

Mindy M. Kim, Caleb Sokolowski, Neethi Sriranga
Wayne State University School of Medicine

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the lives of millions of people in the United States with low-income communities being most adversely impacted. In addition to the higher mortality rates in low-income black communities, these patients may also be at risk of being overlooked as their regular streams of assistance may be disrupted.¹ As a result of this, a case study was completed of a middle-aged African American woman in Detroit, Michigan. The purpose of this study is to investigate the health disparities and shortcomings of the healthcare system experienced by a low-income at-risk woman in Detroit during the COVID-19 pandemic.

METHODS

A 14-question survey was conducted via phone. The patient was asked to compare her needs before and after COVID-19. Below are interview questions used to compile list of various shortcomings she experienced during COVID-19.

Qualitative Interview Questions During COVID-19

1. Do you have any chronic health challenges that benefits from specific dietary requirements or restrictions?
2. What challenges did you face with meeting these dietary requirements or restrictions prior to COVID-19?
3. How have your challenges meeting these requirements changed due to COVID-19?
4. How many days a week can you eat your normal meals/snacks with the amount of food that you currently have in your home?
5. Since quarantine started, were you worried about running out of food before you got money/resources to buy more?
6. Do you have the financial resources needed to pay household bills, rent/mortgage during COVID-19?
7. What challenges did you face with transportation prior to COVID-19?
8. How has your access to transportation changed since the implementation of restrictions due to the COVID-19?
9. What challenges did you face with accessing health care prior to COVID-19?
10. How has your access to health care changed since the implementation of restrictions due to the COVID-19?

RESULTS

Needs Exacerbated by COVID-19: Transportation, Employment, Food supply, and Healthcare access. There are many unmet needs due to COVID-19 in low-income disadvantaged communities. These communities are affected to the greatest extent as they not only bear the greatest weight of disease, but also lose access to community resources that they need for survival. It is apparent that this patient lost many essential resources, which had a compounding, deleterious effect on her health and well being.

