

# COVID-19

One Year Later



# Celebrate Essential Workers

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed the first COVID-19 case in the United States on Jan. 21, 2020.

By March 13, President Donald Trump made national emergency declarations under both the Stafford Act and the National Emergencies Act.

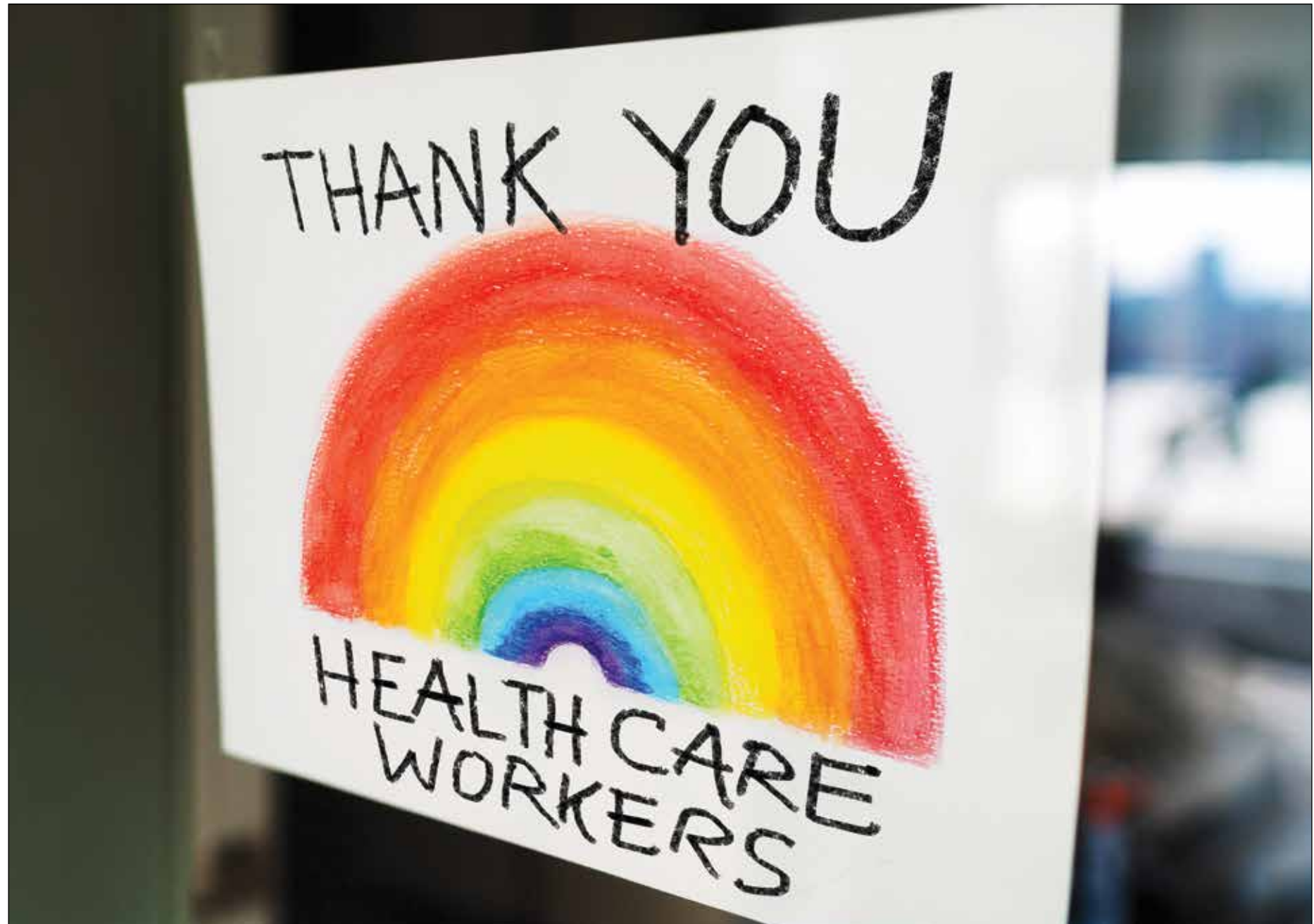
As officials encouraged country-wide lockdowns and stay-at-home orders, many in the workforce remained on the front lines. Take the time to celebrate the essential workers who risked infection to ensure a sense of normalcy in uncertain times.

