

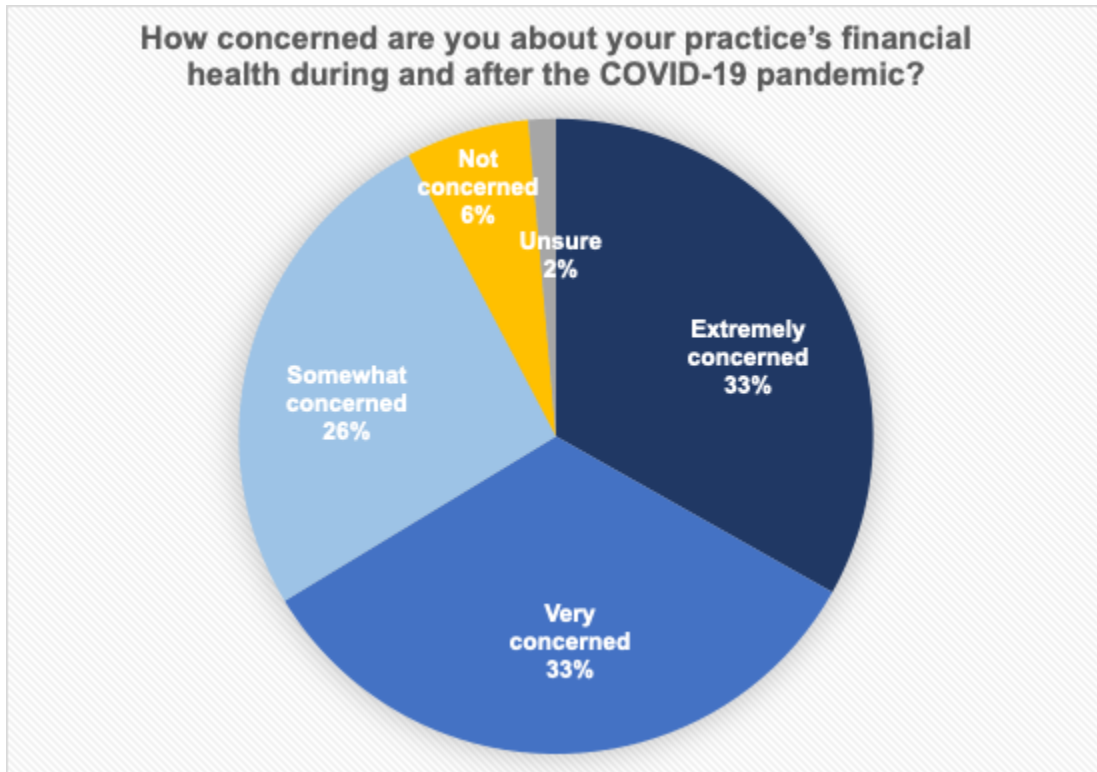
MEMORANDUM

TO: CMS Board of Directors
FROM: Chet Seward & Amy Goodman
DATE: June 3, 2020
RE: Statewide physician survey on COVID-19 impacts

The Colorado Medical Society (CMS), in partnership with many of our partners in the Colorado House of Medicine, recently fielded a focused, statewide physician survey asking how the COVID-19 crisis has affected physicians and their practices to inform the decision-making and advocacy next steps of each organization's board. A total of 423 physician organization members completed the survey (82% of whom are in active practice of 20 or more hours per week). The survey was conducted May 15-22, 2020.

Key results

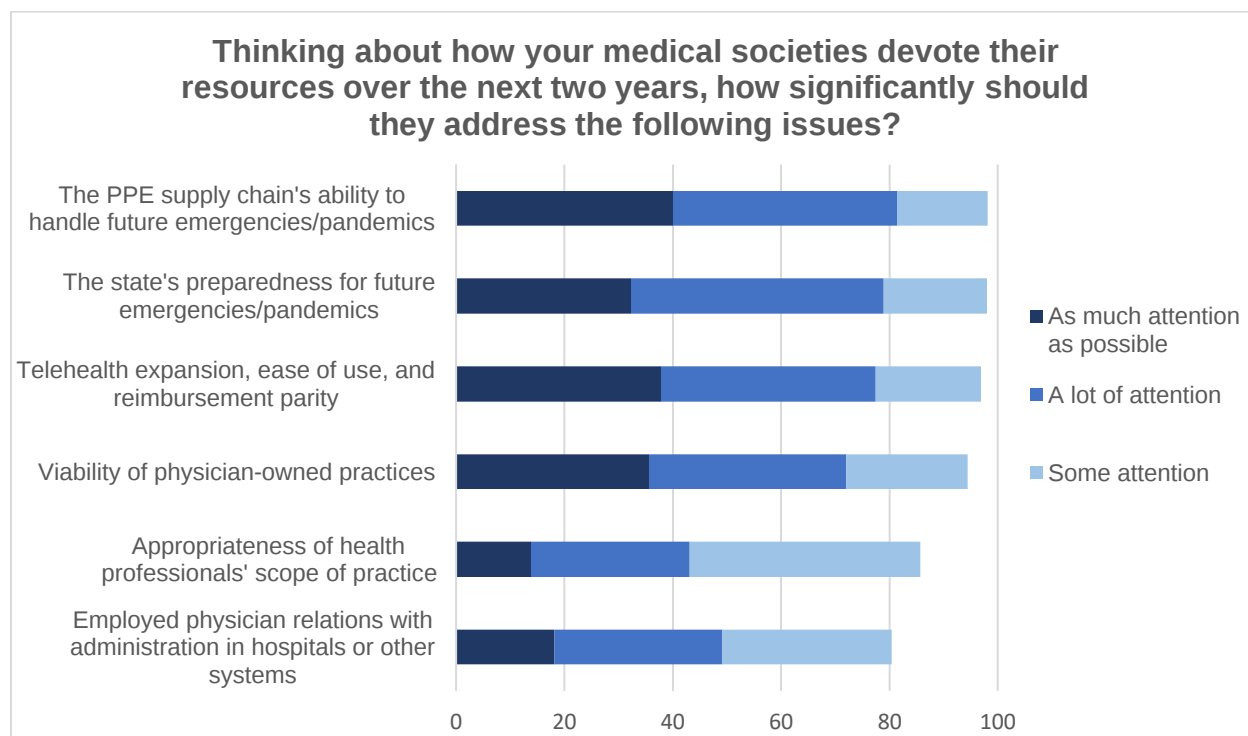
- Concerns about the financial health of their practice during and after the COVID-19 pandemic is an overriding worry for physicians. Two-thirds of physicians are extremely concerned or very concerned and another quarter are somewhat concerned.



