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Coronavirus (COVID-19) Climate Snapshot Poll - Report

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Maury, Rosalinda; Armstrong, Nicholas; Stone, Brice M.; Linsner, Rachel; and Euto, Linda Rougeau, "Coronavirus (COVID-19) Climate Snapshot Poll - Report" (2020). *Institute for Veterans and Military Families*. 102.

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BRIEF #1:

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Climate Snapshot Poll

R. Maury, N. Armstrong, B. Stone, R. Linsner, & L. Euto

Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) at Syracuse University



Brief#1: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Climate Snapshot Poll

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Suggested Citation

Maury, R., Armstrong, N., Stone, B., Linsner, R., Euto, L. (2020, April). Brief #1: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Climate Snapshot Poll. Syracuse, NY: Institute for Veterans and Military Families, Syracuse University.

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Overview

Military Times and the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) at Syracuse University conduct recurring snapshot polls of the military and veteran community. The purpose of these polls is to provide timely insights on the social, economic, education, and policy views and concerns of military-affiliated individuals. As the world navigates the Coronavirus (COVID-19) health crisis, IVMF remains committed to serving transitioning service members, veterans, and their family members. We are determined to stay informed of the evolving impacts, needs, and challenges experienced by this military-connected community. Therefore, in partnership with Military Times, the IVMF created and conducted a COVID-19 climate poll.

Many military and veteran serving organizations have responded quickly to this crisis and have surveyed their memberships to determine the immediate effects of the pandemic. Several surveys have measured the impacts on employment, education, childcare, children's education, mental and physical health, and caregiving across various military, veteran, and military family populations. In an effort to provide new insights and add to the emerging COVID-19 survey research in this space, this poll focused on service member and veteran perceptions of immediate and future (three months) threats of COVID-19, their need for and knowledge of resources, and their confidence in various levels of public leadership.

Participants were asked about the perceived threat of COVID-19 to various aspects of their lives ranging from the U.S economy to their personal financial situation, and were also asked about the national security climate, impacts to their employment and job security. Participants were also asked their need for and knowledge of various resources at multiple levels (local community, state, federal), their confidence in the response in institutional responses to the crisis, and numerous demographic questions.

"Senior leaders have a lot of tough decisions to make. Stay apolitical on the subject and support service members and their families to the best of your ability." -

Anonymous respondent

This brief is the first installment part of an ongoing series based on results of the COVID-19 climate poll. **The survey remains active, and we plan to conduct follow-up polls to monitor and share changes and trends so that we can continue to engage and best support those we serve.**

Methodology

Military Times/IVMF conducted a voluntary, confidential online survey that collected information related to the COVID-19 climate. The survey included a series of questions focused on military and veteran family needs, concerns, missed events, along with overall thoughts regarding the COVID-19 crisis. Participants were subscribers of Military Times publications and their military status was verified through official Defense Department email addresses. The survey was sent via email. A total of 140,760 emails were sent and 7,693 responded to the survey (7% of the total sample after bounces, failed, and duplications were removed).

The data included in these analyses were collected between March 26, 2020 and March 31, 2020. At the time the poll was downloaded for analysis, on March 31, 2020 at 10:50am, a total of 7,693 Military Times subscribers had responded, and 4,047 finished the poll. Of those that provided their current military status ($n = 4,022$), 1,507 were active duty service members (38%), 47 were National Guardsmen (1%), 135 were Reservists (3%), 1,783 were veterans (45%), 156 were family members (4%), and 338 reported being “none of the above” (9%).

Standard methodology was used to weight the results according to the gender and age for the U.S. veteran population, as well as rank, gender, and service branch for the active duty population. The margin of error for most questions was roughly 2.5 percent for active duty participants. For veteran participants, the margin of error for most questions was approximately 2.3 percent. Like most studies in which participation is voluntary, the poll’s sample is subject to self-selection bias. Researchers sought to account for that and adhered to generally accepted scientific practices analyzing the data. The Military Times and the researchers at IVMF have used identical methodologies for these polls since 2016. The analysis below is reflective of the veteran and active duty weighted samples only.

Poll Highlights

Overall Outlook

- Military-affiliated participants consistently view COVID-19 as a **severe (i.e., moderate to extreme) threat to nearly all key issues surveyed**.
- Projecting three months ahead, perceptions of the COVID-19 threat decrease slightly, but overall levels remain severe for most issues.
- Perceived threat was most extreme toward national issues (public health, economy) compared to community or family/personal concerns, though nearly all were a concern for many.
- Some slight differences in perceived threat were observed between sub-groups: active duty/veteran (e.g., economy/employment), gender (e.g., resources, family health, finances), and age (e.g., employment, finances).

National Outlook

- Veteran and active duty participants saw a moderate to extreme COVID-19 threat to all three national issues surveyed (in order of severity): the U.S. economy, the health of the U.S. population, and national security.
- Projecting three months ahead, overall perceptions remain severe across all three issues, though decrease slightly. Veterans perceived the threat slightly higher than active duty both now and in the near future.
- Perceptions varied slightly by gender and age on the issue of threat to U.S. population health. Female participants (active and veteran) and older veterans (55+) rated the threat slightly higher than their counterparts.

Community Outlook

- Veteran and active duty participants reported a moderate to extreme threat to the local resources and the day-to-day life in their communities.
- Neither groups expect to see this to change in the next three months.
- Female and older veteran participants rated the threat slightly higher than their counterparts.

Family & Individual Outlook

- Veteran and active duty participants reported a moderate threat to their personal health and family well-being.
 - Personal health: Veterans and active duty females rated the threat higher than their counterparts.
 - Family well-being: Older veterans (55+) and active duty females rated the threat higher than their counterparts.
- Compared to other issues surveyed, veteran and active duty participants both rated the threat to their job security and financial readiness somewhat lower (slight to moderate threat).
 - Job security: Veterans and active duty females rated the threat higher than their counterparts.
 - Financial readiness: Younger participants (all groups) and active duty females rated the threat higher than their counterparts.

Detailed Findings

1. National Perceptions of Immediate and Future Threat

Participants were asked to rate the level of threat the COVID-19 outbreak poses to key national issues, both today and in the next three months, on a 5-point Likert scale. Figure 1 presents the average ratings for the responses based on the values assigned to each response: not a threat (1), a slight threat (2), somewhat of a threat (3), a moderate threat (4), and an extreme threat (5). There was a “does not apply” option, but this was excluded from the average calculations.

Overall, veteran and active duty participants saw a moderate to extreme COVID-19 threat to all three national issues surveyed (in order of severity): the U.S. economy, the health of the U.S. population, and national security.

