

Community Voices in the COVID-19 Pandemic

Stories from vulnerable community residents, health care workers, and community leaders in Santa Ana, CA



UCI Program in Medical Education for the Latino Community (PRIME-LC)

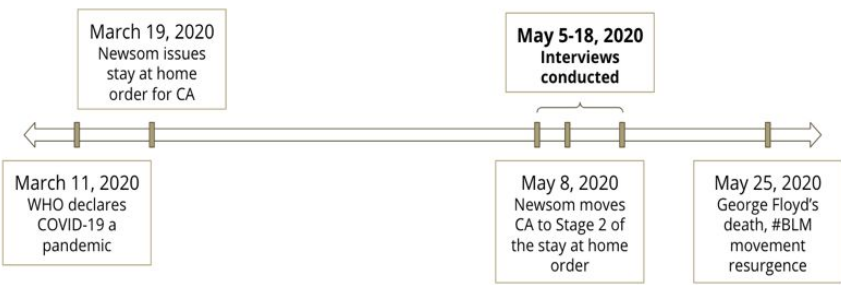


Interview Methodology

We interviewed **46 community members** by phone:



- **29 Hispanic/Latinx residents** with chronic health conditions who receive care from safety net clinics in Santa Ana (27 in Spanish)
- **8 leaders** from community based organizations*
- **9 health care workers*** that serve marginalized communities in central OC



...and more to come

*Interviews represent the perspectives of individuals, not necessarily of the organizations they work with.

Interview Content



UCI **29 students** (including 23 Spanish-speaking students) completed **14+ hours** of training to reach out & conduct interviews with community members

We asked questions relating to:

1. **Social and economic burdens** of social distancing and COVID-19.



2. **Messages about COVID-19 and which media sources are trusted.**



3. **Accessing vs. deferring needed medical care since COVID-19 started.**



These are some of their experiences, from the first **16 transcribed interviews**:
Major themes with representative quotations
Names of respondents have been changed

Fear and Uncertainty

*“So much is coming out [about the coronavirus] and **I don’t know how long this [pandemic] will last.** I don’t know, sometimes one can get a little worried.”*

- **Estrella,**
Community Resident



*“So with COVID, the challenges [and] the barriers have been ... getting information [out] in a way that can be easily understood ... because of the nature of the pandemic [information] has come out very sporadically, hit and miss, with a lot of question marks and a lot of unknowns. **And unknowns induce fear and confusion in everybody.**”*

- **Sara,**
Community Leader



Mistrust & Misinformation

“... You just don't know what to believe. It's hard to believe, to see the numbers going up fast ... I don't have any family members that have had this COVID. I mean, knock-on-wood so far. And **sometimes I wonder if they're just making up numbers.**”

- **Valeria,**
Community Resident



“[My community clients and even my dad] send me videos, they want to send me things, that that this whole thing, **this pandemic COVID-19 is a hoax** that it's made up by government.”

- **Sara,**
Community Leader



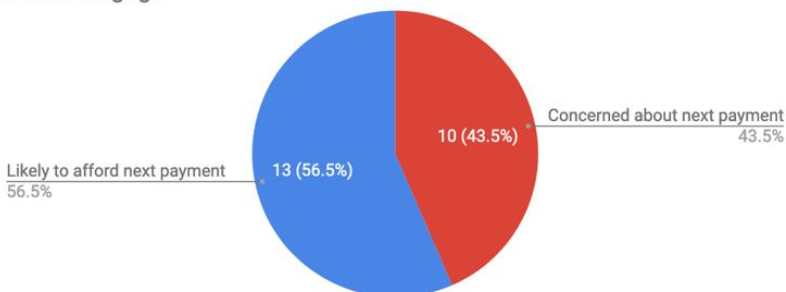
“I mean, I think to myself, **I think they're exaggerated numbers.** And like some people I know that are in medical, **it's all about money.** It's if they die from Coronavirus, they get more money.”

- **Isaac,** Community Resident



Housing Insecurity and Overcrowding

Rent/Mortgage



44% of resident respondents with housing payments were concerned about **making their next rent or mortgage payment**

“Having a room [to social distance] would be difficult for me because my girl and I rent one room. It would be difficult because **the house isn't ours so you're limited with rooms**”

Estrella,
Community Resident



Food Insecurity

“200 people...had been previously accessing our food pantry...[W]e’ve [now] peaked at over 300 and are averaging close to 300 bags a day now.”

