



## More Critical Care Doctors Report Sufficient Protective Gear and Tests

The share of California critical care physicians who say their hospital has adequate protective gear and COVID-19 tests has increased in recent days, according to the latest tracking poll from CHCF and Truth on Call. The survey also found that critical care physicians are less worried that they won't have enough PPE and other needed resources in the coming weeks.

The survey was conducted among 150 hospital-based critical care, emergency department, and infectious disease physicians in California.

Seventy-eight percent of physicians say the patients and health care workers at their hospital can get tested for COVID-19 if they need it (see Figure 1, page 2). In the first survey two weeks ago, 74% said adequate testing was available.

### Seventy-eight percent of physicians say the patients and health care workers at their hospital can get tested for COVID-19 if they need it.

All of that increase was attributed to growing confidence among safety-net physicians, defined as those who practice at institutions that serve populations of at least 30% Medi-Cal or uninsured patients. Among these safety-net doctors, 68% said they had sufficient access to COVID-19 tests two weeks ago, compared to 75% this week. The proportion of non-safety-net physicians who said their hospitals had adequate testing resources was unchanged at 81%.

Among all physicians surveyed, 22% said they did not have enough available COVID-19 tests to meet current needs. Within the safety net, 25% of doctors say that sufficient tests are not available. Among physicians working outside the safety net, reported availability of tests did not change.

The share of surveyed doctors reporting adequate access to PPE is increasing. Eighty percent of them say they have adequate PPE now, up from 70% two weeks ago (see Figure 2, page 2). Safety-net doctors reported the greatest improvement, with the number saying they have sufficient PPE rising from 67% to 83%. The share of non-safety-net doctors reporting adequate PPE edged up from 74% two weeks ago to 77% this week.

#### COVID-19 Tracking Poll Series

To help Californians and state policymakers understand evolving demands on the state's health care system during the COVID-19 pandemic, CHCF is working with survey firms on two fronts. CHCF and global survey firm **Ipsos** are assessing residents' desire for COVID-19 testing and their access to health care services. CHCF and **Truth on Call**, a physician market-research firm, are surveying hospital-based critical care, emergency department, and infectious disease physicians about staffing and the availability of testing, personal protective equipment (PPE), intensive care unit beds, and ventilators.

**Download the charts and data** for your own presentations and analyses. **Get all the results** from CHCF's surveys of California's health care providers and the general public in this collection.

Figure 1. COVID-19 Testing Availability, by Critical Care Physician Type and Survey Date

