



To BCG's network around the world,

I'm not telling you anything new when I point out that the greatest tragedies in the world do not affect us all equally.

Again and again, the most vulnerable among us are hit the hardest, no matter the challenge we're facing—from the impact of [climate change](#) to COVID-19 to ongoing racial injustice.

When it comes to the damage caused by the coronavirus, there are three groups of people who are at risk of suffering most severely:

- Those who are **susceptible to adverse health outcomes**, including people over 65 and those with underlying health issues
- Those who are **more at risk of being exposed** to the virus, including people in high-contact jobs, dense neighborhoods, crowded homes, or congregate-living situations, such as prisons and long-term care facilities
- Those who suffer the **greatest economic hardships** from shutdowns or reduced demand

My colleagues and I have looked at data from around the world to understand the impact on these groups, and [the results are striking](#). Those who are most health vulnerable are roughly 50 times more likely to be hospitalized or die as a result of COVID-19 than adults who are mostly healthy and under the age of 50.

Right now, as we're fully entering the ["fight" phase](#) of this crisis, with

countries restarting while working to keep infection rates low and prevent further lockdowns, we're presented with a unique and immediate challenge, as well as an important opportunity.

We have to target our efforts to helping those who are most at risk of this disease and to recognize the overlapping vulnerabilities across all three groups: the people who are the most health vulnerable are often also the most economically vulnerable and at risk of being exposed.

But by dramatically reducing the infection rate among the health vulnerable, in particular, we can dramatically reduce the impact of COVID-19, potentially bringing social and economic activity back to a more normal level more quickly, strengthening economies and providing opportunity for so many millions whose livelihoods have been severely affected. Thus by delivering better health and economic outcomes to the vulnerable, we'll accelerate the recovery for society more broadly.

I thought you would value reading our article on this topic, the first in a series, for our perspectives on the challenges we're facing today. See below for this and other related BCG publications.

Looking forward to connecting with you again next week, when I'll be sharing some thoughts about how we can't let climate become the next victim of this crisis.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Rich", with a stylized flourish at the end.

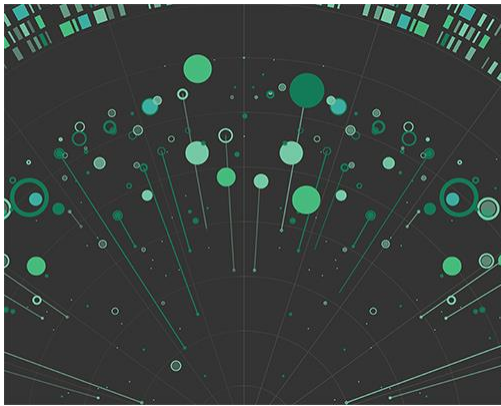
Rich Lesser
Chief Executive Officer



Protect the Vulnerable—Protect Us All

Reducing exposure among those who are vulnerable to adverse health outcomes will benefit the healthy, the economically vulnerable, and society overall.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



Facts, Scenarios, and Actions for Leaders

Governments need to prepare for the new reality by enhancing social and economic resilience, building and strengthening capabilities required for the future, and deploying equitable and forward-looking financial support.



COVID-19: Win the Fight, Win the Future

The fight will be long. Businesses and society must plan for multiple scenarios to survive the crisis and emerge stronger.