# Providing Support During the COVID-19 Pandemic

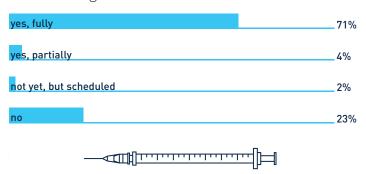
Direct Support Workforce 12-month follow-up survey | Iowa version

Direct support workers provide an array of critical supports making it possible for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to live, work, and thrive in their communities. The pandemic has affected this work in many ways. This survey, completed by 535 respondents, comprising direct support professionals (DSPs) and frontline supervisors (FLSs) from lowa, gathered

information about the experiences of DSPs related to the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccine availability. Vaccinations are a key way to prevent COVID-19 from spreading and prevent severe infections and hospitalizations. It was completed between June 1-July 23, 2021. The results are intended to inform efforts to support public health and prepare for future waves of the pandemic.

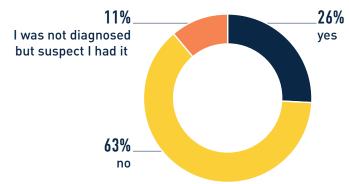
#### **VACCINATION STATUS**

Respondents reported whether they were vaccinated against COVID-19.



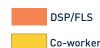
#### **COVID-19 DIAGNOSIS**

Respondents reported whether they were diagnosed with COVID-19.



## REASONS FOR VACCINATION HESITANCY

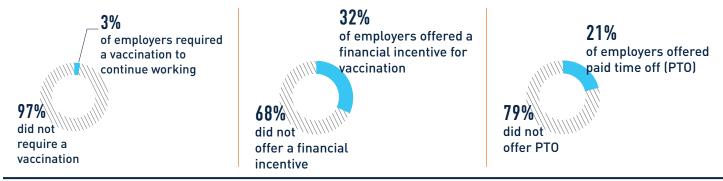
If respondents were not vaccinated, they were asked to report any reasons that affected their decision (indicated by the darker bar). They also reported on any reasons that their coworkers are hesitant to get vaccinated (indicated by the lighter bar).



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#### REQUIREMENTS AND INCENTIVES

Employers of respondents utilized a number of strategies to ensure that workers were not contracting or spreading COVID-19. Respondents reported whether their employer required vaccinations and provided a financial incentive or paid time off for them to get their vaccine.

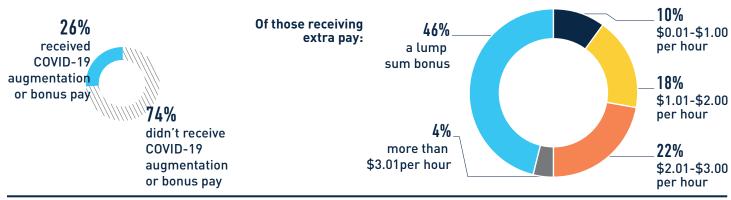


#### **WAGES**

Respondents reported on their wages before the pandemic and whether they received extra pay for pandemic-related risks. Many received extra pay, although states and businesses had varying levels of access to additional dollars to compensate essential workers.



\*This is higher than the national median wage of 12/hour due to respondents including DSPs and FLSs and having worked in their positions for more than 3 years.



#### SCHEDULES AND STAFFING

Respondents were asked to report on how the pandemic affected the number of hours they worked, where and when they worked, and how their role may have shifted.

work more hours per week	29	<b>9</b> %
work fewer hours per week	59	%
work different shirts	26	6%
work in different settings	23	3%
providing supports to different people	18	8%
additional responsibilities/different roles	43	3%
furloughed/laid off/unemployed/facility closed	19	%
working remotely/telehealth	11	1%

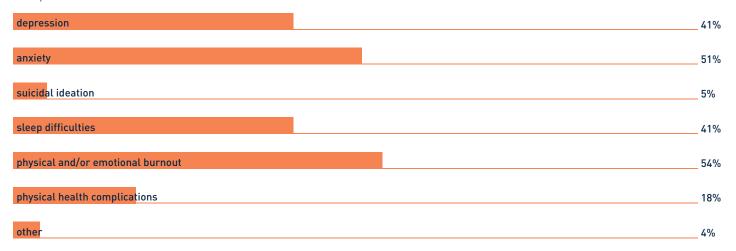
#### REASONS FOR LEAVING POSITION

The pandemic affected many aspects of peoples' lives and their ability to work. Respondents reported on reasons that they or their co-workers were no longer working in direct support.

testing positive for COVID-19	11%
quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure	10%
fear of becoming infected	15%
childcare issues (e.g. daycare closed)	13%
fear of infecting others	7%
family reasons (e.g. caring for someone with health issues, homeschooling children	17%

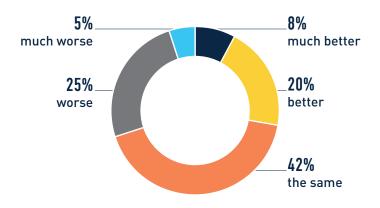
### RESULTS OF PANDEMIC ON DIRECT SUPPORT WORKERS

Respondents reported whether they have experienced any mental or physical health concerns as a result of the pandemic.



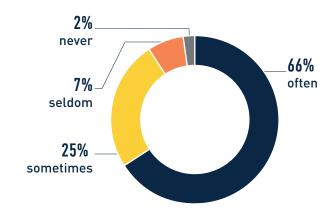
#### **WORK LIFE BALANCE**

Respondents were asked to gauge the quality of their work life compared to the beginning of the pandemic.



# PEOPLE SUPPORTED VISITING FAMILY & FRIENDS IN-PERSON

Respondents reported how frequently people they support visit family or friends in person.



#### ISOLATION DURING THE PANDEMIC

Many people experienced social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Respondents were asked about the consequences of increased isolation on the people they supported.

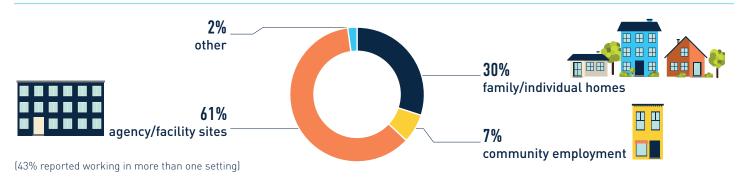
difficulty addressing dietary issues	18%
difficulty addressing pain management	7%
other health issues	12%
decreased exercise	56%
miss going out into the community	74%
increased behavior issues	52%
increase mood swings and/or depression	53%
more anxiety	55%
boredom	70%
loneliness	46%
academic concerns	6%

# DEMOGRAPHICS, ROLE, AND SETTING

Respondents self-reported demographic information and the primary setting where they worked.







Please contact Jerry Smith with questions at smith495@umn.edu. View the full report at z.umn.edu/dsp-covid19. Funded by grant #90RTCP0003 from the National Institute on Disability Independent Living Rehabilitation Research and cooperative agreement #90DDUC0070 from the Administration on Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

