

Assessing Barriers Among HIV, Substance Use Disorders, and Trans Patients During the COVID-19 Pandemic. AE Yousif, (MD, CUSOM), C Akpala, (MD, MUSOM), L Patten, (M.S. CoSPH), E Wallace, Department of Medicine University of Colorado, JP Bettencourt, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA.

COVID-19's effects on the health of vulnerable populations are still emerging; however, current data suggest a disproportionate burden of illness and death among groups with substance use disorders (SUD), HIV, and transgender patients. Widening of healthcare disparities during COVID-19 justifies the exploration of barriers faced by vulnerable populations. We explored socioeconomic barriers by surveying healthcare providers about the impacts of COVID-19 on their patient's healthcare access and investigated ways to mitigate barriers widening the health disparities for vulnerable patients. 74 providers completed a cross-sectional survey administered in July 2020 at Fenway Health, a large multi-site community health center. Fisher's exact tests were used to compare outcomes. The frequency of outcomes reported are associated with whether providers were asked about *before* versus *during* COVID-19. Providers reported that, during COVID-19, mental health concerns for patients were higher ($p < 0.001$) and more patients lacked access to transportation ($p < 0.001$). Most providers (88%) reported their patients were not informed of the resources available to them through the CARES Act, where providers identified financial barriers (66%) to be the most common and language barriers (22%) to be the least common. Evidence suggests that improvements can be made to better facilitate efficient transportation and provide mental health services. Most providers identified a lack of education and understanding of the CARES Act among their patients to access available resources. This indicates a need for providing an outreach and education department to ensure patients are aware of their resources. Financial barriers were the most common, which may require institutional and governmental resources to curb this disparity.