

# The **Mississippi Survey**// of **Knowledge, Attitudes + Practices** //Concerning **COVID-19**

## KEY FINDINGS

Most Mississippians report maintaining social distance and staying at home in order to slow the spread of COVID-19, although some demographic groups are doing better at this than others. Also, more than a third of adults who smoke or vape have made at least one serious attempt to quit since March 1st. However, more than a third of Mississippi adults have an underlying health condition that might put them at high risk for complications with coronavirus. More than a quarter of adults who had a job at the beginning of March are laid off or furloughed; these lost jobs are impacting more vulnerable populations.

## SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Almost all Mississippians (**94.0%**) report that they are practicing social distancing
  - Women (**96.3%**) were more likely than men (**91.4%**) to do so,  $p < .001$ .
  - Younger adults between the ages of 18-24 (**87.8%**) were less likely to do so than adults ages 25-44 (**93.6%**), 45-64 (**94.6%**), and 65 and older (**95.6%**),  $p = .034$ .
  - Adults with less than a high school education (**91.2%**) and who ended their education with a high school diploma (**91.3%**) are less likely to report that they are practicing social distancing than those who completed some college (**96.4%**) or have a college degree (**96.4%**),  $p = .002$ .
- Most Mississippians (**81.5%**) report that they are staying at home except for necessities such as groceries and medications.
  - Women (**88.4%**) were more likely than men (**73.5%**) to stay at home;  $p < .001$ .
  - Republicans (**79.5%**) were less likely to do so than Democrats (**87.6%**) and Independents (**79.3%**),  $p = .006$ .

## SOCIAL DISTANCING // CONTINUED -----

- Younger adults between the ages of 18-24 (**68.7%**) were less likely to do so than adults ages 25-44 (**81.0%**), 45-64 (**80.6%**), and 65 and older, (**86.4%**),  $p=.034$ .
  - White adults (**80.3%**) were less likely to stay at home than black adults (**84.8%**),  $p=.045$ .
  - Adults in households with an income of less than \$20,000 per year (**89.0%**) were more likely to do so than those with incomes greater than \$20,000 (**78.5%**),  $p<.001$ .
  - Adults who do not vape (**82.1%**) were more likely to stay at home than those who vape (**72.2%**),  $p=.028$ .
- Most Mississippi adults believe that social distancing is effective. When asked, “How effective do you think social distancing is for decreasing the spread of the coronavirus?” **57.7%** reported very effective, **35.7%** reported moderately effective, and only **6.6%** reported not effective.
    - Women (**62.4%**) were more likely than men (**52.0%**) to report very effective,  $p<.001$ .
    - Democrats (**65.4%**) were more likely than Republicans (**52.4%**) and Independents (**52.7%**) to report very effective,  $p=.001$ .
    - Confidence in the effectiveness of social distancing increases with age. Younger adults between the ages of 18-24 (**44.8%**), ages 25-44 (**49.1%**), 45-64 (**58.4%**), and 65 and older (**71.7%**) believed social distancing to be very effective,  $p<.001$ .
    - Nonsmokers (**59.0%**) are more likely than smokers (**51.8%**) to see social distancing as very effective,  $p=.007$ .
    - Adults who do not vape (**58.7%**) are more likely than adults who vape to think so (**43.4%**),  $p=.014$ .
    - Adults in households with an income of less than \$20,000 per year (**61.3%**) were more likely to think so than those with incomes greater than \$20,000 (**54.6%**),  $p=.01$ .
  - Almost two thirds of adults are confident that the state government will be able to handle a major outbreak of the coronavirus. When asked, “How confident are you that the state government will be able to handle a major outbreak of the coronavirus?” **22.0%** reported very confident, **42.2%** reported somewhat confident, **21.5%** reported not too confident, and **14.3%** reported not confident at all.

## SOCIAL DISTANCING // CONTINUED

- Women (**67.4%**) were more likely than men (**60.9%**) to report very confident or somewhat confident,  $p < .001$ .
- Republicans (**82.0%**) were more likely to report at least somewhat confident than Democrats (**52.3%**) and Independent (**51.5%**),  $p < .001$
- Confidence in the state government increases with age. Younger adults between the ages of 18-24 (**44.0%**), ages 25-44 (**56.7%**), 45-64 (**69.1%**), and 65 and older (**72.9%**) report at least somewhat confident,  $p < .001$ .
- White adults (**73.4%**) were more confident in state government than black adults (**49.1%**),  $p < .001$ .
- Adults in households with an income of less than \$20,000 per year (**57.6%**) were less confident than those with incomes greater than \$20,000 (**65.7%**),  $p = .01$ .