## **HEALTHCARE WORKERS**

Healthcare personnel across the country played a vital role in the battle against COVID-19. From working in their regular medical facilities to practicing in makeshift field hospitals, military ships or temporary offices, they pushed through adversity to save lives.

According to the American Medical Association, many medical students graduated early to meet the urgency of overloaded health systems.

As a small token of appreciation, vaccinated healthcare workers earned a ticket to Super Bowl LV. The NFL rewarded their sacrifice and heroism during the COVID-19 pandemic by inviting 7,500



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medical professionals to the big game.

## **RETAIL WORKERS**

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, the retail industry is the second-largest employment sector in the United States. Positions like salespersons, cashiers, stock clerks and supervisors are

vital to brick-and-mortar facilities and e-commerce businesses.

From stocking shelves to delivering consumer goods to disinfecting public areas, essential workers ensured that people could buy necessities while remaining safe. Their presence has been critical in places like grocery stores, pharmacies, pet-food supplies and convenience stores.

## **LONG-DISTANCE TRUCK DRIVERS**

With Americans urged to stay home, truck drivers answered the call to ensure they delivered goods across the country. Without their dedication, grocery shelves would remain empty, gas stations would be inoperable and critical healthcare supplies could not reach the hands of medical professionals.

Those in charge of transporting items faced exposure to people in numerous industries ranging from retailers and petrochemicals to heavy equipment operators. Companies dedicated cleaning teams to ensuring their trucks were clean by sanitizing the rigs before and after deliveries, quarantining trailers and testing employees to stop the spread further.



# Technology's Role During COVID

While Americans were asked to socially distance from others, including their own family, we sought ways to keep in touch. We found solace in innovative apps and software, and creative minds used technology to document their appreciation for frontline workers.

By utilizing cutting-edge technology, people found ways to ease their need for human connection remotely.

Technology played a more significant role than only relieving stress for those in quarantine. It assisted professionals like doctors and teachers in continuing their essential jobs. Check out how advancements in video-call and internet capabilities aided an uncertain nation into a brighter future.

## STAYING CONNECTED

As Americans were encouraged to shelter in place, companionship between peers and family members was lacking. Fortunately, numerous software companies answered the call to beef up their support for video calls, multiplayer apps and innovative ways to spend time together.

Concerned family members of those infected with COVID-19 could safely check-in on their progress remotely and bring some positivity while facing a lonely quarantine process.

Others could fight the boredom by joining their peers with joint movie-watching ventures, watching in-home concerts performed by their



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favorite artists and enjoying conversations with their loved ones.

## VIRTUAL HEALTH AIDES

While much of the medical world's focus shifted to curbing the effects of COVID-19 on our citizens, non-infected patients still relied on essential services. Telehealth offers an innovative way for patients to receive care for non-life-threatening problems while avoiding in-person visits to hospitals or doctors' offices.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention encourages this type of

care to lessen the need for PPE, minimize the impact of patient surges and reduce the exposure to ill persons.

Thanks to real-time video or telephone calls, Americans seamlessly received guidance and relief for multiple medical conditions, including:

- Physical therapy sessions.
- Mental health diagnosis and therapies.
- COVID-19 symptom screenings.
- Coaching for chronic health conditions.
- Receiving prescriptions for numerous ailments.

## REMOTE LEARNING

Teachers and school districts were also forced to shift the traditional pace of education. While most of the country shut the doors of learning facilities, students remained in touch through online classes.

Virtual classroom lessons allowed young children to keep up with their state's educational requirements, spend time socializing with friends and be offered one-on-one contact with their educators for support, questions and even therapies.



# Where Do We Go From Here?

As the country continues its journey through the pandemic, pharmaceutical companies are creating vaccines at record paces.

Under Operation Warp Speed, the United States Food and Drug Administration approved the first vaccination in December 2020, less than a year after the first COVID-19 case was declared in the U.S.

As of the end of January 2021, about 10.6 million Americans had received at least their first dose. Unfortunately, the country recorded its highest number of monthly deaths from the virus in the same month, with over 95,000 lost Americans, up from approximately 77,000 in December.

Health and public officials encourage those most at risk to receive a vaccination before it is available to the masses. Here's what to expect regarding how to get a vaccine and what to anticipate.

