

## LatAm Healthcare Pulse

Key data and perspectives on **patient care**

# Colombia

GHQ has been monitoring health care trends in Latin America throughout the COVID-19 crisis, interviewing physicians, surgeons and medical staff on a regular basis to understand how the pandemic, global market supply chains, and government policy are affecting patient health outcomes and healthcare market dynamics.

In this brief, we report key insights and local medical perspectives from Colombia in the first quarter of 2020, from primary research conducted with experts in cardiology, neurology, endocrinology, and other areas of general surgery.

### General

- General, non-emergency surgeries have fallen across the board, by an estimated 35%.
- Hospitals expect to regain pre-pandemic patient and procedure volumes gradually by the end-quarter of 2020, depending on the pace of vaccinations.
- Private hospitals in Colombia report cost increases for surgical procedures due to shortages in critical supplies, such as anesthesia machines, gowns, and critical medical devices. These shortages are more acute in regional hospitals and clinics in smaller urban centers.
- Many hospitals will have to restock once the worst of the pandemic is over, should equipment suppliers shut down for both orders and production themselves with sufficient inventory when public health and hospital budgets are allocated for 2020.

- Patient and procedure volumes for specialized and urgent surgeries have narrowed stable elective procedures, however, have been postponed, including in such specialties as orthopedic surgery and cardiovascular interventions.

*"Costs have increased due to the pandemic. Most of the surgeries that were performed were emergency procedures and we had to use the supplies that were in stock or that could be obtained at the time."*

**—Laparoscopic Surgeon, large private hospital, Bogotá, Colombia (March 2020)**