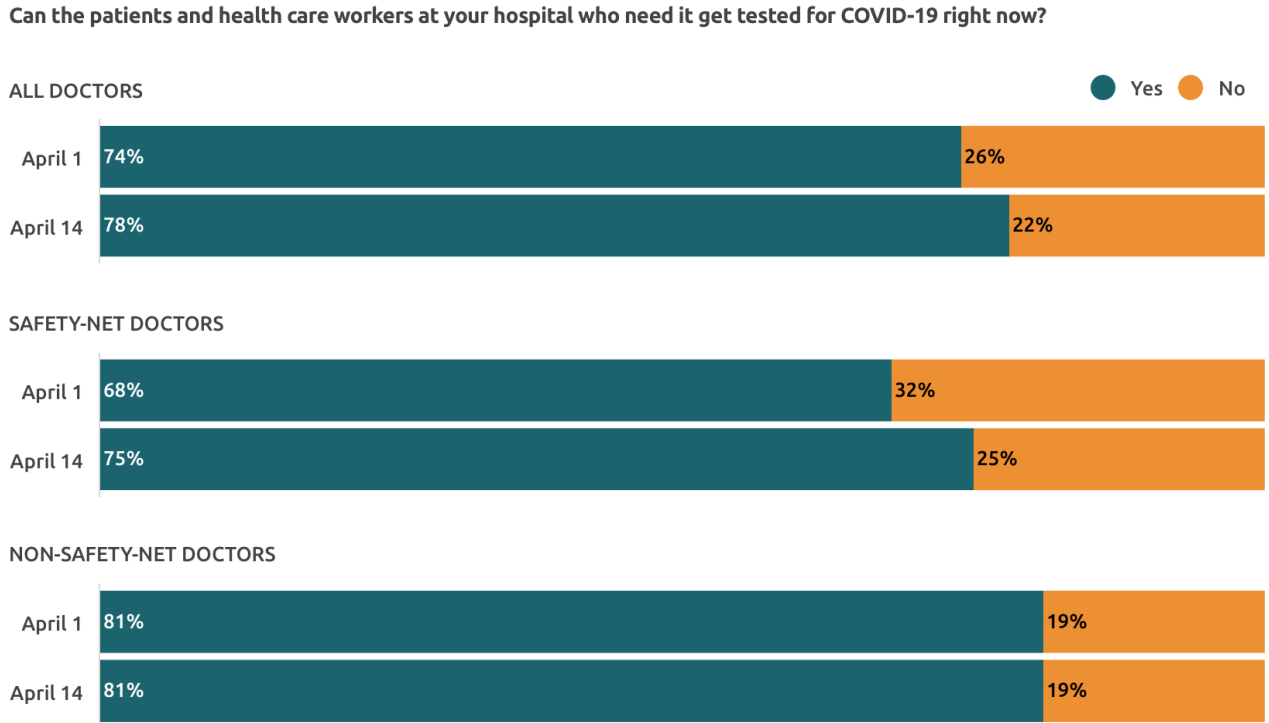
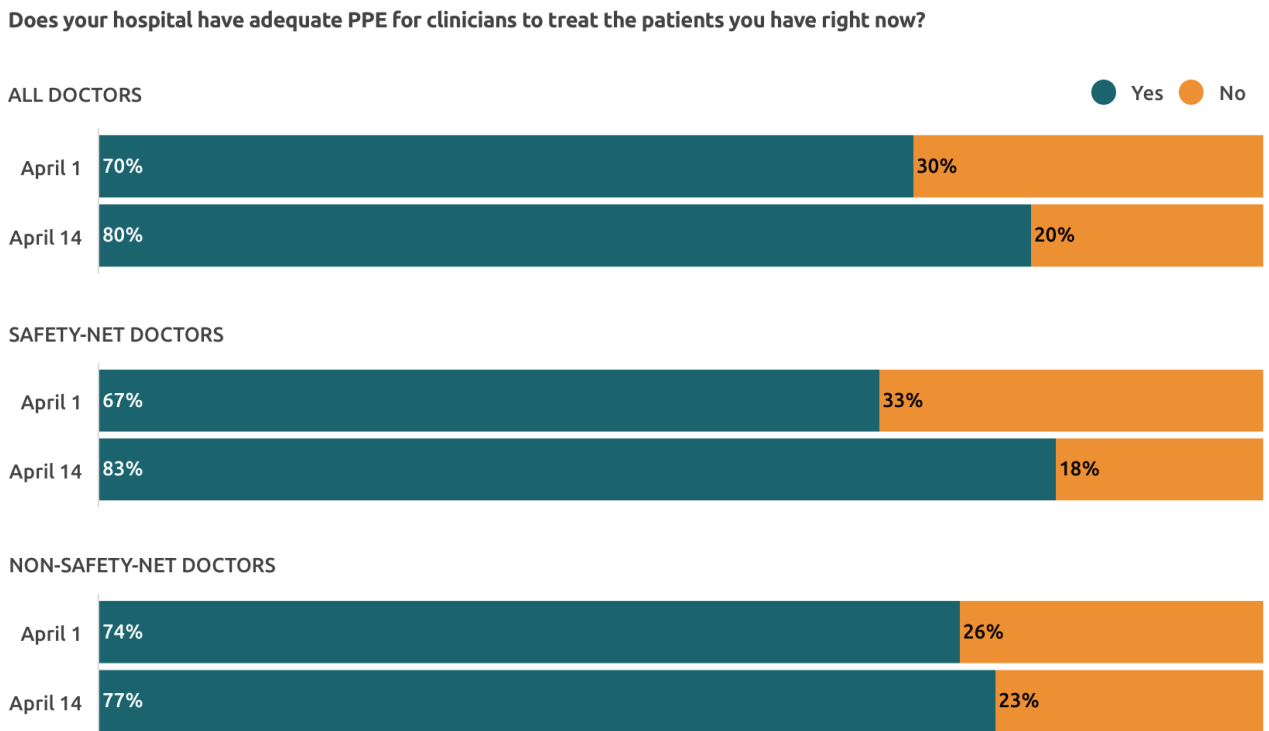


Figure 2. Adequate PPE, by Critical Care Physician Type and Survey Date



Note: Safety-net providers report at least 30% of their patients are covered by Medi-Cal or are uninsured.

Source: CHCF / Truth on Call Survey of California Hospital-Based Critical Care, Emergency Department, and Infectious Disease Physicians, April 10–14, 2020.

Fewer physicians worried about having what they would need to treat COVID-19 patients in the next month since the first survey two weeks ago. Physicians were asked to rank on a numerical scale from 1 to 5 — with 1 being “not worried” and 5 being “extremely worried” — their level of concern about the availability of PPE, ICU beds, ventilators, and staffing to treat critical care patients in the next 30 days.

Two weeks ago, 66% of physicians expressed a high level of worry about shortages of PPE with ratings of 4 or 5 (see Figure 3). This week, only 31% rated their worry at 4 or 5. The share of safety-net providers who ranked their worry at 4 or 5 fell sharply from 71% to 34%. Doctors outside the safety net expressing that level of concern plummeted from 62% to 27%.

