

# COVID-19 Ripple Effect

## The Impact of COVID-19 on Children in New York State

### Part 1: Death of Parent or Caregiver

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# Overview

The magnitude of COVID-19's impact is like nothing we've seen before. A new analysis of the pandemic's effect on households with children under age 18 in New York State has estimated severe, long-lasting, and racially disparate repercussions on children who lost a parent or guardian or who entered poverty or are near poverty as a result of the pandemic. The analysis, conducted by United Hospital Fund and Boston Consulting Group, estimates that between March and July 2020, 4,200 children experienced a parental death; and 325,000 children have been pushed into or near poverty as a result of the pandemic's economic downturn.

This analysis is broken out in two parts. This report contains the findings from Part 1, which highlights the impacts of parental death on New York's children. Part 2, included in a separate document, addresses COVID-19's poverty-related effects and broader economic implications.

Losing a parent or caregiver during childhood is a particularly acute adversity, one that raises a child's risk of experiencing a range of poor outcomes over their lifetime, including poorer mental and physical health. These children and their families will require ongoing support and investment to ensure that the next generation won't remain victims of this current COVID-19 pandemic. Given the magnitude of the challenge for state and local authorities, federal support will be crucial.

We hope this analysis will provide policymakers and community leaders with data to support the development of these necessary strategies and policies. Please contact Catherine Arnst, Director of Public Information at UHF, with any questions or comments: [carnst@uhfnyc.org](mailto:carnst@uhfnyc.org) or (212) 494-0733.

## Key Takeaways from Part 1

**4,200 of New York State's approximately 4 million children experienced a parental or caregiver death due to COVID-19.**

- Parental and caregiver deaths from COVID-19 occurred at a rate of 1 per 1,000 children.
- 57% of these deaths were in three New York City counties: Bronx, Kings (Brooklyn), and Queens.

**Black and Hispanic children experienced parental/caregiver deaths from COVID-19 at twice the rate of Asian and white Children.**

- There are wide racial/ethnic disparities in the rate of parental/caregiver deaths from COVID-19 due to vast structural inequities that led to communities of color disproportionately being exposed to the virus.
- Black and Hispanic children were disproportionately burdened, with 1 per 600 Black children and 1 per 700 Hispanic children affected, compared to 1 per 1,400 Asian children and 1 per 1,500 white children.

**The consequences of losing a parent or caregiver to COVID-19 can be severe and long-lasting.**

- Up to 23% of children who lost a parent or caregiver due to COVID-19 may be at risk of entry into foster or kinship care. Some children who are already in kinship care, due to the opioid epidemic for example, may be disproportionately affected.
- Approximately 50% of children who lost a caregiver due to COVID-19 may enter poverty.

United Hospital Fund and BCG partnered in 2019 to quantify the “opioid ripple effect” nationally and at a state level, estimating the number of children affected and the associated societal cost.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating impact across New York State since early March, the teams came together again to assess the “ripple effect of COVID-19 on households with children”.

This analysis contains two parts. Part 1, included in the following slides, assesses the number of children who have lost a parent or caregiver to COVID-19.

2020

**~4,200 children**  
have suffered the loss of  
a parent or caregiver

**~1 in 1,000  
children**  
across New York, on  
average, lost a parent  
or caregiver due to  
COVID-19 between  
March and July 2020

NYS  
**COVID  
Ripple  
Effect**

**~1 in 600  
Black/African-  
American  
children**  
in New York lost a parent  
or caregiver

**~ 57% of  
children** who lost a  
parent or caregiver live  
in the Bronx, Brooklyn, or  
Queens

# Part 1 Objective:

## Estimate How Many Children in NYS Lost a Parent or Caregiver to COVID-19



**We examine  
this data in  
three ways:**

- 1 |** Racial/ethnic disparities
- 2 |** Most affected counties and NYC zip codes
- 3 |** Potential consequences from these losses



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# Context

# The COVID-19 pandemic is like nothing we have seen before and is disproportionately affecting people of color and low-income communities



“The last time I spoke to my mom on the phone, she said, ‘If anything happens to me, just take care of your sister, OK?’” Mr. Barrera said. “I had to be the responsible one for my sister.”

Only weeks later, Ms. Arizaga [his mother] died of COVID-19.

*He Is 16 and His Mother Died of Covid-19. What Happens To Him Now?; August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020; The New York Times*



Twenty-one in-service members of the United Federation of Teachers — out of 69 who died — leave 32 surviving children 18 or under.

*‘A Bad Dream’: New York Children Who’ve Lost Parents to COVID-19 Face Hardships Beyond Grief.  
July 6, 2020; The City*



“I started breaking down almost immediately. I held his hand, and with my mask on, I kissed him on the forehead, and I sort of just had my last words with him,” Tobias said.

Shortly after, Tobias’s father died. One month later, on June 30, his mother died, as well.

