Chapter 10
NAHSE and the 2020 Presidential Elections

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ABSTRACT

In Summer 2020, prior to the U.S. November 2020 elections, the "NAHSE Political Leadership in the United States" survey was administered to 2,000 members with a 12.6% response rate to assess member views on the Presidential candidates. The purpose of the survey was to assess healthcare concerns of the membership, which would help frame the organization's public policy agenda. Of the respondents, 98% stated they would definitely vote with 80% very confident or confident that their votes would be counted. Approximately 65% of respondents plan to vote in person on the day of the election or through early voting opportunities, and 35% intend to vote via mail or absentee ballot, with 1% stating they do not plan to vote. The top five issues the membership recommended to be addressed by the new President of the United States are (1) COVID-19, (2) criminal justice/police brutality, (3) race relations/police brutality, (4) jobs/economic insecurity, and (5) economy.

BACKGROUND

The U.S. Presidential election of 2020 had two candidates—the current occupant of the White House President Donald Trump and former Vice-President Joseph Biden—running for the new term. The vitriol between the candidates, the Democratic and Republican party competition, the public's anger over the handling of COVID-19, the resulting shut-down of the economy, and the introduction of public health principles mandating face-masking that some constituencies refused to support added to the election controversy.

The murders of Ahmaud Arbery (February 23, 2020), Breonna Taylor (March 13, 2020), and George Floyd (May 25, 2020) resulted in a summer of "Black Lives Matter" marches to demand justice for the murders of unarmed Blacks. The recording of George Floyd's death on a cell phone captured international attention and brought young people to the streets to march for social justice during the pandemic.

The general election was held on November 3, 2020, with voters directly selecting their state's members to the U.S. Electoral College. On November 7, most national media organizations projected that Biden had clinched enough electoral votes to be named the U.S. president-elect (*The New York Times*, 2022). Unlike in previous elections where the incumbent candidate lost and congratulated the newly elected president, there was no acknowledgement in the Trump circle that the Trump Administration would not advance to a second term of office.

Survey Administration

The purpose of the "NAHSE Member Survey of Political Leadership in the United States" was to identify healthcare priorities, needs and concerns of the member's organizations and communities regarding the political and policy landscape during the health pandemic and time of national transition. Approximately 2,000 members of the National Association of Health Service Executives (NAHSE) received invitations to participate in the survey, and 252 members responded (12.6% response rate). Sixty-three percent of respondents were residents of nine states: Florida (8%); Georgia (9%) Illinois (10%); Michigan (4%); Missouri (5%); New York (4%); Pennsylvania (6%); Tennessee (5%) Texas (12%). The remainder were distributed in smaller numbers across several remaining states.

The respondents were 62% female and 38% male; 86% were between the ages of 25 and 64, and 11% were over 65. Relative to academic preparation and highest degree earned, 67% of respondents hold a master's degrees; 20% hold doctoral degrees; 12% hold bachelor's degrees and less than 1% have associate degrees. Eighty-one percent of the respondents were employed full-time; student respondents accounted for 5%, retired persons 4%, and unemployed 5%. Also included were "other" at 5%, and the combination of consultants, entrepreneurs, or working in another industry outside of healthcare was 5%.

How COVID-19 Affected Members' Professional and Personal Lives

Based on 261 responses, 210 (80%) indicated that they had "no," limited, or temporary reductions in their compensation and/or benefits. Of the 261 respondents, 210 individual responses (66%) indicated that their employment benefits were not impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, 7% had their pay reduced but it had been restored; in addition, 8% were furloughed/laid off/hours and/or benefits reduced temporarily but were restored to baseline.

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