

ADULT TEXANS' EXPERIENCES WITH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC – 2021

Findings from the Episcopal Health Foundation
2021 Texas Health Tracking Survey

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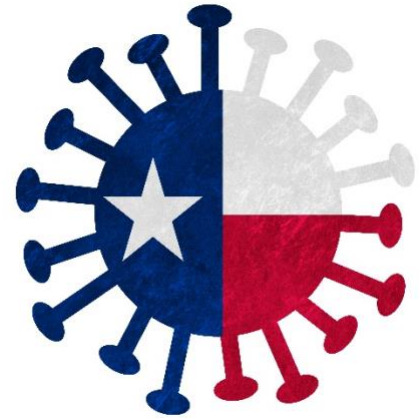
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the world continues to grapple with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the health care system and economy, most adult Texans remain concerned about the state of the pandemic. The 2021 Texas Health Tracking Survey conducted by the Episcopal Health Foundation (EHF) and SSRS, asked residents about the impact the pandemic has had on their lives including experiences with serious illness, their finances, as well as the implementation of vaccine mandates in the state. This report highlights main findings for the Texas population as a whole and notes where there are statistically significant differences among demographic groups.



The majority of Texas residents are concerned about the state of the COVID-19 pandemic in Texas (70%; 39% very; 31% somewhat). Concern is highest among adults over age 65 (78%) and those with a chronic condition or disability (76%). Black (86%) and Hispanic (75%) residents are also more likely to say they are concerned than White residents (63%) of the state.

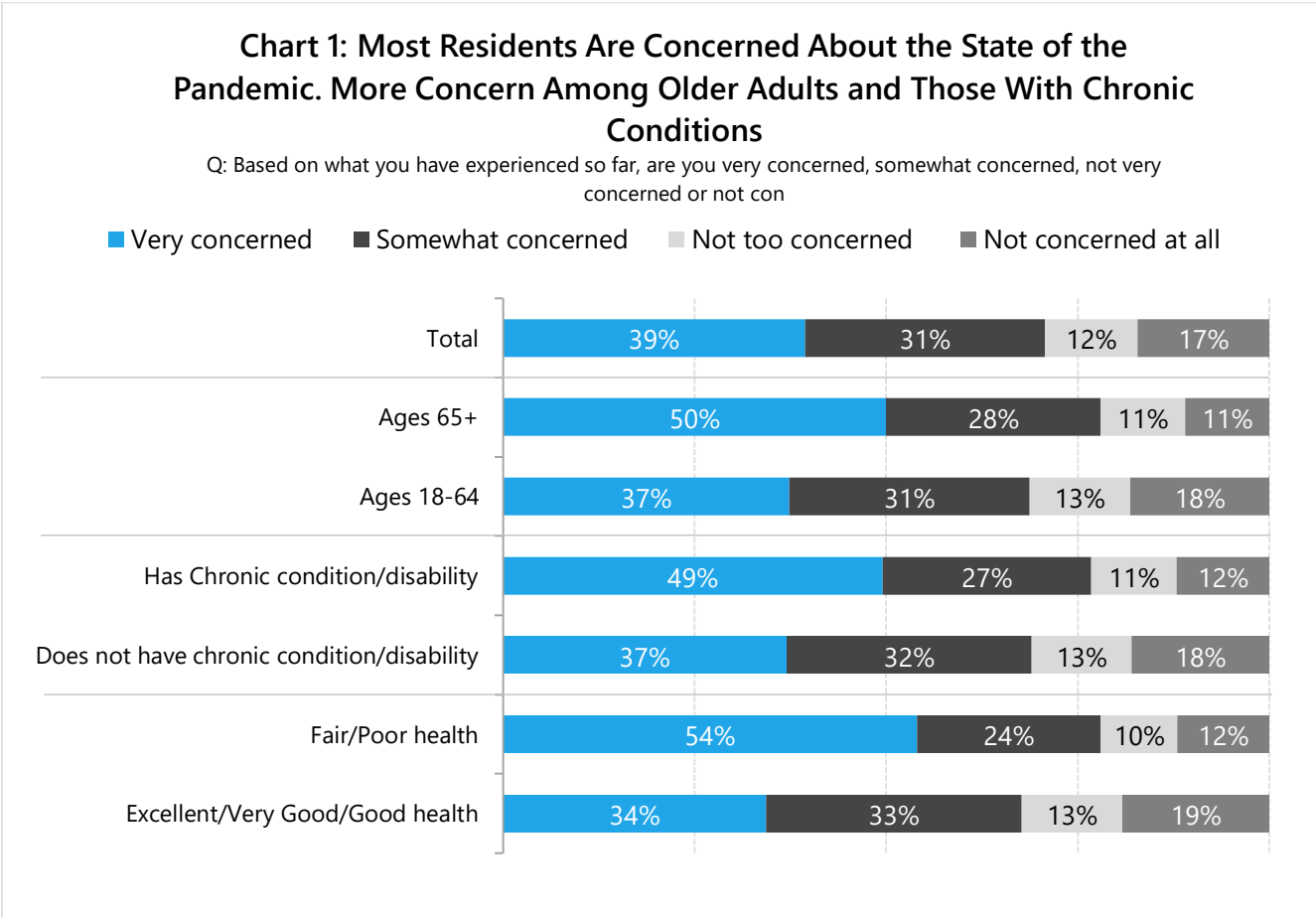
Severe illness from the pandemic has touched more than half of Texans with 54 percent saying they or someone they know has been seriously ill or hospitalized. Almost three in 10 know someone who has died from the disease. For one in four, this person was a close friend or family member.

