



CHCF

COVID-19 TRACKING POLL SERIES

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CHCF Market Analysis and Insight

California Critical Care Doctors Report Increased Availability of Protective Gear, Tests

Nearly 90% of frontline doctors in California hospitals say they have the COVID-19 testing and protective gear they need right now, according to the latest tracking poll from CHCF and Truth on Call. The survey shows that critical care physicians are significantly less worried about the future supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other resources than they have been in previous weeks.

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

Eighty-six percent of doctors surveyed 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). When the first installment in this tracking poll was conducted in early April, 74% said adequate testing was available.

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The survey found that 14% of physicians say they don't have enough COVID-19 tests available to meet current needs. Among doctors working in safety-net institutions, 16% say that sufficient tests are not available, compared to 12% for physicians working elsewhere.

This week, the CHCF / Truth on Call survey asked a new question about whether patients' COVID-19 test results are completed in a timely manner. Physicians were asked to rank their responses on a numerical scale from 1 to 5 — with 1 being "not timely" and 5 being "very timely." Sixty-two percent rate timeliness of results a 4 or 5, suggesting that they are getting results quickly, while 30% gave a timeliness rating of 3 (see Figure 2, page 2). Less than 9% of respondents rated it a 1 or 2, the worst scores.

There were no significant differences in timeliness ratings whether physicians do or do not serve a safety-net population, which is defined as having at least 30% Medi-Cal or uninsured patients.

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

Can the patients and health care workers at your hospital who need it get tested for COVID-19 right now?

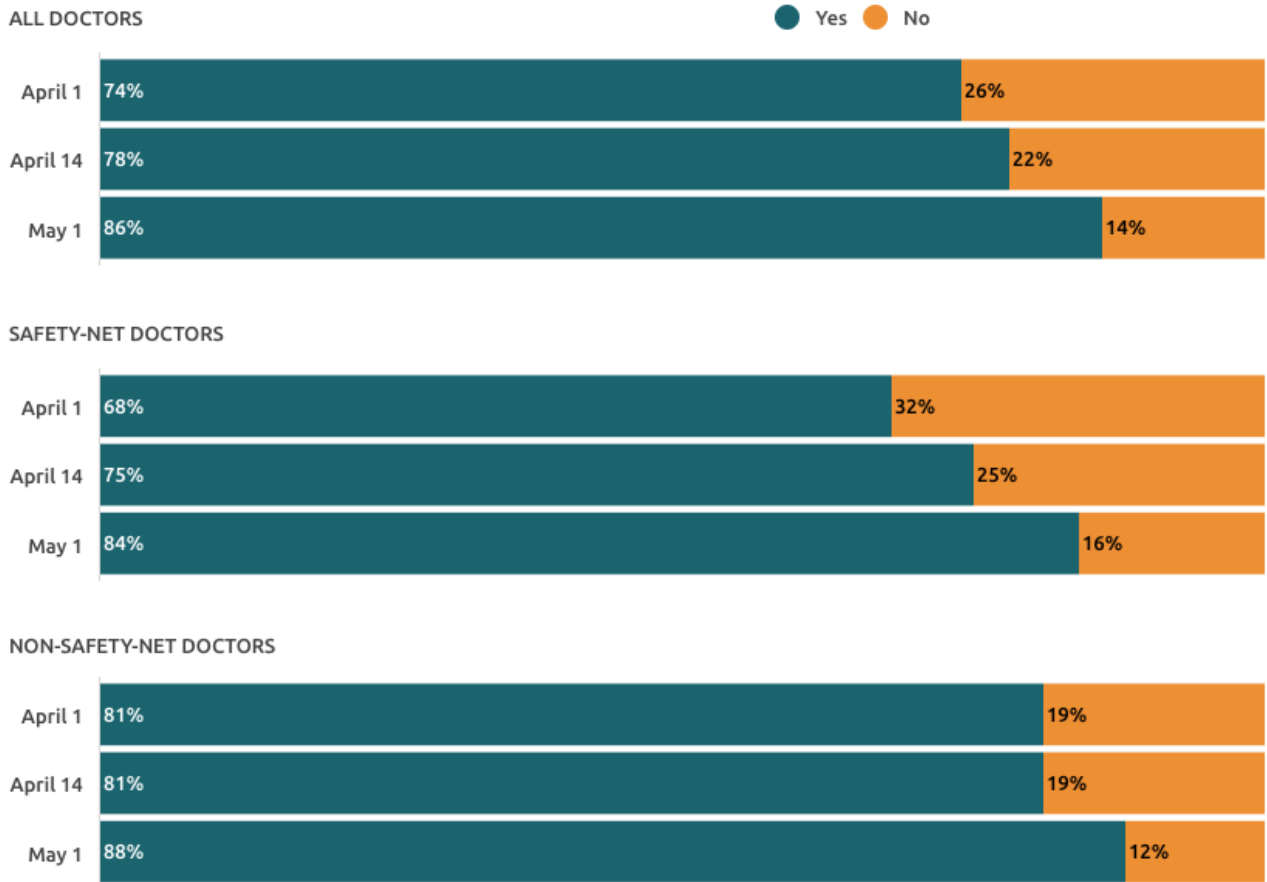
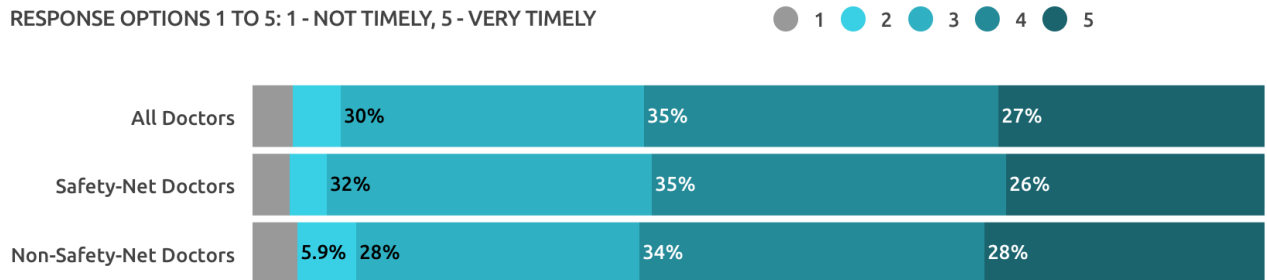


Figure 2. Timeliness of COVID-19 Test Results, May 1

Are you getting COVID-19 testing results for your patients in a timely manner?

RESPONSE OPTIONS 1 TO 5: 1 - NOT TIMELY, 5 - VERY TIMELY



FIGURES 1 AND 2:

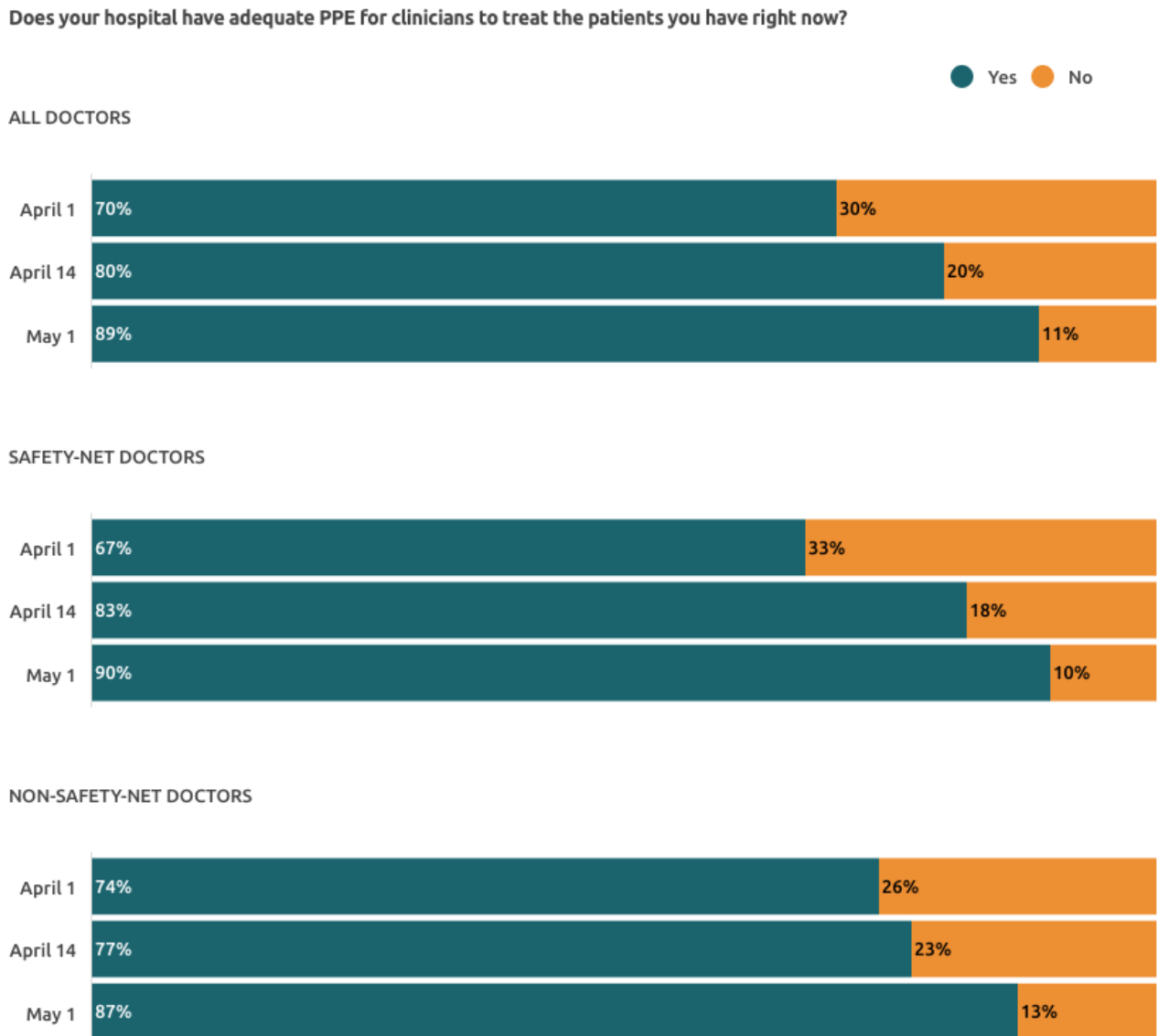
Notes: Safety-net providers report at least 30% of their patients are covered by Medi-Cal or are uninsured. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

