

Coronavirus Update

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The Impact

**COVID-19**

is Having on Mental Health

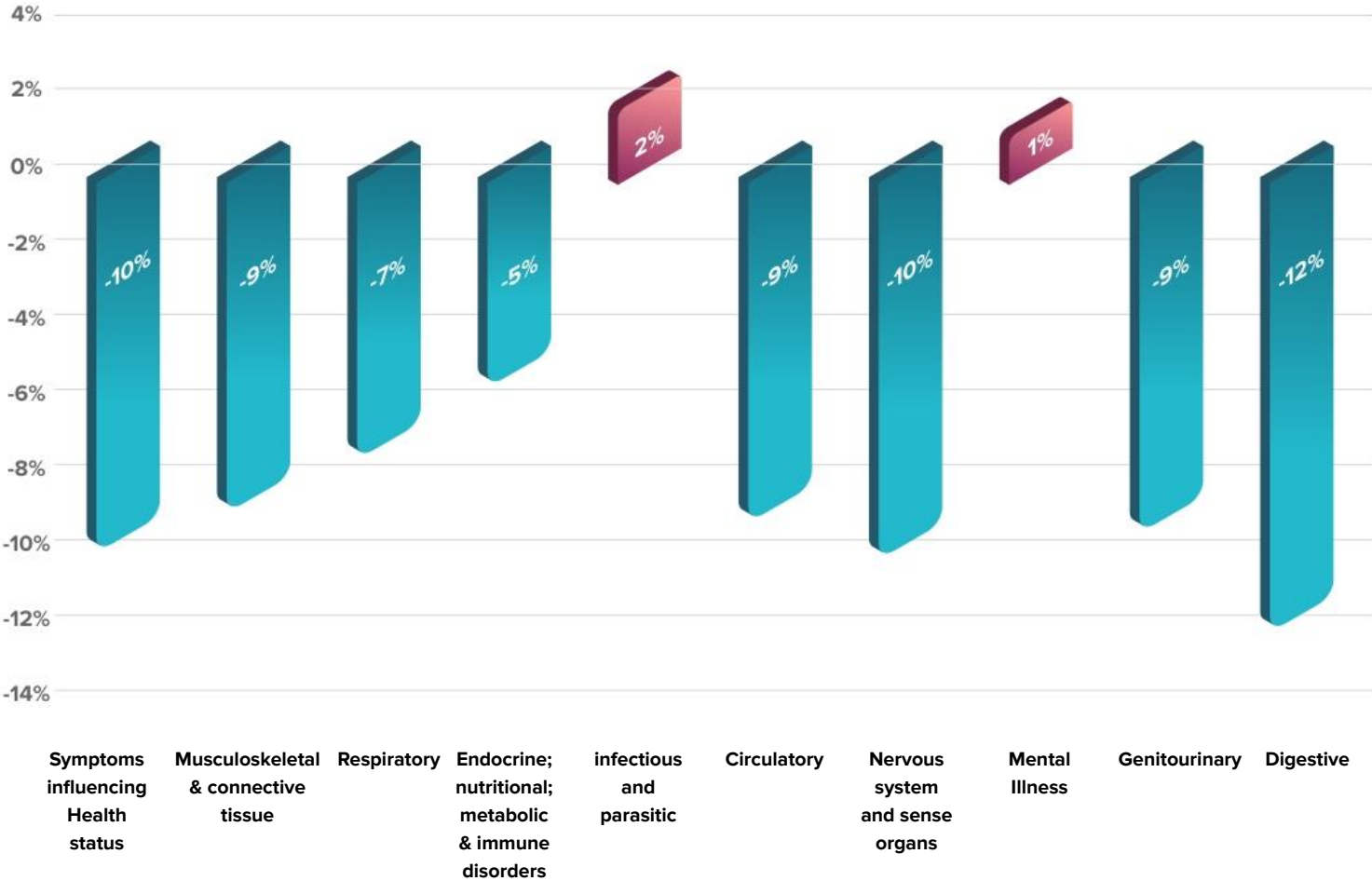
# Data Observations

## Care For Mental Illness and Infectious Disease Rise While Other Medical Treatments Lower than Pre-Covid Levels

Medical claims at the end of Q2 showed the number of members seeking medical care was above the 18-month average for two clinical conditions:

1. Increase in Mental Health claims during the pandemic.
2. Increase in members with infectious diseases as a primary diagnosis.

However, outside of these two areas, all other primary reasons for seeking medical treatment are slower to return to pre-pandemic levels.



## Anxiety Most Prevalent as Mental Health Illnesses Increase

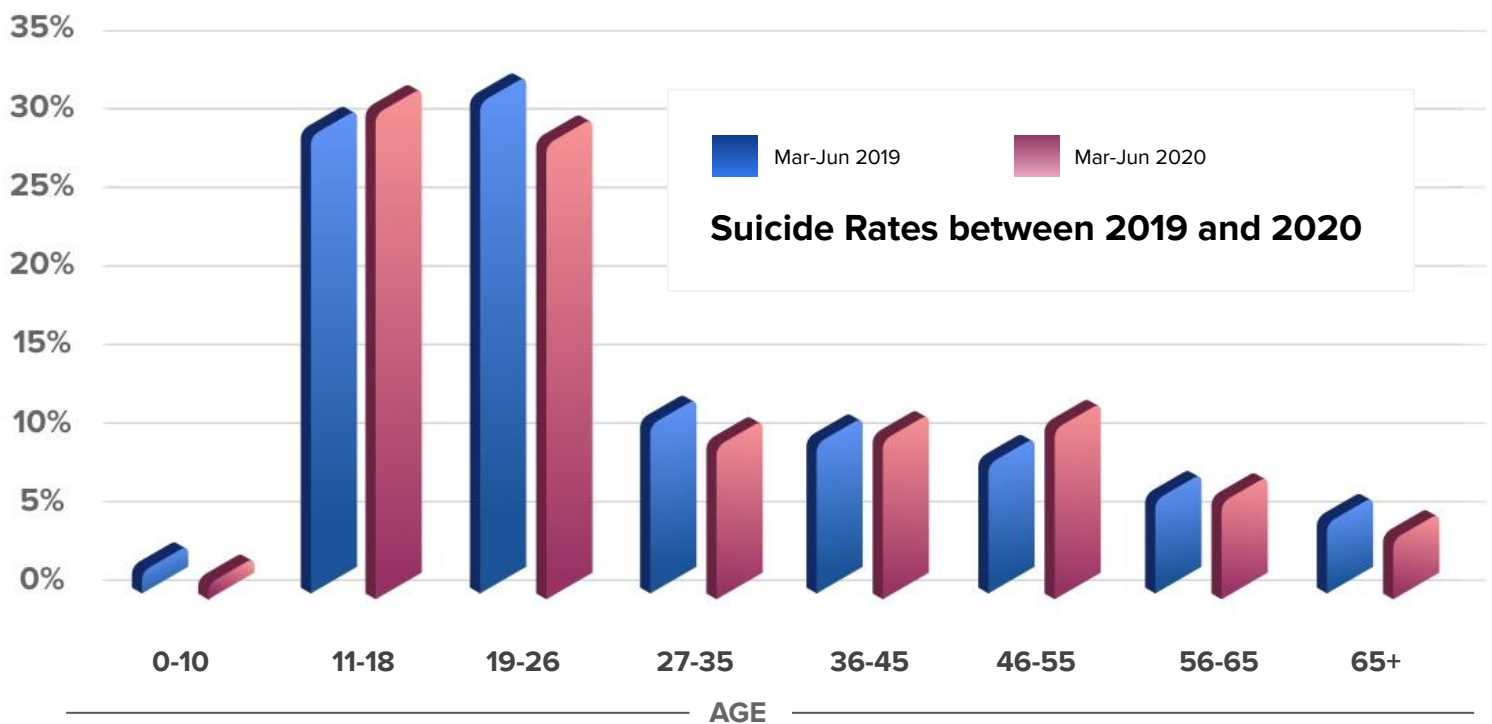
During the pandemic, individuals with anxiety disorders continued to be the most prevalent mental health condition.

- The data showed anxiety disorders increased 6% in March-June of 2020 compared to March-June 2019.
- Adjustment disorders increased 5%. (e.g. suicidal thoughts or behaviors, feeling sad, hopeless, stressed out, and overwhelmed).<sup>1</sup>
- Screening and history of mental health and substance abuse diagnoses increased 17% compared to 2019.

## Suicide/Injury Rates Among the 11-18 Age Group Surpass the 19-26 Age Group During Period

Crisis providers nationwide reported an increase in calls from individuals experiencing mental and physical health concerns.<sup>2</sup>

- USA Today reported an 890% increase in call volume to the Disaster Stress Helpline in April 2020 compared to April 2019.
- U.S. adults self-reported a 31% increase in anxiety/depression and a 26% increase in trauma/stressor-related disorder symptoms based on a CDC survey in late June 2020.<sup>3</sup>
- While the survey excluded those under the age of 18, the impact to younger population is called out by earlier CDC reports that suicide is the second leading cause of death in Americans ages 10-34.<sup>4</sup>
- Innovu's data substantiated the impact on minors. Our data found that 30% of individuals with a medical claim for suicide/self-harm occurred in school aged children aged 11-18.



[1] <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/adjustment-disorders/symptoms-causes/syc-20355224>

[2] <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2020/06/15/crisis-hotline-call-volume-spikes-straining-social-workers/5266072002/>

[3] <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm>

[4] <https://www.forbes.com/sites/nicolefisher/2020/07/31/new-3-digit-suicide-prevention-hotline-coming-following-unanimous-support-by-fcc>

## **Child Abuse Incidents are Being Underreported, Call Hotline Volumes Increase**

A possible cause for the uptick amongst America's younger population may be found in the unsettling recent statistics concerning child abuse. According to the CDC, reporting incidents of child abuse declined in March-April, though the severity of incidence increased. With diminished access, mandatory child abuse reporters such as teachers, doctors, police, and other service professionals are less likely to identify children in dangerous situations.

Conversely other data sources found that call volume to the Childhelp National Child Abuse hotline was up 31% from March 2019 compared to March 2020 and, for the first time ever, half of the visitors to the National Sexual Assault Hotline were minors. Among those who called with concerns related to the pandemic, 79 percent said they were living with their perpetrator.<sup>5</sup>

## **FCC Announces New 3-Digit Emergency Hotline as Calls to Suicide Prevention Hotlines Increases**

In mid-2020, calls increased by 300% to suicide prevention hotlines in some areas of the attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. To improve access to those in need, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced support at the end of July 2020 for a new 3-digit emergency hotline. The digits 988 will be designated as a direct access line for suicide prevention and mental health crisis counselors. Telephone service providers have until July 2022 to enact the 988 hotline.

[5] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2020/04/30/child-abuse-reports-coronavirus>