

COVID-19 Registry Final Public Summary Report

As of September 2021, 9,406 residents nationwide have joined the COVID-19 Registry. Of those, 8,584 live in the State of Texas. As a project that started in the Greater Houston area and Texas Gulf Coast,ⁱ 7,499 registrants are from this region. In our final dashboard update, we focus on this key geography.

The majority of responses were collected before 07/2020. Therefore, the results on this dashboard are most informative of the COVID-19 situation in Southeast Texas before this time. Still, the follow-up responses we received provide valuable insights to changes in testing, mental health, behaviors, and economic/household impacts over this period. More than half of registrants completed at least one follow-up survey.

Symptoms and testing for COVID-19. While the majority of Gulf Coast registrants (64%) had not tried to get tested at the time of completing their initial survey, in the follow-up responses we observe a steady increase in the percentage of registrants who got tested for COVID-19. The percentage of registrants who tried to get tested and could not remained relatively low, with small peaks in the summer of 2020 and January 2021.

Mental health. According to the Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)-7 assessment,ⁱⁱ a validated tool that screens for anxiety, approximately 18% of survey respondents reported experiencing moderate to severe anxiety. This is in contrast to CDC findings which report 6% of adults in the US had moderate to severe symptoms of anxiety in 2019,ⁱⁱⁱ highlighting a significant increase consistent with national trends.^{iv} The most frequently reported symptom was nervousness, which 21% of registrants reported experiencing in more than half the days or nearly every day of a two-week period.

Economic and household impacts. Over 40% of registrants reported they and/or a household member lost income due to COVID-19. The primary reasons for income loss were reduced work hours (41%) and lay off or job loss (35%). Follow-up responses show the percent unemployed in the registry remained consistently high. As registrants dealt with unemployment and income loss, they also experienced several economic difficulties, including increased household and medical expenses which was most frequently reported. Broken down by race, non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic registrants experienced greater difficulty paying rent and bills and increased household expenses

COVID-19 prevention behaviors. The practice of mitigation behaviors remained high throughout 2020, with some behaviors peaking at 100% uptake among registrants in January 2021. Following this, a steady decline in the use mitigation behaviors is observed, although numbers increased again starting in June 2021. Twice as many registrants relied on traditional news than health care providers for information on COVID-19.

Key limitations. The demographics of survey respondents are not representative of the population at large. Respondents were more likely to be female, Caucasian, and with higher educational attainment compared to the Texas Gulf Coast population. As such, the mental health and economic/household impacts observed in the registry may be even stronger in the general population. Further research is needed to fully understand these findings. For additional questions on the dashboard, please contact our team at Covid19Registry@rice.edu.

ⁱ The Texas Gulf Coast was defined as the five coastal councils of the [Texas Association of Regional Councils](#): Regions 15, 16, 17, 20, and 21.

ⁱⁱ Spitzer RL, Kroenke K, Williams JBW, Löwe B. A Brief Measure for Assessing Generalized Anxiety Disorder: The GAD-7. *Arch Intern Med.* 2006;166(10):1092–1097. doi:10.1001/archinte.166.10.1092

ⁱⁱⁱ Terlizzi EP, Villarroel MA. Symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder among adults: United States, 2019. NCHS Data Brief, no 378. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2020.

^{iv} Vahratian A, Blumberg SJ, Terlizzi EP, Schiller JS. Symptoms of Anxiety or Depressive Disorder and Use of Mental Health Care Among Adults During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, August 2020–February 2021. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2021;70:490–494. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7013e2>; Jia H, Guerin RJ, Barile JP, et al. National and State Trends in Anxiety and Depression Severity Scores Among Adults During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, 2020–2021. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2021;70:1427–1432. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7040e3external icon>