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

The share of surveyed doctors reporting that hospital clinicians have adequate access to PPE continues to increase. Eighty-nine percent say they have adequate PPE now, up from 70% four weeks ago (see Figure 3). Doctors working outside the safety net had greater improvement, with 87% reporting adequate PPE compared to 77% two

weeks ago. Ninety percent of safety-net doctors report adequate PPE, up from 83% two weeks ago. This survey does not address whether nonclinicians working at hospitals, such as housekeeping staff and food service workers, have adequate protective gear.

Figure 3. Adequate PPE, by Critical Care Physician Type and Survey Date



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.

Compared to previous tracking, responding physicians now are less worried about having the protective gear and equipment needed to treat COVID-19 patients in the coming weeks (see Figure 4). Physicians ranked, 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 ICU beds, ventilators, PPE, and staffing to treat critical care patients in the next month.

Four weeks ago, 66% of physicians rated their expectation of future PPE shortages with ratings of 4 or 5. This week, only 21% rated their worry at 4 or 5. The share of safety-net providers who ranked their worry at 4 or 5 is 24%, while 19% of doctors outside the safety net made a similar assessment.

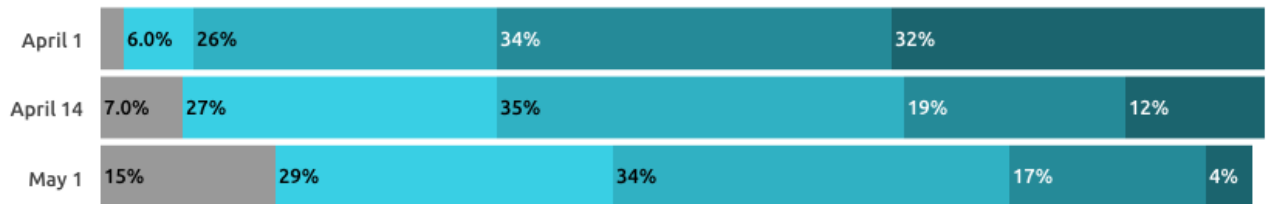
Figure 4. Level of Worry About Adequate PPE Supplies, by Critical Care Physician Type and Survey Date