*Queens Teen Loses Both Parents to COVID-19 in One Month;  
July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020; Spectrum News NY1*

Source: The City, NY Times, Spectrum News NY1



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# Findings



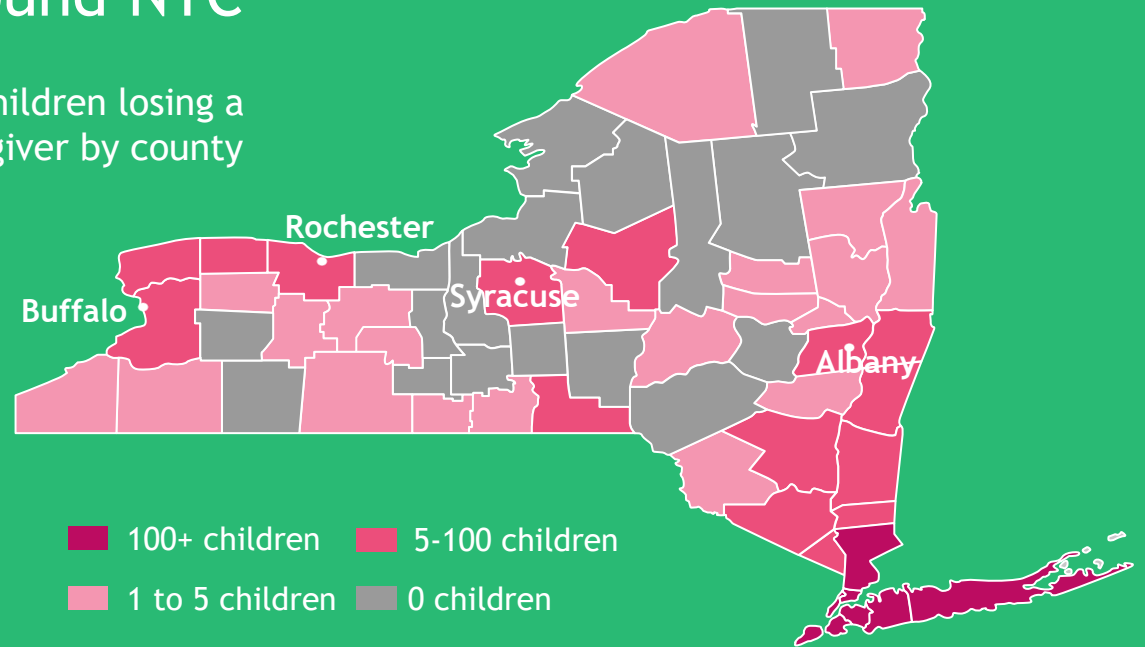
# -4,200 children lost a parent or guardian to COVID-19



~4,200  
children,  
57% of  
whom live in  
the Bronx,  
Brooklyn, or  
Queens

## COVID-19's impact on children is centered in and around NYC

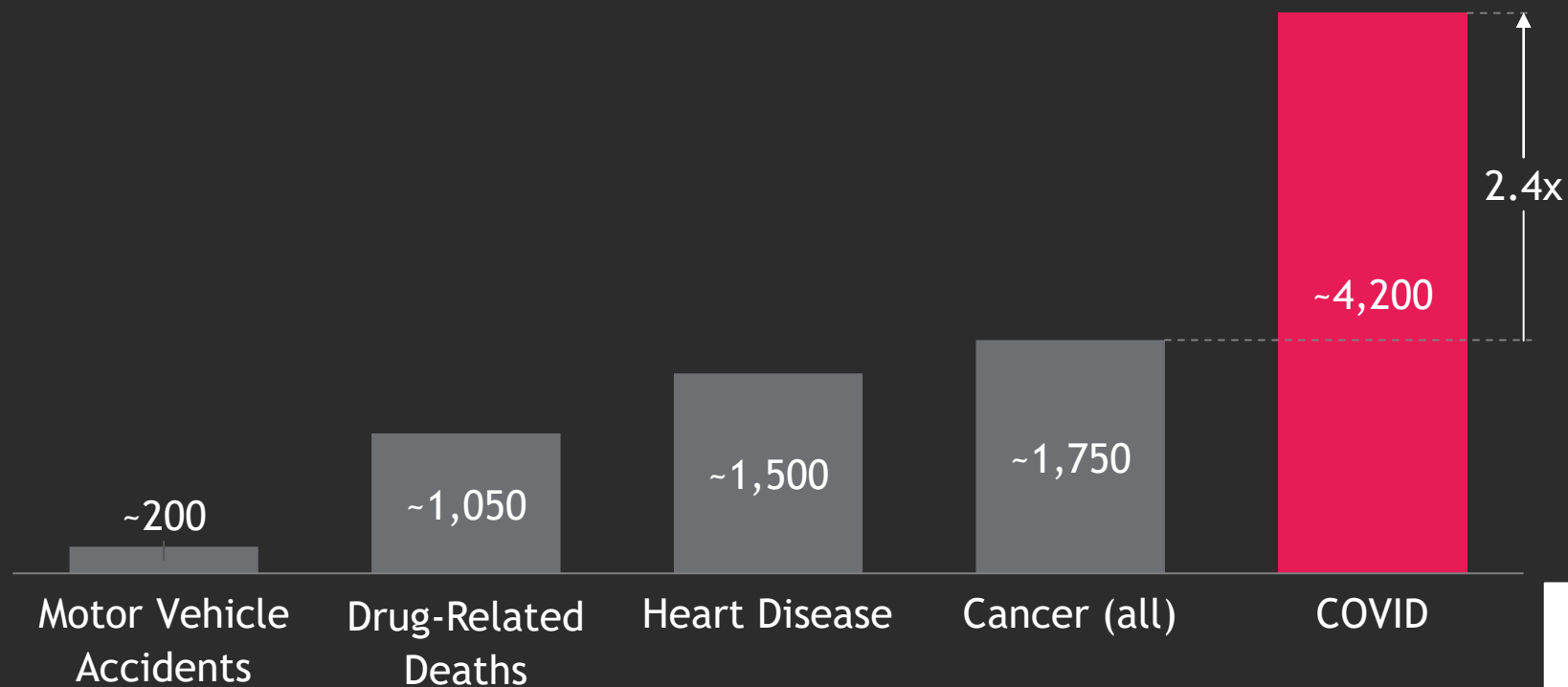
Number of children losing a parent/caregiver by county



1. Age and gender demographic breakdowns of NY's COVID-19 deaths were used to estimate the number of deaths occurring among parents of children under age 18 or grandparents providing kinship care; the data was further modified by probability of living in a single or two-parent household and the average number of children per household type. Estimates were developed for each NY county and each NYC zip code. COVID-19 death data includes probable and confirmed COVID-19 deaths. Due to unavailability of probable COVID-19 death data outside of NYC, the number of probable deaths occurring outside NYC is estimated based on the NYC ratio of confirmed to probable deaths. The data was last updated on 8/03/2020.

# 4,200 children in New York having lost a parent or caregiver to COVID-19 translates to 1 in 1,000 NY children

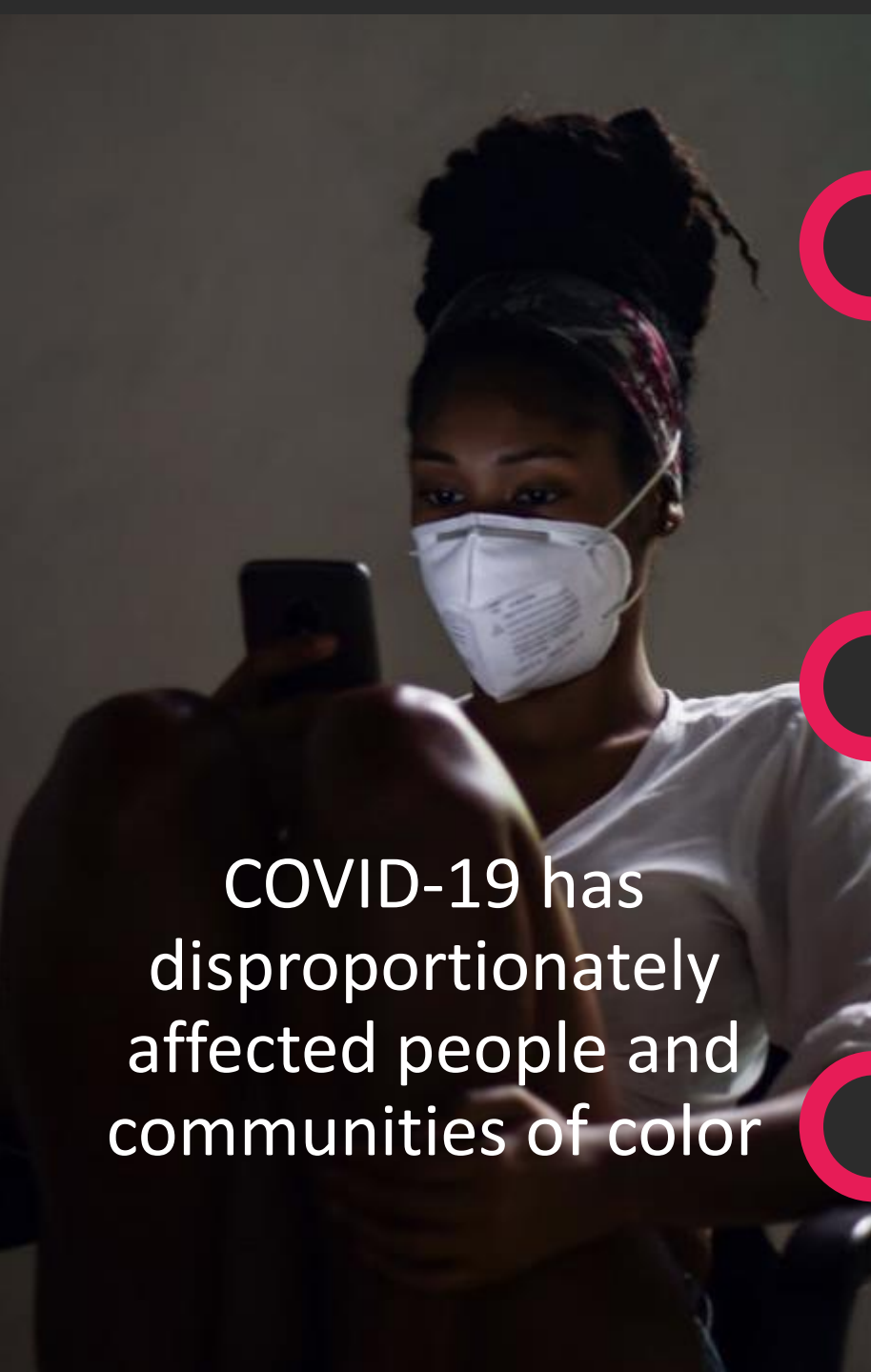
Number of children in NYS suffering the death of a parent or guardian due to COVID-19 (March-July)<sup>1</sup> compared to common causes of death over same time period in 2018