When asked about the financial impact of the pandemic, about half say their family has experienced financial hardship due to the pandemic (49%) with 16 percent of Texans saying this hardship was severe.

With the widespread availability of vaccines against COVID-19, many residents approve of vaccine mandates for their local area and schools. Forty-six percent of Texans would support a local mandate in their area that required proof of vaccination in non-essential businesses such as restaurants and theaters. Support differs across political party identification with Democrats more likely to support this (76%) than Independents (43%) and Republicans (21%). Additionally, the majority of parents with a child ages 12 to 17 would support vaccine requirements for all eligible students and staff in their child's school (56%).

EXPERIENCES WITH COVID-19 ILLNESS

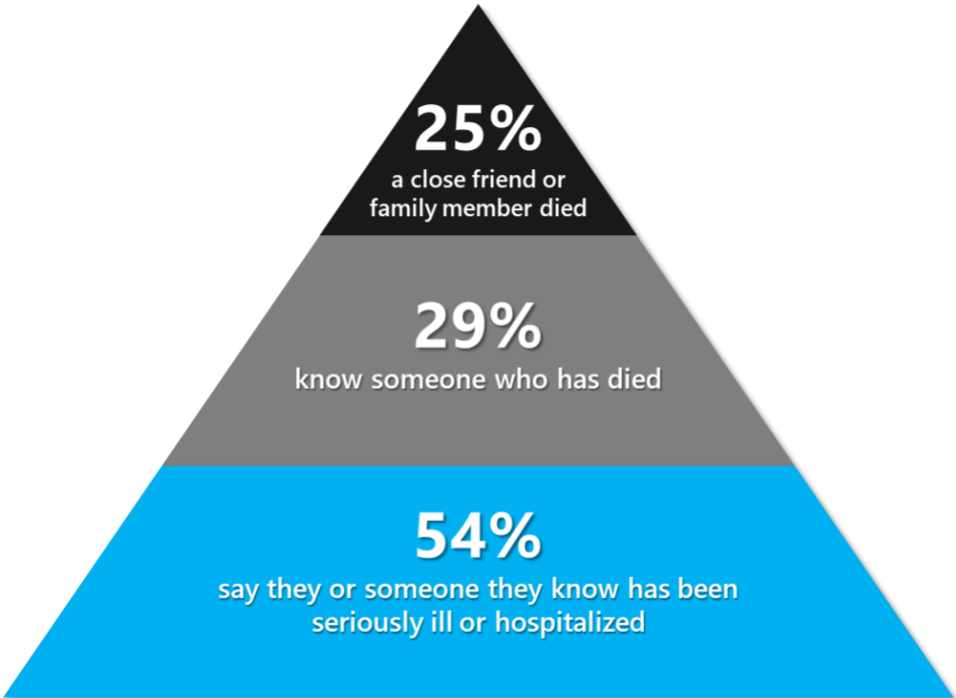
Concern over the state of the pandemic in Texas is highest among elderly residents and those with chronic conditions and disabilities. While 70 percent of residents overall say they are at least somewhat concerned (39% very; 31% somewhat), 78 percent of those 65 or older say they are concerned with half being very concerned (50%). Concern is also higher among those with chronic conditions or a disability (76%) and those who report being fair or poor health (78%) (Chart 1). Chronic conditions that may impact one’s immune system and older age are key risk factors for serious illness due to COVID-19.¹



Many Texans have personal experience with COVID-19 related illness which may be connected to these overall high levels of concern. Most Texans say they themselves or someone they know has been seriously ill or hospitalized due to COVID-19 (54%). Furthermore, 29 percent say they know someone who has died. One in four have had a close family member or friend die from coronavirus (Chart 2). Illness from the disease also appears to impact Texans across socioeconomic and demographic groups with similar percentages of Texans across age, race and ethnicity, and income levels reporting knowing someone who has been seriously ill.