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

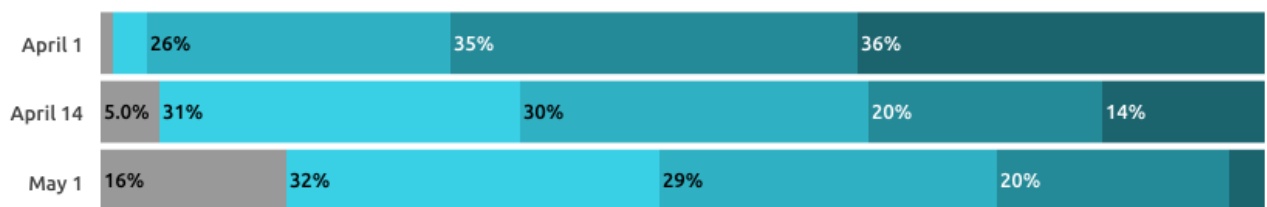
RESPONSE OPTIONS 1 TO 5: 1 - NOT WORRIED, 5 - EXTREMELY WORRIED



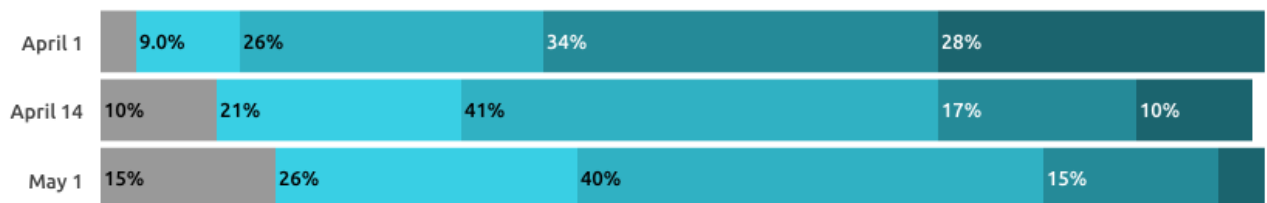
ALL DOCTORS



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.

Doctors who rate their worry about availability of ICU space and ventilators at 4 or 5 plunged from 62% four weeks ago to 12% today (see Figure 5). Safety-net

providers who rank their worry at 4 or 5 fell from 64% to 15%. Among doctors outside the safety net, it dropped from 59% to 7%, with no doctors ranking their worry at 5.

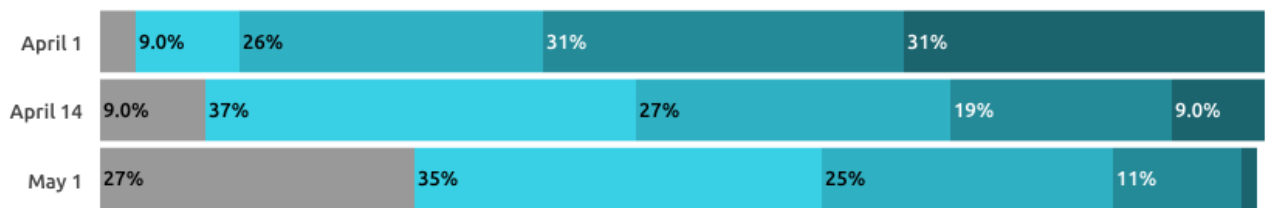
Figure 5. Level of Worry About Adequate ICU Space or Ventilators, by Critical Care Physician Type and Survey Date

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?

