



## ***Mental Health Among Parents of Children Aged <18 Years and Unpaid Caregivers of Adults During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, December 2020 and February–March 2021***

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### **OVERVIEW:**

ARCHANGELS today released a national study conducted as part of the COVID-19 Outbreak Public Evaluation (COPE) Initiative and co-authored by public health officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) revealing increased mental health symptoms and suicidal thoughts among unpaid caregivers during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this study, ARCHANGELS provided a critical tool for researchers—the Caregiver Intensity Index™—which is an online tool that calculates the intensity of an individuals’ mental health symptoms. This platform instantly connects caregivers with available resources in their community to improve their lives for the better.

### **TOP LINES:**

Out of 10,000 surveyed participants:

- Overall, 70% of caregivers (parents, guardians, and unpaid caregivers of adults) reported at least one adverse mental health symptom during the pandemic such as anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts and COVID-19-induced stress and trauma
- 85% of adults who were both parents and unpaid caregivers for adults (sandwich caregivers) experienced adverse mental health symptoms during COVID-19 (or 85%), and 52% reported recent suicidal thoughts
- Parents, guardians, and unpaid caregivers of adults could benefit from increased access to mental health resources and support
- 54% of all caregivers are men

### **KEY FACTS:**

- **43%** of adults are caregivers (for either someone under 18 or someone over 18)
- **23%** of adults are sandwich caregivers (caring for both someone under 18 and someone over 18)
- **47%** of caregivers for adults are men
  - **62%** of sandwich caregivers are men
- **1 in 2** caregivers for adults are 18-44 years old
  - **3 out of 4 (78%)** sandwich caregivers are 18-44 years old



- **4.5%** of adults without parenting or caregiving responsibilities reported serious suicidal thoughts between December 2020 and March 2021 and **9.6%** reported passive suicidal thoughts.

#### **SUICIDAL THOUGHTS KEY FINDINGS:**

- Those caring for someone under 18 in a parent or guardian role:
  - 9% serious suicidal thoughts: **2x** the rate of nonparents/noncaregivers
  - 19% passive suicidal thoughts: **2x** the rate of nonparents/noncaregivers
- Those caring for someone over 18:
  - 10% serious suicidal thoughts: **2x** the rate of nonparents/noncaregivers
  - 16% passive suicidal thoughts: **1.6x** the rate of nonparents/noncaregivers
- Those caring for people under 18 and over 18 (sandwich caregivers):
  - 52% serious suicidal thoughts: **12x** the rate of nonparents/noncaregivers
  - 58% passive suicidal thoughts: **6x** the rate of nonparents/noncaregivers
- A parent/guardian has **1.56x** odds of serious suicidal thoughts than a nonparent/noncaregiver
  - And **1.54x** odds of passive suicidal thoughts
- A caregiver for an adult has **1.67x** odds of serious suicidal thoughts than a nonparent/noncaregiver
  - And **1.33x** odds of passive suicidal thoughts
- A sandwich caregiver – caring for both age groups- has **8.2x** odds of serious suicidal thoughts than a nonparent/noncaregiver
  - And **5.84x** odds of passive suicidal thoughts

#### **MENTAL HEALTH KEY FINDINGS:**

- Caregivers of adults with mental health or substance use conditions reported **5x** odds of adverse mental health symptoms and **3.8x** odds of serious suicidal thoughts vs caregivers not providing care for this reason
- **70%** of parents and/or caregivers reported adverse mental health symptom
- **85%** of *sandwich* caregivers had at least one mental health symptom vs
  - **32%** of the nonparent/noncaregiver population
- As assessed by the ARCHANGELS Caregiver Intensity Index™, drivers of Caregiver Intensity increased odds of adverse mental health symptoms:
  - Caregiving related family disagreements (**3x odds**)
  - Resentment about caregiving responsibilities (**3x odds**)
  - Feeling underprepared as a caregiver (**2x odds**)
  - Not having as much personal freedom as desired (**2x odds**)
  - Having had to cut down on expenses due to caregiving (**2x odds**)
- Caregivers who had greater support (as measured by the ARCHANGELS Caregiver Intensity Index™) had lower odds of experiencing any adverse mental health symptoms.



## **BACKGROUND:**

### **About The COPE Initiative:**

The findings build on previous studies conducted by the same team and published by the CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* earlier in the pandemic as part of *The COPE Initiative*, designed to assess public attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs related to the pandemic and to evaluate mental health and behavioral health during the pandemic.

ARCHANGELS' goal is to provide the public with a voice through the collection and dissemination of findings to help shape the design and delivery of targeted communications and interventions strategies nationwide to improve both public and private health efforts and save lives.

### **About ARCHANGELS:**

ARCHANGELS is a national movement and a platform that is reframing how caregivers are seen, honored, and supported using a combination of data and stories. ARCHANGELS believes that shining a light on caregivers is the first step, and has created a software platform, called the Caregiver Intensity Index (CII), as an online tool to engage all caregivers-- even if they don't see themselves in that role. This platform provides a 'score' that not only validates the caregiver experience, but crosswalks them over to a wide range of existing resources that often already exist but go underutilized due to lack of awareness. ARCHANGELS is dedicated to working with states, communities, employers, healthcare providers, and payers in providing greater awareness, access, and a data-driven approach that improves caregiver's lives for the better. Join the movement today and learn more about ARCHANGELS at [archangels.me](https://archangels.me).