Leave No One Behind:
Exploring the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on People with Disabilities in North Carolina

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The Question
How has COVID-19 disproportionately impacted People Living With Disabilities (PLWD) in North Carolina?

Emerging Policies
CARES ACT
https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/about-the-cares-act

- Unemployment checks
- Housing needs
- Family caregiver support
- Special education funding

Our Research Process
- Conducted 6 key informant interviews to gather first-hand testimonies of PLWD experiences during the pandemic
- Held focus groups with representatives of 5 different community-based organizations to discuss how organizations adapted to changing needs during the pandemic
- Used 3 arts-based methodologies to provide alternate modes of communication for participants to share their experiences. Methods used were Photovoice, Body Mapping, and Story Completion.

What Do We Know Already?
Structural/Organizational Features
1. Policy: disruption of healthcare services due to pandemic mitigation efforts, lack of representation in health policy
2. Emergency Response: lack of infrastructure to support needs and inclusion of PLWD; COVID-19 pandemic presents opportunity for urban health reform
3. Educational Disparities: home isolation, lack of socialization, lack of services, pre-existing educational disparities, need to adapt curricula according to students’ individual needs

Individual Impacts
1. Economic: PLWD more likely to lose jobs and experience higher financial stress during pandemic, telework potentially an ideal future option for PLWD
2. Mental Health: pre-existing burden faced by PLWD before the pandemic now exacerbated, moral responsibility to promote greater investment in tele-rehabilitation programs
3. COVID Information Accessibility: need for equal access of COVID-19 health information that accommodates PLWD

Moving Forward
- Continue using arts-based methodology to interview participants and gather more data
- Conduct data analysis using NVivo
- Continue project with the 2021 Summer Story+ and 2021-2022 Bass Connections teams

Acknowledgements: We would like to extend our deepest thanks to our team leads (Michel Landry, Marion Quirici, Kearsley Stewart, and Anna Tupetz) for their mentorship over the past year. We would also like to thank our community team members at The Alliance for Disability Advocates for their ongoing feedback and support of this project. We thank the Duke Fortin Foundation Bass Connections programs and the Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy for funding and support.