Threat to U.S. Economy. Veterans saw an average rating of 4.61 (out of 5) today, followed by an average of 4.47 in three months (slightly lower, though still moderate to extreme). Similarly, active duty service members had an average rating of 4.57, followed by 4.39 in three months.

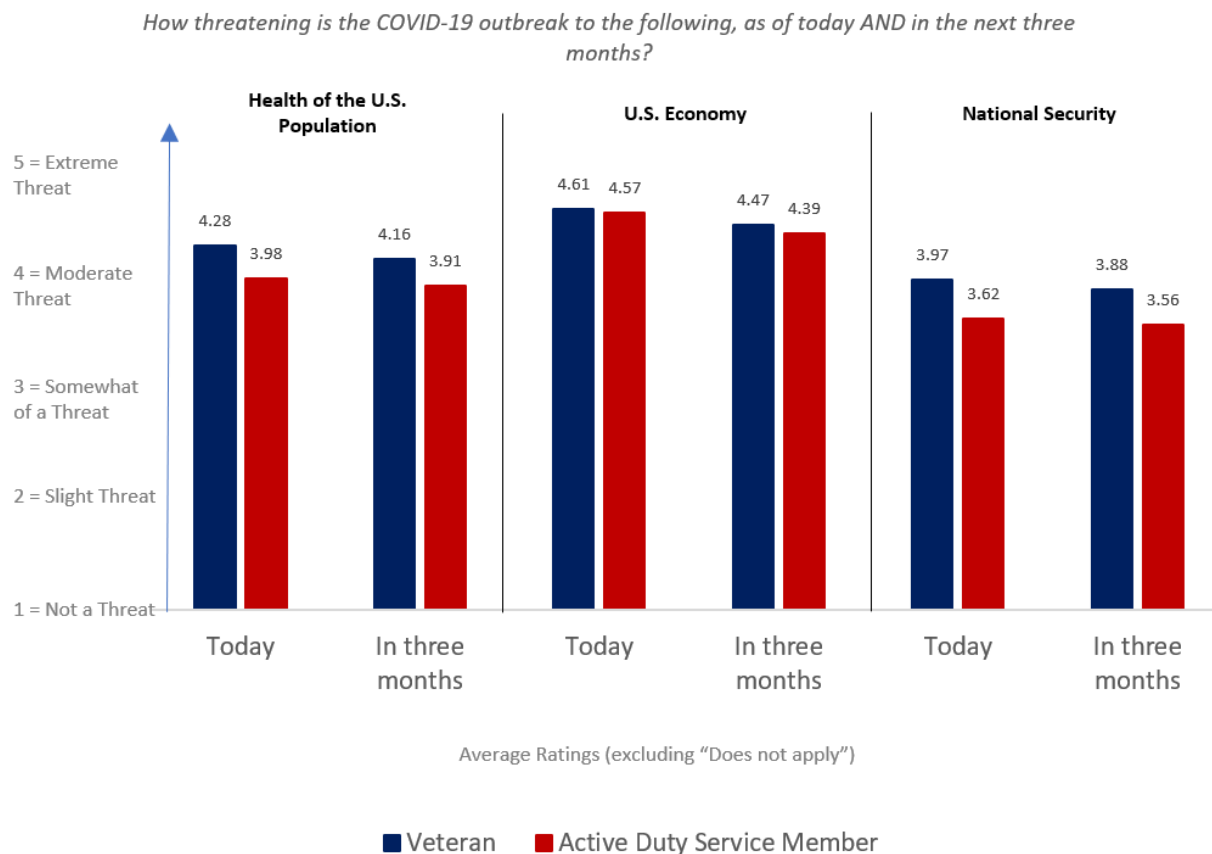
Threat to U.S. Population Health. Veterans had an average rating of 4.28 today, and 4.16 in three months (slightly lower, though also moderate to extreme). For active duty service members, the average rating for the health of the U.S population today was 3.98 and 3.91 in three months.

Threat to National Security. On the threat to national security, veterans had an average rating of 3.97 today, and 3.88 in three months (moderate threat). For active duty service members, the average rating for national security today was 3.62 and 3.56 in the next three months (somewhat to moderate threat).

“Putting the soldiers at risk, puts the nation at risk, as we need healthy personnel to serve in our armed forces to safeguard this great nation from external and internal threats.” - Anonymous respondent

“... the virus could devastate the personnel necessary to operate the complex ships, aircraft, and machinery needed for our security.” - Anonymous respondent

Figure 1. Average Threat Rating of COVID-19 to the Health of the U.S. Population, Economy, and National Security



Differences by Military Status (Veteran and Active Duty)

Considering veteran responses more closely, Figure 2 presents the relative levels of perceived threat among veteran participants for the same question. These percentages indicate the relative degree of perceived threat across response items: not a threat, a slight/somewhat of a threat, and a moderate/extreme threat. Most veteran participants reported the outbreak to be a moderate to extreme threat to the U.S. economy, the health of the U.S. population, and national security.