Up to 1 in 600 for Black/African-American children

Total children in New York<sup>2</sup>

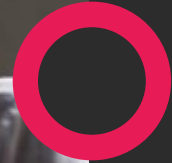
~4M



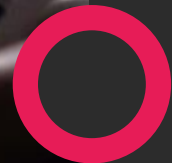
COVID-19 has  
disproportionately  
affected people and  
communities of color



People of color are at **greater risk of exposure**. They are more likely to live in multigenerational housing, use public transit, and work in high-contact occupations.



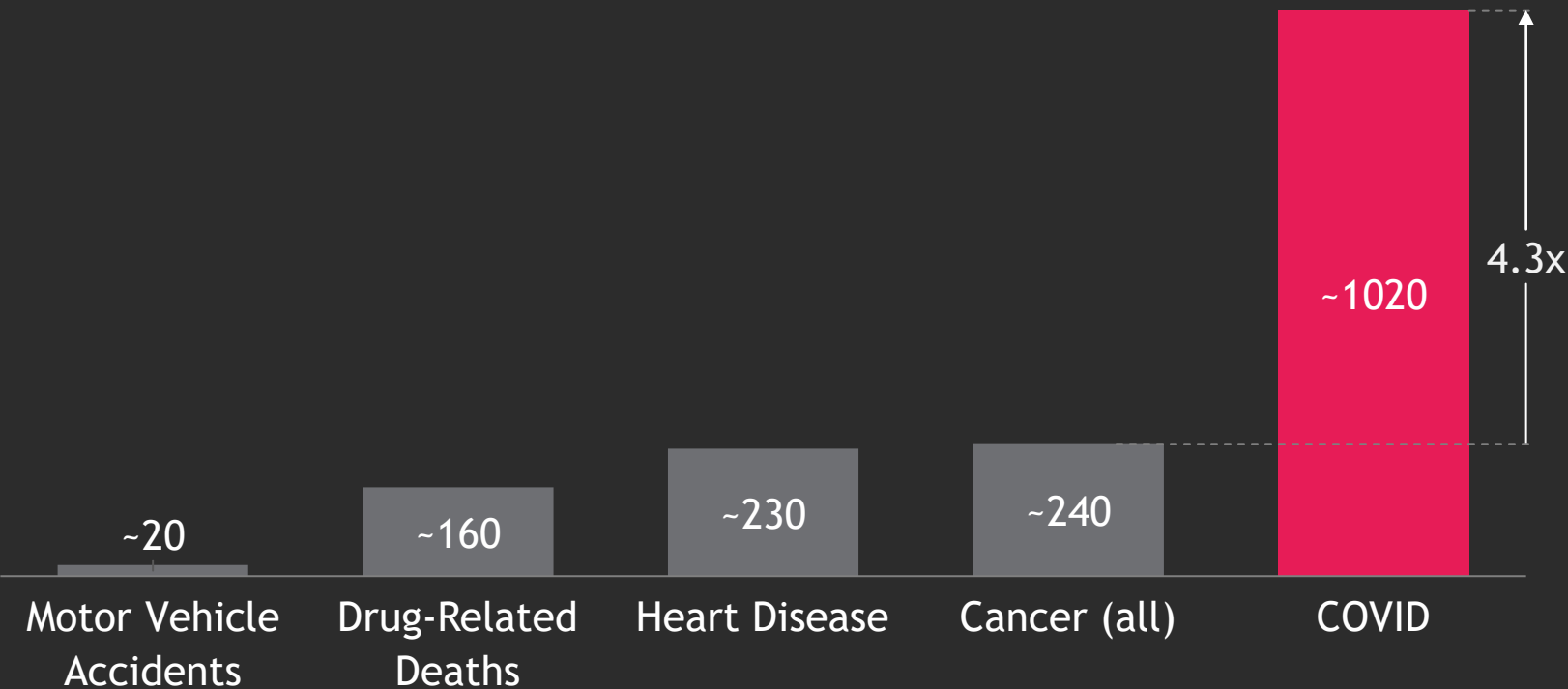
Racial and ethnic disparities are pronounced, with people of color **more likely to die due to COVID-19** compared to white people when looking at age-adjusted COVID-19 deaths.



**Long-standing health and social inequities** contributed to the increased COVID-19 infection risk faced by communities of color.

