

**From the Memorial Day to the Fourth of July Weekends 2020:
The COVID-19 Case Rate Increase in California's Diverse
Population**

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ABOUT CESLAC

Since 1992, the Center for the Study of Latino Health and Culture (CESLAC) of the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA has provided cutting-edge, fact-based research, education, and public information about Latinos, their health, their history, and their roles in California's society and economy.

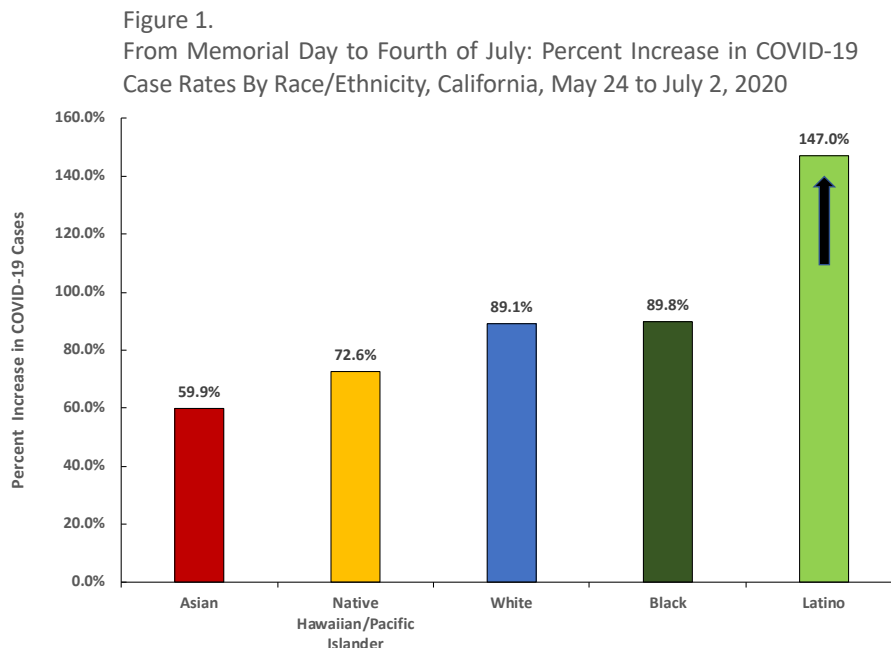
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Shortly after the first cases of COVID-19 were detected in California, early in 2020, the state aggressively took protective measures to “flatten the curve” of coronavirus spread, by discouraging the formation of large, dense crowds. Only “essential workers” were allowed to work as normal; everyone else was required to work from home.

But there was a blind spot in the state’s protective measures. While some essential workers, such as physicians and nurses, were provided with N-95 masks and other personal protection equipment (PPE), other essential workers were overlooked: for example, farm workers, meat processors, truck drivers, grocery clerks and shelf stockers, automobile mechanics, gardeners, construction workers, and nursing home attendants. These workers, largely Latinos or other minorities of color, were exposed to the coronavirus while performing their essential jobs, so that others could shelter at home.

By mid-May, California was in the process of re-opening on an accelerated basis, despite public health officers’ warnings that this rapid re-opening might lead to a new surge in COVID-19 cases. As a result of the fast-tracked reopening, all racial/ethnic groups have experienced huge growths in their case rates in the past six weeks.

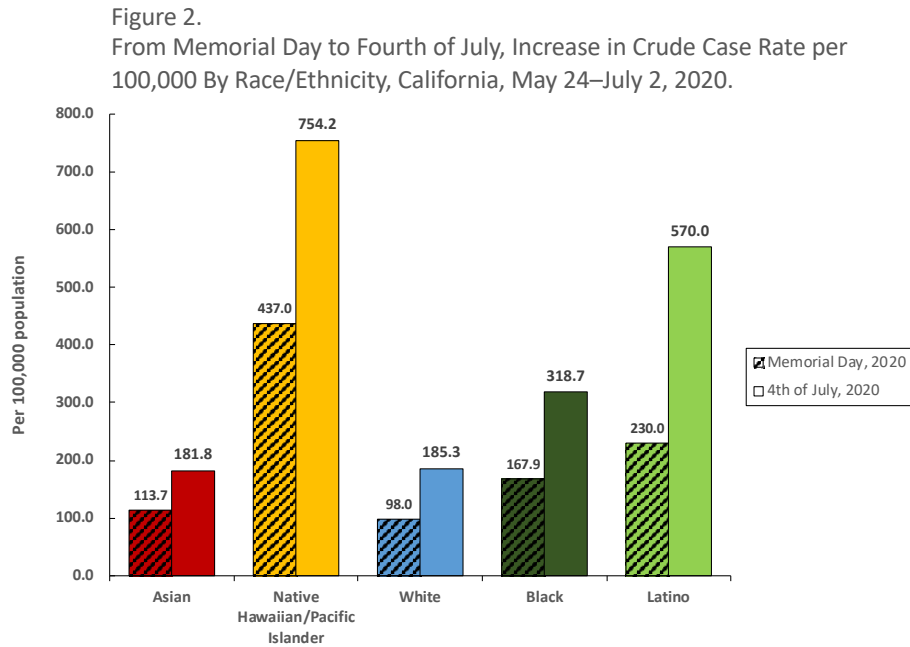
Figure 1 shows the percent increase in COVID-19 case rates (number of cases per 100,000 population) by race/ethnicity, between the Memorial Day and the Fourth of July weekends of 2020.



Source: UCLA CESLAC Tabulations, CDPH, 05-24-2020 and 07-02-2020, Population: ACS 2018

All racial/ethnic groups experienced tremendous growth in their case rates. The Asian rate had the smallest increase, at 59.9%. All other groups had higher percent increases, with the Latino case rate more than doubling, at an increase of 147.0%.

For more detail, Figure 2 shows each race/ethnic group’s crude case rate per 100,000 population on May 24 (with diagonal hatching) and then that group’s case rate on July 2 (no hatching).



Source: UCLA CESLAC Tabulations, CDPH, 05-24-2020 and 07-02-2020, Population: ACS 2018

Methods. Data on COVID-19 cases, stratified by race/ethnicity and by age group, were furnished by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). As of July 2, 2020, out of 240,195 cases recorded across all age groups, 80,895 (34%) were missing data on race/ethnicity, and so were not included in these figures. Population denominators to calculate the rate of cases per 100,000 were tabulated from the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS), the latest available.

For more information, or to arrange a telephone interview with the Center’s Director, David E. Hayes- Bautista, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor of Medicine, please contact Adriana Valdez, at (310) 794-0663 or cesla@ucla.edu.