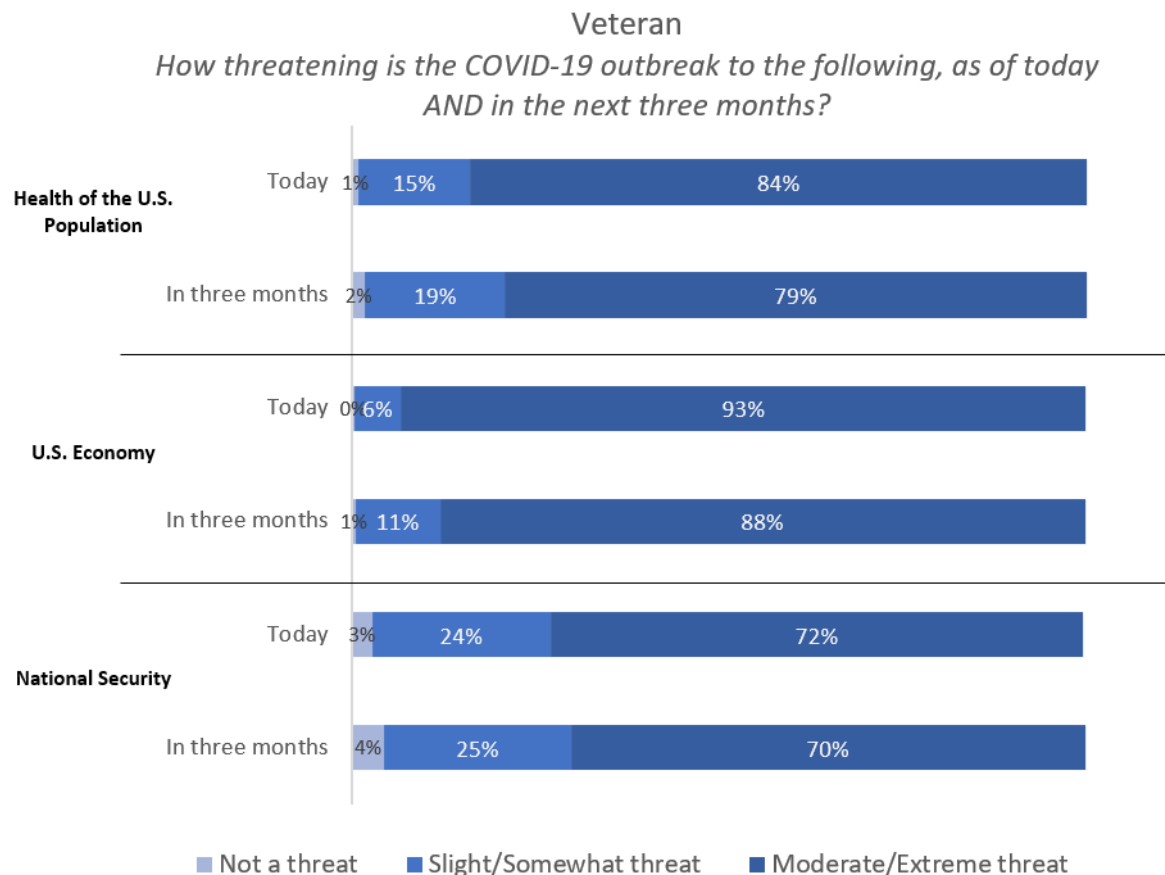
Veteran Responses

Threat to U.S. Population Health. On the health of the U.S. population specifically, 84% of veterans indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat today, and 79% indicated that this will remain a threat three months from now (slight decrease).

Threat to U.S. Economy. On the U.S. economy, 93% of veterans indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat today, and 88% indicated that this will continue to be a threat three months from now (slight decrease).

Threat to National Security. On national security, 72% of veterans indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat today, and 70% indicated that this will continue to be a threat three months from now (slight decrease).

Figure 2. Relative Levels (%) of Veterans' Perceived COVID-19 Threat to the Health of the U.S. Population, Economy, and National Security



Active Duty Responses

In comparison, Figure 3 presents the relative levels of perceived threat among active duty service member participants for the same question. In general, most active duty participants reported a moderate to extreme threat to the U.S. economy, the health of the U.S. population, and national security. Compared to veteran participants, active duty participants perceive similarly high, albeit relatively lower, threat levels across on these items.

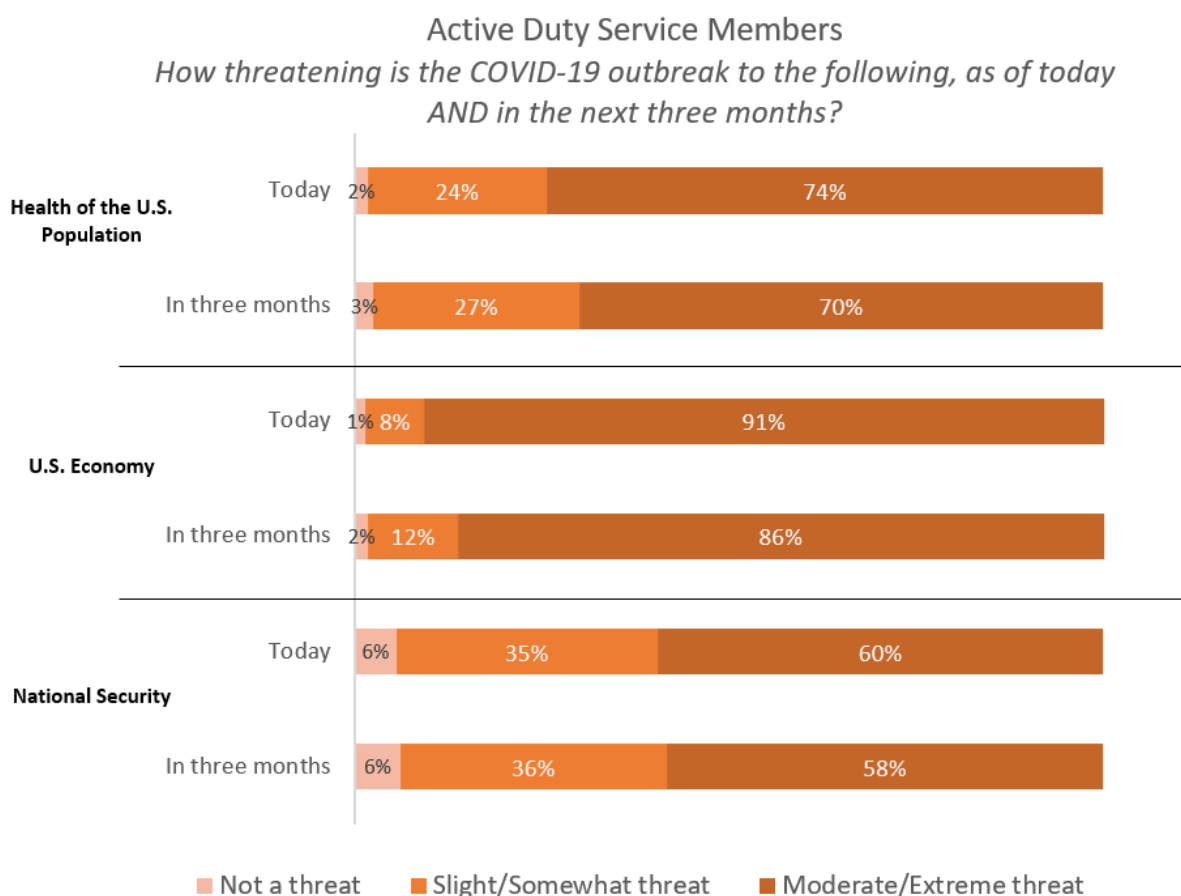
Threat to U.S. Population Health. On the health of the U.S. population, approximately 74% of active duty service members indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to

extreme threat today, and 70% indicated that this will continue to be a threat three months from now (a slightly decrease).

Threat to U.S. Economy. On the U.S. economy, 91% of active duty service members indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat today, and 86% indicated that this will continue to be a threat three months from now (a decreasing threat).

