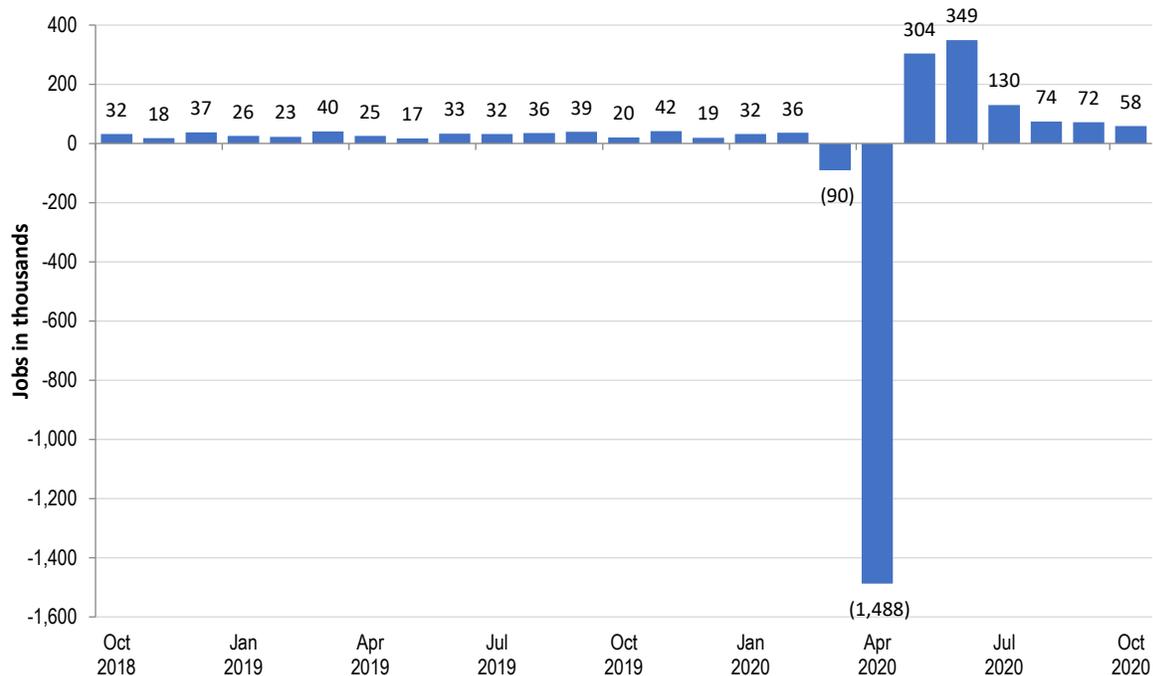


## Health Care has recovered nearly 1 million jobs but is still 590,000 below February level

The monthly jobs data released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) [today](#) provide an update through October 2020, eight months out from the start of the “COVID-19 recession.” Both health care and the overall economy continue to recover jobs lost, but both remain below pre-COVID-19 levels of employment. Health care gained 58,300 jobs in October, a very strong month by historical standards, but less than the gains of over 70,000 jobs seen in August and September as the pace of job recovery continues to gradually slow (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Month-over-month change in health care employment, seasonally adjusted**



Source: Altarum analysis of BLS Current Employment Statistics data.

As of October, health care has regained nearly 1 million jobs, or 63% of the 1.58 million jobs lost in March and April. Health care employment remains 3.6% below where it was in February, with 590,000 fewer jobs. Employment remains below pre-COVID-19 levels across all settings of care.

Ambulatory care settings saw the sharpest drop due to the pandemic, losing 1.33 million jobs in March and April. Most (82%) of these jobs have come back, but ambulatory settings are still down by 246,000 jobs, or 3.1%. Within ambulatory care, outpatient care centers – including Community Health Centers, outpatient behavioral health clinics, and freestanding ambulatory surgery centers – have had the fullest recovery, and are now only 1%, or 10,000 jobs, below their pre-COVID-19 employment. Offices of physicians dropped 10.8% of their workforce, or 295,000 jobs, and have regained three-quarters of these jobs to stand at 2.6%, or 72,000 jobs below their pre-COVID peak. Dental offices, which dropped more than half their workforce (549,000 jobs), have regained 95% of these jobs and now stand at 2.7%,

or 26,000 jobs, below pre-COVID-19 levels. Home health care jobs fell by 111,000, of which almost 60% have returned, putting home health at 2.9%, or 45,000 jobs, below February employment.

Hospital employment fell by only 3.1%, or 161,000 jobs, in April and May but remains about 2.1%, or 111,000 jobs, below the pre-COVID-19 peak. Employment in nursing homes, which has been flat or slightly declining for several years, has fallen in each of the past eight months, and is down 8.4%, or 133,000 jobs since February. Other residential care, including assisted living facilities and residential behavioral health, is also declining, although less steeply, down 5.8%, or 105,000 jobs since February.

The health care share of total employment usually climbs during recessions. Even though this recession has been unique in its impact on the usually stable health sector, health jobs did not fall as far and are recovering somewhat faster than overall employment. Therefore, the health care share of total employment has modestly jumped to pass 11%, or fully one out of every nine jobs.