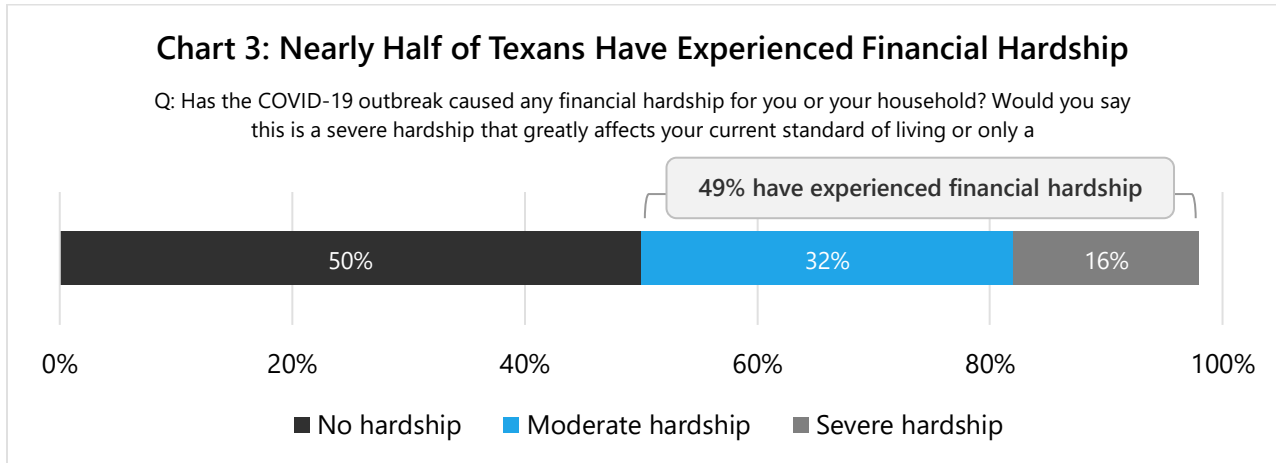
¹<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>

Chart 2: One in Four Texans Have a Close Friend or Family Member Who Has Died from Coronavirus