Threat to National Security. Finally, on national security, 60% of active duty service members indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat today, and 58% indicated that this will continue to be a threat three months from now (a slightly decreasing threat).

Figure 3. Relative Levels (%) of Active Duty Service Members' Perceived COVID-19 Threat to the Health of the U.S. Population, Economy, and National Security



Differences by Gender

Survey results were analyzed and compared by gender (male and female) for both veterans and active duty participants. Table 1 presents the average ratings for the responses by gender based on the values assigned to each response: not a threat (1), a slight threat (2), somewhat of a threat (3), a moderate threat (4), and an extreme threat (5) (there was a “does not apply” option, but this was excluded from the average calculations).

Threat to U.S. Economy and National Security. Overall, both veteran and active duty male and female participants who responded to the survey reported a moderate to extreme threat to the U.S. economy, followed by the health of the U.S. population, and national security. Both male and female participants rated similar levels of threat to both the U.S. economy (moderate to extreme) and national security (moderate).

Threat to U.S. Population Health. Health perceptions varied slightly more by gender on the threat to the health of the U.S. population. On this issue, female participants rated higher levels of perceived threat compared to male participants. Further analysis reveals that 87% of female veterans indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat to population health today, followed by 82% in three months (slight decrease). By comparison, 84% of male veterans indicated a moderate to extreme threat today, followed 79% in three months (slight decrease).

Among the active duty participants, 83% of female active duty participants indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat to population health today, followed by 76% in three months (slight decrease). By comparison, 74% of male active duty participants indicated a moderate to extreme threat today, followed by 70% in three months (slight decrease).

Table 1. Average Threat Rating of COVID-19 to the Health of the U.S. Population, Economy, and National Security by Gender

		Veteran		Active Duty Service Member	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
Health of the U.S. population as a whole	Today	4.28	4.43	3.97	4.29
	In three months	4.16	4.30	3.90	4.17
U.S. economy	Today	4.64	4.65	4.57	4.59
	In three months	4.47	4.50	4.39	4.52
National security	Today	3.97	4.06	3.62	3.66
	In three months	3.88	3.96	3.56	3.60

Differences by Age Group

Results were also analyzed and compared by age (18-34, 35-54, 55 and older) for veteran and active duty participants. Most veterans were older than 55 years (over 80%). Conversely the majority of the active duty participants were below 55 years of age (34% are between 18 to 34 and 64% are between 35 to 54). Table 2 presents the average ratings to responses by age group. In general, participants across all age groups reported a moderate to extreme threat to the U.S. economy, followed by the health of the U.S. population, and national security.

Threat to U.S. Economy and National Security. Both younger (18-34) and older (55+) active duty respondent perceived a relatively lower threat to the U.S. economy compared to their veteran counterparts. A similar pattern holds for the perceived threat to national security, that is, that active duty respondents perceive lower threat across age groups compared to their veteran counterparts.

Threat to U.S. Population Health. Participants rated similar levels of threat to the health of the U.S. population, except for older participants. Older veterans rated higher levels of threat to population health compared to younger veterans. Conversely, older active duty participants rated lower levels of threat to population health compared to younger active duty participants.

Table 2. Average Threat Rating of COVID-19 to the Health of the U.S. Population, Economy, and National Security by Age

		Veteran			Active Duty Service Member		
		18-34	35-54	55 and older	18-34	35-54	55 and older
Health of the U.S. population as a whole	Today	3.97	4.03	4.35	3.96	4.02	3.39
	In three months	3.98	4.01	4.21	3.94	3.93	3.10
U.S. economy	Today	4.60	4.60	4.65	4.45	4.63	4.04
	In three months	4.52	4.47	4.47	4.34	4.43	3.48
National security	Today	3.75	3.82	4.02	3.50	3.75	2.77
	In three months	3.70	3.78	3.91	3.53	3.65	2.82

2. Community and Individual Perceptions of Immediate and Future Threat

Respondents were also asked to rate the level of threat the COVID-19 outbreak poses to key aspects of community and family life, both today and in the next three months, on a 5-point Likert scale. Figure 4 presents the average ratings for the responses based on the values assigned to each response: not a threat (1), a slight threat (2), somewhat of a threat (3), a moderate threat (4), and an extreme threat (5). There was a “does not apply” option but this was excluded from the average calculations.

In general, both veterans and active duty participants reported a moderate to extreme threat to the resources in their local communities and the day to day life in their communities, followed by their families well-being, personal health, personal financial situation, and job security/employment.

Community Resources. On the threat to local community resources, veterans reported a persistent average rating of 3.79 both today and again in three months. Active duty service members reported an average rating of 3.85 today and 3.79 in three months (slight decline).

Community Life. On the threat to day-to-day community life, veterans similarly reported an average rating of 3.76 both today and again in three months. Active duty service members reported an average rating of 3.88 today, and 3.77 in three months (slight decline).

“My husband is currently serving in Iraq. He was supposed to be home for good and unfortunately airports are shutdown throughout the world. Now he may not come home till mid-April or even sometime in June.” - Anonymous respondent

*“The potential for mass contagion is already higher in the military due to the nature of things. Tent cities and other things aren’t going to help that. In fact, it would just add to it. Social distancing is not happening. Common sense is not happening.”
- Anonymous respondent*

Personal Health. On the threat to their personal health, veterans reported an average rating of 3.47 today and 3.42 in three months (slight decline). Active duty service members report an average rating of 3.01 and 3.02 in the next three months.

Family Well-Being. With respect to the threat to their family well-being, for veterans the average rating today was 3.50 and 3.43 in the next three months. For active duty service members, the average rating for the threat to their family well-being today was 3.39 and 3.32 in the next three months.

