

CHA Key Messages

**During this crisis, some things can't wait.
Your health care is one of them.**

- **While Californians are rightly concerned about COVID-19 and must take precautions against the virus, delaying care can be dangerous.**
 - Understandably, many Californians may be reluctant to seek medical care as the number of infections fluctuates during the COVID-19 crisis, but data pointing to a different health crisis are alarming:
 - A National Cancer Institute model looking just at breast cancer and colorectal cancer [predicts there will be 10,000 excess deaths](#) in the U.S. over the next 10 years because of pandemic-related delays in diagnosing and treating these tumors.
 - More than 76% of Californians responding to a recent online poll said they have a medium to high concern about returning to regular health care activities because of COVID-19.
 - One in four people surveyed for a Harris Poll said they would [rather stay at home if they experienced a heart attack or stroke than risk getting infected with COVID-19](#) at the hospital.
 - Nationwide, [visits to hospital emergency rooms dropped by 42%](#) in April, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
 - The number of [vaccinations for kids in California dropped nearly in half](#) this April compared to last April, following a worrying national trend as parents avoid doctors' offices during the coronavirus pandemic, public health numbers show. The number of children vaccinated for diseases such as chicken pox dropped more than 40%.
 - All of this points to a secondary health crisis driven by COVID-19: a greater disease burden for Californians resulting from undiagnosed or untreated disease, or from missed opportunities for juvenile vaccinations.
- **In response, California's hospitals are doing everything necessary to keep patients and health care workers safe from the spread of COVID-19.**
 - Examples include:
 - Separating patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 from other patients
 - Providing masks and requiring that all hospital workers, patients, and visitor wear them at all times
 - Frequent deep cleaning of rooms and equipment using UV disinfecting technology and anti-viral cleaning products
 - Caring for patients with COVID-19 in special, negative pressure rooms where air doesn't mix with the rest of the hospital
 - Providing separate entrances and exits for patients with COVID-19

- **Even if you've lost coverage or changed coverage, you can get care.**
 - COVID-19 has caused many Californians to lose their jobs, and unemployment has hit hard many households. There are [ways to get health care if you're out of work](#).
 - California's hospitals provide charity care each year to people who need services but cannot afford them. Hospitals also offer rate reductions and flexible payment plans to support those needing care. If you don't have coverage but need care, contact your hospital to see what options are available.