## AVAILABLE VACCINES

As of the end of January 2021, the FDA had approved only two vaccinations deemed safe and effective to protect people. Check out how the two life-saving vaccines differ, as explained by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

• **Pfizer-BioNTech:** To obtain



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the most protective results, two doses are required, 21 days apart. The vaccine proved to be 95% effective in preventing COVID-19 and is considered safe for those 16 and older.

• **Moderna:** The vaccine requires two doses, 28 days apart. It showed 94.1% effectiveness in clinical studies and is considered safe for those 18 and older.

The CDC reports that multi-

ple potential vaccines are currently undergoing large-scale (phase three) clinical trials in the United States.

## MASS AVAILABILITY

According to Reuters, experts estimate that at least 70% of the roughly 330 million Americans require the vaccine before we can reach herd immunity. As developers work to up the country's inventory

and present new options, the CDC anticipates that mass availability will be possible around April of 2021.

## HOW COVID-19 VACCINES WORK

A new approach to vaccines was required to combat the widespread COVID-19 threat. Previous vaccinations triggered an immune response by introducing a weakened or inacti-

vated virus into our bodies. Today's mRNA concoctions work differently.

After injecting the medicine into a human's upper arm muscle, the fluid teaches our cells how to make a protein that produces antibodies. The harmless protectant, called a spike protein, is found on the surface of the virus that causes COVID-19 and prepares our bodies to fight off an infection.



# Support Local Businesses

Small businesses are often considered the backbone of America. They provide culture to neighborhoods and offer unique services.

According to the United States Census Bureau, they make up 99.7% of the country's employer firms.

Unfortunately, as COVID-19 roared through the nation in early 2020, health officials asked non-essential businesses to close their doors. Without the support of their customers, many were forced to shutter their operations permanently.

The virus's impact affected small businesses in almost every industry. The National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America surveyed more than 5,800 companies to find out their financial status. Here are a few of the staggering findings.

- On average, businesses reported having reduced their active employment by 39%.

- The median firm with monthly expenses over \$10,000 only had cash to withstand roughly two weeks of closures.

- About 41.3% of businesses reported that they were temporarily closed; 1.8% reported permanent closures related to COVID-19.



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- Seventy percent of respondents planned on requesting funding from the Paycheck Protection Program included in the CARES Act.

As the businesses around your community begin opening up, you can help welcome them back and encourage them to thrive by showing your support in multiple ways.

## SHOP LOCAL

Try your best to keep dollars in the local community by buying from vendors in the neighborhood. Check their websites for restrictions, as many still encourage social distancing by offering curbside pickups or home delivery. Look for ways to make your purchases online through their services and stay safe while

retrieving them to help lessen the spread and limit human interaction.

## INCREASE YOUR TIPS

Since most hospitality positions rely on tips to supplement their base income, paying more for services can help their bottom line. Consider increasing your contributions for servers and delivery work-

ers, even if you're only picking up a meal curbside.

## BE PATIENT

As small businesses push through adversity, many have relied on skeleton crews to continue their operations. Be patient if service is slow by planning for meals and waiting for items to become available for purchase.



# Achieving Better Mental Health

Americans were informed about the significant physical health risks introduced by COVID-19. The emotional toll of social distancing, loneliness and quarantining, however, may have had unexpected effects on our mental health.

If you're facing anxiety or emotional distress, find out how to manage your stress with these tips from the National Alliance on Mental Health.

## INFORMATION SOURCES

A significant measure to take when learning about COVID-19 is to gather information from reputable sources, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the World Health Organization.

Selective data consumption can help limit the misinformation you discover and calm your fears about information that may be false.

- Try to avoid spreading misinformation on social media by verifying sources as reputable outlets. Also, disregard data you find unless it can be verified.

- Rather than watching or listening to the same news



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source, consider reading your news to manage the amount of info you absorb.

- While it's imperative to stay up to date about health care guidelines, try to limit when and how long you consume news and information.

As a replacement for dedicating your time to digesting so much media, fill the void with

physical exercise and eating a healthy diet. Both are directly tied to your mood and can promote better mental health.

## REACH OUT FOR HELP

Whether you're worried for your own health or that of a loved one, or you lost a close family member throughout the pandemic, it's understandable

to become overwhelmed. Take advantage of remote organizations that offer support like Carson's Village or Grief Share. Ensuring you can share your concerns with like-minded peers will help you navigate the unexpected journey of grief.

