

Summary: BC COVID-19 SPEAK Round 2 data provides insight into how people in B.C. are coping with pandemic

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More than 188,000 adults in British Columbia completed the BC COVID-19 Survey on Population Experiences, Action and Knowledge (SPEAK) in April and May of 2021. The survey was the second to measure the populations' perceptions of risk, acceptability of public health response and recovery measures, and the broader impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Both surveys were funded by the [BCCDC Foundation for Public Health](#).

The B.C. COVID-19 SPEAK 2 Survey Dashboard provides a snapshot in time of B.C. during the COVID-19 pandemic. It shows B.C. residents self-reported worse mental health, more stress, greater household conflict, more challenges with access to health care, and decreased connections to community in the time between this survey and its predecessor in 2020.

The survey results provide information about the adaptations and changes from the pandemic that B.C. residents would like to keep and see more of in their future, as well as valuable insights to help guide efforts to strengthen health care and quality of life for people and communities.

This public health initiative collected comprehensive, relevant and representative information at provincial, regional and local levels. The project was led by the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) in collaboration with First Nations Health Authority, Fraser Health, Interior Health, Island Health, Northern Health, Vancouver Coastal Health and the Office of the Provincial Health Officer.

The 2021 data show, compared to the 2020 results that:

- **Fewer respondents (1 in 20) reported not working** due to COVID-19 compared to 3 in 20 last year (5 vs 16 percent).
- **More respondents self-reported worsening mental health since the beginning of the pandemic** (46 vs 57 percent) and increased stress (18 vs 25 percent) across all health regions.
- **More respondents (1 in 3) have found it harder to access health care**, up from around one in five during the first phase of the pandemic (23 vs 36 percent), and 40 percent say their health has worsened, either significantly or somewhat, as a result.
- Of the people who reported having difficulty accessing healthcare, family doctor (78 percent) or diagnostic services (28 percent) were reported the most.
- **A greater proportion of respondents who identified as Black or South Asian, reported difficulty accessing their family doctor (80 percent and 85 percent respectively) and diagnostic services (38 percent and 35 percent respectively).**

Household impacts and vaccine hesitancy impacts during the pandemic

- **2 in 5 households, or 46 percent of females and 42 percent of males, reported increased household conflict** since the pandemic.
- Around 1 in 10 (9 percent) respondents reported being vaccine hesitant with differences observed by geography among other determinants, with **vaccine hesitancy more likely expressed by people who live in the Northern Health Authority** (18 percent compared to 9 percent for B.C. overall) in the Northeast Health Service Delivery Area (29 percent compared to 9 percent for B.C. overall).

Young adults, post-secondary students, and families living with children

A year ago, data revealed that young adults, and families living with children were disproportionately impacted by their experience with the pandemic. This survey confirmed that these impacts continue, with new data showing:

- 20 percent of respondents between 18 to 29 years old reported experiencing **increased age-based discrimination** since the COVID-19 pandemic began.
- Three-quarters (74 percent) of post-secondary student respondents reported **accessing financial relief services**.
- Among households with children, **2 in 3 reported worsening well-being of their children (65 percent)**, and the proportion reporting increased child stress has risen to four in five up from three in five last year (59 vs 83 percent).

Emerging public opinion

- As many workplaces look towards the reintegration of their onsite workforce, today's data reveals that three-quarters of respondents (75 percent) would like to see continued flexible work options.
- Two-thirds (65 percent) hope to have continued access to virtual health care, a health delivery model rapidly implemented in response to COVID-19.