# 1 in 600 Black/ African American children in New York have lost a parent or caregiver to COVID-19

Number of Black/ African American children in NYS suffering the death of a parent or guardian due to COVID-19 (March-July)<sup>1</sup> compared to common causes of death over same time period in 2018



Total Black/ African American children in New York<sup>2</sup>

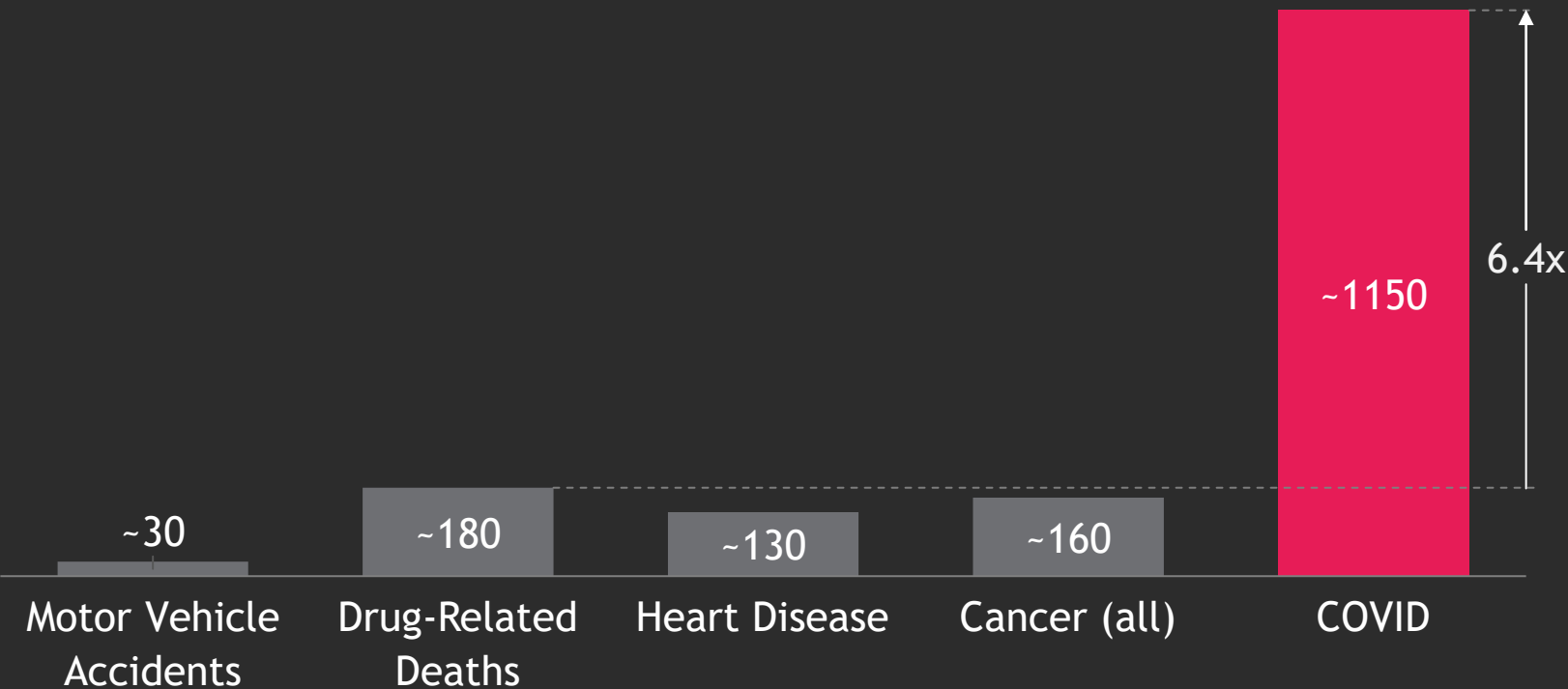


1. CDC WONDER online database. Applying percent of parents/grandparents by age group and number of children to total deaths in 5-month period of 2018; 2. 2018 American Community Survey



# 1 in 700 Hispanic children in New York have lost a parent or caregiver to COVID-19

Number of Hispanic children in NYS suffering the death of a parent or guardian due to COVID-19 (March-July)<sup>1</sup> compared to common causes of death over same time period in 2018