**Figure 3. Level of Worry About Adequate PPE Supplies, by Critical Care Physician Type and Survey Date**

**How worried are you that your hospital will run out of adequate PPE to treat patients you expect to see in the next month?**

RESPONSE OPTIONS 1 TO 5: 1 - NOT WORRIED, 5 - EXTREMELY WORRIED



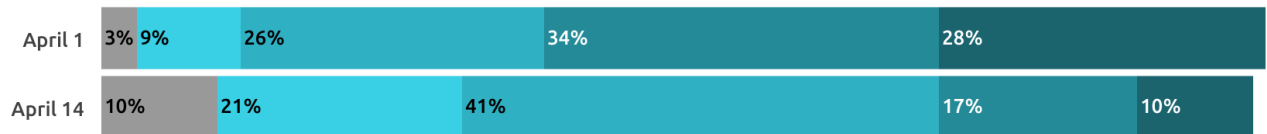
**ALL DOCTORS**



**SAFETY-NET DOCTORS**



**NON-SAFETY-NET DOCTORS**



Notes: Safety-net providers report at least 30% of their patients are covered by Medi-Cal or are uninsured. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Source: CHCF / Truth on Call Survey of California Hospital-Based Critical Care, Emergency Department, and Infectious Disease Physicians, April 10–14, 2020.

Doctors who rated their worry about availability of ICU space and ventilators at 4 or 5 on the scale plunged from 62% two weeks ago to 28% today (see Figure 4).

Safety-net providers who ranked their worry at 4 or 5 fell from 64% to 31%. Among doctors outside the safety net, it dropped from 59% to 23%.

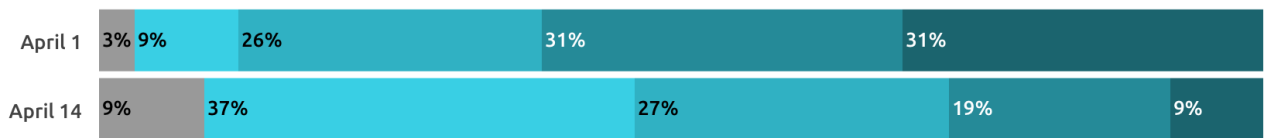
**Figure 4. Level of Worry About Adequate ICU Space or Ventilators, by Critical Care Physician Type and Survey Date**

**How worried are you that your hospital will run out of ICU space or ventilators for COVID-19 patients and other critical care patients you expect to see in the next month?**

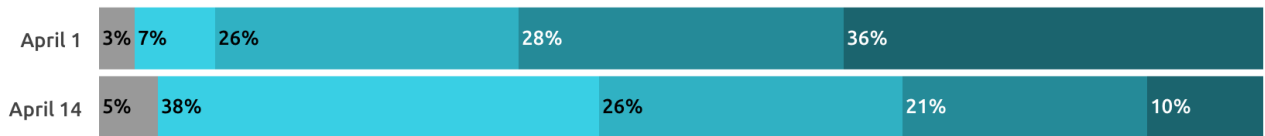
RESPONSE OPTIONS 1 TO 5: 1 - NOT WORRIED, 5 - EXTREMELY WORRIED



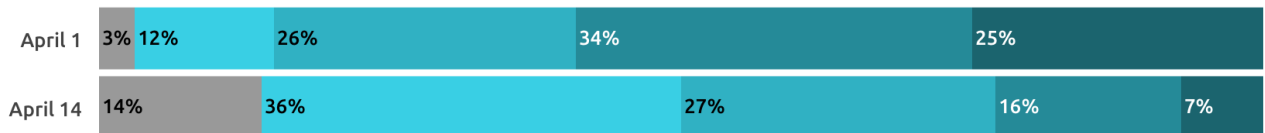
**ALL DOCTORS**



**SAFETY-NET DOCTORS**



**NON-SAFETY-NET DOCTORS**



Notes: Safety-net providers report at least 30% of their patients are covered by Medi-Cal or are uninsured. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Source: CHCF / Truth on Call Survey of California Hospital-Based Critical Care, Emergency Department, and Infectious Disease Physicians, April 10–14, 2020.

Physician worries about hospitals meeting staffing needs in the next month declined substantially. Two weeks ago, 50% of physicians rated their worry on this score at 4 or

5, and this week it decreased to 23% (see Figure 5). For safety-net providers, the worry rating fell from 54% to 25%, and for others it declined from 45% to 20%.