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Almost two thirds of Mississippi adults (**62.7%**) were employed at the beginning of March; although, employment was higher among some demographic groups.
  - Men (**71.8%**) were more likely than females (**55.4%**) to have a job,  $p < .001$ .
  - Republicans (**60.3%**) and Democrats (**59.5%**) were less likely to have a job than Independents (**71.7%**),  $p = .001$ .
  - Employment varied by age. Younger adults between the ages of 18-24 (**73.7%**), ages 25-44 (**88.2%**), 45-64 (**68.9%**), and 65 and older (**20.0%**) reported employment,  $p < .001$ .
  - Likelihood of employment increased with education - (**44.0%**) for adults with less than a high school education, (**59.5%**) for those who ended their education with a high school diploma, (**66.2%**) for those who completed some college, and (**72.5%**) for those who have a college degree,  $p < .001$ .
  - Adults in households with an income of less than \$20,000 per year (**50.7%**) were less likely to have a job than those with incomes greater than \$20,000 (**70.6%**),  $p < .001$ .
- Since the beginning of March, **28.5%** of Mississippi adults have become unemployed or furloughed due to lay-offs.
  - Women (**35.1%**) were more likely to have been laid-off than men (**22.4%**),  $p < .001$ .

## ECONOMIC IMPACT // CONTINUED

- Democrats (**32.5%**) and Independents (**36.9%**) were more likely to have been laid-off than Republicans (**19.6%**),  $p < .001$ .
- Lay-offs were more common among younger adults between the ages of 18-24 (**36.6%**) and those between ages 25-44 (**34.5%**) than adults between ages 45-64 (**21.6%**) and 65 and older (**21.3%**),  $p = .001$ .
- White adults (**22.8%**) were less likely to have been laid-off than black adults (**37.8%**),  $p < .001$ .
- Lay-offs decreased as education increased; **31.9%** of adults with less than a high school education, **37.2%** of those who ended their education with a high school diploma, **29.8%** of those who completed some college, and **15.2%** of those who have a college degree reported being laid-off since the beginning of March,  $p < .001$
- Adults in households with an income of less than \$20,000 per year (**51.0%**) were more likely to be laid-off than those with incomes greater than \$20,000 (**23.3%**),  $p < .001$ .

## COVID-19 & HEALTH

- More than a third of Mississippi adults (**38.6%**) have an underlying health condition that might put them at high risk for complications with coronavirus.
  - Women (**45.4%**) are more likely than men (**31.1%**) to report an underlying health condition,  $p < .001$ .
  - Independents (**32.6%**) are less likely than Republicans (**40.2%**) and Democrats (**43.1%**) to have underlying health conditions,  $p = .018$ .
  - Underlying health conditions increase with age. Younger adults between the ages of 18-24 (**12.1%**), ages 25-44 (**22.4%**), 45-64 (**40.7%**), and 65 and older (**64.0%**) reported underlying health conditions,  $p < .001$ .
  - Adults with less than a high school education (**50.6%**) are more likely to have an underlying health condition than those who ended their education with a high school diploma (**37.0%**), those who completed some college (**37.3%**), and **36.3%** of those who have a college degree (**36.3%**),  $p = .013$ .
  - Adults in households with an income of less than \$20,000 per year (**45.7%**) were more likely to have underlying health conditions than those with incomes greater than \$20,000 (**35.8%**),  $p = .003$ .
  - Adults who do not vape (**39.8%**) are more likely than adults who vape to have underlying health conditions (**21.5%**),  $p = .001$ .

