



**AMERICAN ASSOCIATION ON HEALTH AND DISABILITY RESEARCH BRIEF  
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**COVID-19 & DISABILITY SURVEY: KEY FINDINGS ON HEALTH CARE FOR  
PERSONS WITH CHRONIC PAIN, DIFFICULTY SLEEPING, MEDICATION SIDE EFFECTS, OR OTHER**

**Introduction**

People with disabilities experience unique risks during disasters, epidemics, and pandemics that can impact health and health care. *Yet, we do not know the full impact of COVID-19 on people with disabilities.*

**Research Approach**

AAHD conducted the COVID-19 and Disability Survey between April 17 and May 1, 2020, and 2,469 adults with disabilities responded. Adults with serious difficulties concentrating, remembering, or making decisions due to chronic pain, difficulties sleeping, medication side effects made up 8% of the sample (194 persons).

**Main Findings- Access to Regular Health Care & Services for Persons with Chronic Pain, Difficulty Sleeping, Medication Side Effects, Or Other Disabilities**

**Use of Direct Care Workers & Impact of COVID-19**

- 26% of respondents reported having a Direct Care Worker (DCW).
- Of these, 74% were still receiving DCW services during the pandemic.
- **42% of respondents still receiving DCW services were unable to maintain safe distances from their Direct Care Worker.**

**Access to Regular Health Care Treatment**

- 55% of respondents who needed regular health care (such as physical therapy, dialysis, etc.) were able to receive it during the pandemic.
- **45% of respondents needing regular health care reported their access had been disrupted during the pandemic.**

**Access to Prescription Medications**

- Among respondents taking prescriptions, 98% reported no access problems.
- **Only 2% of respondents reported access to prescription medication access had been disrupted during the pandemic, but any disruption of life-sustaining medication can be critical.**

**New Challenges to Accessing Health Care**

- 45% of respondents reported that they were not facing new challenges to accessing health care.
- **55% of respondents reported new challenges to accessing health care and prescriptions!**

**Conclusion**

- **Population-based research is critically needed to fully document these problems.**

Full results are available at: <https://www.aahd.us/initiatives/dissemination/covid-19-disability-survey/>.

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