

The Michigan Farmworker Project

Improving Working and Living Conditions for Michigan Farmworkers amid the COVID-19 Pandemic

Summary

The Michigan Farmworker Project conducted by University of Michigan School of Public Health researchers, found that farmworkers (migrant, seasonal, and H-2A)—considered “essential workers”—faced challenging working and living conditions that are critical to address during the COVID-19 pandemic. Efforts to limit COVID-19 risks in this population require an evidence-based, multifactorial approach that involves workers, employees, and stakeholders. We recommend that enforcement actions be taken to ensure compliance with COVID-19 protection and mitigation guidelines instead of reliance on self-compliance. Recommendations should be provided to farmworkers regardless of their legal status.

What did the researchers do?

The Michigan Farmworker Project (MFP) was conducted in the Summer of 2019 as a community-engaged qualitative study that aimed to provide a deeper understanding of the complex working and living conditions of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in the state of Michigan. With stakeholders, we discussed their current knowledge, experiences and barriers to the adoption of the 15 recommendations made by the Michigan Civil Rights Commission of 2010 and 2019 in response to the Report on the Conditions of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers in Michigan. We also sought to understand gaps in service provision and recommendations from farmworkers themselves to address their current working and living conditions from the perspective of farmworkers and stakeholders who provide services directly to farmworkers—health, legal, outreach, and educational services. We conducted 55 in-depth interviews (with 19 female farmworkers, 15 male farmworkers and 21 key stakeholders) in various rural areas of Michigan.



Purpose

This diagram describes preliminary findings from the Michigan Farmworker Project and highlights the challenging working and living conditions that Michigan farmworkers face, which may be exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. We present recommendations to improve working conditions, worker safety, and the overall well-being of Michigan farmworkers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Michigan Farmworker Project Research Team

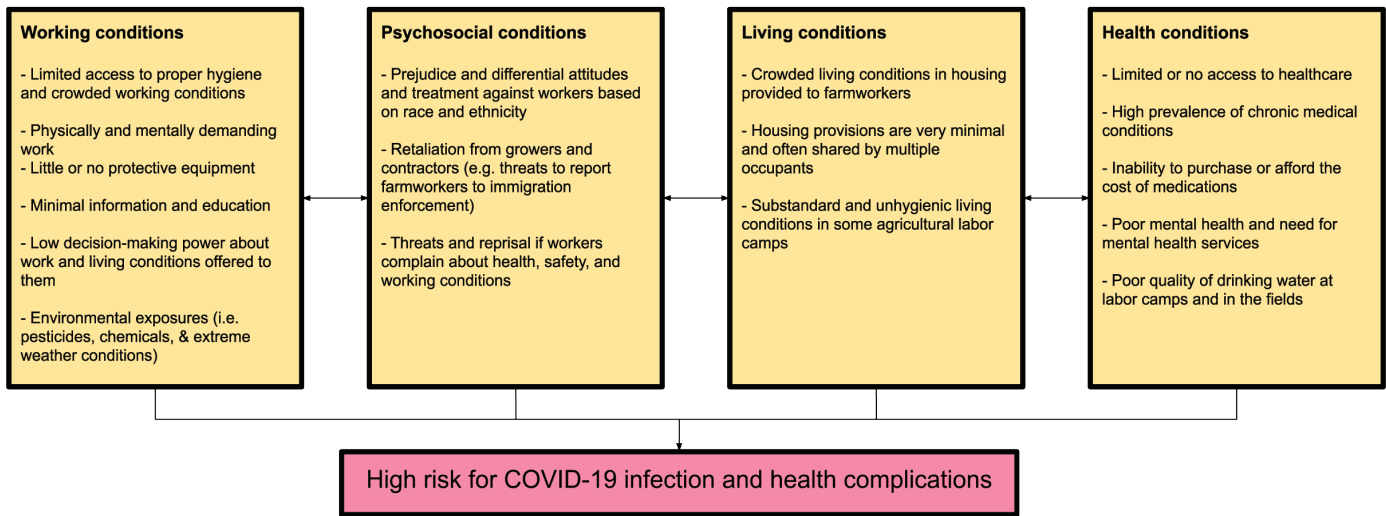
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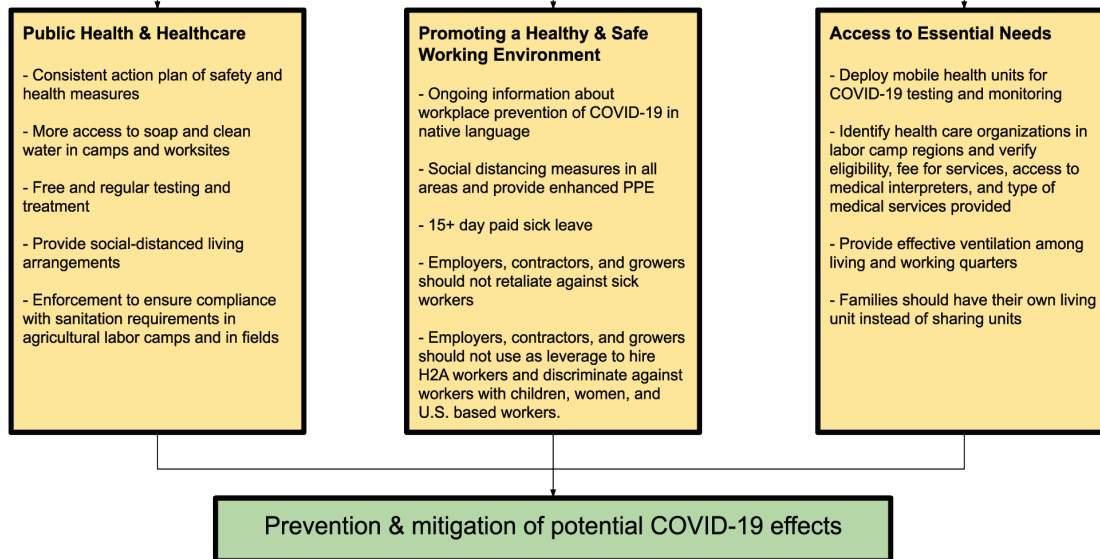
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What's happening?



What can be done?



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