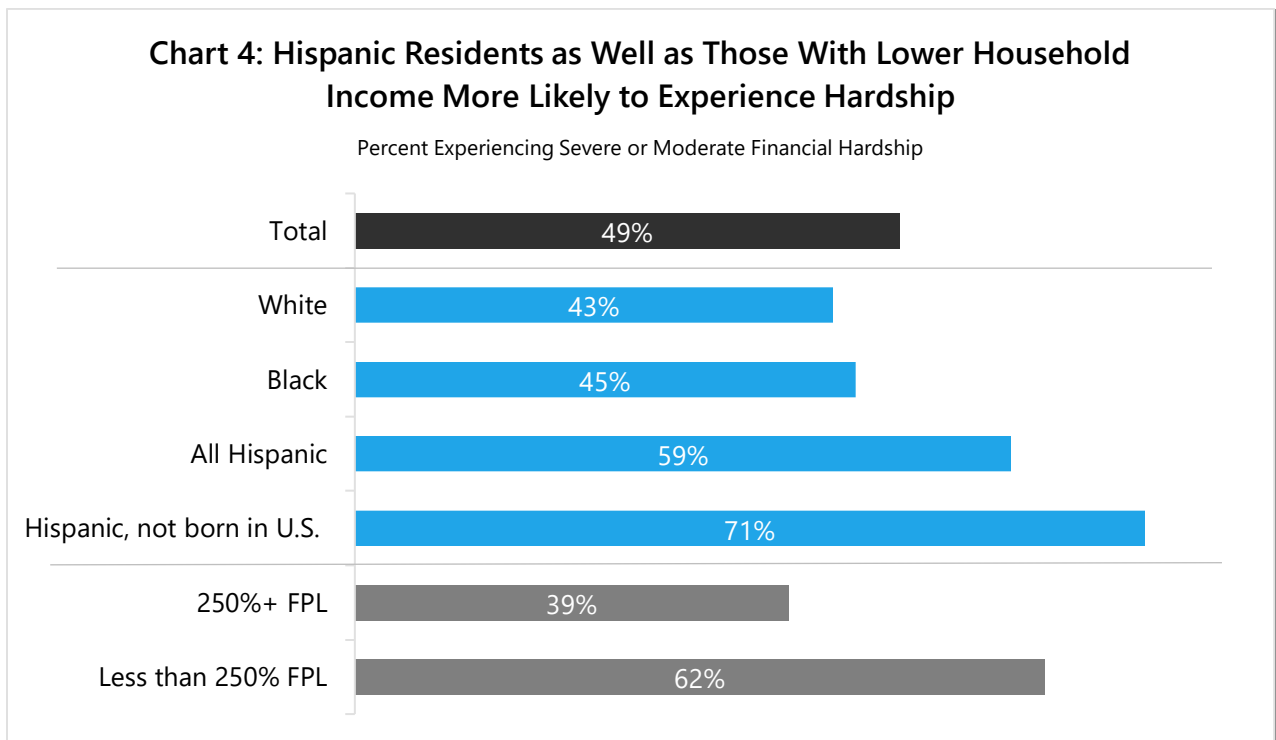


IMPACTS ON FAMILY FINANCES

Financial hardship from the pandemic has impacted about half of Texans (49%). Sixteen percent say the pandemic caused severe financial hardship and 32 percent report moderate financial hardship (Chart 3). Experiences of financial hardship due to the pandemic are more common among Hispanic residents (59%) compared to Black (45%) and White (43%) residents. This difference is most pronounced among Hispanic Texans who were not born in the U.S. Seven in 10 Hispanic residents born outside of the U.S. say they experienced financial hardship caused by the COVID-19 outbreak (71%). Those with lower household income levels were also more likely to experience financial hardship (Chart 4).



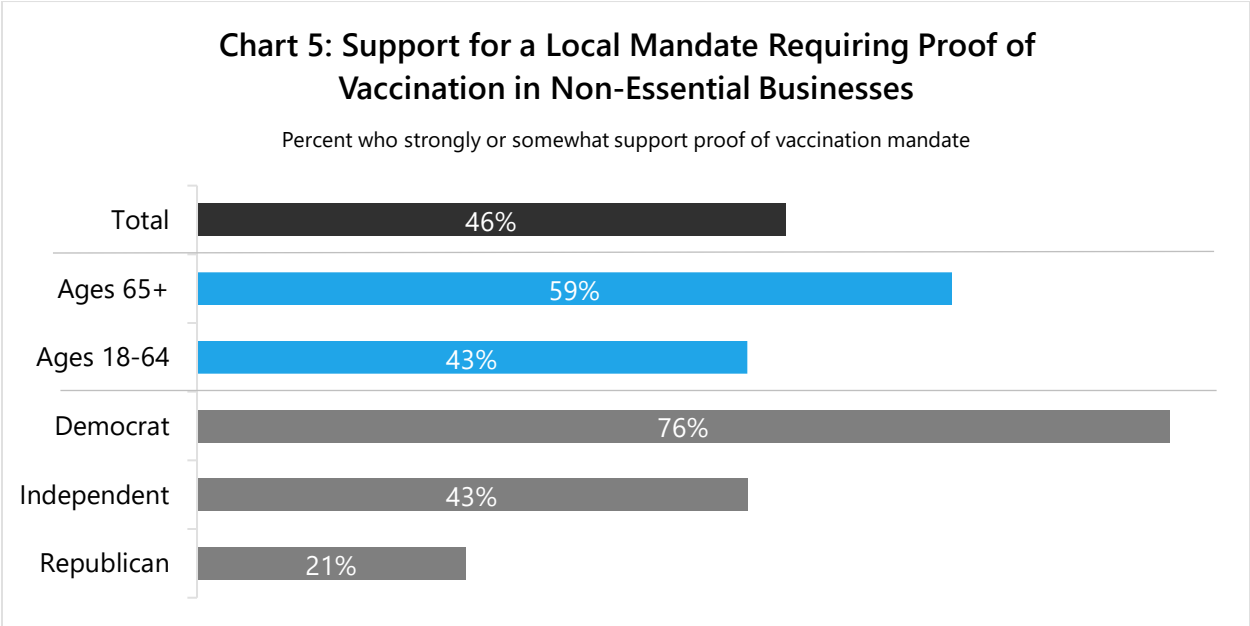
Note: Don't know/Refused responses are not shown.