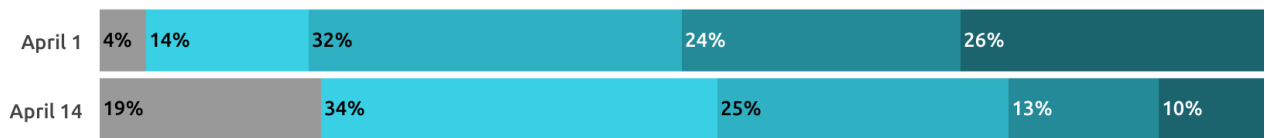
**Figure 5. Level of Worry About Sufficient Number of Health Care Providers, by Critical Care Physician Type and Survey Date**

**How worried are you that your hospital will have insufficient health care providers to care for your COVID-19 patients and other critical care patients you expect to see in the next month?**

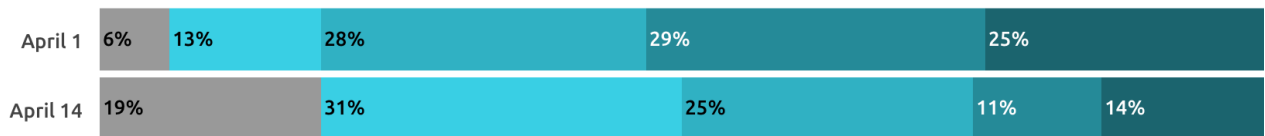
RESPONSE OPTIONS 1 TO 5: 1 - NOT WORRIED, 5 - EXTREMELY WORRIED



**ALL DOCTORS**



**SAFETY-NET DOCTORS**



**NON-SAFETY-NET DOCTORS**



Notes: Safety-net providers report at least 30% of their patients are covered by Medi-Cal or are uninsured. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

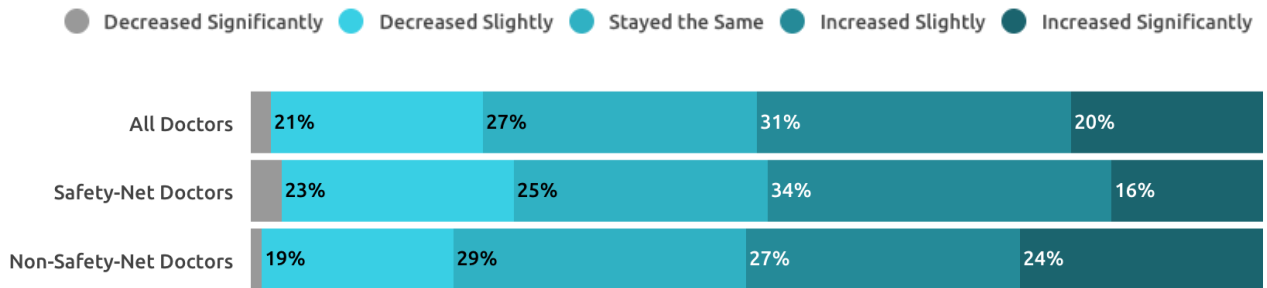
Source: CHCF / Truth on Call Survey of California Hospital-Based Critical Care, Emergency Department, and Infectious Disease Physicians, April 10–14, 2020.

This week, the CHCF / Truth on Call survey added a new question about changes in physicians' personal stress levels. Among surveyed physicians, 51% said their stress had increased "slightly" or "significantly" in the

past week, while 27% said it was about the same (see Figure 6). Half of safety-net physicians said their stress level had increased, while 53% of doctors outside the safety net said stress levels rose.

**Figure 6. Change in Stress Levels, by Critical Care Physician Type, April 14**

How would you rate the change in stress you are experiencing at work compared to seven days ago?



Notes: Safety-net providers report at least 30% of their patients are covered by Medi-Cal or are uninsured. Figures may not sum due to rounding.  
 Source: CHCF / Truth on Call Survey of California Hospital-Based Critical Care, Emergency Department, and Infectious Disease Physicians, April 10–14, 2020.

## Methodology

This survey was conducted online using Truth on Call's proprietary physician database. Responses were solicited over email, and methods were employed to ensure a representative sample of physicians treating at least 30% of patients who are on Medi-Cal or are uninsured. The study consisted of 150 California physicians practicing emergency medicine, critical care, or infectious disease in a hospital setting. Responses were collected between April 10 and April 14, 2020. Truth on Call is a division of Slingshot Insights.

## About the Foundation

The California Health Care Foundation is dedicated to advancing meaningful, measurable improvements in the way the health care delivery system provides care to the people of California, particularly those with low incomes and those whose needs are not well served by the status quo. We work to ensure that people have access to the care they need, when they need it, at a price they can afford.

CHCF informs policymakers and industry leaders, invests in ideas and innovations, and connects with changemakers to create a more responsive, patient-centered health care system.

For more information, visit [www.chcf.org](http://www.chcf.org).