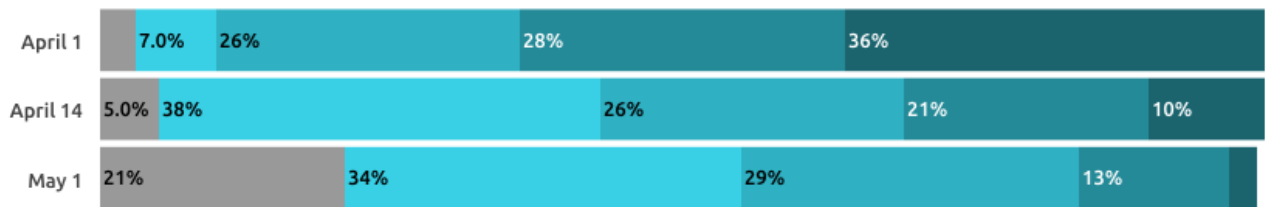
RESPONSE OPTIONS 1 TO 5: 1 - NOT WORRIED, 5 - EXTREMELY WORRIED



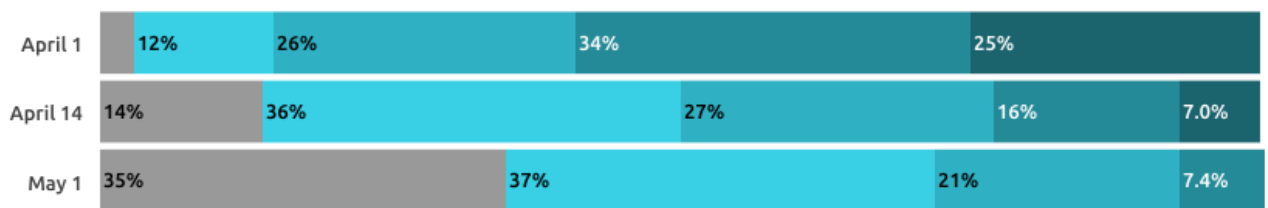
ALL DOCTORS



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.

Respondents are less worried about hospitals meeting staffing needs in the next month. Four weeks ago, 50% of physicians rated their worry at 4 or 5. That has now declined to only 9% (see Figure 6). For safety-net providers, the worry rating fell from 54% four weeks ago to 14% today, and for others it fell from 45% to 4%.

The sharpest decline was among doctors who said they are “extremely worried” about having enough staffing resources. Less than 3% of surveyed doctors now have this level of worry, down from 26% four weeks ago.

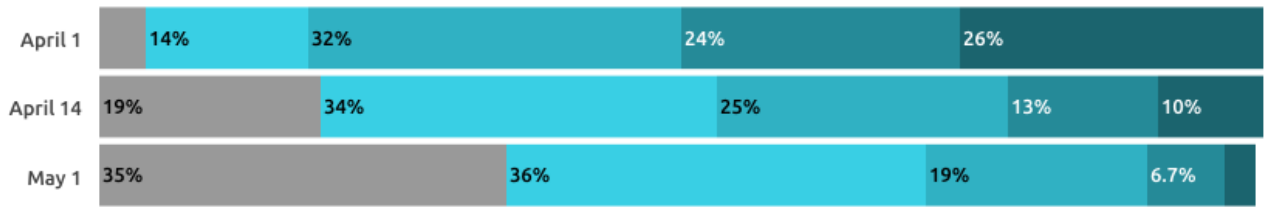
Figure 6. Level of Worry About Sufficient Number of Health Care Providers, by Critical Care Physician Type and Survey Date

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?

