that](#) they are facing serious financial problems due to the pandemic, while almost 9 in 10 Latinos report experiencing serious financial problems themselves.

The Economic Consequences Of COVID-19 Have Had A Disproportionate Impact On Black Workers And Black-Owned Businesses. 12 percent of Black Americans are currently jobless, [more than double](#) the pre-pandemic rate of 5.8 percent in February. The economic impact of COVID-19 on Black workers was swift and historic, with the Black labor force participation rate [dipping](#) to 58.6 percent in April, the lowest level since 1974. Black owned businesses have also been devastated during the pandemic. Data from the New York Fed [indicates](#) that there was a 41 percent decrease in Black owned businesses between February and April. Research conducted at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and a report by the National Bureau of Economic Research [found](#) that 41 percent of Black-owned businesses—roughly 440,000 enterprises—had closed by July.

- **Black People In The United States Have Been Less Likely To Receive Benefits And Pandemic Relief.** Black people have been less likely to receive unemployment benefits throughout the pandemic, with [just 13 percent](#) of out of work Black people receiving benefits from April to June, compared to 24 percent of white workers. A July study [showed](#) that Black owned businesses were less likely to receive federal aid as part of the Paycheck Protection Program.
- **Black Workers Were More Likely Than Their White Counterparts To**

Face Workplace Retaliation Over COVID Concerns. A June report from the National Employment Law Project showed that Black workers were [more than twice as likely](#) to be retaliated against for raising COVID-19 concerns in a workplace than white workers were.

Indigenous Americans Have Suffered Disproportionate Economic Consequences As A Result Of The Pandemic. When the national unemployment rate reached a record high of 14.7 percent, Native American unemployment was at [26.3 percent](#). As the virus spread and forced tribal casinos to shut down ([leaving](#) 700,000 native and non-native people out of work), tribal nations [lost](#) a key source of revenue used to provide basic services. Joseph Kalt, co-director of the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development at the Kennedy School's Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, [highlighted in May](#) that many Native American tribes' tax bases were "cut literally to zero" after tribal casinos and businesses were forced to close. A September poll [found that](#) 41 percent of Native American households reported using up their savings through the pandemic, while 55 percent of Indigenous respondents reported experiencing a serious financial problem as a result of the pandemic.

People Of Color Have Already Lost Coverage At Alarming Rates Under Trump

The Affordable Care Act helped [reduce](#) longstanding racial disparities in coverage rates, improving health care access for communities of color across the board. However, Trump has spent his presidency [sabotaging](#) the ACA and Medicaid, leaving more people of color without coverage. According to the Commonwealth Fund, [coverage loss](#) under Trump has "largely halted the improvement in coverage disparities" seen after the implementation of the ACA.

Millions Of People Have Lost Coverage Under Trump. Census data revealed in 2018 that the uninsured rate rose for the first time since the [implementation](#) of the Affordable Care Act, increasing from 7.9 percent in 2017 to 8.5 percent in 2018. The uninsured rate reached 9.2 percent in 2019, meaning [30 million Americans](#) went without health insurance last year. This represents a 2.3 million increase in the number of people without insurance since Trump took office — and these estimates do not even account for the record [coverage losses](#) driven by Trump's failure to respond to the pandemic.

Hispanic People Have Seen The Highest Rates Of Coverage Loss Since Trump Took Office. Hispanics were already the most likely racial/ethnic group to lack health insurance, but they also experienced the greatest increase in uninsurance in 2019, growing from 17.9 percent in 2018 to 18.7 percent. Experts [point to](#) Trump's immigration rhetoric and Medicaid policies, [including](#) onerous paperwork requirements, for having deterred many Hispanic and Latino families from obtaining coverage. Alarming, these steep coverage losses have impacted children. Between 2016 and 2018, the uninsured rate for Hispanic children [rose](#) from 7.6 percent to 8.0 percent.

- **Three Million Hispanic People Are Expected To Lose Their Employer-Sponsored Coverage As A Result Of The Pandemic.** A recent analysis from Avalere found that [3 million Hispanic people](#) are likely to lose their employer-sponsored health insurance in 2020 as a result of the pandemic.