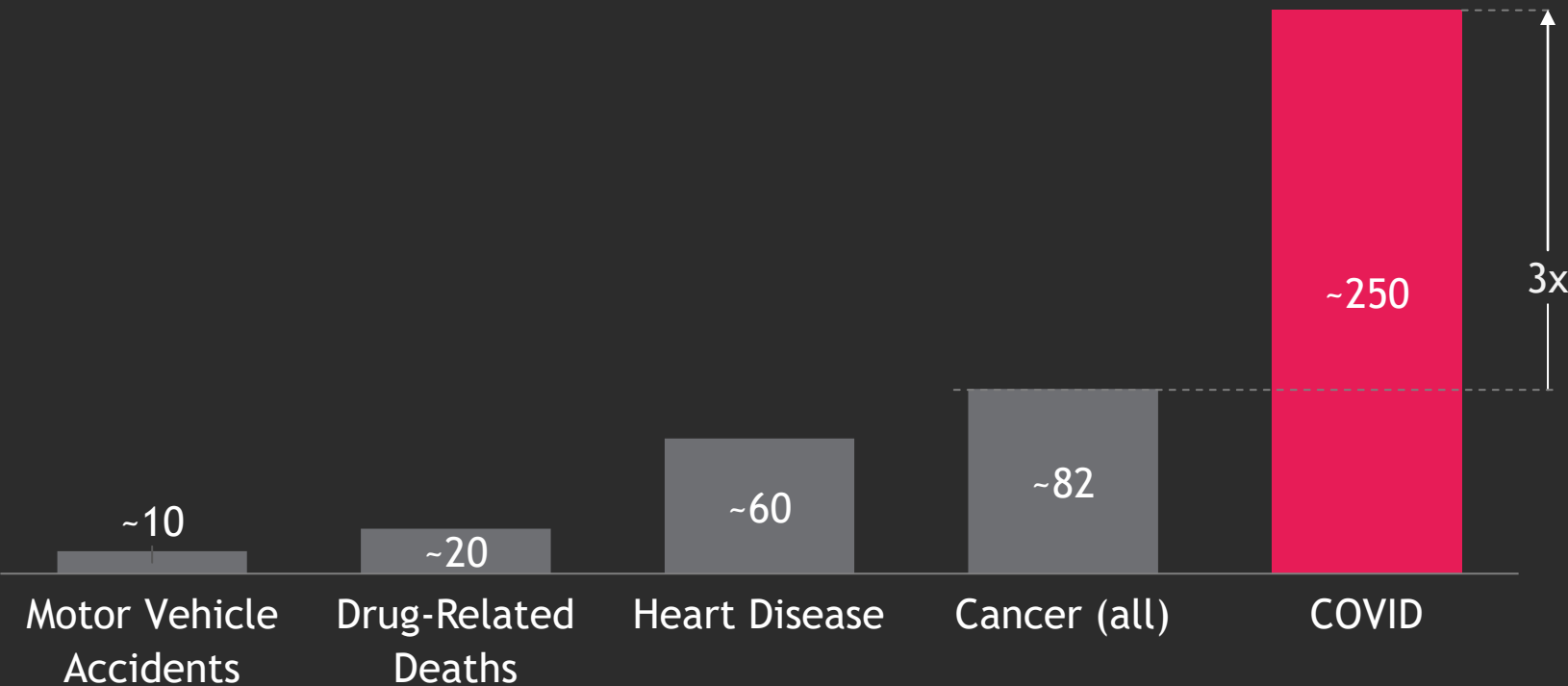
Total Hispanic children in New York<sup>2</sup>



1. CDC WONDER online database. Applying percent of parents/grandparents by age group and number of children to total deaths in 5-month period of 2018; 2. 2018 American Community Survey

# 1 in 1,400 Asian children in New York have lost a parent or caregiver to COVID-19

Number of Asian children in NYS suffering the death of a parent or guardian due to COVID-19 (March-July)<sup>1</sup> compared to common causes of death over same time period in 2018



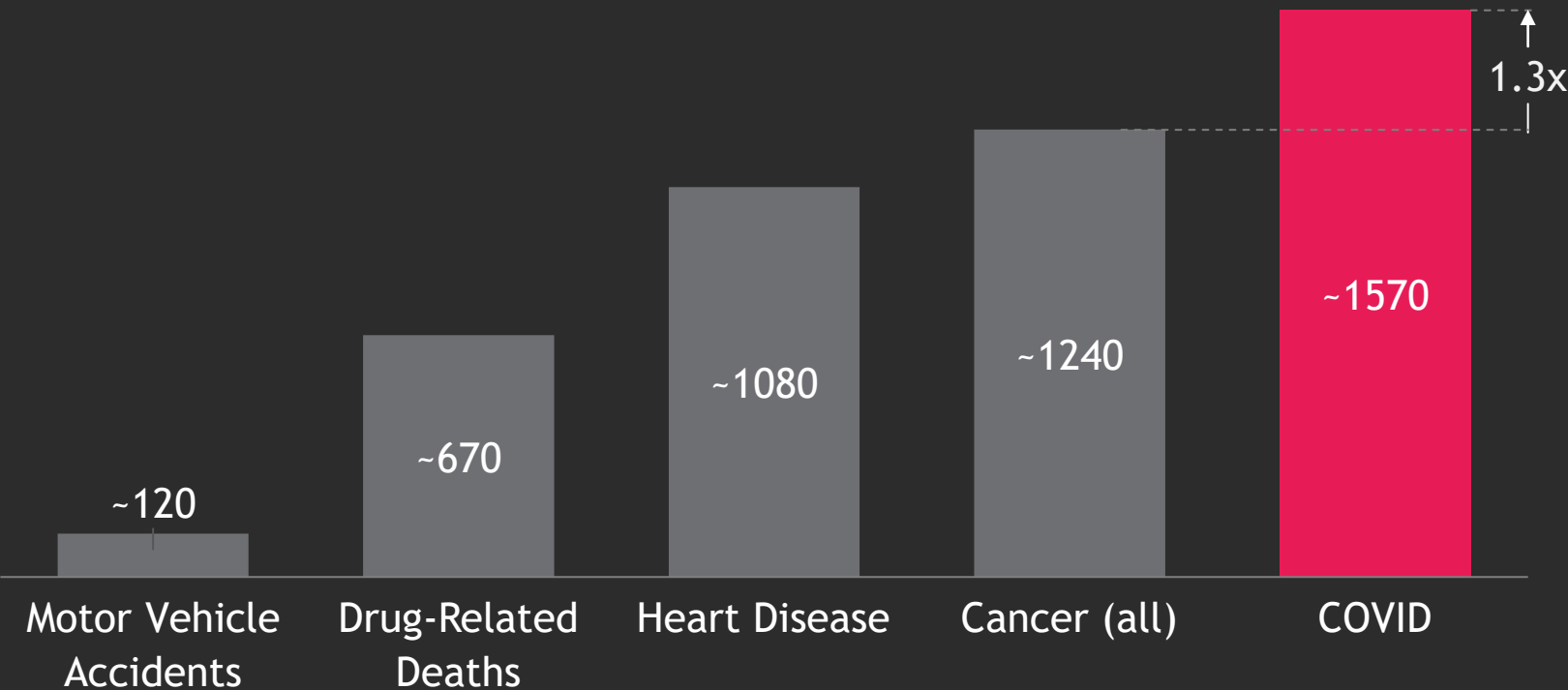
Total Asian children in New York<sup>2</sup>



