

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: COVID-19-National Health Interview Survey- Early Release Data

Almost a year and a half into the COVID-19 pandemic, researchers are finding out new information about the long-term impacts of coronavirus daily. The recently popularized term “long haulers” describes people with long-term symptoms of COVID-19, even after recovery, and recent data from the National Center for Health Statistics (NHIS) shows the effects are both physical and mental. Data collected between April and June of 2019, indicated 11 percent of Americans experienced anxiety or depression. During the same time in 2020 when COVID-19 really hit the U.S., the CDC reported 35.6 percent of Americans had symptoms of anxiety or depression. A study published in the Lancet Psychiatry found that 1 in 3 patients who recovered from COVID-19 later developed neurological or psychiatric conditions within 6 months of infection. Topping the list was anxiety and depression.

The NHIS provides estimates for selected mental health indicators based on self-report of the frequency of anxiety and depression symptoms. They are derived from responses to the first two questions of the eight-item Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-2) and the seven-item Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-2) scale. In the PHQ-2, survey respondents are asked about how often in the last two weeks they have been bothered by 1) having little interest or pleasure in doing things, and 2) feeling down, depressed, or hopeless. In the GAD-2, survey respondents are asked about how often the respondent has been bothered by 1) feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge, and 2) not being able to stop or control worrying. For each scale, the answers are assigned a numerical value: not at all = 0, several days = 1, more than half the days = 2, and nearly every day = 3. The two responses for each scale are added together.

The percentages of adults who had reported symptoms of anxiety or depression that resulted in scale scores equal to three or greater have symptoms that generally occur more than half the days or nearly every day. These estimates are being published prior to final data editing and final weighting to provide benchmarks for recent mental health estimates derived from the U.S. Census Bureau’s Household Pulse Survey. The Household Pulse Survey is an experimental data system started in April 2020 to produce data on the social and economic impacts of COVID-19 on U.S. households. The Pulse Survey included

similar questions on mental health, but the timeframe was limited to the last 7 days rather than the last 2 weeks. Unlike NHIS, the Pulse Survey is not a health survey; rather, it is framed as a survey about changes in finances, employment, health, and education due to coronavirus specifically. The Pulse Survey is administered via an online questionnaire, and its representativeness and potential biases have not yet been fully evaluated. Based on Pulse Survey data from May 14-19, 2020, 28.2% of adults in the U.S. had symptoms of anxiety disorder, 24.4% had symptoms of depressive disorder, and 33.9% had symptoms of one or both disorders in the prior 7 days.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people are seeking mental health treatment and in huge numbers largely related to COVID and all the other different kinds of symptoms that COVID long haulers experience can really impact and change your wellness in general. Trauma researchers maintain is not uncommon for individuals to develop a mental illness after being diagnosed with a chronic illness. It often stems from people coming to terms with not being able to do the things they once enjoyed. This can lead to anxiety, social anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress. It is recommended that those who are struggling seek mental health treatment, take care of their physical bodies, communicate with family—and seek out support groups. It is especially important for family members of people who may be experiencing these mental health impacts to keep in mind that they may appear to be fully recovered on the outside, while still working to overcome these issues internally.

There are various kinds of trauma based modalities that are focused in helping individuals work with the impact on the body, and help the body and the mind to heal in a way that the whole like being becomes more resilient. As you become more resilient overall, then that's going to help your overall wellbeing and this could help your immune system, it's going to help every part of your physical self to also deal with the illness.

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is a principal agency of the U.S. Federal Statistical System, which provides statistical information to guide actions and policies to improve the public health of the American people. NCHS is one of the principal statistical agencies in the federal government and overseen by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is a federal agency that conducts and supports health promotion, prevention and preparedness activities in the United States, with the goal of improving overall public health. To learn more about the CDC please visit www.cdc.gov.

To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more about the COVID-19 Epidemic and its correlation to increased mental illness, alcohol and substance use at www.safeglencove.org.