



The Long-Term Impact of COVID-19 on Colorado's Health Care Workforce and the Broader System

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Today's Discussion



- Situational Awareness:
Where are we today?
- Current Challenges
- Short, Medium and Long-Term Strategies

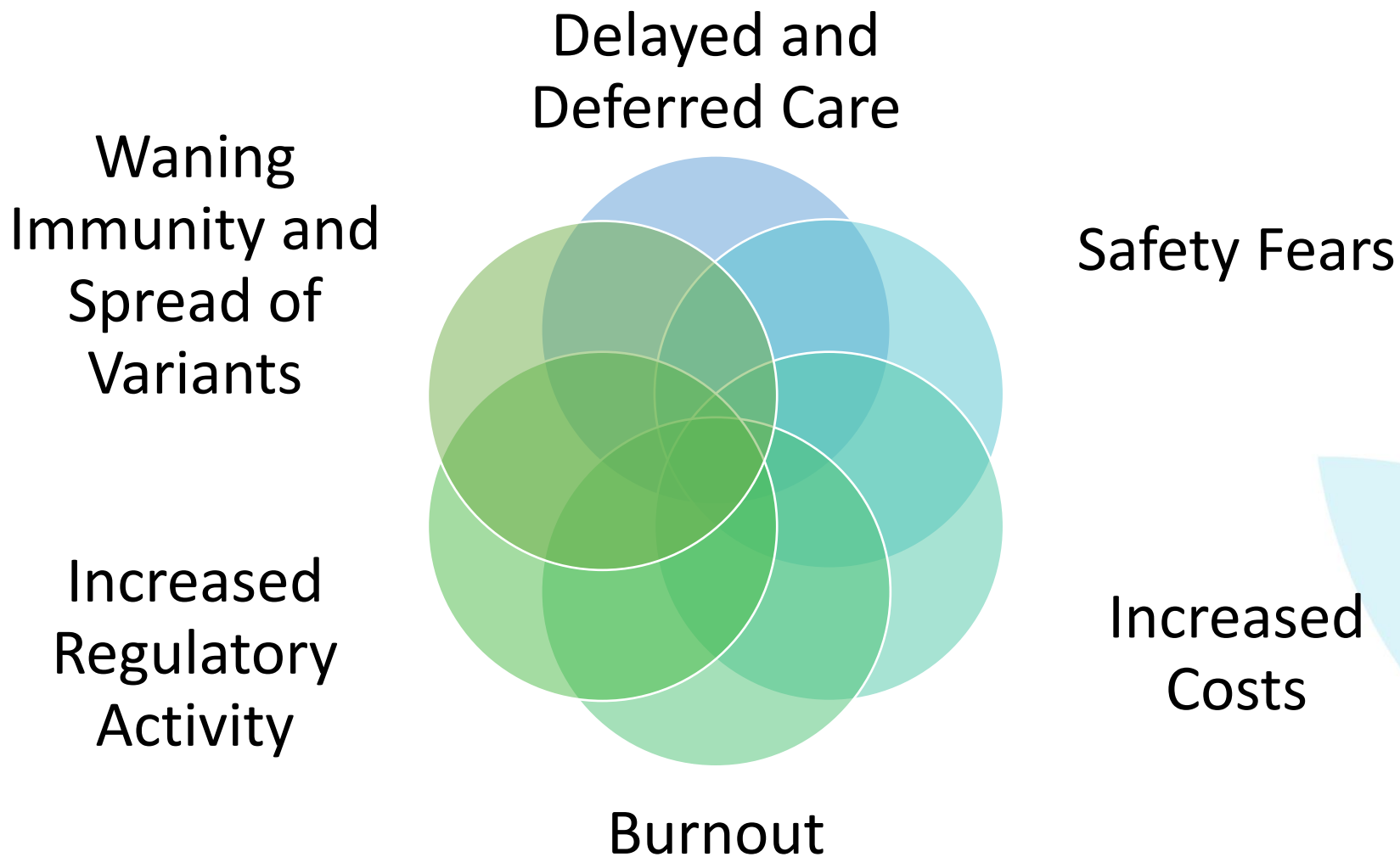


Situational Awareness

| | One Day Ago | One Week Ago | One Month Ago |
|---|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| Number of patients currently hospitalized for confirmed COVID-19 | 1,021 | 976 | 921 |
| Patients currently hospitalized as COVID-19 persons under investigation | 80 | 69 | 100 |
| Number of patients discharged/transferred within past the 24 hours | 64 | 146 | 114 |
| Number of facilities anticipating staff shortages (within the next week) | 35% | 35% | 21% |
| Number of facilities anticipating shortages of personal protective equipment (within the next week) | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| Facilities anticipating ICU bed shortages in the next week | 28% | 24% | 15% |
