

Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Gainesville Community from the Perspectives of Healthcare Key Stakeholders

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The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated existing health disparities within underserved and vulnerable communities across the country. Access to healthcare resources has become unpredictable, and systems intended to serve marginalized populations have been paralyzed, necessitating real-time community-based resources. Healthcare leaders play a vital role in the maintenance of community health through their intimate knowledge of the groups they work with as well as local resources. The primary aim of this study is to construct a collective narrative of how local healthcare organizations and leaders in Gainesville, Florida have adapted to addressing the health-related needs of vulnerable groups during the COVID-19 pandemic. In total, ten key stakeholders from the healthcare sector were interviewed regarding their missions, targeted populations, challenges to resource access and allocation, and changes in services. Zoom Video Communications was used to interview each participant with each participant consenting to having their audio recorded. Audio recordings were transcribed using Otter.ai and verified for quality assurance by one of the research team members. While this study is still ongoing, qualitative analysis using NVivo 12 software will include the constant comparative method to extract common themes and ideas from the recorded transcripts. Results from the study will be used to identify future interventions, health care needs, and gaps in research in both local and global contexts. Findings will also be shared with local and global healthcare leaders who can use these findings to address the systemic disparities that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated in the community.