THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC has triggered both health and economic crises that are being felt disproportionately by women here in New Hampshire and across the globe. This pandemic has destabilized workers, families and communities and has exposed the fragility and inequality in our health care, economic and caregiving systems. While the rate of COVID-19 cases in New Hampshire remains one of the lowest in the country, women are predominantly on the frontlines of the virus shouldering the burden in the workplace and at home as caregivers to children and aging parents. At the same time, women are more likely than men to suffer negative health and economic consequences.

WOMEN ARE EXPERIENCING A HIGHER PERCENT OF COVID-19 CASES AND DEATHS

TOTAL COUNT CASES BY SEX

- **MALE**: 11,056 cases
- **FEMALE**: 12,371 cases


NH IS AMONG THE TOP 10 STATES FOR PERCENT OF FEMALE CASES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Female %</th>
<th>Male %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>57.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RI</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>54.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>53.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KY</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>53.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Gender/Sex COVID-19 Data Tracker (Data as of 11/23/20)

THE SEX DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 CASES varies significantly across all 50 states with a low of 35% of positive cases attributable to women in Texas and a high of 58% in Pennsylvania. At 53%, New Hampshire ranks among the top 10 states in the country for the gendered impact of the virus, above the national average of 52%.

TOTAL COUNT DEATHS BY SEX

- **MALE**: 271 cases
- **FEMALE**: 276 cases


NH IS ONE OF ONLY 7 STATES WITH A HIGHER PERCENT OF FEMALE DEATHS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Female %</th>
<th>Male %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RI</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>52.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>51.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>50.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>50.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Gender/Sex COVID-19 Data Tracker (Data as of 11/23/20)

THE SEX DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 DEATHS shows that mortality rates for men and women vary widely among US states, with the virus killing more men than women in all but 7 states. NH is among these 7 states ranking 5th highest in the country for percent of female deaths.

FIRST IN THE NATION FOR PERCENT OF COVID-19 DEATHS IN LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES: EVEN HIGHER FOR FEMALES

Residents of long-term care (LTC) facilities, such as nursing homes, have experienced a disproportionate share of COVID-19 deaths. New Hampshire has the highest share of LTC facility deaths in the U.S. at 82% of total state deaths. This number is even higher, at 90%, when looking at female deaths alone.

HEALTHCARE SUPPORT OCCUPATIONS

HEALTHCARE PRACTICIONER/TECHNICAL OCCUPATIONS

NH WOMEN ARE EXPERIENCING A HIGHER PREVALENCE OF COVID-19 CASES ACROSS MOST, BUT NOT ALL AGE GROUPS (Rate per 100,000 population)

Risk and gender disparity are most pronounced for women in the 20-29 and 80+ age groups. Given that a person’s age is a strong predictor of their risk of dying from COVID-19, this disparity contributes to the higher number of female deaths for women over age 80.

FEMALE WORKERS FACE INCREASED OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS

Women are disproportionately represented in occupations on the frontlines of the pandemic response with employment conditions that present higher exposure and greater risk of contracting COVID-19. These jobs are often physically demanding, lack flexibility and have fewer benefits and lower pay.

WOMEN AS PERCENTAGE OF ESSENTIAL WORKFORCE IN KEY OCCUPATIONAL SECTORS IN NH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Women as % of Essential Workforce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child care/social services</td>
<td>85.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocery, retail, convenience stores</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building/cleaning services</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public transit</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trucking, warehouse/postal service</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Center for Economic and Policy Research Analyzing ACS 2014-2018

THE WAGE GAP HAS MADE THINGS WORSE FOR WOMEN DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

During economic downturns and recessions, lost earnings due to the gender wage gap make women economically more vulnerable and add to financial hardship when women have less savings to cover emergencies or basic expenses when there is a sudden or unexpected loss of employment.