| Critical care ventilators in use | 45% | 45% | 44% |

- 1/3 of Hospitals anticipating staffing shortages
- Metro hospitals forced to go on ED Divert
- 1/4 of hospitals anticipating ICU bed shortages
- Nearly half of all critical care ventilators in use at the moment
- Flu season typically runs October to late spring

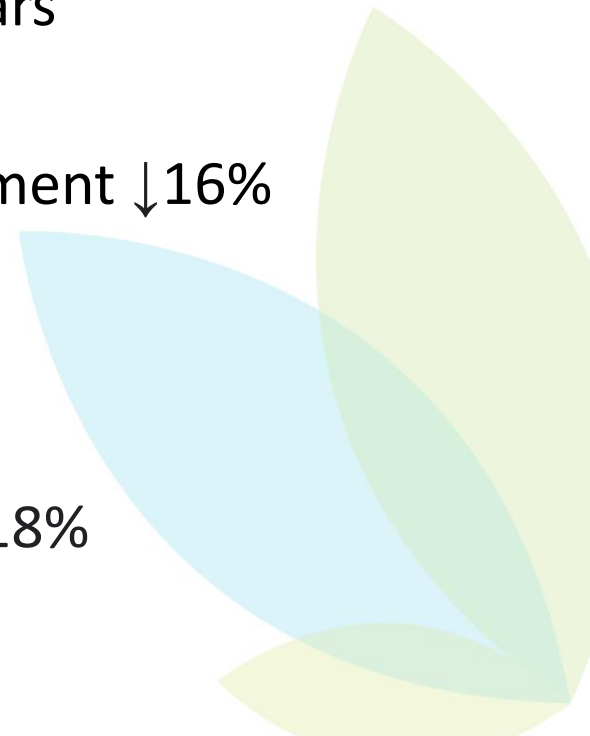
Some of the Current Challenges



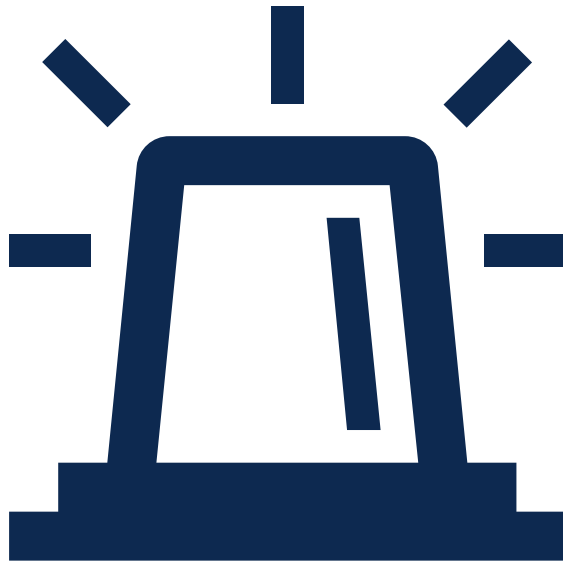
Delayed and Deferred Care



- Surgical Volumes ↓20-50%
 - Supply conservation
 - COVID capacity
 - Ongoing patient fears
- Ambulatory Visits
 - Emergency Department ↓16%
 - Outpatient ↓6%
- Capacity Challenges
 - Patient Acuity ↑ ↑ ↑
 - Length of Stay ↑ 8-18%



Safety Fears



- Physical harm/abuse of HCWs
 - Politicization/misinformation
 - Increase in behavioral health diagnoses
- Community threats
 - Doxxing of health care workers
 - Misdirected anger toward hospitals and providers