"My husband is a disabled Vietnam vet; I'm a retired disabled Army vet. We're both older with compromised immune systems, so are confined to quarters. We both have specific diets and need special food(s). While we previously ordered and had food delivered--the food we need is no longer available, and when we do find it, it is at 10-70 times over normal price." - Anonymous respondent

"My wife and I are both veterans using our education benefits and we use our housing allowance as our only income. During this crisis, the most important thing to us is that we are guaranteed that our benefits will not change due to colleges being forced to go online around the nation." - Anonymous respondent

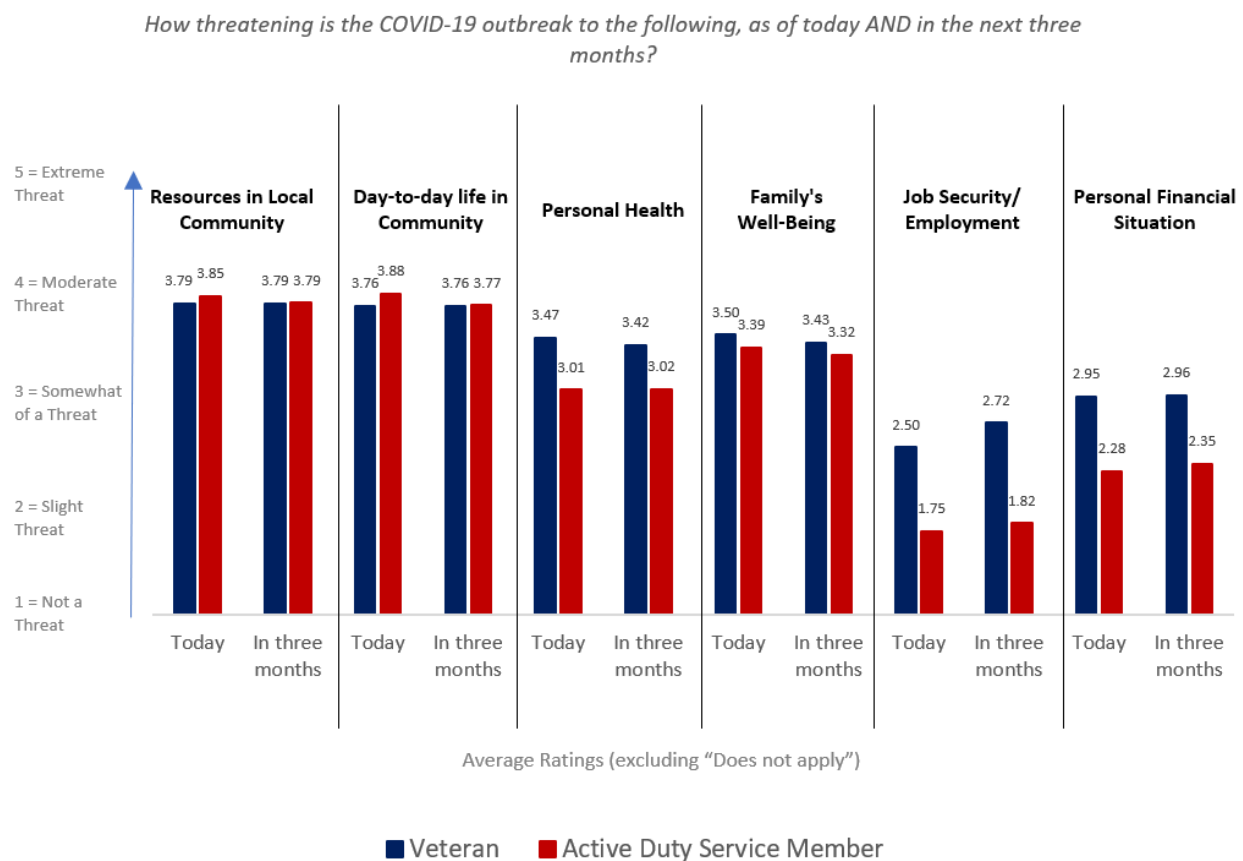
Job Security/Employment. With respect to the threat to their job security/employment, for veterans the average rating today was 2.50 and 2.72 in the next three months. For active duty service members, the average rating for the threat to their job security/employment today was 1.75 and 1.82 in the next three months.

Personal Finances. And finally, with respect to the threat to their personal finances, for veterans the average rating today was 2.95 and 2.96 in the next three months. For active duty service members, the average rating for the threat to their personal financial situation today was 2.28 and 2.35 in the next three months.

"Military and veteran families need the same as the rest of the community: proper and efficient testing, monetary assistance to help stabilize themselves a volatile job market, and peace of mind." - Anonymous respondent

"I'm transitioning into retirement and so very lost myself. I can't get civilian medical records during to closures which is delaying my ability to file my disability claims. In the meantime, I am fearful of finding a job due to closures, but now limited due to home schooling (single parent of 4). I don't believe this is unknown territory. This is not the first pandemic, although we are in different times."
- Anonymous respondent

Figure 4. Average Threat Rating of COVID-19 to Resources, Day-to-Day Life, Personal Health, Family Well-Being, Job Security/Employment, and Personal Financial Situation



Differences by Military Status (Veteran and Active Duty)

Considering veteran responses more closely, Figure 5 presents the relative levels of perceived threat among veteran respondents for the same question. These percentages indicate the relative degree of perceived threat across response items: not a threat, a slight/somewhat of a threat, and a moderate/extreme threat.

Veteran Responses

The majority of veteran participants reported the outbreak to be a moderate to extreme threat to the resources in their local communities and the day to day life in their communities, followed by family well-being, personal health, and personal financial situation, and job security/employment.

Community Resources. On local community resources, 72% of veterans indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat today, and 67% indicated that this will remain a threat three months from now (slight decrease).

Community Life. On day-to-day life in their communities, 71% of veterans indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat to the today, and 66% indicated that this will continue to be a threat three months from now (slight decrease).

Personal Health. On their personal health, 55% of veterans indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat to today, and 53% indicated that this will continue to be a threat three months from now (slight decrease).

