



# **Wisconsin's Annual Report on Abuse, Neglect, and Financial Exploitation of Adults at Risk: 2019**

A statewide summary of reports  
submitted by Wisconsin counties

Division of Public Health  
P-00123-19 (06/2020)



# Introduction: The Annual Adults at Risk Report

County agencies in Wisconsin receive abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation referrals and determine whether a situation of abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation exists. They create individualized service plans to assist adults at risk and help ensure their safety.

After responding to a referral, county agencies file a report with the Department of Health Services, using the web-based Wisconsin Incident Tracking System (WITS). A compilation of all county reports from 2019 are the basis of this statewide report: *Wisconsin's Annual Report on Abuse, Neglect, and Financial Exploitation of Adults at Risk*.



# Introduction: The Annual Adults at Risk Report

This report documents reported incidents involving adults at risk ages 18-59, providing information about the types of abuse reported, characteristics of the adults at risk and alleged abusers, and local responses, which guide the State's efforts to stop abuse, neglect, and exploitation of adults at risk.

The majority of the adults at risk included in this report are community-dwelling. Allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of individuals living in licensed facilities are generally addressed through the Department of Health Services (DHS), Division of Quality Assurance (DQA), Office of Caregiver Quality.



# Who is considered an Adult at Risk?

- For the purposes of this annual report, the definition of an “adult at risk” is an adult:
  - between the ages of 18 and 59 years.
  - who has any physical or mental impairment that substantially restricts his or her ability to care for his or her needs.
  - who has experienced or is at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- An adult at risk *does not* require membership in a categorical group such as those with developmental disabilities, a degenerative brain disorder, a serious and persistent mental illness, or other like incapacities.



# Your Role in Reporting Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation of Adults at Risk

Wisconsin has made great strides in identifying and protecting adults at risk. No one should experience or endure abuse, neglect or exploitation. Let individuals know that you are concerned about them and that they are not alone; there are others who do understand and are there to help them stay safe.

Call your County Help Line if you need to talk to someone about suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of an adult at risk (ages 18-59).

See <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/aps/Contacts/aaragencies.htm> for these help line phone numbers.



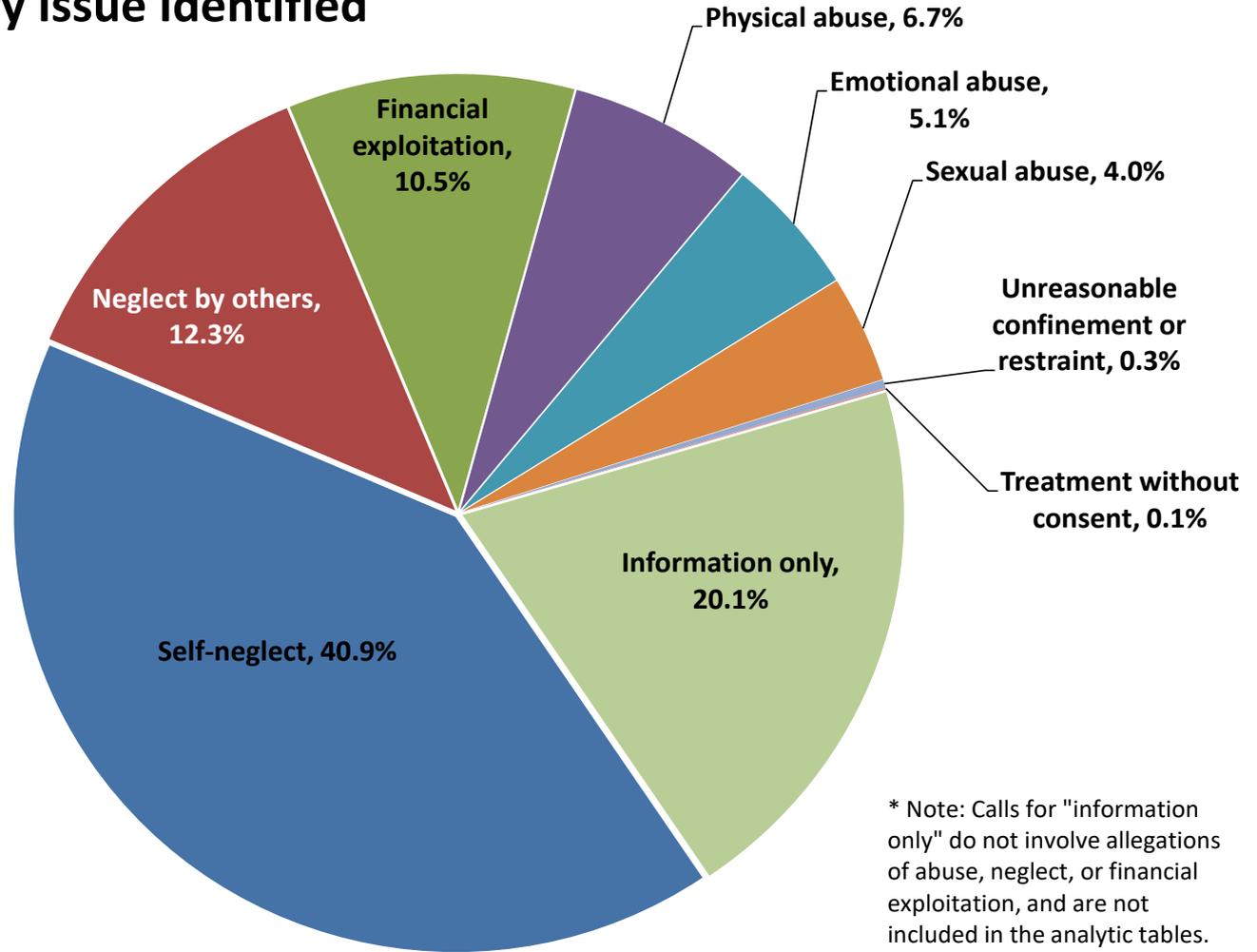
## Primary Reason for Call/Issue Identified

	Number	Percent
Self-neglect	1,214	40.9%
Neglect by others	366	12.3%
Financial exploitation	311	10.5%
Physical abuse	200	6.7%
Emotional abuse	152	5.1%
Sexual abuse	118	4.0%
Unreasonable confinement or restraint	9	0.3%
Treatment without consent	2	0.1%
Information only	597	20.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,969</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*\* Note: Calls for "information only" do not involve allegations of abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation, and are not included in the analytic tables.*