1. CDC WONDER online database. Applying percent of parents/grandparents by age group and number of children to total deaths in 5-month period of 2018; 2. 2018 American Community Survey

# 1 in 1,500 white children in New York have lost a parent or caregiver to COVID-19

Number of white children in NYS suffering the death of a parent or guardian due to COVID-19 (March-July)<sup>1</sup> compared to common causes of death over same time period in 2018



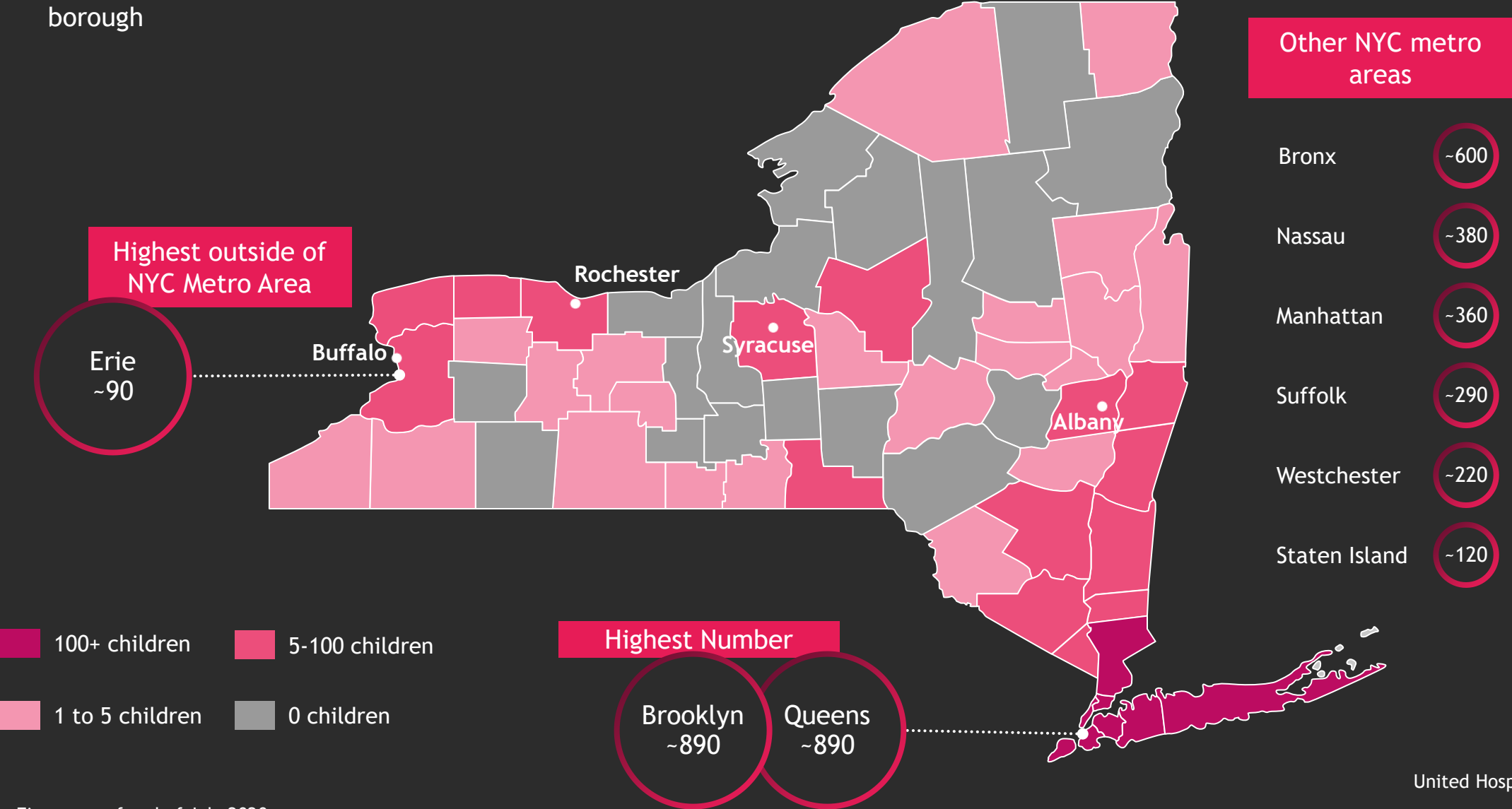
Total white children in New York<sup>2</sup>



