Secondary Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic in the United States

Identifying & Understanding Secondary Impacts

The critical efforts underway to prevent, detect, and respond to COVID-19 are having a profound impact on our daily lives, our workplaces, and society as a whole. Identifying the secondary impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic can help us understand the major changes we’re experiencing and how to potentially mitigate them. The model below highlights major sectors of society affected by the pandemic and provides examples of the changes we’re seeing. In addition, the model includes exacerbating factors that can affect the nature and magnitude of any impact. Just as the pandemic itself has disproportionately affected low-income populations and communities of color, these same populations and communities will be disproportionately affected by these secondary impacts. Secondary Impacts include:

- **Employment**
  - Massive unemployment
  - Permanent automation of jobs

- **Housing**
  - Market instability
  - Housing insecurity

- **Public Health**
  - Food Insecurity
  - Reduced physical activity

- **Environment**
  - Closed public spaces
  - Disrupted public and religious services

- **Public Safety**
  - Increased domestic violence
  - Drug and alcohol abuse

- **Mental Health**
  - Social isolation
  - Depression, anxiety, suicide

- **Business**
  - Disrupted supply chains
  - Small business closures

- **Education**
  - Disruptive schools
  - Inequitable access to technology

- **Healthcare**
  - Disrupted services
  - Reduced care seeking

- **Government**
  - Disrupted voting
  - Disrupted tax revenue

- **Transportation**
  - Reduced safety
  - Decline in infrastructure and travel

Exacerbating factors that can affect the nature and magnitude of any impact:

- Lack of healthcare coverage
- Existing structural inequalities
- Systemic racism, bias & discrimination
- Politicization & misinformation

This conceptual model is designed to serve as a framework to help organizations; communities; and local, state, and federal agencies identify the broad and far-reaching impact of the COVID-19 pandemic toward the design of holistic and multisectoral interventions to address them. It is meant to be tailored as needed based on local context, affected population, or other area of focus.

For more information, email Howell Wechsler, Director, U.S. Programs, at HWechsler@fhi360.org