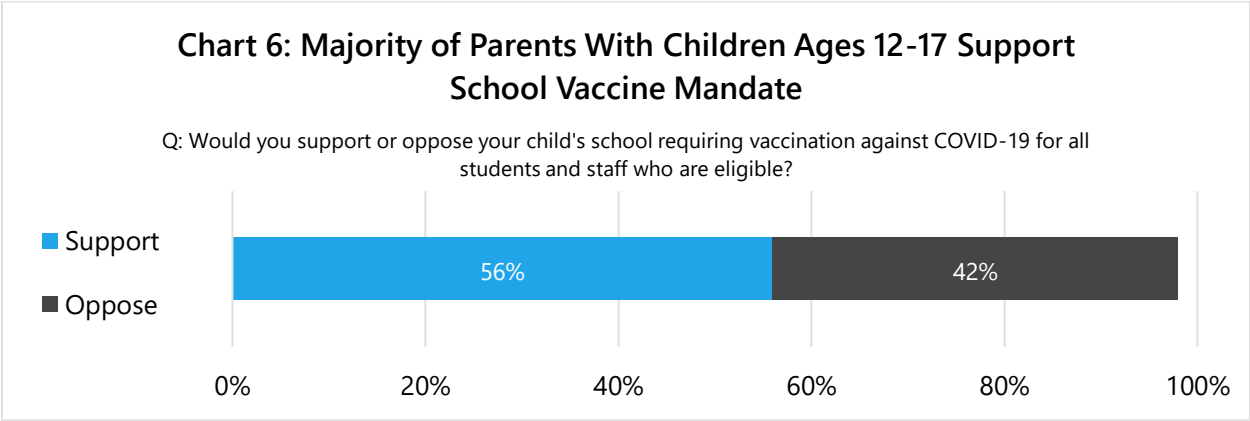
Note: FPL = Federal poverty line

VIEWS ON VACCINE MANDATES

With vaccines against COVID-19 now available to everyone age five and older in the U.S., more local governments around the country are implementing proof of vaccination mandates for entry into restaurants, theaters, and other non-essential businesses. When asked about implementation of such a requirement in their own area, many Texans are in support. Forty-six percent say they support a vaccine mandate (32% strongly; 14% somewhat). Support differs by age group with the majority of adults over age 65 in support of a vaccine mandate (59%; 43% strongly; 16% somewhat) compared to only 43 percent of those under age 65 (29% strongly; 14% somewhat). Differences in support are also present by political party identification. Three-quarters of Democrats support a vaccine mandate (76%) compared to just 21 percent of Republicans (Chart 5).



Parents of children between the ages of 12 to 17 also tend to be in favor of a vaccine requirement by their child’s school. Fifty-six percent of parents with a child ages 12 to 17 said they would support their school requiring vaccination of all students and staff who are eligible (Chart 6).



Note: Don't know/Refused not shown.

METHODOLOGY

SSRS conducted the *2021 Texas Health Tracking Survey* on behalf of Episcopal Health Foundation (EHF) from October 20 through November 18, 2021. The goal of this survey was to understand the perspectives and experiences of Texas adults regarding their health care and health care policies in the state as well as current experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic. For the 2021 Texas Health Tracking Survey, SSRS interviewed a representative sample of 1,203 Texas adults (age 18 or older), reached via landline (n=352) and cell phone (n=851; including n= 705 who could not be reached via landline) random digit dialing (RDD). Interviews were conducted by live professional telephone interviewers in English or Spanish based on the respondent's language preference.

Weighting is generally used in survey analysis to compensate for sample designs and patterns of non-response that might bias results. The survey data are weighted to balance the sample demographics to match estimates for the Texas adult population. The margin of sampling error for this study is +/- 3.5 percentage points for results based on the total sample.

ABOUT EHF

The [Episcopal Health Foundation \(EHF\)](#) is committed to transforming the health of our communities by going beyond the doctor's office. By providing millions of dollars in grants, working with congregations and community partners, and providing important research, we're supporting solutions that address the underlying causes of poor health in Texas. EHF was established in 2013, is based in Houston, and has more than \$1.2 billion in estimated assets. **#HealthNotJustHealthcare**

ABOUT SSRS

SSRS is a full-service market and survey research firm managed by a core of dedicated professionals with advanced degrees in the social sciences. Service offerings include the Omnibus Survey, Probability Panel and other Online Solutions as well as custom research programs – all driven by a central commitment to methodological rigor. The SSRS team is renowned for its multimodal approach, as well as its sophisticated and proprietary sample designs. Typical projects for the company include complex strategic, tactical, and public opinion initiatives in the U.S. and in more than 40 countries worldwide. SSRS is research, refined. Visit www.ssrs.com for more information.