

# The Toll of COVID-19 on Communities of Color

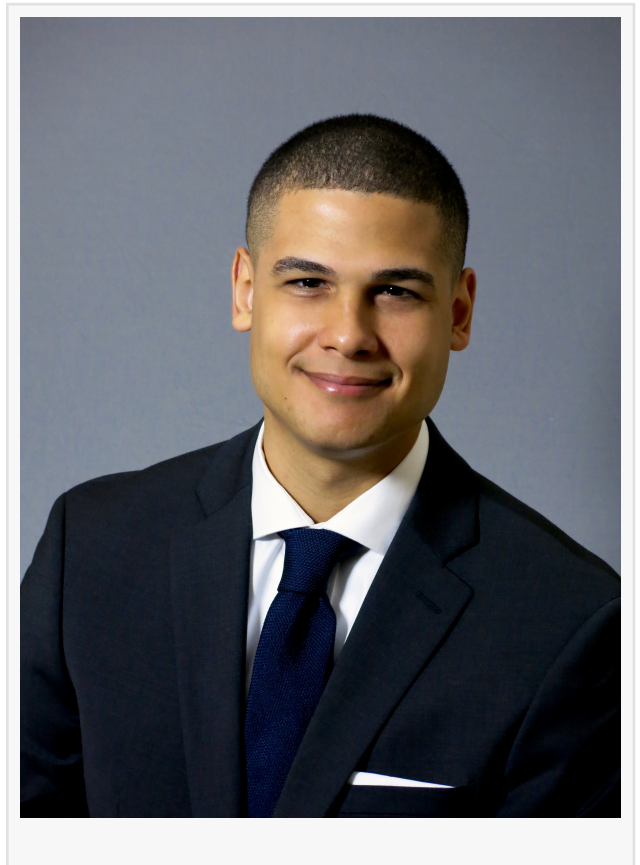
## by Anthony Grullon

USA, March 2, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The coronavirus pandemic is exacerbating America's pre-existing conditions, chief among them, structural racism. Early statistics reveal the disturbing and disproportionate toll this pandemic is taking on the health and wealth of low-income and minority groups. And yet, these communities disproportionately perform many of the essential services currently sustaining our society.

In the U.S., wealth correlates with race: the typical White family has 10x the wealth of Black families and 7x that of Latinx families. This reinforces the need to discuss lower-income and racial minority communities collectively. Social distancing, the primary public health recommendation for COVID-19, is a luxury for these communities, who cannot easily telework or engage in long-distance education per social distancing guidelines. As a result, the wealth inequalities along racial lines continue as racial minorities, who already earn less than their White peers, hold jobs that are more vulnerable to loss during the pandemic.

From a health standpoint, a closer look at racial minority groups reflects unfortunate and disproportionate representation in at-risk settings. For example, Black Americans constitute only 12% of the U.S. population but comprise 40% of the homeless population and 33% of the prison inmate population in 2020. The homeless community does not have access to sanitary resources, has more pre-existing comorbidities, and experiences higher hospitalization rates. Similarly, prisoners live in close quarters, which speed the rate of transmission.

Meanwhile, these same low-income minority communities disproportionately perform a large share of the essential services that our society depends on. As mentioned, working from home is a privilege. Research shows only 16.2% of Hispanic and 19.7% of Black workers can telework. Moreover, only 9.2% of those in the lowest quartile of the wage distribution can telework



compared to 61.5% in the highest. These populations have to show up to work. Why? Their work is essential. Black Americans, for example, constitute 15% of the entire essential workforce. Similarly, one in three jobs held by women has been deemed essential, and women of color, especially, are more likely to work in low-wage frontline healthcare positions—as nursing assistants, orderlies, home health aides, etc.—where they are most at risk of contracting the virus. Beyond the healthcare sector, grocery store cashiers, delivery men and women, meat plant workers, too, tend to be low-income minority individuals who must continue to work, frequently under questionable conditions.

As a nation, those we are relying on the most are the most exposed, and therefore, we all are.

### About Anthony Grullon

Anthony is an entrepreneur, investor, and operator. With a current focus on consumer companies that leverage technology to increase access to education, food, and health, Anthony has worked with both early and growth stage companies. He loves partnering at the earliest stage with startup teams to build products customers love, and to help them scale to build aspirational companies. Most recently, Anthony was a co-founder of Forage, a startup focused on helping families on food stamps affordably buy groceries online.

Forage's work was recognized as a Rising Startup to Watch by Forbes. Prior to Forage, Anthony held investor roles at Rethink Education and Kapor Capital. During his time at these funds, he led investments in companies like Wonderschool and Blavity. Anthony holds a degree in Management Science and Engineering from The College of New Jersey and an MBA with a concentration in Entrepreneurial Management from the Wharton School.

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