Increased Costs



- Staffing firms now charging 3-4 times the hourly wage of many positions
- **Changes in Expenses- 2021 YTD compared to pre-pandemic levels (per adjusted discharge):
 - Drug Expenses ↑24%
 - Supplies ↑17%
 - Non-Labor Expenses ↑17%
 - Purchased Services ↑15%
 - Total Expenses ↑15%
 - Labor Expenses ↑14%
- Don't forget the challenges and costs associated with sourcing PPE and basic supplies last year, now being stressed by global supply chain issues

Burnout



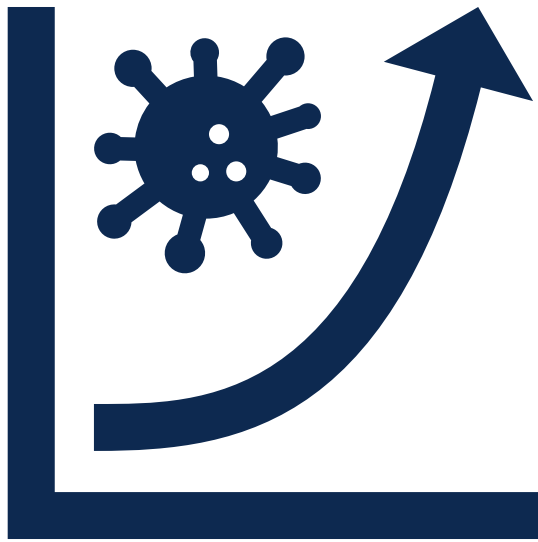
- Recent estimates show that roughly 20% of health care workers have left the profession or retired since the start of the pandemic
- Multiple surveys of health care workers remaining show that 20-30% are have contemplated leaving the profession
- “We keep asking the same people to do more. It’s been 18 months, I don’t know how much more they can take.”

Increased Regulatory Activity



- New state and federal data reporting being added all the time
- Elevated infection prevention protocols and state survey activity
- New nurse staffing regulations
- Vaccine mandate for health care workers

Waning Immunity and Spread of Variants



- Studies showing that immunity from vaccines begins diminishing after six months
- Vaccines were developed for original COVID strain (B.1.1.7 or Alpha)
- Dominant strain in Colorado now Delta variant (B.1.617.2)– which is far more contagious
- Despite all this, the unvaccinated still represent 80% of all hospitalizations

Potential Short, Medium and Long-Term Strategies



**>1
Year**

Support those
taking care of
us today



**1-5
Years**

Prepare those
taking care of
us tomorrow



**5-10
Years**

Recruit those
taking care of
us in the future



>1
Year

Support those
taking care of us
today

Potential Short, Medium and Long-Term Strategies

- Leverage infusion of federal dollars to fund:
 - Retention programs for front-line HCWs
 - Backfill high HCW replacement costs
 - Mental health supports
 - Temporary respite
- Increase protections for HCWs from threats and violence
- Investigate anti-competitive pricing by health care staffing firms that exacerbate existing shortages and disadvantage frontline HCWs



1-5
Years

Prepare those
taking care of us
tomorrow

Potential Short, Medium and Long-Term Strategies

- Reconstitute the Colorado Health Care Professions Workforce Policy Collaborative to identify gaps, areas of growth and opportunities for coordination in the current system
- Additional training and support for advanced practice nursing to practice at the top of their scope or move into leadership positions
- Additional training and support for new graduates, increase preceptorships
- Support community training programs, particularly for ancillary service providers
- Cross-training of HCWs (HB21-1005)



5-10
Years

Recruit those
taking care of us
in the future

Potential Short, Medium and Long-Term Strategies

- Update and implement the state's [Workforce Development Strategy](#) (last updated in 2014)
- Analyze existing state-level pipeline programs to identify gaps, areas of growth and opportunities for coordination in order to meet or exceed replacement needs
- Pipeline initiatives should be focused in the following areas at a minimum:
 - Growing the health care workforce at all professional levels
 - Diversifying the health care workforce so that the providers better reflect the communities they serve
 - Building out the safety net in rural and underserved communities to improve upon equitable access and outcomes