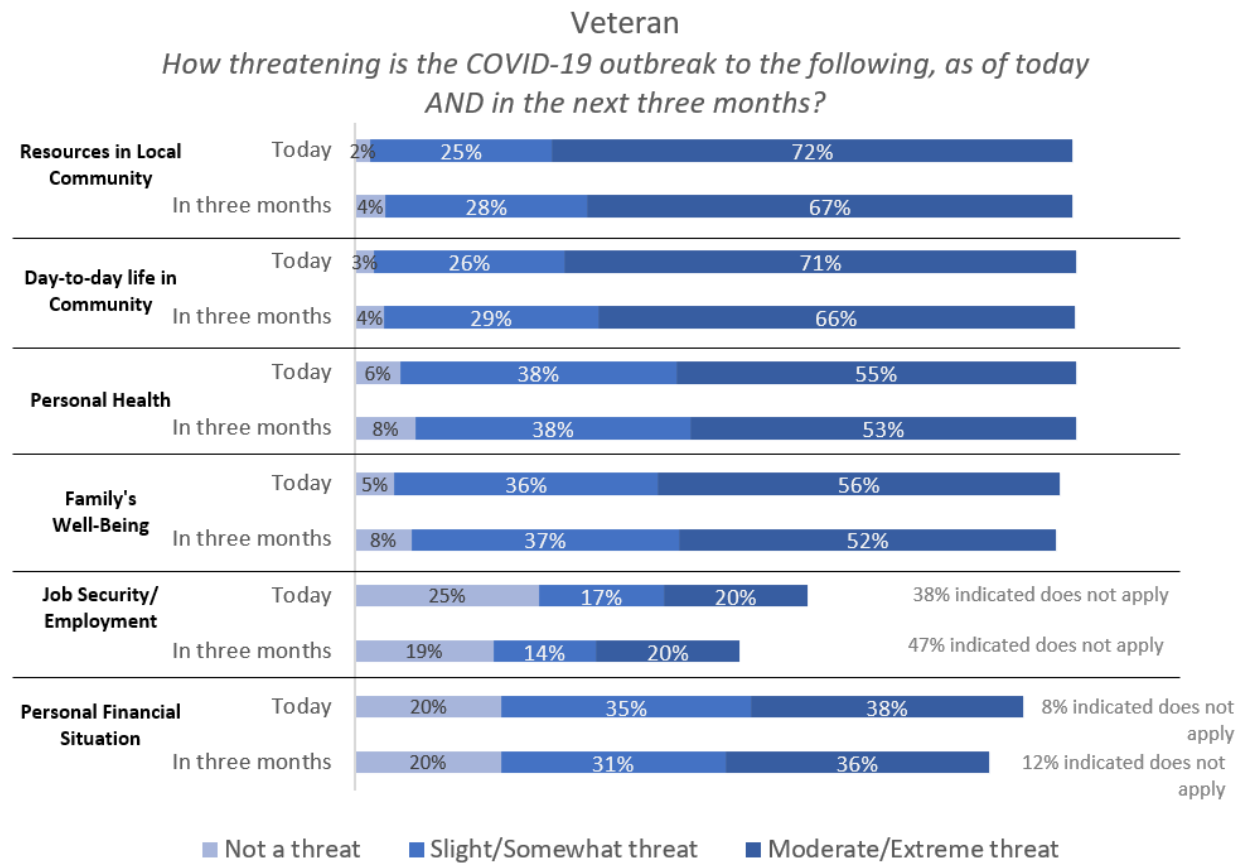
Family Well-Being. On family well-being, 56% of veterans indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat today, and 52% indicated that this will continue to be a threat three months from now (slight decrease).

Job Security/Employment. On job security/employment, 20% of veterans indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat to their job security today, and 20% indicated that this will continue to be a threat three months from now (no change). However, a large percentage of veterans indicated that this does not apply to them (38% indicated it “does not apply” today and 47% indicated it “does not apply” in the next three months).

Excluding those for whom this “does not apply”—in other words, including only those who are still working—the percentages increase, but are still low compared to other areas of concern. Of those respondents still working, 41% of these veteran respondents indicated not a threat to their job security, 28% slight/somewhat of a threat, and 32% indicated a moderate to extreme threat to their job security both today and three months from now.

Personal Finances. For personal financial situation, 38% of veterans indicated the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat today, and 36% indicated that this will continue to be a threat three months from now (slight decrease).

Figure 5. Relative Levels (%) of Veterans' Perceived COVID-19 Threat to Resources, Day-to-Day Life, Personal Health, Family Well-Being, Job Security/Employment, and Personal Financial Situation



Active Duty Responses

In comparison, Figure 6 presents the relative levels of perceived threat among active duty service member respondents for the same question. Compared to veteran participants, active duty participants reported similar (though slightly less extreme) levels of threat to local community resources, day-to-day life, and family well-being. However, their perceived threats to their personal health, financial situation, and job security/employment were significantly lower by comparison.

Community Resources. On local community resources, 67% of active duty service members indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat today and three months from now (no change).

Community Life. On day-to-day life in their communities, 70% of active duty service members indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat today, and 66% indicated that this will continue to be a threat three months from now (slight decrease).

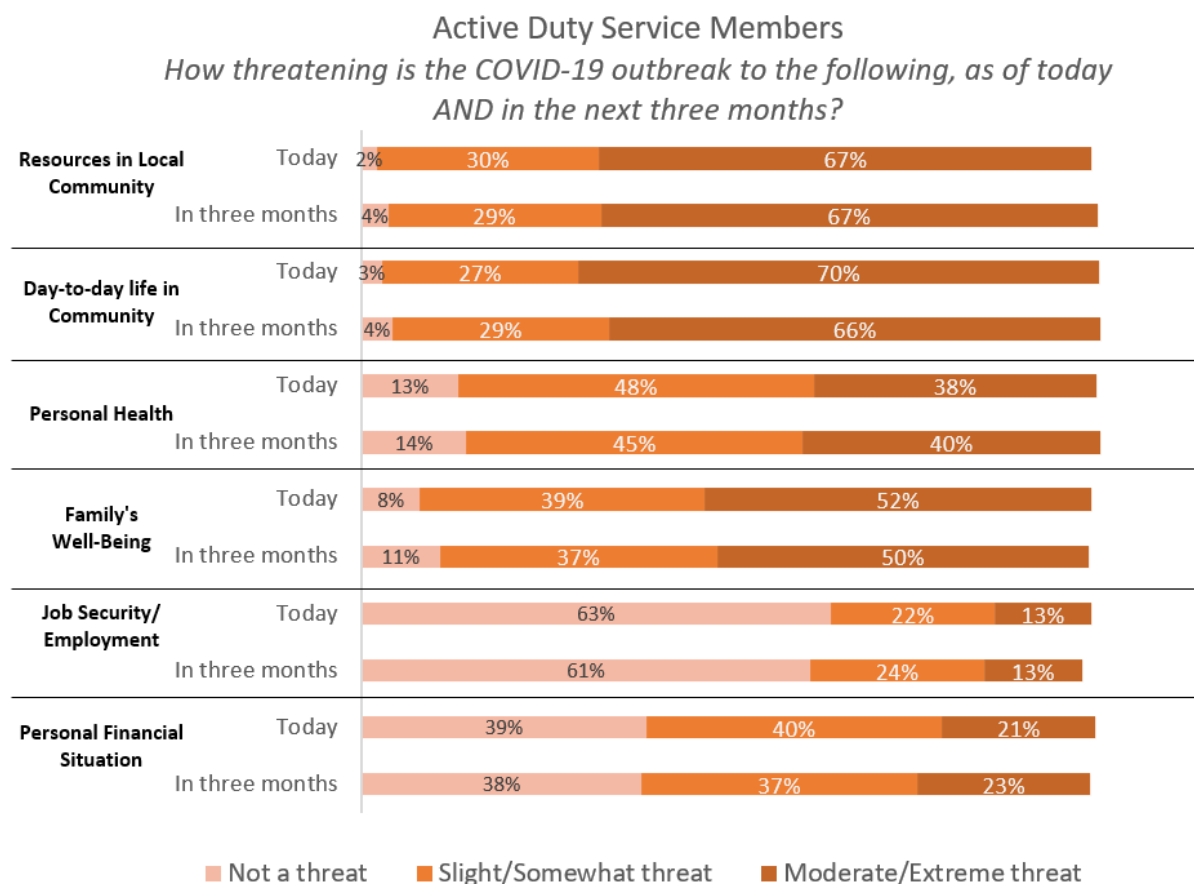
Personal Health. On their personal health, 48% of active duty service members indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a slight to somewhat threat today, and 45% indicated that this will continue to be a threat three months from now (slight decrease).

