Workers

Essential and Vulnerable
COVID-19

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Michigan’s asparagus harvest seemed to go well, then the COVID-19 outbreaks came
Immigrant, Black, Latinx, Communities of Color

- “Essential”
- Dangerous
- Low-wage
COVID-19 is affecting Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other people of color the most.

- Black people are dying at 2.5 times the rate of white people.
- Latinx are twice as likely as whites to get infected with COVID-19.
Health and safety is challenged by...

- Migratory lifestyle
- Cultural and language differences
- Immigration status
- Inherent dangers and health risks of occupation
- Lack of access to insurance or financial resources
- Lack of regulatory protection
Social Determinants of COVID-19 Mortality

In rural counties (n=2826), counties with more non-English speaking households and more farm workers had significantly higher levels of mortality, as did counties with higher levels of poverty and more residents over the age of 65.

Fielding-Miller et. al preprint July 2020
Blame workers

• “Home and social conditions” cause of meatpacking outbreaks

• “Living Circumstances in Certain Cultures”

• “They go to work in school buses and they’re all packed in there like sardines.”
Contact

Tracing?

Our essential workers survive in shadows.

• Fear
• Broken, cruel immigration system
Families of mixed immigration status often behave as if all members of family do not have documentation.
• Abandoned by feds
• State policies vary
• County policies vary
• It’s up to workers, families, service providers, health centers and advocates
• And the employer
• LOCAL LOCAL LOCAL LOCAL
Partnering in Maine