- Since March 1, 2020, almost all physicians have had patient volumes drop across all of their lines of service. Almost 40% of physicians have seen patient volumes drop between 26-50% and almost a third have seen patient volumes drop between 51-75%.
- Similarly, almost 40% of physicians have seen practice charges drop across all of their lines of service between 26-50% and over a quarter have seen practice charges drop between 51-75%.

Percentage Drop	0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%	Any
Patient Volumes	15%	38%	29%	11%	93%
Practice Charges	17%	38%	27%	12%	93%

- As a result of the COVID-19 crisis, physician practices have taken a number of sobering steps in an attempt to continue to care for patients, including:
 - Staff
 - 56%: Reduced staff and/or physician hours
 - 36%: Salary reductions for staff and/or physicians
 - 27%: Implemented furloughs for staff and/or physicians
 - 10%: Laid off staff and/or physicians
 - Operations
 - 39%: Delayed purchase of equipment, supplies, medications, technology
 - 19%: Closed some locations (for practices with multiple locations)
 - 5%: Closed the practice temporarily
 - 1%: Closed the practice permanently
 - Services
 - 45%: Reduced the types of services offered
 - 33%: Ramped up existing telehealth services
 - 66%: Started new telehealth service
 - Financial help
 - 43%: Applied for a loan created by the CARES Act from the Small Business Administration or EID loan
 - 17%: Took out personal or temporary business loans
 - 15%: Applied for Medicare Accelerated Advance Payment Program
 - 13%: Used personal savings to keep practice open
- Access to PPE continues to be a significant concern for many physicians, with 57% saying their access is either poor (23%) or fair (34%).
- Access to COVID-19 testing is even worse, with 67% saying their access is either poor (36%) or fair (30%).
- Moving forward, there are a number of issues that physicians focused on, with worries about their personal and family health and their ability to respond to a second pandemic or COVID surge tied as top concerns (64%). Other concerns related to what the “new normal” will be include concerns about patient volume (60%), telehealth rules/use reverting to pre-COVID-19 status (53%), and the viability of their practice (47%). As they continue to serve on the frontlines of health care, a quarter of physicians (26%) are also worried about liability for COVID and non-COVID related care delivered during the emergency.
- Physicians’ overall self-reported experience of burnout is similar to a year ago, but there has been a small uptick in reports of severe burnout. 31.6% of physicians report that they are, at the very least, “definitely burning out and have one or more symptoms of burnout,” which is up 1.7% from March of 2019. 9.4% of physicians say the symptoms of burnout they are experiencing “won’t go away” (a 1.3% increase) and 1.2% say they “feel completely burned out” (a 0.8% increase.)
- When seeking information and collaboration during this crisis, physicians have primarily turned to their national specialty society (45%), the Colorado Medical Society (39%), their state specialty society (17%), the AMA (13%), and their component medical society (10%).
- Just under half (45%) of physicians feel that medical societies are now more relevant, given the need for a centralized hub of resources and problem solving, and another 45% think the role and identity of medical societies is just as important as before the crisis.
- When thinking about how medical societies should devote their resources over the next two years, physicians believe they should prioritize the PPE supply chain's ability to handle future emergencies/pandemics; the state's preparedness for future emergencies/pandemics; telehealth expansion, ease of use, and reimbursement parity; and the viability of physician-owned practices. Appropriateness of health professionals' scope of practice and employed physician relations with administration in hospitals or other systems were also important to many physicians.



Conclusions

As frontline providers, Colorado physicians have seen firsthand the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on patients and their families. While the toll has been profound, the impact on physicians themselves as well as on physician practices cannot be understated either. Physicians have faced numerous clinical, operational, and financial challenges that threaten their ability to keep their doors open and continue to provide care to patients. Physicians' concerns about the ongoing impacts of the pandemic will need to be followed and addressed by all organizations representing physicians throughout the state.

Thank you to the following organizations from the Colorado House of Medicine that partnered with CMS on this survey:

Specialty Societies	Component Societies
CO Academy of Family Physicians	Aurora-Adams County Medical Society
CO Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics	Arapahoe-Douglas-Elbert Medical Society
CO Chapter, American College of Cardiology	Boulder County Medical Society
CO Chapter, American College of Physicians	Denver Medical Society
CO Endocrinology & Metabolism Society	El Paso County Medical Society
CO Orthopedic Society	Foothills Medical Society
CO Psychiatric Society	Mesa County Medical Society
CO Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons	Northern Colorado Medical Society
	Pueblo County Medical Society