If you need someone to speak to about managing your own fears, ask your doctor to

refer you to a personal counselor or call an emotional support hotline. It can also be beneficial to keep an open line of communication between your loved ones.

If you can't visit them physically and safely, try to hold regular conversations through phone calls or real-time video software.



# Pandemic's Impact on Sports

“Out of an abundance of caution,” which seemingly became a slogan for 2020, many professional sports leagues cut their seasons short as COVID-19 took hold in America.

Even as restrictions eased as the year progressed, games would be canceled or rescheduled, and players were placed on reserve lists after positive test results or exposure. Still, each major league sector worked through the adversity and made it to their championship game.

Sporting teams did their best to give the world a place to escape into a former sense of normalcy. From innovative new ways to watch at home, fake crowd noise and limiting attendance to safe numbers, fans found ways to get a break from reality and enjoy their favorite athletes.

Take a look back by reviewing this timeline regarding the COVID-19 response to sporting events reported by Sports Illustrated and CBS Sports.

## MARCH 2

With over 100 confirmed cases in the United States, the National College Players Association contemplated hosting the March Madness tournament without fans.

## MARCH 11

- The World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 virus a pandemic, leading to numerous subsequent events.

- The NBA and MLB considered alternative sites to host games.

- The NCAA announced its March Madness tournament would continue without fans.

- Utah Jazz's Rudy Gobert tested positive for coronavirus, inspiring the NBA to promptly suspend its season indefinitely.

## MARCH 12

- The NCAA men's and women's tournaments were canceled.

- After one round of the Players Championship, the PGA Tour postponed all events until the Masters, beginning April 9.

- The NHL suspended its season indefinitely.

- MLB announced that it would delay the beginning of its season for at least two weeks.

- Dana White, the UFC president, announced its upcoming Fight Night event would be

held without fans.

- The XFL temporarily postponed its rebooted inaugural season.

## MARCH 17

- Churchill Downs moved the Kentucky Derby from May 2 to September 5.

## MARCH 20

The XFL officially canceled its season, allowing players to sign with the NFL immediately.

## APRIL 23-25

- The NFL draft was held on

time, but remotely. It drew a record 15.6 million viewers, according to Nielsen.

## JUNE 4

- The NBA Board of Governors approved a 22-team schedule beginning July 31, where the league would compete within a bubble.

## JULY 23

- The MLB announced its 60-game season would host Opening Day and perform without fans.



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# Traveling Safely

With coronavirus cases trending downward, health officials are still urging Americans to stay home and limit their interactions with others. Unfortunately, life circumstances sometimes make traveling a necessity for business or personal reasons.

If you must travel, it's critical to be respectful of the local COVID-19 precautions and practice utmost safety measures to limit the spread.

Here are some factors to consider before traveling, as suggested by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

- Are you, someone in your household or someone you will be visiting at an increased risk of getting sick from a COVID-19 infection?

- Does your home or destination have requirements or restrictions for travelers?

- During the 14 days before your visit, have you or those you are seeing had close contact with people outside of the household?

- Are hospitals in your community or destination overwhelmed with patients who have contracted the virus?

Open a communication line with your intended visi-



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tors to ensure they are remaining safe and commit to practicing safety protocols yourself before traveling.

## DO YOU HAVE TO TRAVEL?

When staying home isn't an option, the CDC recommends that travelers get fully vaccinated for COVID-19 and wait at least two weeks before leaving for a trip. If you can't

receive the vaccination before your intended departure date, make sure to get tested for the virus at least one to three days ahead.

Since restrictions vary between states, you should also familiarize yourself with the requirements of your destination. Be prepared to pack extra masks, hand sanitizers and documents proving your negative test results or full

vaccination reports.

## TYPES OF TRAVEL

You can open yourself up to numerous safety risks depending on how you choose to travel. For instance, taking a road trip in a personal vehicle can limit the exposure you have to others. Still, you should carefully handle situations like stopping for gas or taking bathroom breaks.

When traveling on public transportation like an airplane or bus, prepare to stand in long lines while practicing social distance requirements of standing at least 6 feet apart.

Keep in mind that while distancing yourself from others is practical during short periods, extended flights may increase your risk of contracting the virus.