## COVID-19 & HEALTH // CONTINUED

- Since the beginning of March, **6.9%** of Mississippi adults reported having experienced symptoms of coronavirus such as fever, dry persistent cough, or difficulty breathing.
  - The prevalence of reported symptoms varied by age. Younger adults between the ages of 18-24 (**3.1%**), ages 25-44 (**10.8%**), 45-64 (**5.4%**), and 65 and older (**4.4%**) reported symptoms,  $p=.001$ .
  - Adults who vape (**12.7%**) are more likely than adults who do not vape to report symptoms (**6.5%**),  $p=.038$ .
- Stress refers to a situation where a person feels tense, restless, nervous, anxious, or is unable to sleep at night because their mind is troubled. Mississippi adults are experiencing different levels of stress because of the coronavirus situation; **15.2%** report often feeling stress, **23.6%** report sometimes feeling stress, **16.0%** report seldomly feeling stress, and **45.3%** report never feeling stress. Levels of stress vary by demographic groups.
  - Women (**19.6%**) are more likely to report feeling stress often than men (**10.0%**),  $p<.001$ .
  - Feeling stress often also varies by party affiliation - Republicans (**11.3%**), Democrats (**14.3%**), and Independents (**20.1%**),  $p=.007$
  - And by age, younger adults between the ages of 18-24 (**19.0%**), ages 25-44 (**15.0%**), 45-64 (**18.7%**), and 65 and older (**10.3%**) reported feeling stress often,  $p=.001$ .
  - Black adults (**18.5%**) were more likely to report feeling stress often than white adults (**12.6%**),  $p=.01$
  - Feeling stress varied with educational attainment - (**14.4%**) for adults with less than a high school education, (**16.5%**) for those who ended their education with a high school diploma, (**16.4%**) for those who completed some college, and (**12.0%**) for those who have a college degree,  $p=.001$ .
  - Adults in households with an income of less than \$20,000 per year (**21.9%**) were more likely to report feeling stress often than those with incomes greater than \$20,000 (**12.9%**),  $p=.001$ .
  - Cigarette smokers (**21.1%**) were more likely to report feeling stress often than nonsmokers (**13.9%**),  $p=.003$ .
- More than a third of adults who reported symptoms<sup>1</sup> (**37.2%**) were tested for coronavirus.
- Among those who were tested<sup>2</sup>, **14.2%** reported that the test was positive, **83.0%** reported negative, and **2.9%** were still waiting for results.

## ATTEMPTS AT TOBACCO CESSATION - - - - -

- A third of cigarette smokers<sup>3</sup> (**33.5%**) have quit smoking for one day or longer because they were trying to quit since the beginning of March.
  - Democrats (**40.0%**) and Independents (**43.2%**) were more likely to make a quit attempt than Republicans (**24.7%**),  $p=.031$
  - Black adults (**47.3%**) were more likely to make a quit attempt than white adults (**25.5%**),  $p=.001$ .
- More than a third of adults who vape<sup>4</sup> (**38.2%**) have quit vaping for one day or longer because they were trying to quit since the beginning of March.

## BACKGROUND & METHODS - - - - -

### Purpose

In collaboration with the Survey Research Laboratory (SRL) at Mississippi State University, Mississippi Tobacco Data at the Social Science Research Center designed a telephone-based survey to assess knowledge, attitudes and practices concerning social distancing as well as confidence in the state's ability to handle the coronavirus outbreak. Additionally, the survey focused on the social distancing practices of tobacco users, given the evidence that tobacco use may increase the risk of COVID-19 infection and complications from this disease. Funding for this project was provided by the Mississippi State Department of Health's Office of Tobacco Control.

### Method

Telephone interviews with adult respondents (age 18 or older) residing in the state of Mississippi were conducted from April 14 through April 22, 2020 by the Siena College Research Institute. The survey administration secured a total of 1,274 completed interviews. In order to provide a probability-based sample representative of all households in Mississippi, a dual-frame RDD (Random-Digit-Dialing) sampling methodology was employed, whereby both landline and cellular telephone numbers were used to contact eligible adults. Telephone numbers were dialed a maximum of eight (8) times before being retired. Data were weighted by age, gender, education and race.

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<sup>1</sup> n=88

<sup>2</sup> n=33

<sup>3</sup> n=240

<sup>4</sup> n=100, note that there were not enough adults who vape in this sample to examine demographic differences in cessation attempts.

## BACKGROUND & METHODS // CONTINUED -----

### Variables & Analyses

Two questions were used to assess the current cigarette smoking status of respondents. Respondents were asked, “Have you smoked at least 100 cigarettes in your entire life?” Respondents who reported that they had then were asked, “Do you now smoke cigarettes every day, some days, or not at all?” Respondents who reported that they now smoke every day or some days were categorized as current cigarette smokers.

Two questions were used to assess the current vaping status. Respondents were asked, “Have you ever tried an e-cigarette or vaping device?” Respondents who reported that they had then were asked, “How often do you currently use an e-cigarette or vaping device? Would you say daily or almost daily; less than daily, but at least once a week; less than weekly, but at least once a month; less than monthly; or not at all?” Respondents who reported using an e-cigarette at least once in the past month or more frequently were categorized as current vapers.

Chi-square analyses were used to compare differences across demographic groups. Associations were considered significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

### LIMITATIONS

Some caution is warranted in the interpretation of these results. The findings of this study are subject to some limitations. First, although the survey responses were weighted by age, gender, education and race, telephone surveys may result in the underrepresentation of “unknown” populations. Second, results were based on self-reports and may be impacted by social desirability biases. Finally, many of the demographic variables are correlated. To illustrate, race and political party affiliation is highly correlated among Mississippi adults. Also, younger adults are much more likely to vape than older adults. Some apparent relationships - such as fewer adults who vape reporting underlying health conditions - may be due to age, rather than vaping.

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