The Racialized Impacts of COVID-19 on Essential Workers’ Career Pathways

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Purpose and Background

• COVID-19 and the construction of “essential work”

• Segmented and segregated workplaces

• Economic crises and long-term advancement effects
Research Questions

• How are the career pathways of essential workers, with an explicit focus on healthcare workers, affected by COVID-19?

• How do the effects of COVID-19 on career pathways differ by race and gender?
Segmentation and Segregation

Representation ratio is calculated as the share of a race group in the occupation divided by their share in the labor force. Sample includes male workers only. Source: CPS-IPUMS Basic Monthly Sample, Jan 2019 - Nov 2020
Four labor market segments

**Primary Internal Examples:**
- Physicians and Surgeons
- Registered Nurses
- Human Resources Managers
- Accountants and Auditors
- Computer Programmers

**Primary External Examples:**
- Massage Therapists
- Pharmacy Aides
- Receptionists and Information Clerks
- Maintenance and Repair Workers

**Secondary Internal Examples:**
- Laboratory Technicians
- Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics
- Counselors
- Social Workers

**Secondary External Examples:**
- Home Health Aides
- Security Guards
- Food Preparation Workers
- Ambulance Drivers

**Primary Segment:**
- High wages
- Good fringe benefits
- Good working conditions
- High degree of job security
- High degree of autonomy and responsibility

**Secondary Segment:**
- Low wages
- Bad working conditions
- Almost no job security
- Low degree of autonomy and responsibility

**Internal Segment:**
- Firm-specific tasks
- Require high skills
- Require on-the-job training
- Good opportunities for advancement in internal market

**External Segment:**
- Un-specific tasks
- Do not require on-the-job training
- Do not have opportunities for advancement or access to internal jobs
- Exist on the periphery of an organization, inside or outside the firm
- Marginal workers

Sample includes persons in the labor force aged between 16 and 64. Source: CPS-IPUMS Basic Monthly Sample, Jan 2019 - Nov 2020
Outsized Shocks Through the Pandemic
Implications

• COVID-19 and growing inequities

• Segmented workplaces and segmented effects during economic crises

• Policy and equity in recovery