

COVID-19 Report Series: Differences in Economic, Physical, and Mental Health by Age

Depending on age, COVID-19 is having a disproportionate effect on people's economic, physical, and mental health.

A recent Lion Poll conducted by Penn State Harrisburg's Institute of State and Regional Affairs found dramatic differences in the way Pennsylvanians are experiencing the pandemic. Loss of employment is highest among younger age groups. Nearly half of people ages 18-34 were recently laid off or had work hours reduced, compared to one-third who were 35-64. Differences by age group in work status were consistent with differences in concern about personal finances. Belief that COVID-19 is a major threat to personal finances was comparatively lower in older age groups.

The statewide poll also asked about concern for physical and mental health. Belief that COVID-19 represented a major threat to personal health was highest in older age groups. Over half of respondents 45 and older considered COVID-19 a major threat to physical health, while only a quarter of people 18-24 said the same.

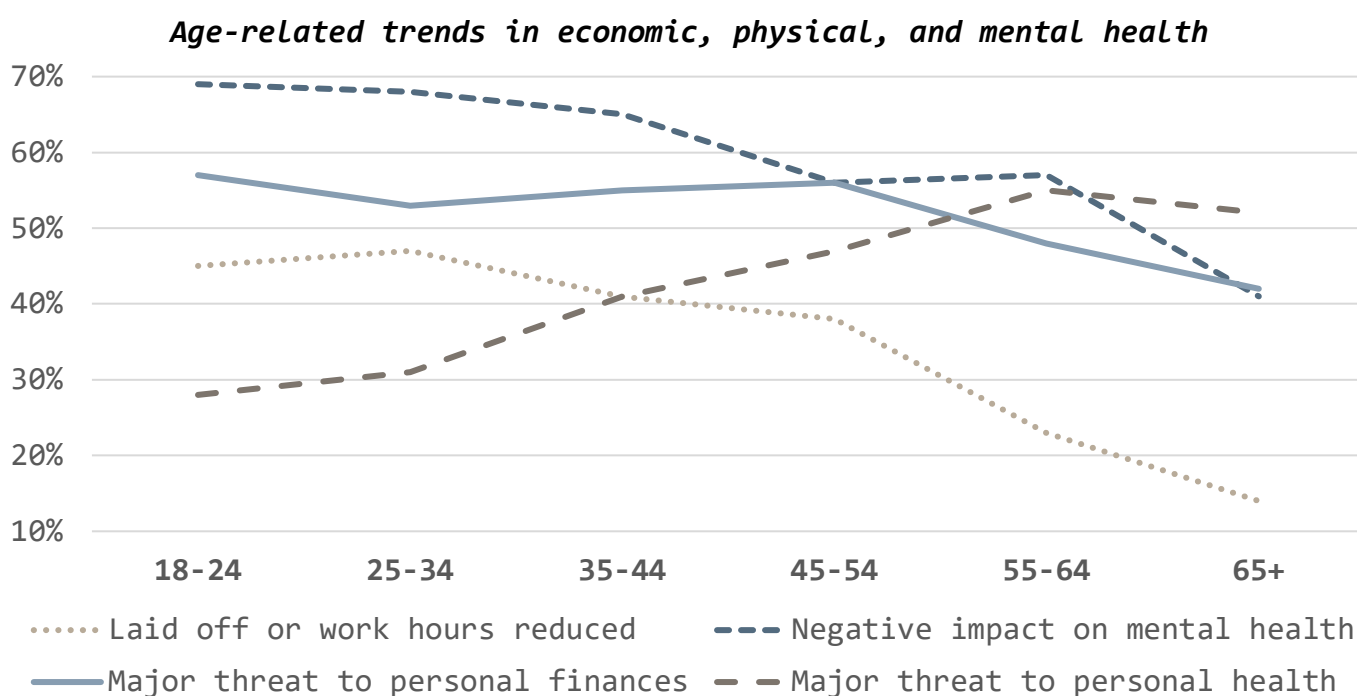
COVID-19 related disparities in health by age group

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Laid off or work hours reduced	45%	47%	41%	38%	23%	14%
Major threat to personal finances	57%	53%	55%	56%	48%	42%
Major threat to personal health	28%	31%	41%	47%	55%	52%
Negative impact on mental health	69%	68%	65%	56%	57%	41%

*Margins of Error for each subgroup presented range from 6.3% to 9.0%.
Excludes respondents who answered "Don't know / Not sure".
Data were collected from 1,047 adult Pennsylvanians
via web from April 6 - April 16, 2020.*

COVID-19 Report Series: Differences in Economic, Physical, and Mental Health by Age

To investigate effects on social-emotional wellbeing, Pennsylvania respondents were asked whether they feel that worry and stress related to COVID-19 are having a negative impact on their mental health. An astounding sixty-nine percent of people age 18-24 reported negative impacts on their mental health. Among the many age-related trends, findings reveal generational differences in how mental health is perceived and/or experienced during the pandemic. Across all age groups, individuals who lost work were 64.7% more likely to worry about their mental health, a statistically significant increase.



Margins of Error for each subgroup presented range from 6.3% to 9.0%.

Excludes respondents who answered "Don't know / Not sure".

Data were collected from 1,047 adult Pennsylvanians

via web from April 6 - April 16, 2020.

While older Pennsylvanians had relatively higher levels of concern about physical health, the poll revealed that younger age groups are experiencing greater job loss, feeling more concern about personal finances, and more often reporting that the worry and stress related to COVID-19 are having a negative impact on their mental health.