



# The Impact of COVID-19 on the Mental Health of Frontline Healthcare Workers Across Texas and Their Communication With the Community

Isabelle Nguyen, Maybelline Granados.

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

How can we recover and prepare from a global pandemic devastation? The CHWI conducted a statewide survey among frontline healthcare workers, including community health workers to explore how their lives and professional work has been impacted by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID -19).

The reality of the impact in all aspects would not be fully calculated (Lorenzoni, Stühlinger, Stummer, & Raich, 2020). We will have to wait until several years after this life-time altering event which impacted everyone currently living on this planet, babies born during the pandemic and perhaps born in the next couple of years. The state of Texas, was declared a state of disaster due to COVID-19 in March 2020. In less than a week, many of our frontline health care professionals, including CHWs.

CHWs serve as liaisons between the community, health care, and social services. Like any frontline worker, CHWs work in close contact with the community, helping people get access to services they may need and building capacity at the individual, community, and system level. Activities to engage with the community such as outreach, community health education and information, and patient navigation and follow-up are implemented by CHWs to increase health knowledge and self-sufficiency in the community they serve. To successfully increase capacity, CHWs must have good understanding of the culture, language, socioeconomic status, life experiences, and other characteristics of the community they serve. In addition to understanding the community they serve; it is important to have strong communication skills to effectively convey information and gain the trust of the community.

### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate frontline healthcare workers' personal experiences about how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted them and the community they serve.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

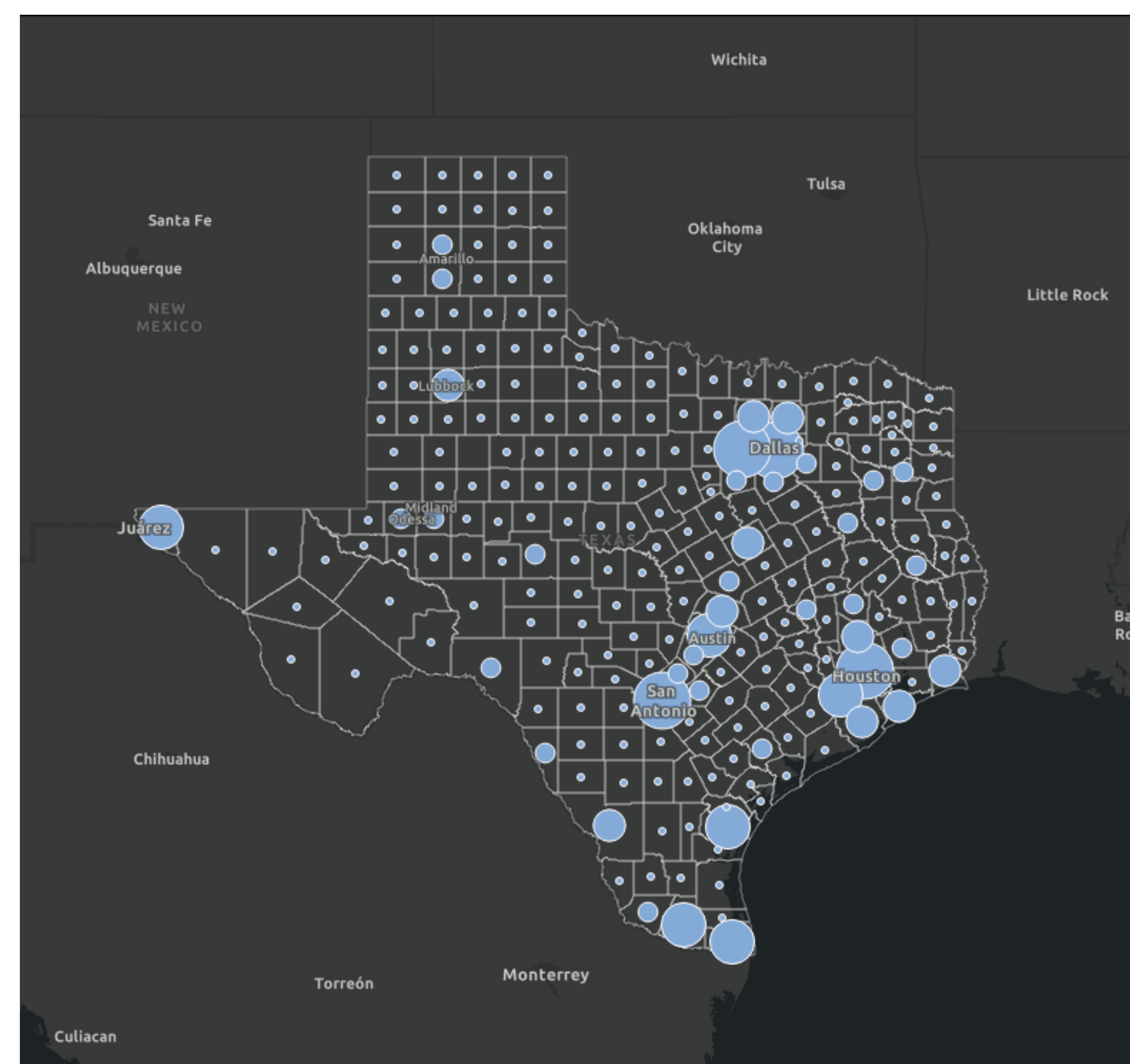
University Houston Community Health Worker Initiative  
Data & Society Minor – Honors College  
Mentor: Donají Stelzig, DrPH

## ABOUT University of Houston – CHW Training Center

The UH Community Health Workers Initiative started in 2015 under Dr. Price's direction. The training center within the CHW offers a 160-hour certification course approved by the Texas Department of State Health (DSHS, 2021). It is also approved to provide continuing education hours towards the renewal for both CHW and CHW instructors. Throughout the course students learn to develop logic models, social determinants of health, motivational interviewing, program evaluation and other community health topics.

## COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS INITIATIVE

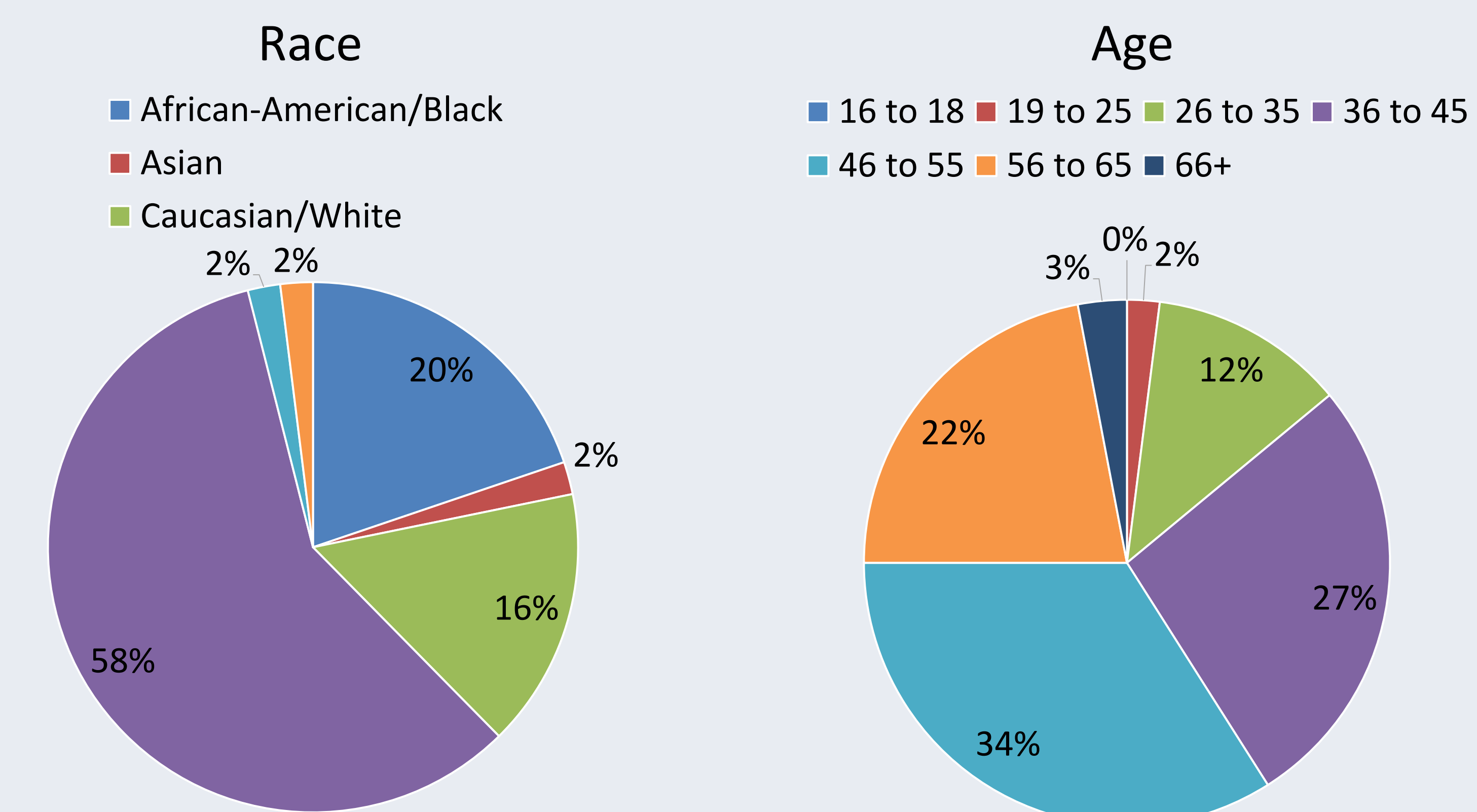
### Map of Respondents



## METHODS

**Participants:** N= 275 frontline healthcare workers via DSHS  
Ages ranged from 16-65+  
**Procedure:** Principal Investigator and research team developed an online survey available in English and Spanish (IRB STUDY00002326) was distributed to participants via CHW Listserv the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). One free response question asked how COVID-19 has impacted (respondents) frontline healthcare workers.  
**Analysis:** After reading all the responses, we identified main topics and then answers were grouped by main topic. Responses in Spanish followed the same process.

## Demographics



## RESULTS

These results reflect the responses that were received and match the following categories. Categories were selected based on the context of the responses received.

	Count	Percentage (%)
Still need to work face-to-face, stressful	66	20
Mental health needed, worried, fear	35	11
Lack of trust w/patients, no direct contact	80	24
Providing resources virtually – telephone, video calls, telehealth	89	27

## DISCUSSION

What is next? More preparation needs to be in place. As we recognize the needs that CHWs have communicated during these narratives, we must push for mental health and technological resources to combat the challenges brought on by COVID-19. By providing these types of resources, frontline workers will be better equipped to serve the community and at the same time take care of their own health and well-being during this devastating event.

## REFERENCES

Lorenzoni, N., Stühlinger, V., Stummer, H., & Raich, M. (2020). Long-Term Impact of Disasters on the Public Health System: A Multi-Case Analysis. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(17), 6251. doi:10.3390/ijerph17176251  
Texas Department of Health State Services. (2021, Feb. 22). *Community Health Workers*. Retrieved March 3, 2021 from <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/chw/chw.aspx>