Household Pulse Survey: Child Care Disruptions

HRSA’s Maternal and Child Health Bureau (HRSA MCHB) and CDC’s National Center for Health Statistics (CDC NCHS) partner with the Census Bureau on the Household Pulse Survey to monitor the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. Content sponsored by HRSA MCHB—including children’s telemedicine appointments, missed/delayed preventive visits, and disruptions in child care—was included on Phase 3.1 of the survey (April 14-July 5, 2021). During Phase 3.1, between 66,000 and 79,000 adults responded to the survey each week. Sponsored content will also be included on Phase 3.2 (July 21-October 11, 2021). Recent analysis by HRSA MCHB of the Phase 3.1 data regarding recent child care disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic has shown:

- Between June 7, 2021 and July 5, 2021, 16,804 surveyed households (representing 1.5 million U.S. households) reported they typically rely on child care. Of those households, 17.8% reported they were unable to use their regular child care due to COVID-19.

- The prevalence of disrupted child care was high among households experiencing some form of financial hardship. Specifically, child care closures in the 4 weeks preceding the survey affected 29.5% of households not caught up on rent/mortgage; 40.9% of households at risk of eviction/foreclosure in the next two months; 26.7% of households struggling to pay usual household expenses; and 32.3% of households with children who were not eating enough due to lack of affordability.

- As a result of these child care closures, 27.2% of caregivers in households with children supervised one or more children while working; 26.9% cut work hours; 22.4% took paid leave (such as vacation or sick leave); and 23.5% took unpaid leave in order to care for children. In addition, 15.9% of caregivers left a job and 16.2% did not look for a job in order to care for children.

This ongoing data collection and analysis will provide a better understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted families to inform policies and programs aimed at families and children.

Detailed information can be found about the Household Pulse Survey on the Census Bureau website or visit HRSA MCHB.