Benjamin, Healthcare Worker

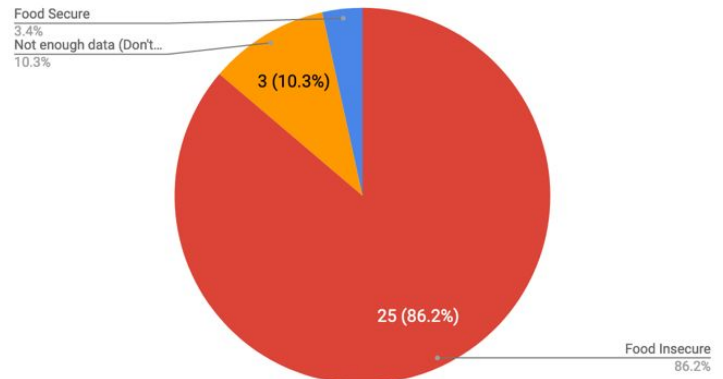


“The most stressful thing these last couple of days is that the price of lots of products have gone up too much and when people are not generating enough money....”

Lucian, Community Resident



Food Security Screening



86% of community residents interviewed were experiencing **food insecurity**

Deferring Medical Care

“When ... social distancing was fully implemented we switched ... to telemedicine and sometimes there can be a barrier there because ... there’s no physician patient interaction and assessment. So it was hard to explain to patients what you’re seeing in the images that you want to convey to them ... because they don’t speak the medical term. So it’s hard to explain them, ‘oh I am treating this part of your liver,’ for example, ‘which is located in this area’. And to them it’s hard to grasp.”

- **Alina**, Healthcare Worker



“I’ve noticed hesitation to come into the clinic, to get their labs done, or come into the doctor’s appointments. That has been a challenge. I think for some people who have experience with technology, it’s been easier maybe to do like telemedicine appointments. And the community that I serve, they don’t always either have a cell phone or a cell phone that has capability to do like video visits with their provider, so many of them will have just a regular telephone call visit.”

- **Aurora**, Healthcare Worker



“One of the first issues [the pandemic has exacerbated is] access to health care ... Santa Ana [is] predominantly migrant communities ... So the majority of these folks don’t have access to affordable health care. And I really think that’s important ... [because the] pandemic has really magnified a lot of the issues impacting our communities, including healthcare.”

- **Oscar**, Community Leader



KFF HENRY J. KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION	48%	Of Americans say that they or a family member has deferred medical care due to the coronavirus outbreak
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“A social-emotional crisis [is] coming.”

“...We have a public health crisis, but **I really see a social-emotional crisis coming**. There's another curve we need to flatten and it's financially routed...as unemployment rates go up for people, so do all the social evils of society ... **once poverty goes up, forget it. Then it's domestic violence, child abuse, crime, suicides ... all those things are tethered together**

... **That woman that we worried about** being in a domestic violence situation. **I haven't laid eyes on her**. I don't know if she has any bruises. **Those kids that the teacher was keeping an eye on** to make sure they weren't being abused [or] look emaciated, [or] didn't look more depressed ... **The teacher saw them every day. Now we don't**. So I think there's a huge, lots of waves and ripple effects coming around that.

... Our poor seniors are so lost and so confused. They don't get this Zoom stuff. They don't get this electronic online stuff. They're on Facebook, thank God for Facebook. But they are really isolated. The depression rates are increasing ... People are anxious. They're worried they don't want to do this anymore. People are tired. **We are tired, sick and tired of this.**”

“There's things that are happening in the shadows because of this physical distancing that before, maybe we had an opportunity to notice.

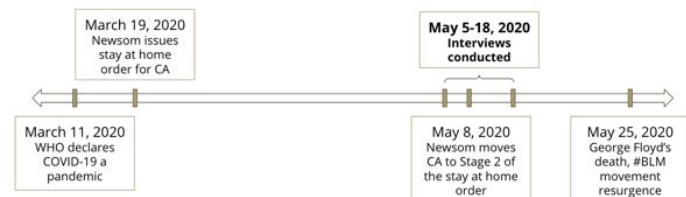
And now we don't have an opportunity to notice.”

- Sara,
LCSW and Community Leader



More to learn

- **36 hours** of interviews with residents, community leaders and healthcare workers
 - More interviews to come in Summer 2020
- **Snapshot** of a critical moment within an under-represented community
- **Eager to partner** to examine other questions, help guide policy, advocacy and communication



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