Family Well-Being. On family well-being, 52% of active duty service members indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat today and 50% indicated that this will continue to be a threat three months from now (slight decrease).

Job Security/Employment. On job security/employment, 63% of active duty service members indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak **presents no threat today**, and 61% indicated that this will not continue to be a threat three months from now. **Conversely, 13% of active duty participants see a moderate to extreme threat to their current and future job security.**

Personal Finances. On personal financial situation, 40% of active duty service members indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a slight to somewhat threat today, and 38% indicated that this will not continue to be a threat three months from now (slight decrease).

Figure 6. Relative Levels (%) of Active Duty Service Members' Perceived COVID-19 Threat to the Resources, Day-to-Day Life, Personal Health, Family Well-Being, Job Security/Employment, and Personal Financial Situation



Differences by Gender

Survey results were analyzed and compared by gender (male and female) for both veterans and active duty participants. Table 3 presents the average ratings for the responses by gender based on the values assigned to each response: not a threat (1), a slight threat (2), somewhat of a threat (3), a moderate threat (4), and an extreme threat (5) (there was a “does not apply” option, but this was excluded from the average calculations).

Community Resources. Participants rated similar levels of threat to community resources, except for active duty female participants. Active duty females rated higher levels of threat now and three months from now, compared to their male counterparts and veteran counterparts.

Community Life. Female participants rated higher levels of threat to community life compared to their male counterparts both now and three months from now.

Personal Health. Participants rated similar levels of threat to their personal health, except for active duty female participants. Active duty females rated higher levels of threat both now and three months from now compared to their male counterparts and veteran counterparts.

Family Well-Being. Participants rated similar levels of threat to family well-being, except for active duty female participants. Active duty females rated higher levels of threat both now and three months from now compared to their male counterparts and veteran counterparts.

Job Security/Employment. Female participants, veteran and active duty, rated higher levels of threat to their job security compared to their male counterparts both now and three months from now.

Personal Finances. Active duty female participants rated higher levels of threat compared to their male active duty counterparts both now and three months from now.

Table 3. Average Threat Rating of COVID-19 to Resources, Day-to-Day Life, Personal Health, Family Well-Being, Job Security/Employment, and Personal Financial Situation by Gender

		Veteran		Active Duty Service Member	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
Resources in your local community	Today	3.79	3.79	3.83	4.14
	In three months	3.79	3.79	3.78	4.18
Day-to-day life in your local community	Today	3.76	3.93	3.87	4.12
	In three months	3.76	3.93	3.76	4.02
Your personal health	Today	3.97	4.06	3.00	3.44
	In three months	3.97	4.06	3.01	3.24
Your family's well-being	Today	3.50	3.52	3.38	3.59
	In three months	3.50	3.52	3.32	3.51
Your job security/employment	Today	2.50	2.64	1.75	1.87
	In three months	2.50	2.64	1.81	2.07
Your personal financial situation	Today	2.95	2.93	2.27	2.55
	In three months	2.95	2.93	2.35	2.51

Differences by Age Group

Results were analyzed and compared by age (18-34, 35-54, 55 and older) participants for both veterans and active duty participants. Table 4 presents the average ratings for the responses by age group.

Community Resources. In general, older participants rated lower levels of threat to community resources compared to younger participants both now and three months from now.

Community Life. Older veteran participants rated higher levels of threat to community life compared to their younger counterparts today and three months from now. Conversely, older active duty participants rated lower levels of threat compared to their younger counterparts both now and three months from now.

Family Well-Being. Older veteran participants rated higher levels of threat to family well-being both now and three months from now compared to their younger counterparts.

Job Security/Employment. With respect to the threat to their job security/employment, in general younger participants rated higher levels of threat compared to their older counterparts both now and three months from now.

Personal Finances. And finally, with respect to the threat to their personal finances, in general the older the veteran respondent, the less perceived threat to their personal financial situation

both now and three months from now. The trend is a bit different for active duty participants, in that the older the service member, the higher the perceived threat to their personal financial situation until they reach a certain age.

Table 4. Average Threat Rating of COVID-19 to Resources, Day-to-Day Life, Personal Health, Family Well-Being, Job Security/Employment, and Personal Financial Situation by Age

		Veteran			Active Duty Service Member		
		18-34	35-54	55 and older	18-34	35-54	55 and older
Resources in your local community	Today	3.89	3.92	3.77	3.87	3.86	3.14
	In three months	3.89	3.92	3.77	3.81	3.80	3.10
Day-to-day life in your local community	Today	3.92	3.85	3.75	3.79	3.96	2.91
	In three months	3.92	3.85	3.75	3.78	3.79	3.01
Your personal health	Today	2.95	3.23	3.48	2.94	3.12	2.45
	In three months	2.95	3.23	3.48	3.04	3.07	2.55
Your family's well-being	Today	3.30	3.40	3.44	3.40	3.44	2.50
	In three months	3.30	3.40	3.44	3.39	3.33	2.61
Your job security/employment	Today	3.28	2.87	2.58	1.71	1.80	1.86
	In three months	3.28	2.87	2.58	1.80	1.86	1.68
Your personal financial situation	Today	3.23	3.13	2.91	2.15	2.40	2.51
	In three months	3.23	3.13	2.91	2.25	2.47	2.17

Summary and Initial Recommendations

As the nation navigates the Coronavirus COVID-19 health crisis, IVMF remains committed to serving transitioning service members, veterans, and their family members. We are determined to stay informed of the impacts experienced across the veteran and military community and the evolving challenges and needs that may result. This COVID-19 poll, conducted in collaboration with Military Times, is just one example.