1. CDC WONDER online database. Applying percent of parents/grandparents by age group and number of children to total deaths in 5-month period of 2018; 2. 2018 American Community Survey

# COVID-19's impact on children is centered in and around NYC

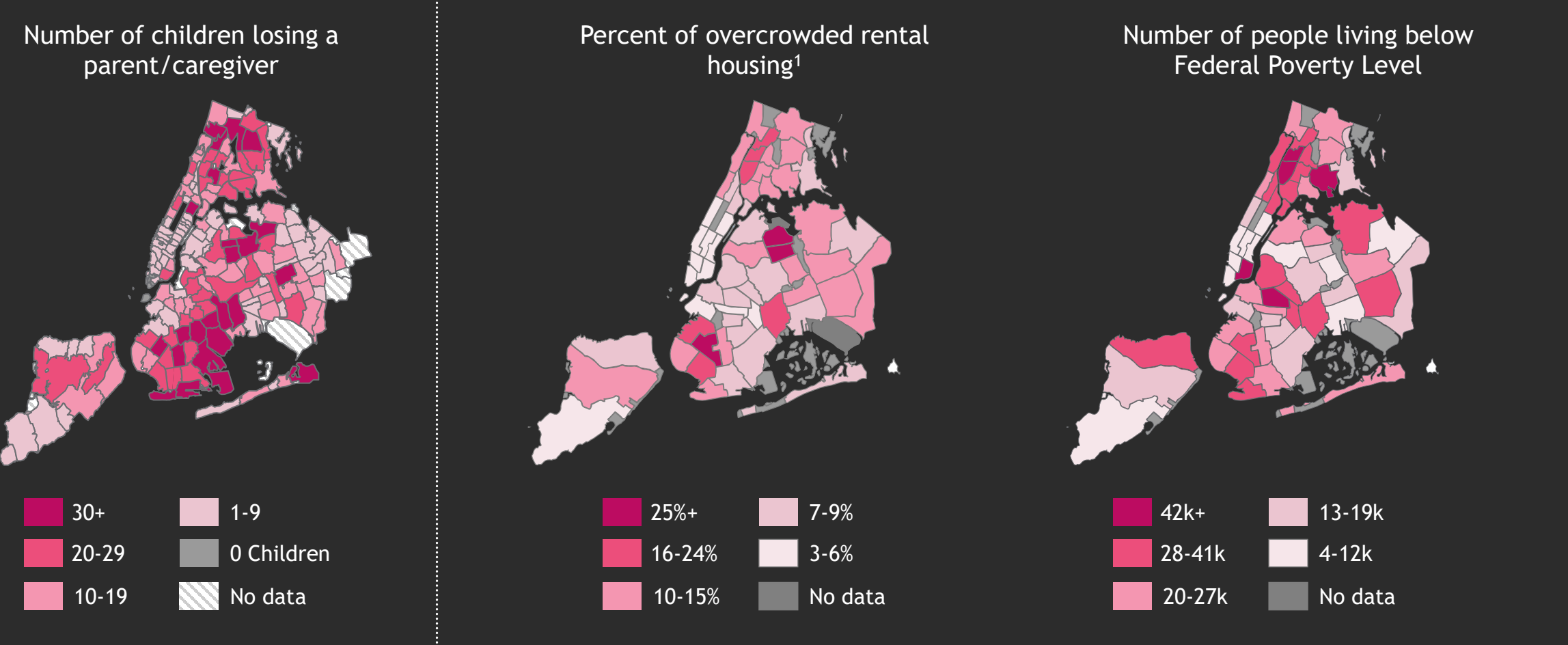
Number of children losing a parent/caregiver by county/NYC borough



Figures as of end of July 2020



# Heavily affected zip codes are more likely to have overcrowded housing and high levels of poverty



1. Overcrowded rental housing defined as occupied rental housing units with more than one person per room; this data is not limited to households with children.  
Source: Citizens Committee for Children

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Children  
experiencing the  
loss of a parent or  
caregiver might  
suffer severe  
consequences over  
their lifetimes

!

Up to ~23% of children (~960) might have **lost sole guardian / parent**<sup>1</sup>

➤ Risk of entry into foster or kinship care

!

Majority of children will suffer **prolonged financial hardship**, and many (~50%) could enter poverty as a result

!

There are **serious, long-term mental health implications**, potentially leading to depression, anxiety, and other mental health illnesses

!

Children already harmed by the **opioid epidemic and living with grandparents** might be disproportionately affected by COVID-19 deaths

1. Pew Research Center, 23% excludes children with only 1 parent who live in an "extended family household" with other adults such as grandparents.

## Legal Context

The situation surrounding COVID-19 is dynamic and rapidly evolving on a daily basis.

This presentation is **not** intended to:

- (i) constitute medical or safety advice, nor be a substitute for the same; nor
- (ii) be seen as a formal endorsement or recommendation of a particular response.

As such you are advised to make your own assessment as to the appropriate course of action to take; use this presentation as guidance. Please carefully consider local laws and guidance in your area, particularly the most recent advice issued by your local (and national) health authorities, before making any decision.

# COVID-19 Ripple Effect

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