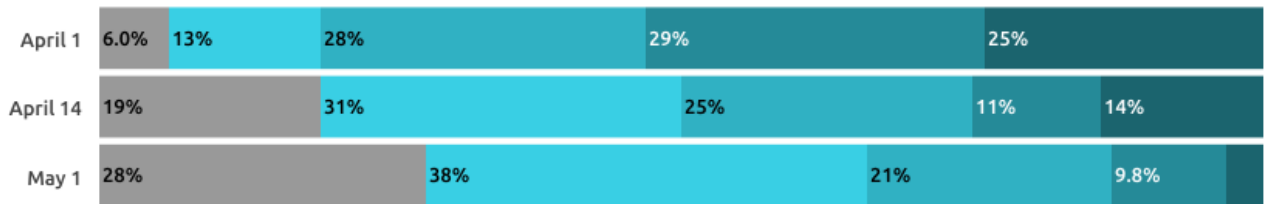
RESPONSE OPTIONS 1 TO 5: 1 - NOT WORRIED, 5 - EXTREMELY WORRIED



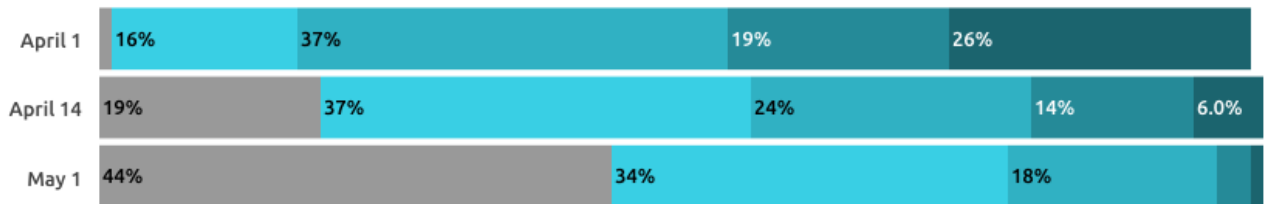
ALL DOCTORS



SAFETY-NET DOCTORS



NON-SAFETY-NET DOCTORS



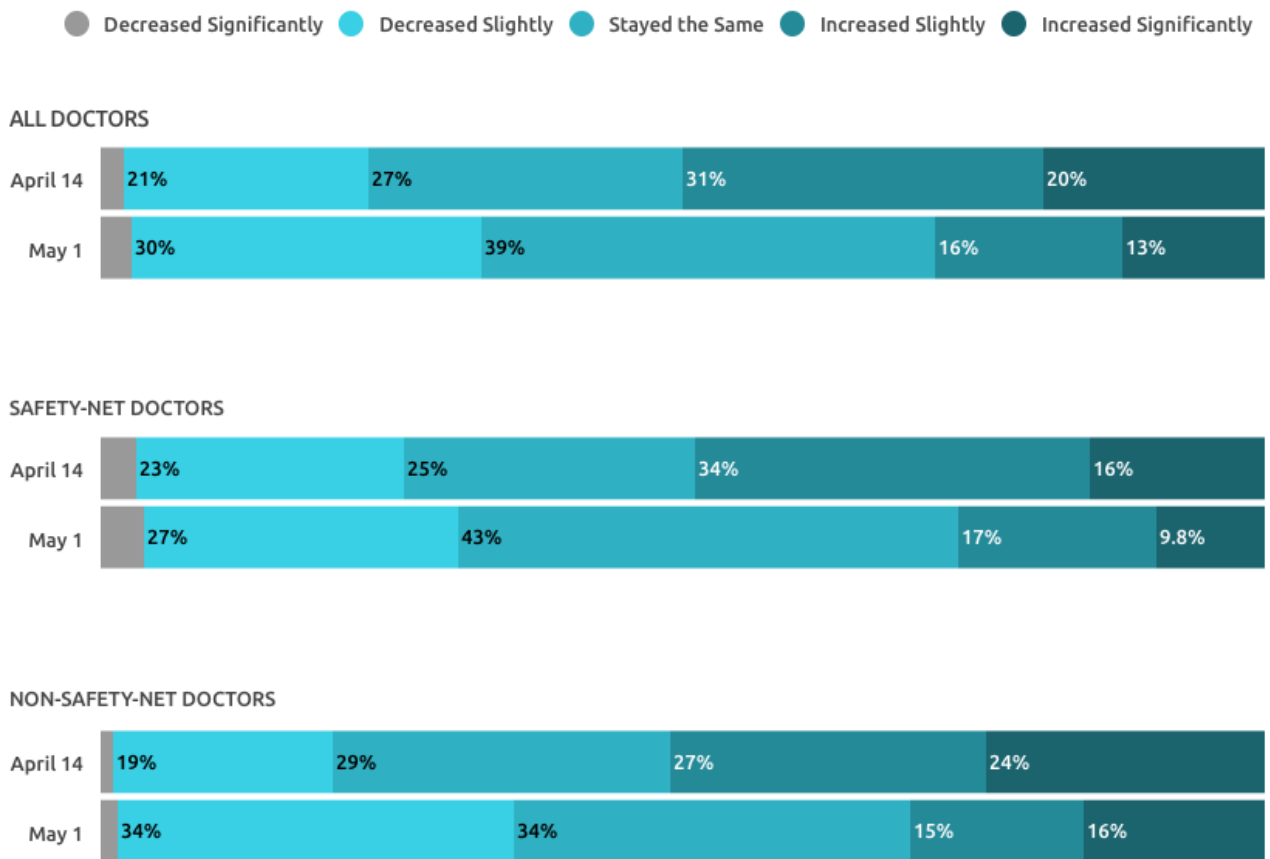
Notes: Safety-net providers report at least 30% of their patients are covered by Medi-Cal or are uninsured. Figures may not sum due to rounding.
Source: CHCF / Truth on Call Survey of California Hospital-Based Critical Care, Emergency Department, and Infectious Disease Physicians.

While fewer surveyed physicians report an increase in their stress levels, 29% say their stress has increased in the past week (see Figure 7). Two weeks ago, 51% reported

higher stress levels. A greater share of surveyed physicians than two weeks ago say their stress level “stayed the same.”

Figure 7. Change in Stress Levels, by Critical Care Physician Type and Survey Date

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.

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 who 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 24 and April 27, 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.