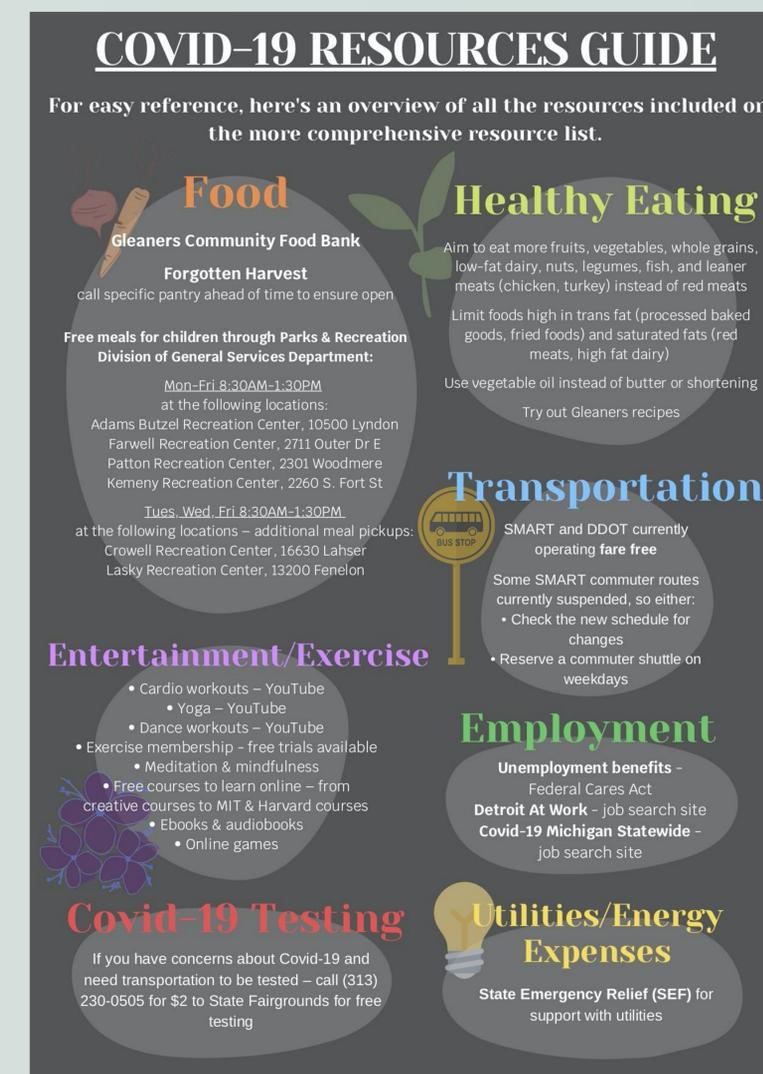


DISCUSSION

Although further studies are warranted on this topic, patients would benefit from having resources given to them from their physician. We encourage physicians to be proactive about reaching out to their patients to better understand their unique challenges and offer resources. The healthcare system has the ability to help mitigate many patient needs, and healthcare professionals should take the initiative to engage deeply with their patients and deliver holistic care. Primary care offices should work to provide resources for their patients in times of crisis where their streams of assistance may be disrupted.

DISCUSSION CONT.

This patient was given a resource guide with information for food pantries, public transportation, and unemployment benefits.



COVID-19 RESOURCES GUIDE

For easy reference, here's an overview of all the resources included on the more comprehensive resource list.

- Food**
 - Gleaners Community Food Bank
 - Forgotten Harvest - call specific pantry ahead of time to ensure open
 - Free meals for children through Parks & Recreation Division of General Services Department:
 - Mon-Fri 8:30AM-1:30PM at the following locations: Adams Butzel Recreation Center, 10500 Lyndon Farwell Recreation Center, 2711 Outer Dr E Patton Recreation Center, 2301 Woodmere Kemery Recreation Center, 2260 S. Fort St
 - Tues, Wed, Fri 8:30AM-1:30PM at the following locations - additional meal pickups: Crowell Recreation Center, 16630 Lahser Lasky Recreation Center, 13200 Fenelon
- Healthy Eating**
 - Aim to eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, nuts, legumes, fish, and leaner meats (chicken, turkey) instead of red meats
 - Limit foods high in trans fat (processed baked goods, fried foods) and saturated fats (red meats, high fat dairy)
 - Use vegetable oil instead of butter or shortening
 - Try out Gleaners recipes
- Transportation**
 - SMART and DDOT currently operating fare free
 - Some SMART commuter routes currently suspended, so either:
 - Check the new schedule for changes
 - Reserve a commuter shuttle on weekdays
- Entertainment/Exercise**
 - Cardio workouts - YouTube
 - Yoga - YouTube
 - Dance workouts - YouTube
 - Exercise membership - free trials available
 - Meditation & mindfulness
 - Free courses to learn online - from creative courses to MIT & Harvard courses
 - Ebooks & audiobooks
 - Online games
- Employment**
 - Unemployment benefits - Federal Cares Act
 - Detroit At Work - job search site
 - Covid-19 Michigan Statewide - job search site
- Utilities/Energy Expenses**
 - State Emergency Relief (SEF) for support with utilities
- Covid-19 Testing**
 - If you have concerns about Covid-19 and need transportation to be tested - call (313) 230-0505 for \$2 to State Fairgrounds for free testing

REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. Millett GA, Jones AT, Benkeser D, Baral S, Mercer L, Beyrer C, Honermann B, Lankiewicz E, Mena L, Crowley JS, Sherwood J, Sullivan P, Assessing Differential Impacts of COVID-19 on Black Communities, Annals of Epidemiology (2020), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annepidem.2020.05.003>.

We would like to acknowledge Daeryl Amponin, Samadhi Kiridena, Tyler Peterson, and Amber Reynolds for their contributions on the Resource Guide.