## Primary Issue Identified





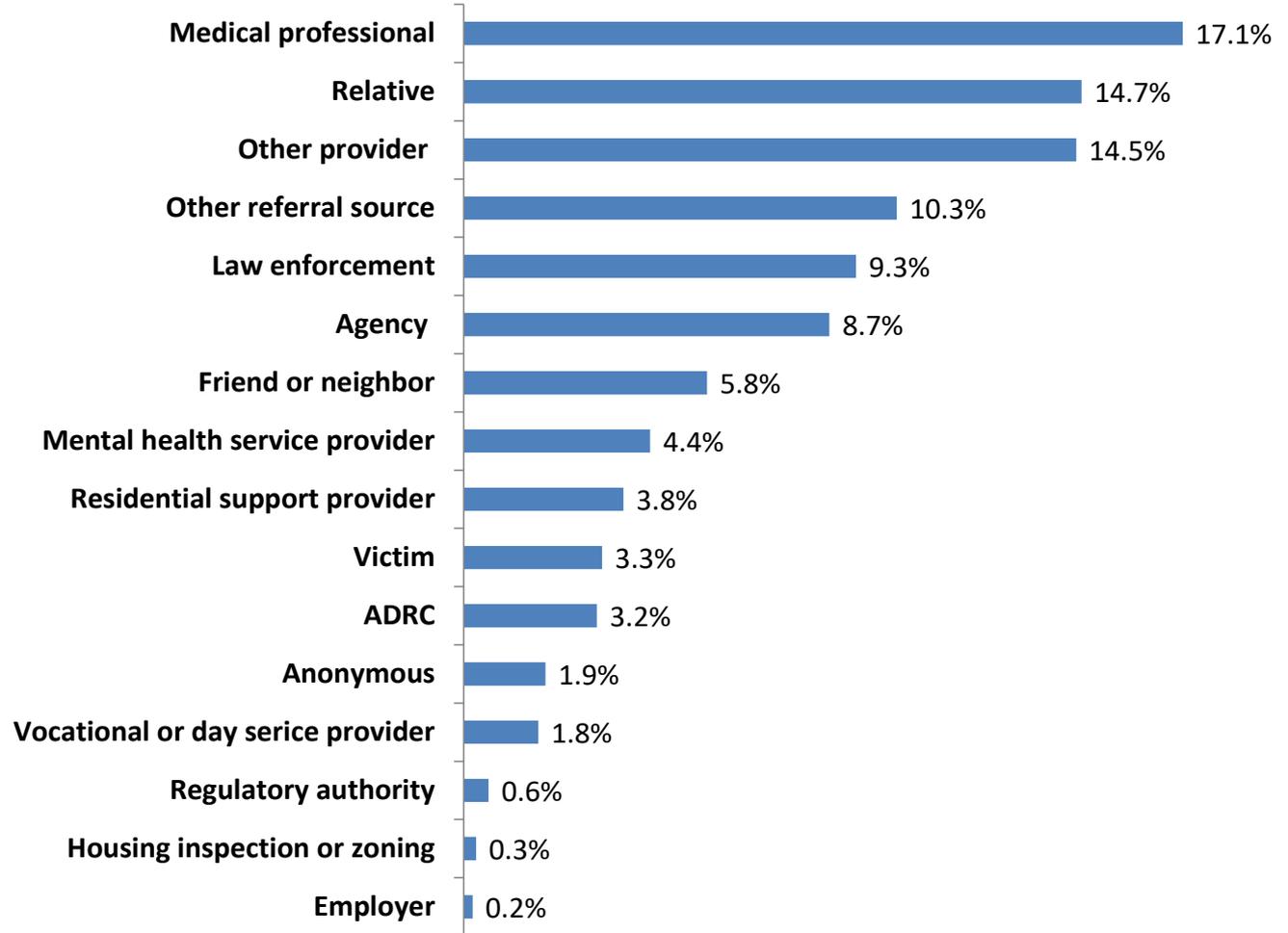
<b>Previous Report on This Individual?</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No	1,321	55.7%
Yes	709	29.9%
Unknown	342	14.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Where Incident Occurred</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Place of residence	2,008	84.7%
Other place	293	12.4%
Place of employment or day services	35	1.5%
School	22	0.9%
Transportation	14	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



<b>Referral Source</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Medical professional	405	17.1%
Relative	348	14.7%
Other provider	345	14.5%
Other referral source	244	10.3%
Law enforcement	221	9.3%
Agency	206	8.7%
Friend or neighbor	137	5.8%
Mental health service provider	105	4.4%
Residential support provider	90	3.8%
Victim	78	3.3%
ADRC	75	3.2%
Anonymous	46	1.9%
Vocational or day service provider	42	1.8%
Regulatory authority	14	0.6%
Housing inspection or zoning	7	0.3%
Employer	5	0.2%
Substance abuse service provider	4	0.2%
Alleged abuser	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