This brief is the first installment in a series based on results of the COVID-19 climate poll. Forthcoming briefs will focus on specific concerns related to military-to-civilian transition, benefits and services, and employment (including self-employment). **The survey remains active, and we plan to conduct follow-up polls to monitor and share changes and trends so that we can continue to engage and best support those we serve.**

In summary, military-affiliated participants consistently reported COVID-19 as a severe (i.e., moderate to extreme) threat to nearly all key issues surveyed. Perceived threat was the highest toward national issues (public health, economy), followed closely by community and family or personal concerns.

National Perspectives

Veteran and active duty participants saw a moderate to extreme COVID-19 threat to all three national issues surveyed (in order of severity): the U.S. economy, the health of the U.S. population, and national security.

On the U.S. economy, 93% of veterans and 91% of active duty service members indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat today. Both participants indicated a slight decrease in this threat three months from now.

On the health of the U.S. population, approximately 84% of veterans and 74% of active duty service members indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat today. Both groups of participants indicated a slight decrease in this threat three months from now.

On national security, 72% of veterans and 60% of active duty participants indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat today. Again, most participants indicate a slight decrease in this threat three months from now.

In general, there were some slight differences with respect to age and gender. Female participants rated higher levels of threat to the health of the U.S. population compared to their male counterparts. Older veterans rated higher levels of threat to the health of the U.S. population compared to younger veterans. Conversely, older active duty participants rated lower levels of threat to the health of the U.S. population compared to younger active duty participants.

“Not everyone will agree leadership is making the best call in situations. I do truly believe in our leadership, their very difficult decisions and fear their guilt will eventually wear at them. This disease and fatalities are saddening, yes, but let's not forget the long-term toll this will leave behind.” - Anonymous respondent

Local and Individual Perspectives

With respect to their local and individual needs, in general, both veterans and active duty participants reported a moderate to extreme threat to the resources in their local communities and the day to day life in their communities, followed by their family's well-being, personal health, personal financial situation, and job security/employment.

On local community resources, 72% of veterans and 67% of active duty participants indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat today. On day-to-day life in their communities, 71% of veterans and 70% of active duty service members indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat to the today. On family well-being, 56% of veterans and 52% of active duty service members indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat today. Both groups of participants indicated that the respective areas would continue to be threatened three months from now (albeit a slight decrease).

On their personal health, 55% of veterans indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat today while 48% of active duty service members indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a slight to somewhat threat today. This maybe be partly because, as a group, veterans are generally older compared to active duty service members.

On job security/employment, 20% of veterans indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat to their job security today, while 63% of active duty service members indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents no threat today. Again, this may also be partly explained by the fact that veterans are more likely to be older and are retired or not working. When we remove the does not apply, 32% of veterans indicated a moderate to extreme threat to their job security. Some gender and age differences surfaced on job security. Female participants rated higher levels of threat to their job security compared to their male counterparts, both now and three months from now. In terms of age, younger participants rated higher levels of threat to their job security compared to their older counterparts both now and three months from now.

Related to the job security is the threat to their personal financial situation: 38% of veterans indicated the COVID-19 outbreak presents a moderate to extreme threat today, while 37% of active duty service members indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak presents a light or somewhat threat.

Some gender and age differences emerged as well. Active duty female participants generally rated higher levels of threat to their personal financial situation compared to their male counterparts, both today and three months from now. Additionally, the older the veteran respondent, the less perceived threat to their personal financial situation. Whereas, increased service member

age is associated with greater perceived threat to their personal financial situation, up to a certain age (55 and older).

“life is on hold with the exception of shopping for food, gas, taking non driving kids to their workplace or bus stop.” - Anonymous respondent

“I am very concerned for my wife’s future financial well-being. When we decided not to enroll in the SBP, who could have ever anticipated this pandemic. If I die, my wife will probably lose our home.” - Anonymous respondent

Initial Recommendations for Key Stakeholders

In all, the findings detailed in this first brief reveal widespread concern and uncertainty among the military and veteran community members who completed this COVID-19 focused poll. Veterans and active duty service members, like many Americans, have clear concerns about COVID-19 and its impact on public health, the economy, and national security. And despite some slight differences across military status, gender, and age, it is clear that COVID-19 presents a threat to many in the military and veteran community across a range of national, community, and individual issues.

In the coming weeks, we look forward to sharing additional insights that emerge from this poll, specific to military-to-civilian transition, community resources, benefits and services, and employment (including business owners). We will continue to monitor these trends in future upcoming polls, as well as emerging topics of concern, and disseminate results to those who work with, engage with, and support those who serve the military and veteran community.

Based on these initial findings, we conclude with three initial recommendations for stakeholders and champions (e.g., policymakers, practitioners, philanthropy, researchers) to consider today, in the short-term, and the long-term.

TODAY. Seek ways to promote continuity of operations and sustainability of critical community-based providers that serve veterans and military families.

Even under normal circumstances, most community-based organizations typically operate under resource constraints. Adapting and sustaining operations—especially to the same level or quality of service delivery—in the current climate may be untenable, if not impossible. Beyond additional financial assistance, grantmaking, or charity-related incentives, stakeholders should actively look for ways to reduce or eliminate organizational barriers to sustaining operations. Such examples include relaxing existing grant requirements, in kind support, technology (e.g., telework), or equipment (e.g., protective gear).

SHORT-TERM. Double-down on resources and interventions that address known family and individual stressors, enable access to care and services, and reduce the risk for adverse outcomes (e.g., unemployment, housing/financial insecurity, suicidal ideation).

COVID-19 is imposing unprecedented stress on American families. Beyond direct health and economic impacts, the loss of childcare, closed schools, and limited access to supportive services—combined with extended social isolation—are among many added stressors to daily life. Military families are facing these new stressors *in addition to* the unique sacrifices and challenges associated with military service (e.g., deployment-related family stress, extended separations, spouse job portability, underemployment, frequent relocation). Recently transitioned families, and those facing transition, are also at risk. Stakeholders and champions should re-double their efforts to focus on *preventative* interventions that mitigate adverse health and well-being outcomes.

LONG-TERM. Monitor emerging needs, pre-position resources, and tailor interventions to various subgroups of need focused on post-COVID-19 recovery.

While COVID-19 is a widespread concern, it will almost certainly impact segments of the active duty and military community differently. For example, in this poll, employment and financial concerns were greatest among female service members and younger veterans. Personal health, family well-being, and community resources were greatest among older veterans. While not covered in this brief, certainly COVID-19 is already disrupting military and veteran families in specific industries and veteran and military spouse owned businesses. Even as the public health and economic consequences have yet to be fully realized, close monitoring of need and tailored interventions will help ensure the greatest impact and a faster recovery for the military and veteran community.

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