



DATA SLICE #30

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COVID-19 Reduced Outpatient Visits by up to 70% in the US

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The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in challenges for outpatient providers due to patients' fear of contagion, the need for physical distancing, and cancellation of elective procedures. Using data from the CDC's Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network 2010-2020, we show that the COVID-19 pandemic started to reduce outpatient visits during the week of March 15-21st, 2020. The effect on visits peaked during the week of April 5-11th, 2020, when the pandemic reduced total outpatient visits per provider by 70% relative to the same week in prior years. The impact on outpatient visits declined over time, and by the week of June 28-July 4, 2020, there was no longer any difference in total visits per provider relative to the same week in prior years. As we enter another period of rising COVID-19 cases in the fall of 2020, it is critical that outpatient providers avoid disruptions in visits given that lapses in health care receipt can have negative implications for patient's health.

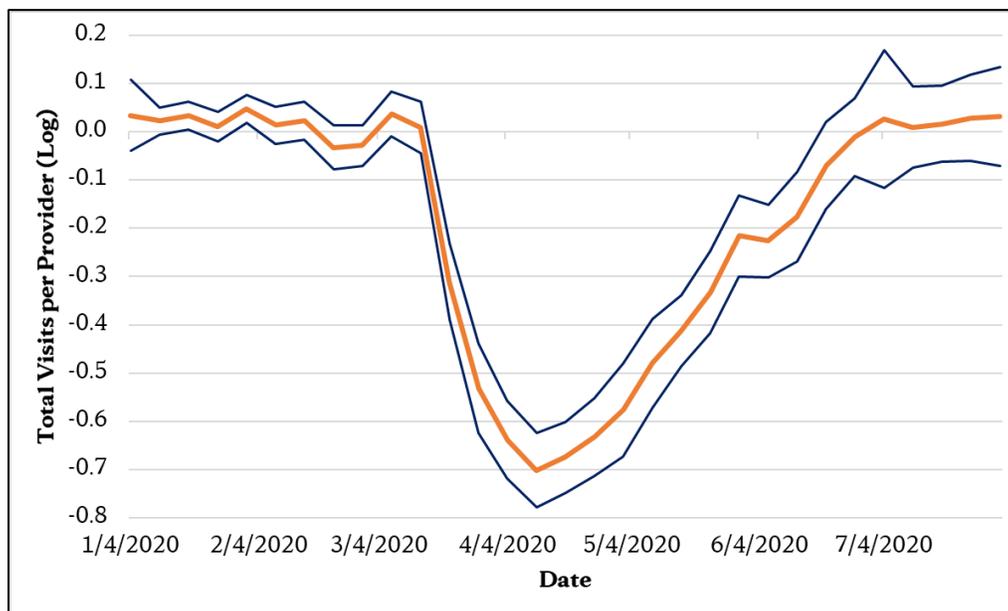


Figure 1: Weekly Trends in Outpatient Visits in 2020 Relative to the Same Week in 2010-19

Notes: The figure reports the weekly change in 2020 outpatient visits relative to the same week in prior years (2010-2019) controlling for flu season fixed effects and state fixed effects. The blue lines show the 95% confidence interval. Standard errors are clustered at the state-flu season level. Data are from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. To read more about the data, methods, and findings from this research, visit the [peer-reviewed paper](#).

About the Authors

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