### Referral Source

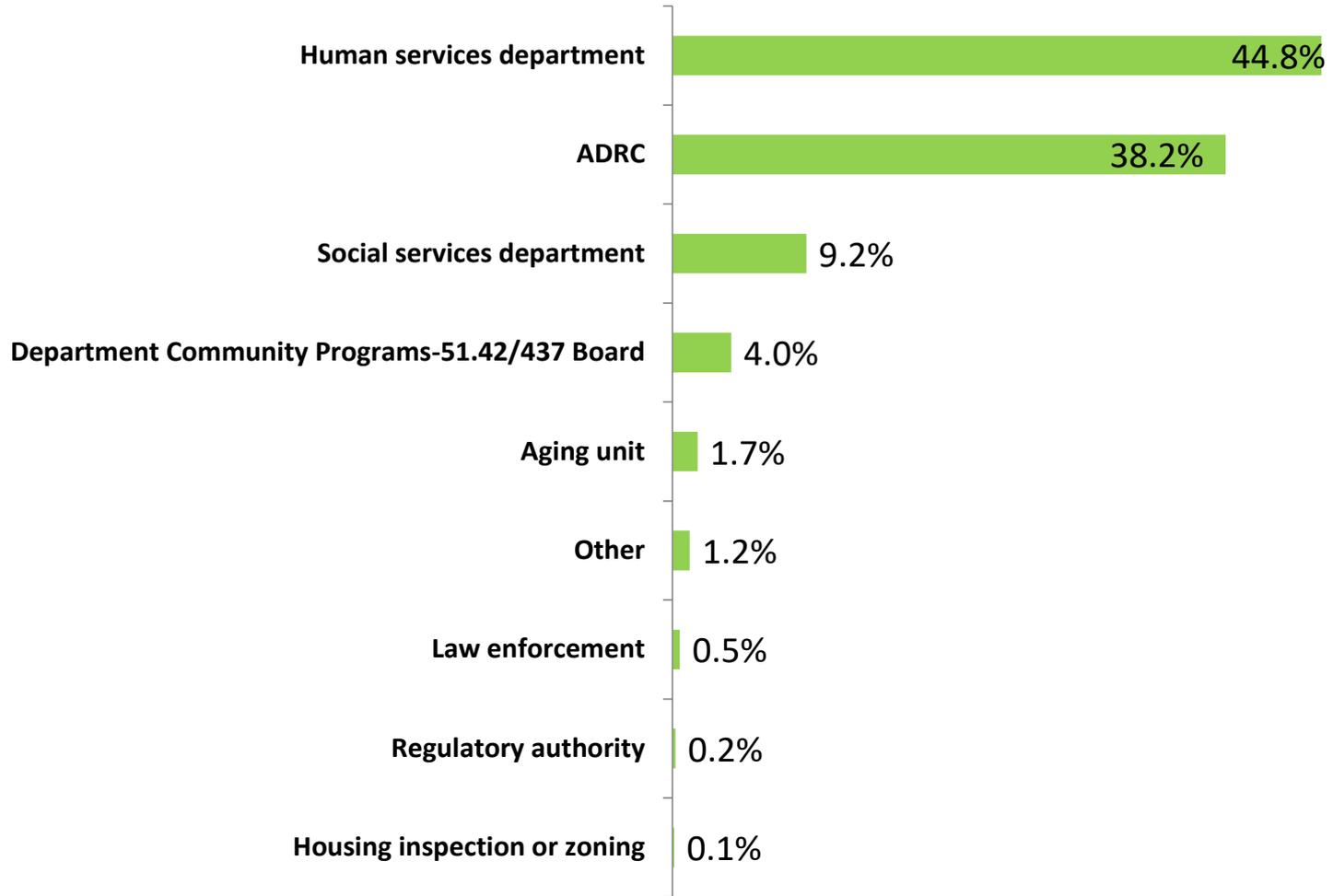




<b>Call Received By:</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Human services department	1,062	44.8%
ADRC	905	38.2%
Social services department	219	9.2%
Department Community Programs-51.42/437 Board	96	4.0%
Aging unit	41	1.7%
Other	28	1.2%
Law enforcement	12	0.5%
Regulatory authority	5	0.2%
Housing inspection or zoning	3	0.1%
Animal control or humane society	1	0.0%
Developmental Disability Board	0	0.0%
Ombudsman or Board of Aging and Long-Term Care	0	0.0%
Publicized helpline number	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Initial Investigating Agency</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Human services department	1,383	58.3%
ADRC	333	14.0%
Aging unit	245	10.3%
Social services department	210	8.9%
Department Community Programs-51.42/437 Board	110	4.6%
Other	40	1.7%
Law enforcement	37	1.6%
Housing inspection or zoning	5	0.2%
Division of Quality Assurance or Licensing and Regulation	5	0.2%
Wisconsin Department of Justice	2	0.1%
Public health department	2	0.1%
Ombudsman or Board of Aging and Long-Term Care	0	0.0%
Developmental Disability Board	0	0.0%
Animal control or humane society	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

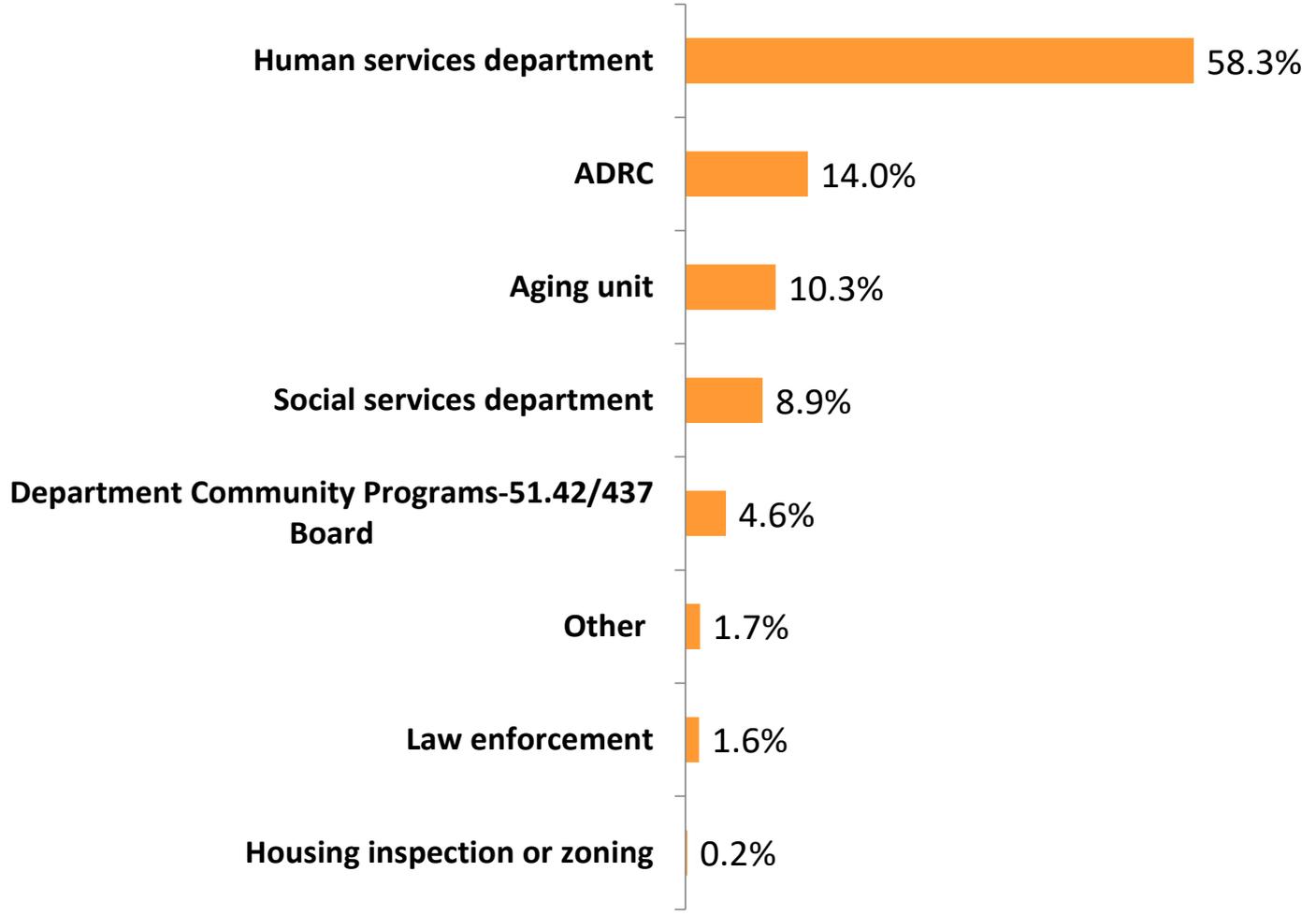


### Call Received By:





### Initial Investigating Agency





### Was Incident Life Threatening?

	Number	Percent
No	2,078	87.6%
Yes	173	7.3%
Unknown	121	5.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Has Adult at Risk Died?

	Number	Percent
No	154	89.0%
Yes	19	11.0%
Unknown	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Note: Percents represent share of all life-threatening incidents.*

### Was Death Related to the Incident?

	Number	Percent
No	3	15.8%
Yes	11	57.9%
Unknown	5	26.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Note: Percents represent share of all incidents involving a death.*

### Was Death Directly Caused by Incident?

	Number	Percent
No	2	18.2%
Yes	8	72.7%
Unknown	1	9.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

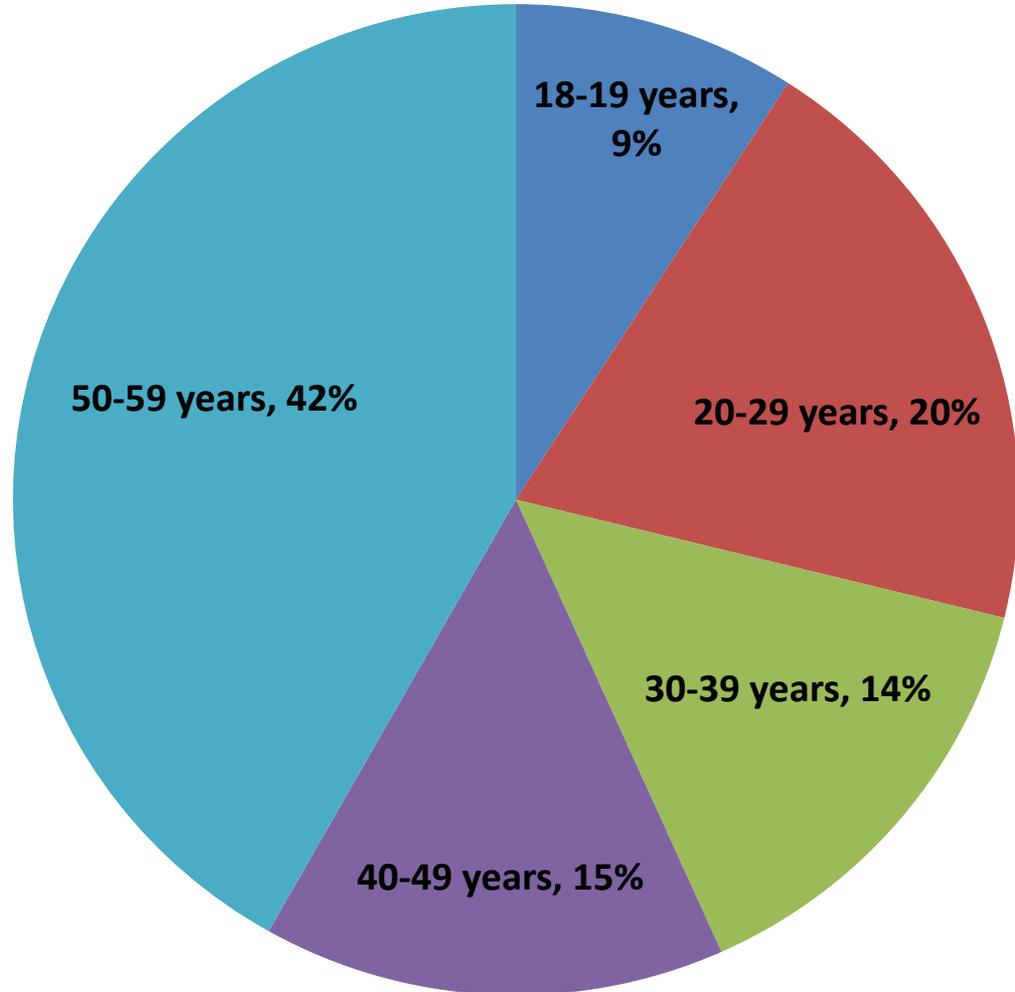
*Note: Percents represent share of all incidents involving a death related to the incident.*



<b>Adult at Risk's Age</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
18-19 years	216	9.1%
20-29 years	468	19.7%
30-39 years	343	14.5%
40-49 years	353	14.9%
50-59 years	992	41.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Adult at Risk's Gender</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	1,197	50.5%
Female	1,172	49.4%
Unknown	3	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Adult at Risk's Race</b>		
<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
White	1,357	57.2%
Black or African American	123	5.2%
Native American or Alaska Native	55	2.3%
Other race	37	1.6%
Asian	27	1.1%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	4	0.2%
Not reported or unknown	769	32.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<i>Notes: Race and Ethnicity are optional fields, so some reports are missing this information. Although data may be incomplete, percents represent the share of all complete reports that showed each race/ethnicity category.</i>		



### Adult at Risk's Age

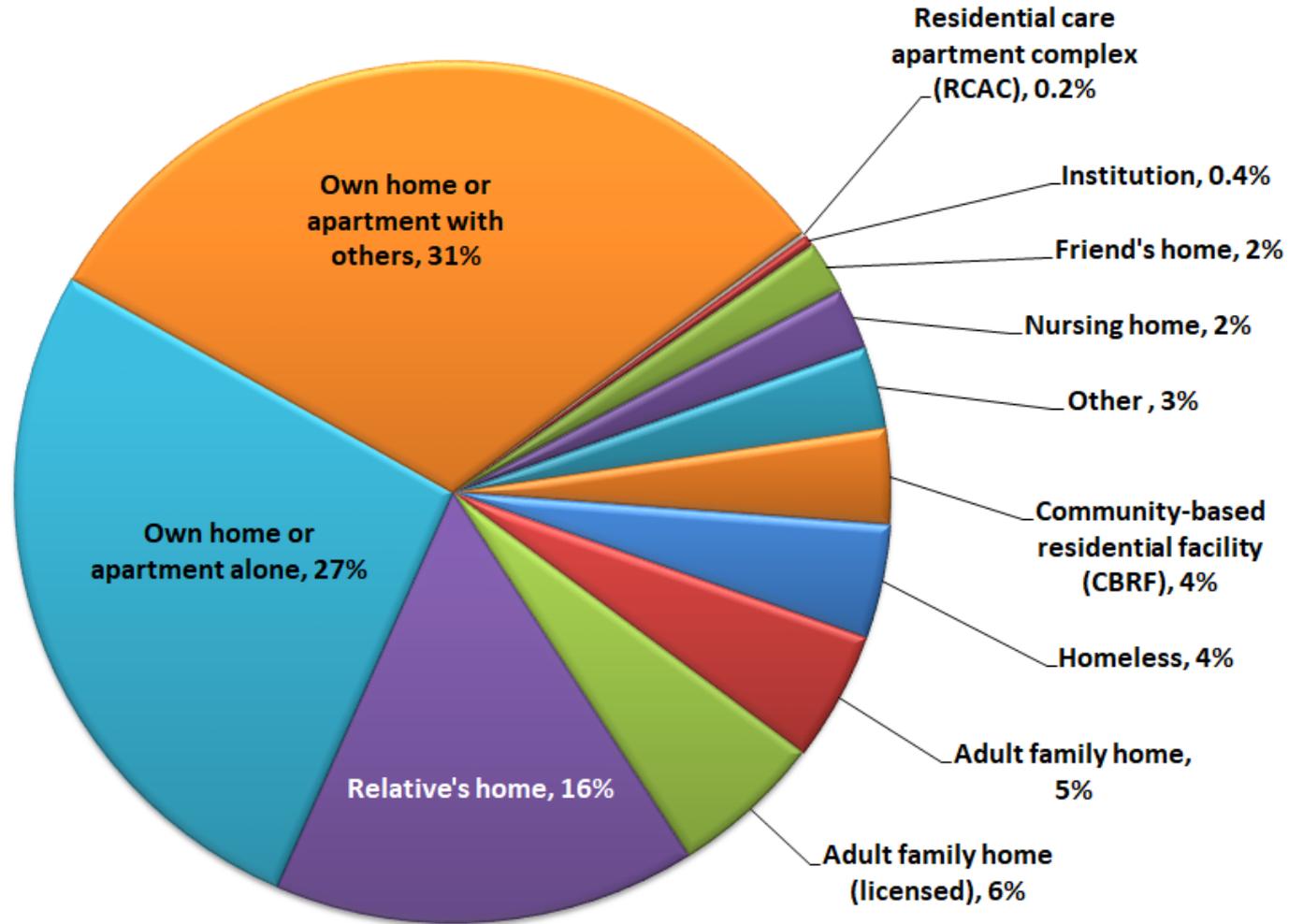




<b>Adult at Risk's Living Arrangement</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Own home or apartment with others	747	31.5%
Own home or apartment alone	632	26.6%
Relative's home	371	15.6%
Adult family home (licensed)	134	5.6%
Adult family home	115	4.8%
Homeless	101	4.3%
Community-based residential facility (CBRF)	84	3.5%
Other	74	3.1%
Nursing home	54	2.3%
Friend's home	46	1.9%
Institution	10	0.4%
Residential care apartment complex (RCAC)	4	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



## Adult at Risk's Living Arrangement





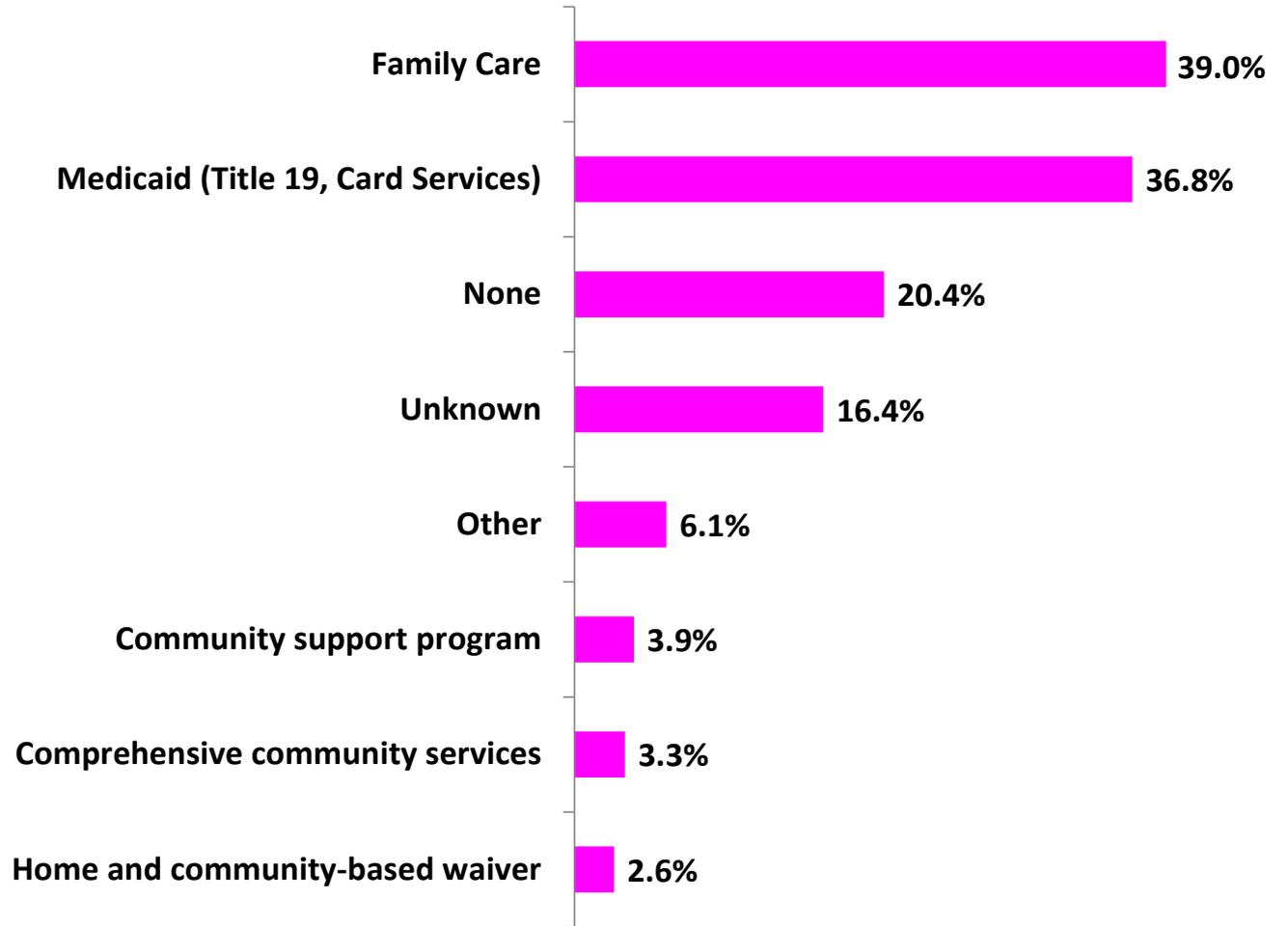
## County and State Funded Programs That Have Served Adult at Risk Adults

	Number	Percent
Family Care	925	39.0%
Medicaid (Title 19, Card Services)	872	36.8%
None	484	20.4%
Unknown	389	16.4%
Other	144	6.1%
Community support program	93	3.9%
Comprehensive community services	79	3.3%
Home and community-based waiver	62	2.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Multiple responses were allowed, so percents do not total 100%.*



### County and State-funded Programs That Have Served Adults at Risk

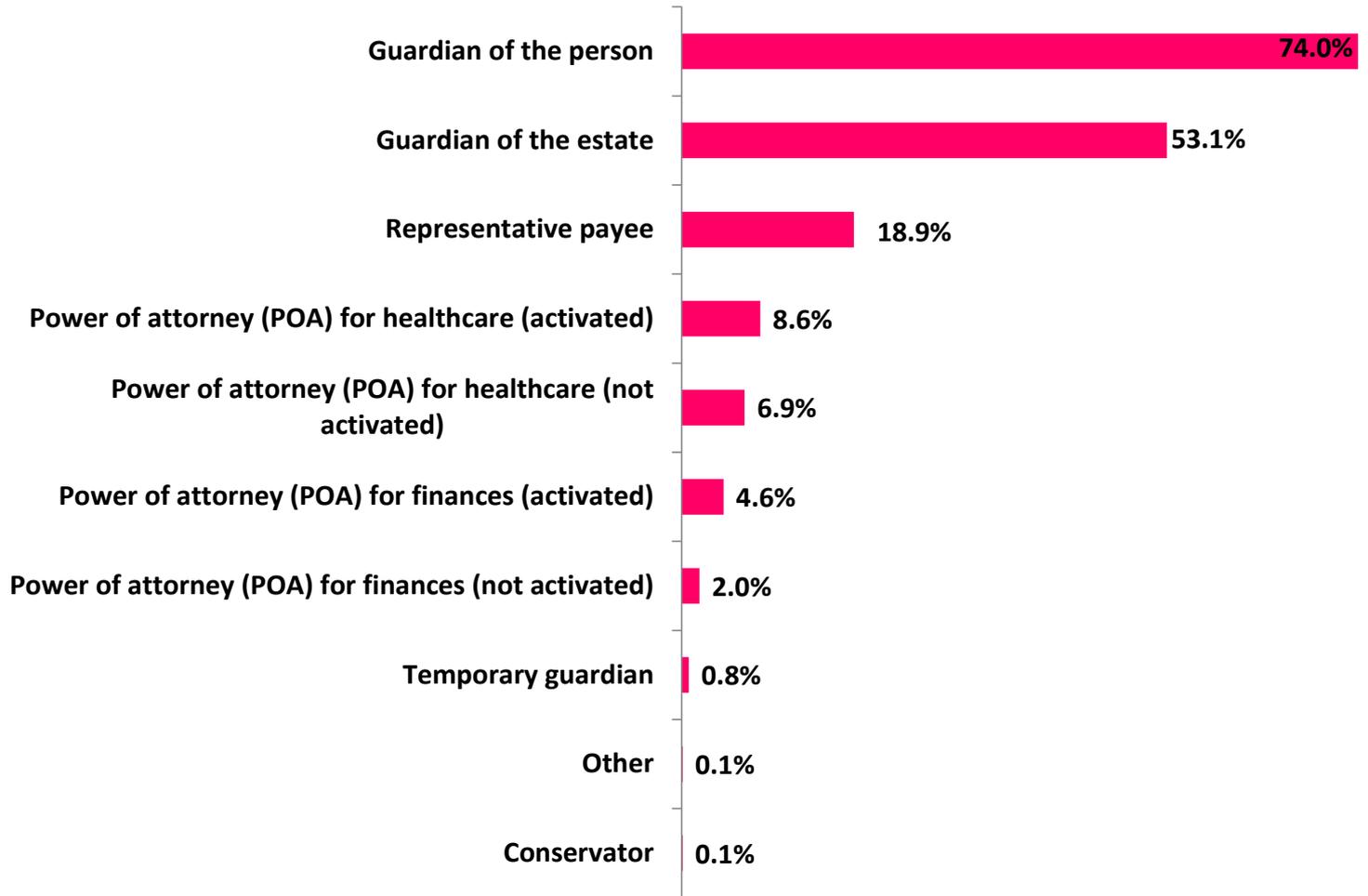




<b>Does Adult at Risk Have a Substitute Decision-Maker?</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No	1,177	49.6%
Yes	870	36.7%
Unknown	325	13.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Type(s) of Substitute Decision-Maker</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Guardian of the person	644	74.0%
Guardian of the estate	462	53.1%
Representative payee	164	18.9%
Power of attorney (POA) for healthcare (activated)	75	8.6%
Power of attorney (POA) for healthcare (not activated)	60	6.9%
Power of attorney (POA) for finances (activated)	40	4.6%
Power of attorney (POA) for finances (not activated)	17	2.0%
Temporary guardian	7	0.8%
Conservator	1	0.1%
Other	1	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<i>Percents represent share of all those with any kind of substitute decision-maker (n=870). Multiple responses are allowed, so percents do not total 100%.</i>		



### Type(s) of Substitute Decision-Maker





<b>Adult at Risk's Characteristics</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Developmental disability	927	39.1%
Mental illness	598	25.2%
Physical disability	341	14.4%
Mobility impaired	257	10.8%
Other medical condition	249	10.5%
Medically fragile	238	10.0%
Chronic mental illness	200	8.4%
Alcohol abuse	198	8.3%
Challenging or dangerous behavior	192	8.1%
Unemployed	172	7.3%
Diabetes	152	6.4%
Other characteristic	139	5.9%
Brain injury	120	5.1%
Drug abuse	95	4.0%
None of the listed characteristics	86	3.6%
Disoriented and confused	82	3.5%
Stroke-related condition	79	3.3%
Incontinent	78	3.3%
Morbidly obese	77	3.2%
Chronic alcoholic	65	2.7%
Communication disorder	62	2.6%
Homebound	59	2.5%
Dementia	58	2.4%
Financially dependent on abuser	38	1.6%
Blind or visually impaired	37	1.6%
Financial dependence: alleged abuser dependent on adult at risk	27	1.1%
Deaf or hard of hearing	26	1.1%
Frail elderly	17	0.7%
Functionally illiterate	15	0.6%
Limited English proficiency	7	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<i>Percents refer to share of all adults at risk having this characteristic. Multiple responses are allowed, so percents do not total 100%.</i>		



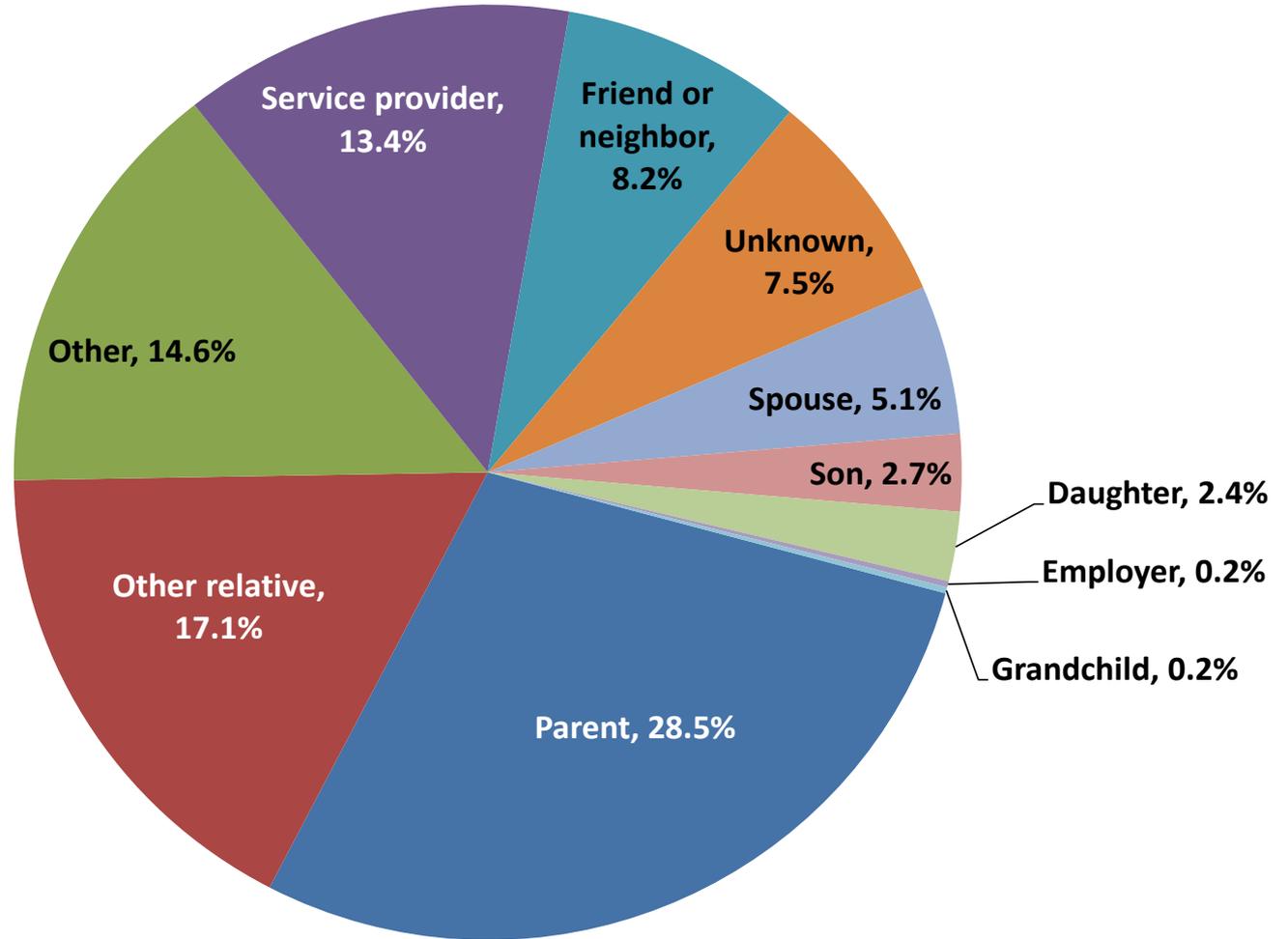
<b>Age of Alleged Abuser(s)</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No abuser or Unknown	685	48.2%
Under 25 years	46	3.2%
25 to 44 years	221	15.6%
45 to 59 years	287	20.2%
60 to 79 years	159	11.2%
80 years or older	22	1.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,420</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<i>Total includes all alleged abusers; some incidents involve more than one.</i>		
<b>Alleged Abusers' Gender</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Female	744	52.4%
Male	672	47.3%
Unknown	4	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,420</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



<b>Alleged Abusers' Relationship to Adult at Risk</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Parent	404	28.5%
Other relative	243	17.1%
Other	208	14.6%
Service provider	190	13.4%
Friend or neighbor	117	8.2%
Unknown	107	7.5%
Spouse	73	5.1%
Son	38	2.7%
Daughter	34	2.4%
Employer	3	0.2%
Grandchild	3	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,420</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Are Alleged Abusers Caregivers?</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No	636	44.8%
Yes	696	49.0%
Unknown	88	6.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,420</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



### Alleged Abusers' Relationships to Adult at Risk





<b>Do Alleged Abusers Live with Adult at Risk?</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No	640	45.1%
Yes	709	49.9%
Unknown	71	5.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,420</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Do Alleged Abusers Have Any Legal or Substitute Decision-Maker Status?</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No	998	70.3%
Yes	422	29.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,420</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



## Abusers' Legal Status

	Number	Percent
No legal status	794	55.9%
Guardian of the person	283	19.9%
Guardian of the estate	201	14.2%
Unknown legal status	197	13.9%
Representative payee	104	7.3%
Power of attorney (POA) for healthcare (activated)	31	2.2%
Power of attorney (POA) for finances (activated)	20	1.4%
Power of attorney (POA) for healthcare (not activated)	17	1.2%
Other legal status	15	1.1%
Power of attorney (POA) for finances (not activated)	4	0.3%
Temporary guardian	1	0.1%
Conservator	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,420</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Percents represent share of all abusers who have this legal status. Multiple responses are allowed, so percents do not total 100%.*



<b>Alleged Abusers' Characteristics</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
None of the listed characteristics	911	64.2%
Other characteristic	79	5.6%
Unemployed	73	5.1%
Mental Illness	72	5.1%
Financial dependence: alleged abuser dependent on adult at risk	66	4.6%
Developmental disability	65	4.6%
Drug abuse	55	3.9%
<i>Alcohol abuse</i>	48	3.4%
Challenging or dangerous behavior	35	2.5%
Financial dependence: adult at risk on abuser	31	2.2%
Physical disability	29	2.0%
Other medical condition	28	2.0%
Frail Elderly	27	1.9%
Medically fragile	18	1.3%
Mobility impaired	18	1.3%
Morbidly Obese	17	1.2%
Chronic mental illness	15	1.1%
Chronic alcoholic	10	0.7%
Diabetes	10	0.7%
Disoriented and confused	8	0.6%
Brain injury	6	0.4%
Deaf or hard of hearing	6	0.4%
Dementia	6	0.4%
Blind or visually impaired	3	0.2%
Stroke-related condition	3	0.2%
Communication disorder	1	0.1%
Functionally illiterate	1	0.1%
Homebound	1	0.1%
Incontinent	1	0.1%
Limited English proficiency	1	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,420</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<i>Multiple responses are allowed so numbers do not add up to 100%.</i>		
<i>Percents refer to share of all alleged abusers.</i>		



<b>More than One Alleged Abuser?</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No, one alleged abuser only	1,358	95.6%
Yes	62	4.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,420</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



<b>Was Hurt or Harm Substantiated?</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantiated	990	41.7%
Unsubstantiated	796	33.6%
Unable to substantiate	586	24.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



<b>Actions Taken to Assist Adult at Risk</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Services not needed	467	19.7%
Services offered-some accepted	352	14.8%
Services offered-not accepted	341	14.4%
Investigation not accepted	323	13.6%
Services offered-all accepted	267	11.3%
Guardian referral	258	10.9%
Referral made to other agency	247	10.4%
Outreach continues	196	8.3%
Protective services placement	129	5.4%
Referral to law enforcement or Department of Justice	128	5.4%
Other disposition	91	3.8%
Referral to protection or advocacy agencies	90	3.8%
Other legal action	64	2.7%
Referral to regulatory authority	36	1.5%
Mental health commitment	27	1.1%
Referral to caregiver misconduct registry	24	1.0%
Response or investigation continues	23	1.0%
Referral to detoxification services	11	0.5%
Services needed are not available	11	0.5%
Referral made to state agency	9	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

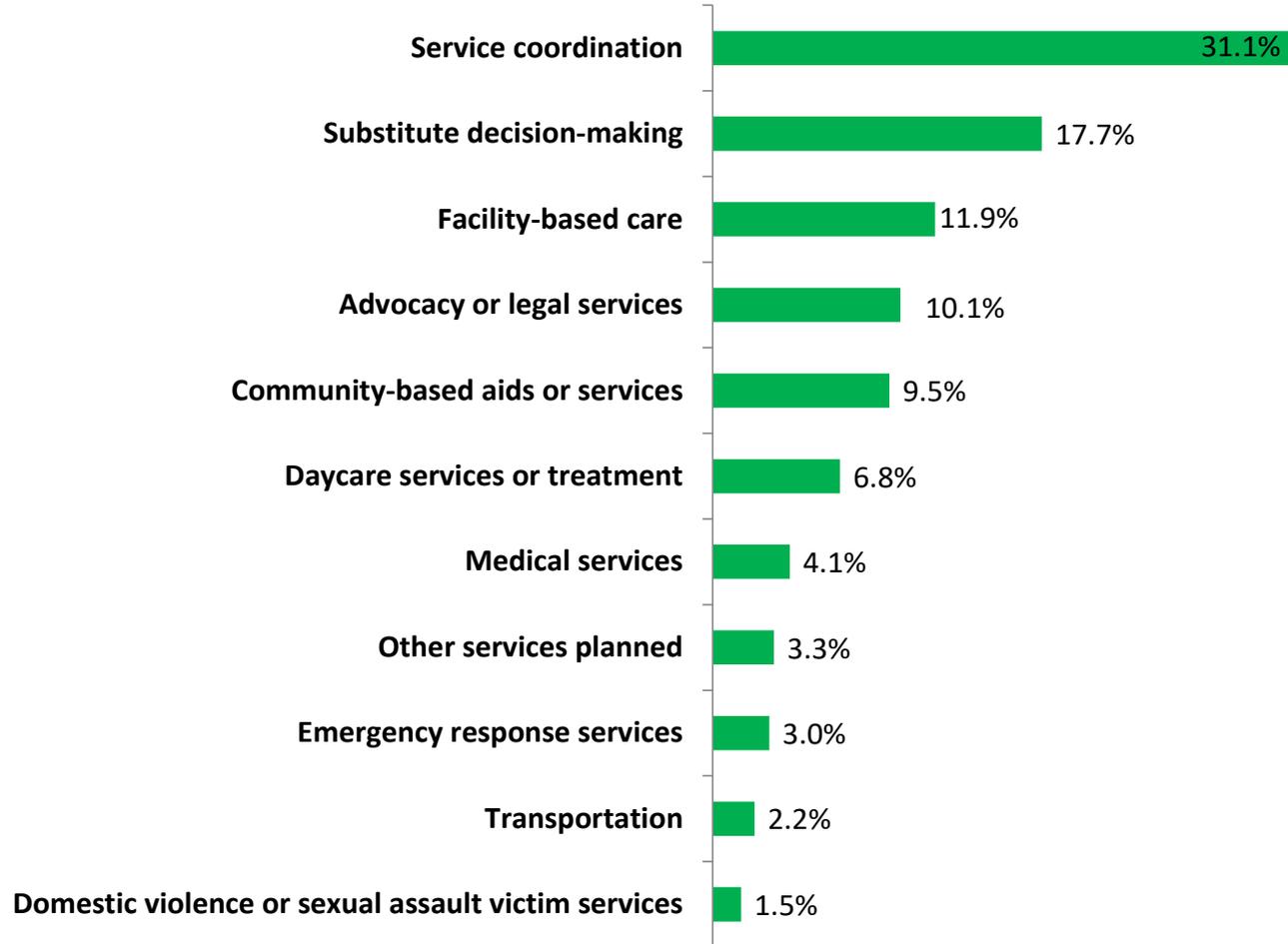
*Percents refer to share of all reports showing this action. Multiple responses are allowed so numbers do not add up to 100%.*



<b>Services Planned for Adult at Risk</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Service coordination	738	31.1%
Substitute decision-making	419	17.7%
Facility-based care	283	11.9%
Advocacy or legal services	239	10.1%
Community-based aids or services	225	9.5%
Daycare services or treatment	162	6.8%
Medical services	98	4.1%
Other services planned	78	3.3%
Emergency response services	72	3.0%
Transportation	53	2.2%
Domestic violence or sexual assault victim services	36	1.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<i>Percents refer to share of all reports showing this service planned. Multiple responses were allowed so numbers do not add up to 100%.</i>		



## Services Planned for Adult at Risk

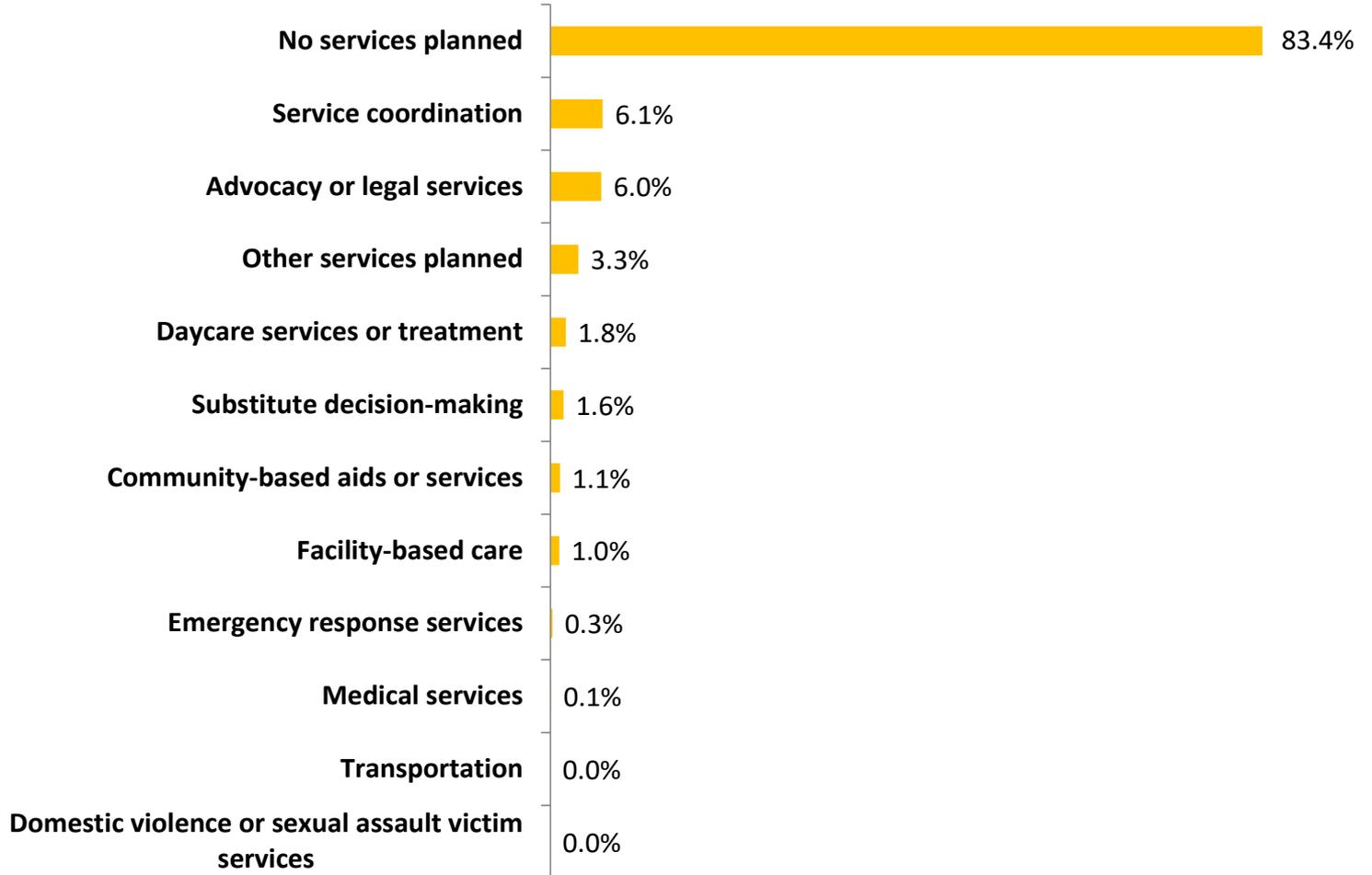




<b>Services Planned for Alleged Abuser(s)</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No services planned	966	83.4%
Service coordination	71	6.1%
Advocacy or legal services	69	6.0%
Other services planned	38	3.3%
Daycare services or treatment	21	1.8%
Substitute decision-making	18	1.6%
Community-based aids or services	13	1.1%
Facility-based care	12	1.0%
Emergency response services	3	0.3%
Medical services	1	0.1%
Domestic violence or sexual assault victim services	0	0.0%
Transportation	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,158</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<i>Multiple responses are allowed so numbers do not add up to 100%.</i>		
<i>Percents refer to share of all incidents in which abuse or neglect was alleged.</i>		



## Services Plan for Alleged Abuser(s)





## Contact Information

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Division of Public Health

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