IN NH HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE, THE WAGE GAP PERSISTS

HEALTHCARE PRACTITIONER/TECHNICAL OCCUPATIONS

76% WOMEN
Includes Doctors, Dentists, Veterinarians, Laboratory technicians, MRI technologists, Registered Nurses, etc.

WOMEN OF COLOR ARE EXPERIENCING COVID-19 AT MUCH HIGHER RATES THAN WHITE WOMEN (Rate per 100,000 population)

Nationally recognized trends of greater COVID-19 risk for racial minority groups are present in New Hampshire. Among nearly all racial and ethnic groups, the risk is greater for women. Black or African American women are experiencing COVID-19 at a prevalence 3.3 times greater than white women and for Hispanic/Latinx women the rate is 3.4 times as great.

WOMEN OF COLOR ARE EXPERIENCING COVID-19 AT MUCH HIGHER RATES THAN WHITE WOMEN

IN NH RATE OF COVID-19 CASES BY AGE AND SEX


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MORE WOMEN HAVE LOST EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS

Men have fared much better in retaining employment and re-entering the workforce throughout the pandemic.

WOMEN’S SHARE OF UNEMPLOYMENT (PERCENT)

While women’s share of the unemployment insurance program in January 2020 was only 36%, by April their share had risen to 59%, reflecting larger job loss among women in NH compared with men. As the economy has reopened since late spring, some job growth has occurred, but women’s share of unemployment has remained uncharacteristically higher than men’s.

IN KEY NH INDUSTRIES, PERCENT OF WORKFORCE THAT IS FEMALE

Women are disproportionately or evenly represented in industries that are suffering the greatest job loss. Ironically, women’s jobs are simultaneously deemed “essential” but also more likely to be eliminated as the labor market responds to the recession and subsequent waves of the pandemic. Persistent job loss in these industries will have long-term impact on women’s earnings.

NUMBER OF NH JOBS IN SELECTED INDUSTRIES (JANUARY, APRIL AND SEPTEMBER 2020)

Source: NH Employment Security, NH Economic Conditions ELM 2020; by Industry and Number of Jobs, Seasonally Adjusted, October 13, 2020

*includes retail

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 1-Year Estimates - Public Use Microdata Sample, 2018
ACROSS THE U.S. PARENTS ARE SCRAMBLING, MOST RESPONSIBILITY FALLING ON WOMEN

Study after study has shown that in response to school, child care, and camp closings, as well as remote learning and reduced class sizes, significantly more women than men have reduced their work hours, left work to care for children, and spent more time on education and household tasks. The latest evidence shows that due to COVID-19 school and child care closures, mothers with young children have arranged reductions in their work hours that are four to five times greater than the reductions arranged by fathers.

IN NH LACK OF CHILDCARE HAS INCREASINGLY BEEN CITED AS A REASON FOR NOT WORKING

Over the span of the pandemic, and the onset of a new school year, the number of Granite State workers who are out of the labor force, citing child care as the primary reason for not working, has grown to more than 26,000. Nearly all of these individuals were women.

For women to re-enter the workforce and sustain employment, schools and child care centers will need to re-open fully and without interruption.

CONCLUSION

Women in New Hampshire are more vulnerable to COVID-19–related health and economic effects because of persistent gender and racial inequalities in our health care system and our economy. As our federal and state governments turn to longer-term recovery efforts, there is a need to center investments and solutions on those who have been most impacted by COVID-19 and the corresponding economic downturn. The needs of New Hampshire women, especially working mothers and women of color, demand greater attention and greater investment.

Without intervention to address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19, women’s progress will continue to decline. This will not just set back the cause of gender equality, but also will hold back the state’s economic recovery and deny women and their families an equitable share of future opportunity and prosperity. Bold action now toward more equitable health, economic and caregiving systems will help reverse these declines in women’s health and financial security and more rapidly restore economic growth and family incomes.

ENDNOTES


We invest in opportunity and equality for women and girls in New Hampshire through research, education, advocacy, grantmaking, and philanthropy.