Key Findings:

- Studies have found adults with underlying pre-existing conditions who contract COVID-19 have a higher risk for more severe illness, including hospitalization, admission to intensive care units (ICU), and death.\(^1\)\(^-\)\(^8\)
- COVID-19 hospitalizations were up to 6 times higher and deaths 12 times higher among patients with reported pre-existing conditions compared to patients with no reported pre-existing conditions between January and May of 2020.\(^4\)

Pre-Existing Conditions and COVID-19 Outcomes in Adult Populations:

- Different pre-existing conditions pose different risks for individuals who contract COVID-19. Based on strong evidence from multiple studies, the list of pre-existing conditions that put individuals at increased risk for severe illness include: serious heart conditions (heart failure, coronary artery disease), chronic kidney disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), obesity, sickle cell disease, solid organ transplant, and type 2 diabetes.\(^6\)\(^-\)\(^8\)
- Among COVID-19 cases, the three most common underlying health conditions are cardiovascular disease (32%), diabetes (30%), and chronic lung disease (18%).\(^4\)
- Among COVID-19 hospitalizations, the three most common underlying conditions are hypertension (57.7%), obesity (47.8%), and metabolic disease (42.9%).\(^5\)
- Between January 22 and May 30, 2020, the highest rates of COVID-19-related ICU admissions were among adults with underlying conditions aged 60-69 years (11%) and 70-79 years (12%).\(^4\)

Figure 1. Reported Underlying Health Conditions among COVID-19 Hospitalizations in Adults\(^9\)

Mitigation & Prevention Recommendations:

- Proper hand washing, physical distancing – even outdoors, mask use, and complete home confinement, if possible, will reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection in individuals with chronic illness. Family members affected or suspected to be affected by COVID-19 should isolate in a separate room, as much as possible.  
- Contact physician immediately if individuals with underlying medical conditions suspect they have been exposed to COVID-19.  
- Continue with treatment plan and medications prescribed by physician to manage any pre-existing medical conditions.  
- Schedule telehealth appointments, if possible, with healthcare providers to safely manage pre-existing conditions.  
- Continue to practice healthy habits, including regular physical activity, regular sleep routines, limited screen time, and consumption of nutritious, unprocessed foods.  
- Receive annual seasonal influenza vaccine, especially in during the pandemic..

Summary:
Pre-existing medical conditions increase the risk for hospitalization for COVID-19. Certain pre-existing conditions have been shown to pose a higher risk for severity of COVID-19 that includes hospitalization, ICU admission, and death. Among U.S. COVID-19 cases, the most common underlying conditions are cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and chronic lung disease. COVID-19 hospitalizations are more common among U.S. adults with hypertension, obesity, and metabolic disease. Practicing proper hand hygiene, physical distancing, and mask use in addition to managing underlying medical conditions and overall health will reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection and/or the severity of COVID-19 in individuals with pre-existing conditions.

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<tr>
<th>TX RPC Network Member(s) Content Expert</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deanna Hoelscher, PhD, RDN, LD, CNS, FISBNPA</td>
<td>The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) School of Public Health in Austin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold W. (Bill) Kohl, III, PhD</td>
<td>The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) School of Public Health in Austin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph B. McCormick, MD</td>
<td>The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) School of Public Health in Brownsville</td>
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References:


