



# **Wisconsin's Annual Report on Abuse, Neglect, and Financial Exploitation of Adults at Risk: 2023**

A statewide summary of reports  
submitted by Wisconsin counties

P-00123 (04/2025)



# 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 2022 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).

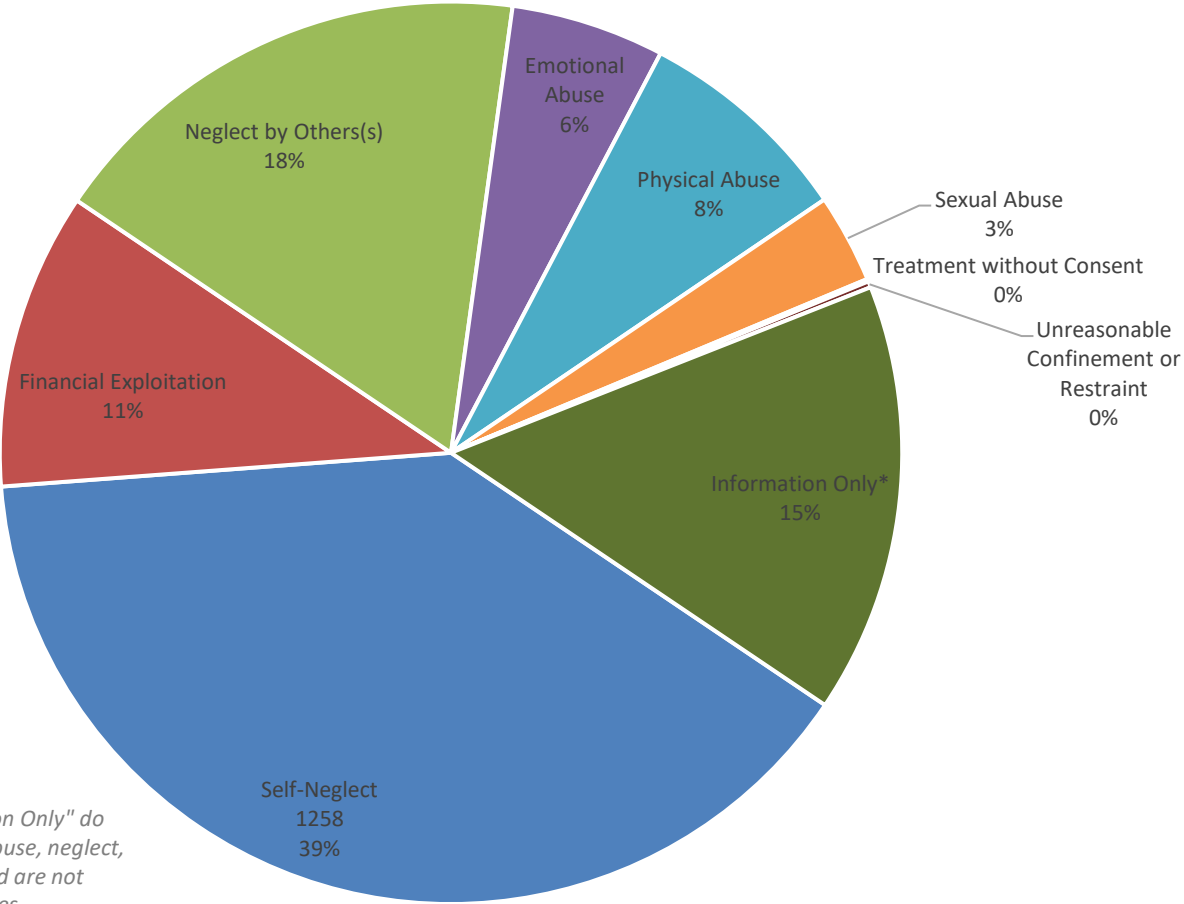
See <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/aps/Contacts/aaragencies.htm> for these help line phone numbers.



Primary Reason for Call/Issue Identified		
	Number	Percentage
Self-Neglect	1,258	39.4%
Financial Exploitation	340	10.6%
Neglect by Others(s)	567	17.7%
Emotional Abuse	176	5.5%
Physical Abuse	250	7.8%
Sexual Abuse	102	3.2%
Treatment without Consent	3	0.1%
Unreasonable Confinement or Restraint	7	0.2%
Information Only	493	15.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,196</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<i>* Note: Calls for "Information Only" do not involve allegations of abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation, and are not included in the analytic tables.</i>		



Primary Issue Identified



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



### Previous Report on This Individual?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	1,597	59.1%
No	854	31.6%
Unknown	252	9.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,703</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Where Incident Occurred

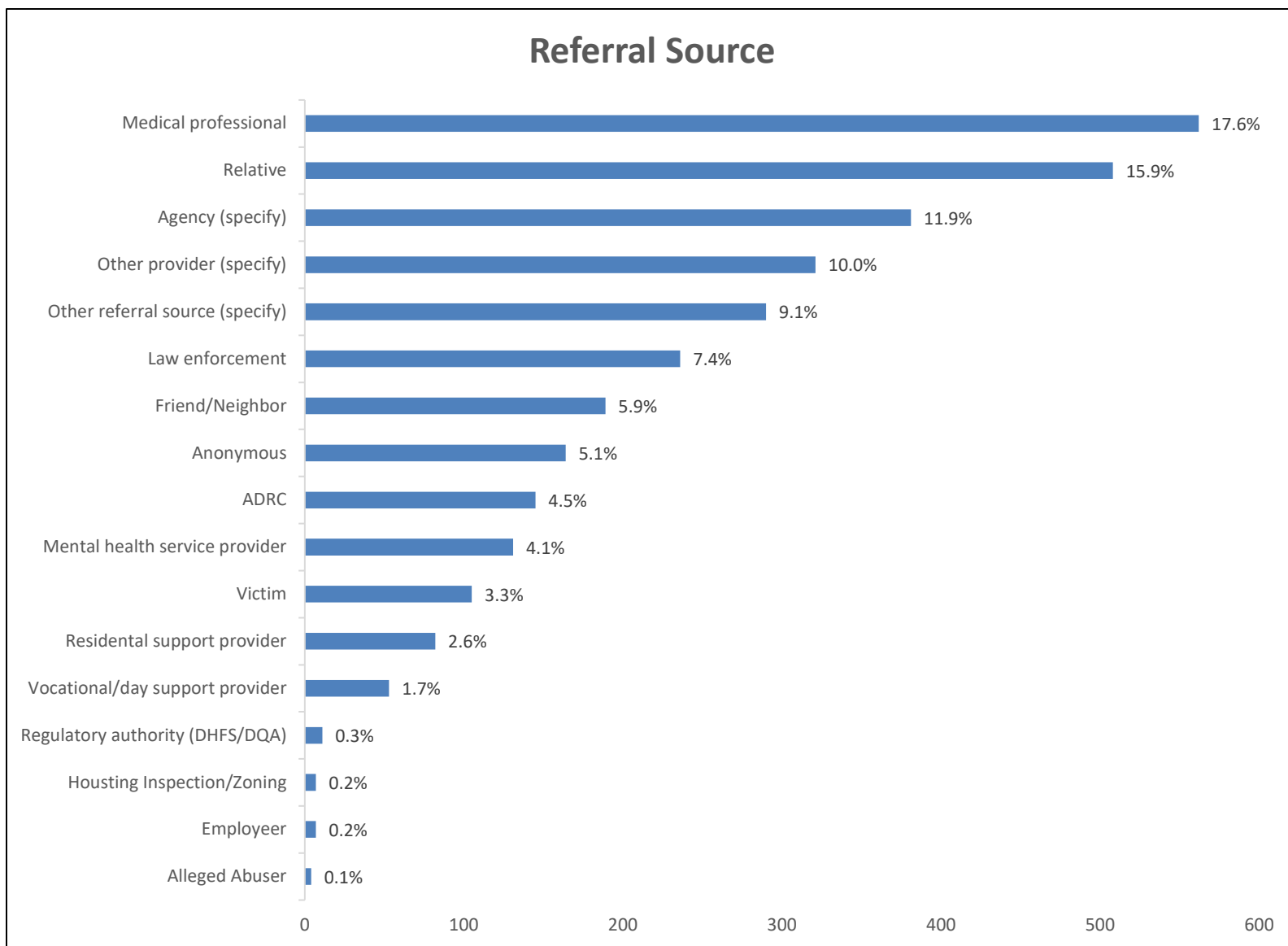
	Number	Percentage
Place of Residence	2,316	85.7%
Other place	282	10.4%
Place of Employment or day services	76	2.8%
School	16	0.6%
Transportation	13	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,703</b>	<b>100.0%</b>





## Referral Source

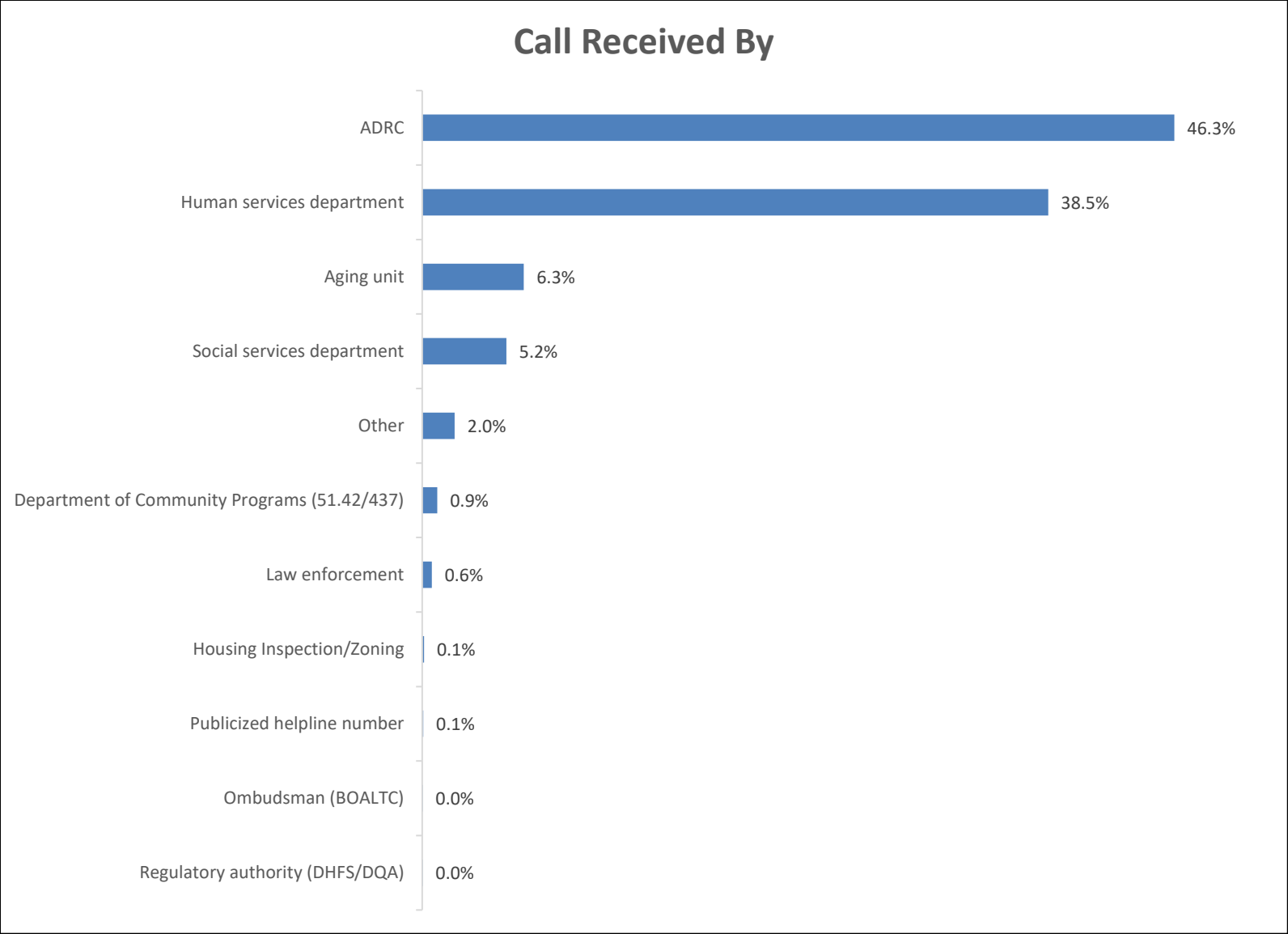
	Number	Percentage
Medical professional	562	17.6%
Relative	508	15.9%
Agency (specify)	381	11.9%
Other provider (specify)	321	10.0%
Other referral source (specify)	290	9.1%
Law enforcement	236	7.4%
Friend/Neighbor	189	5.9%
Anonymous	164	5.1%
ADRC	145	4.5%
Mental health service provider	131	4.1%
Victim	105	3.3%
Residential support provider	82	2.6%
Vocational/day support provider	53	1.7%
Regulatory authority (DHFS/DQA)	11	0.3%
Employer	7	0.2%
Housing Inspection/Zoning	7	0.2%
Alleged Abuser	4	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3196</b>	<b>100.0%</b>





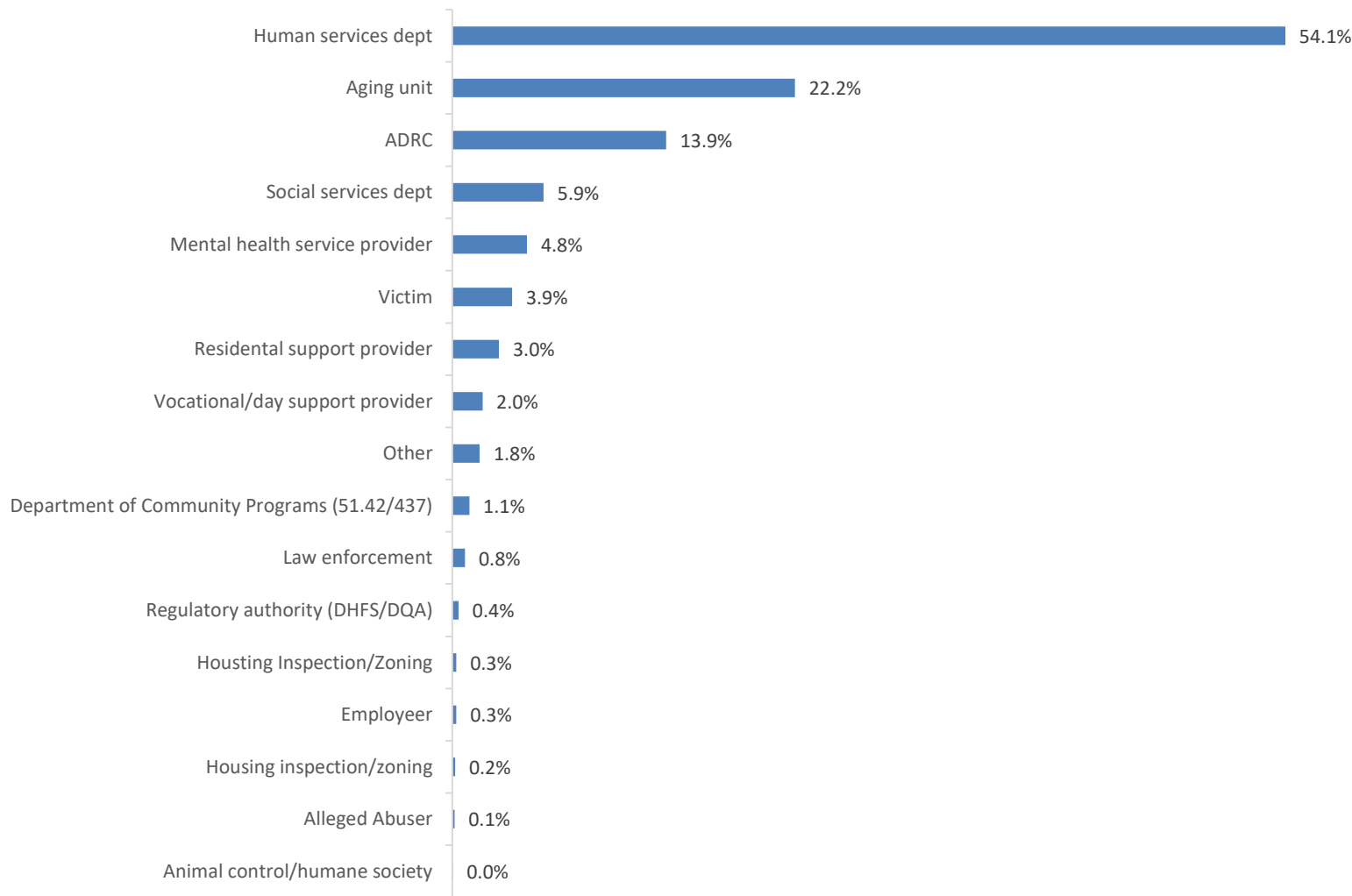
Call Received By		
	Number	Percentage
ADRC	1251	39.1%
Human services department	1041	32.6%
Aging unit	169	5.3%
Social services department	140	4.4%
Other	54	1.7%
Department of Community Programs (51.42/437)	25	0.8%
Law enforcement	16	0.5%
Housing Inspection/Zoning	3	0.1%
Publicized helpline number	2	0.1%
Regulatory authority (DHFS/DQA)	1	0.0%
Ombudsman (BOALTC)	1	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3196</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Initial Investigating Agency		
	Number	Percentage
Human services dept	1461	243.1%
Aging unit	601	100.0%
ADRC	375	62.4%
Social services dept	160	26.6%
Other	48	8.0%
Department of Community Programs (51.42/437)	30	5.0%
Law enforcement	22	3.7%
Housing inspection/zoning	5	0.8%
Animal control/humane society	1	0.2%
Mental health service provider	131	21.8%
Victim	105	17.5%
Residential support provider	82	13.6%
Vocational/day support provider	53	8.8%
Regulatory authority (DHFS/DQA)	11	1.8%
Employer	7	1.2%
Housing Inspection/Zoning	7	1.2%
Alleged Abuser	4	0.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2703</b>	<b>449.8%</b>





## Initial Investigating Agency





Was Incident Life Threatening?		
	Number	Percentage
No	2412	89.2%
Yes	138	5.1%
Unknown	153	5.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2703</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Has Adult at Risk Died?		
	Number	Percentage
No	120	87.0%
Yes	17	12.3%
Unknown	1	0.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<i>Note: Percents represent share of all life-threatening incidents.</i>		

Was Death Related to the Incident?		
	Number	Percentage
No	6	35.3%
Yes	10	58.8%
Unknown	1	5.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<i>Note: Percents represent share of all incidents involving a death.</i>		

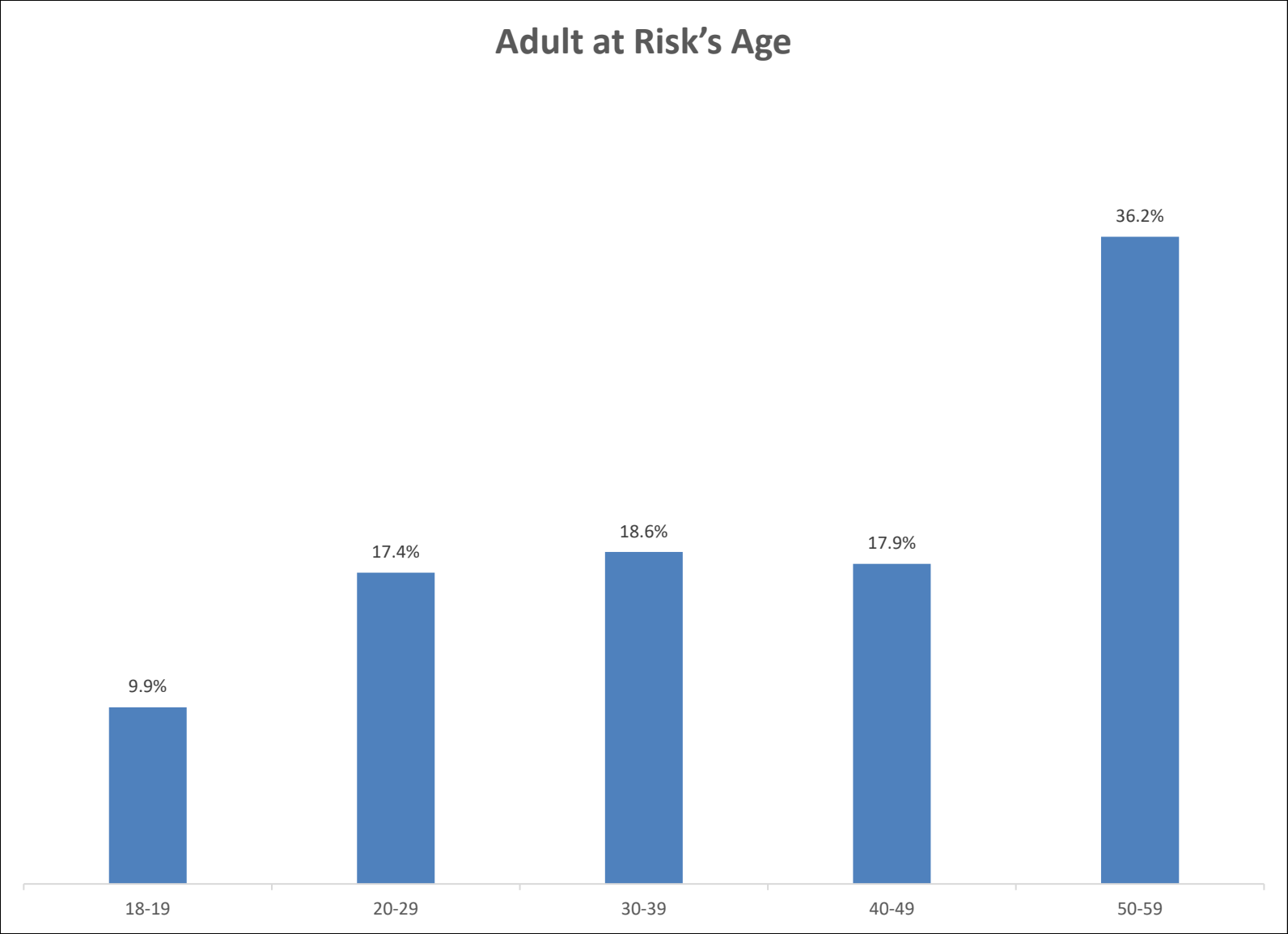
Was Death Directly Caused by Incident?		
	Number	Percentage
No	3	30.0%
Yes	5	50.0%
Unknown	2	20.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<i>Note: Percentages represent share of all incidents involving a death related to the incident.</i>		



Adult at Risk's Age		
	Number	Percentage
18-19	267	9.9%
20-29	471	17.4%
30-39	502	18.6%
40-49	484	17.9%
50-59	979	36.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2703</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Adult at Risk's Gender		
	Number	Percentage
Female	1386	51.3%
Male	1311	48.5%
Unknown	6	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2703</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Adult at Risk's Race		
	Number	Percentage
White	1380	51.1%
Black or African American	304	11.2%
Native American or Alaska Native	48	1.8%
Other	133	4.9%
Asian	11	0.4%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	8	0.3%
Not Reported	833	30.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2703</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<i>Note: 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>		



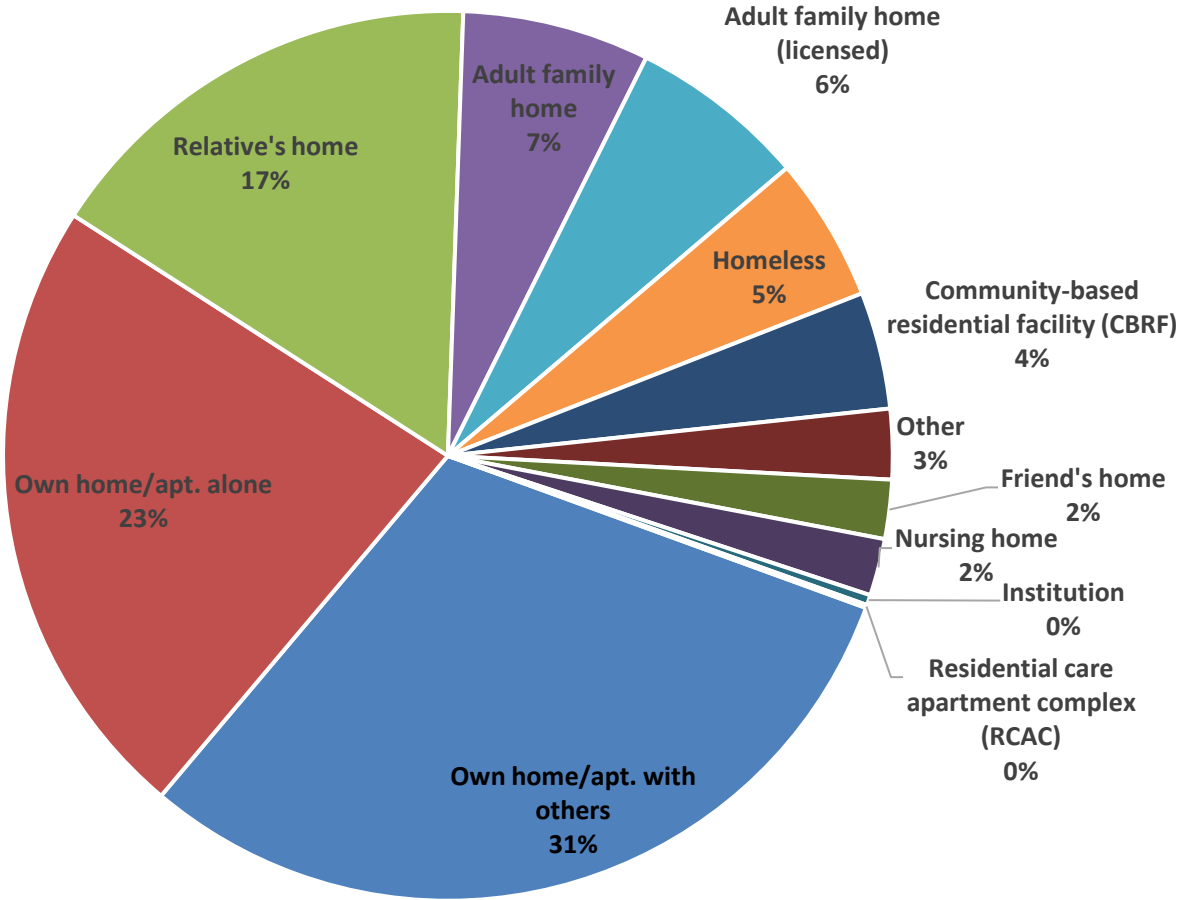




Adult at Risk's Living Arrangement		
	Number	Percentage
Own home/apt. with others	827	30.6%
Own home/apt. alone	620	22.9%
Relative's home	445	16.5%
Adult family home	184	6.8%
Adult family home (licensed)	174	6.4%
Homeless	142	5.3%
Community-based residential facility (CBRF)	115	4.3%
Other	69	2.6%
Friend's home	58	2.1%
Nursing home	56	2.1%
Institution	10	0.4%
Residential care apartment complex (RCAC)	3	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2703</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



Adult at Risk's Living Arrangement





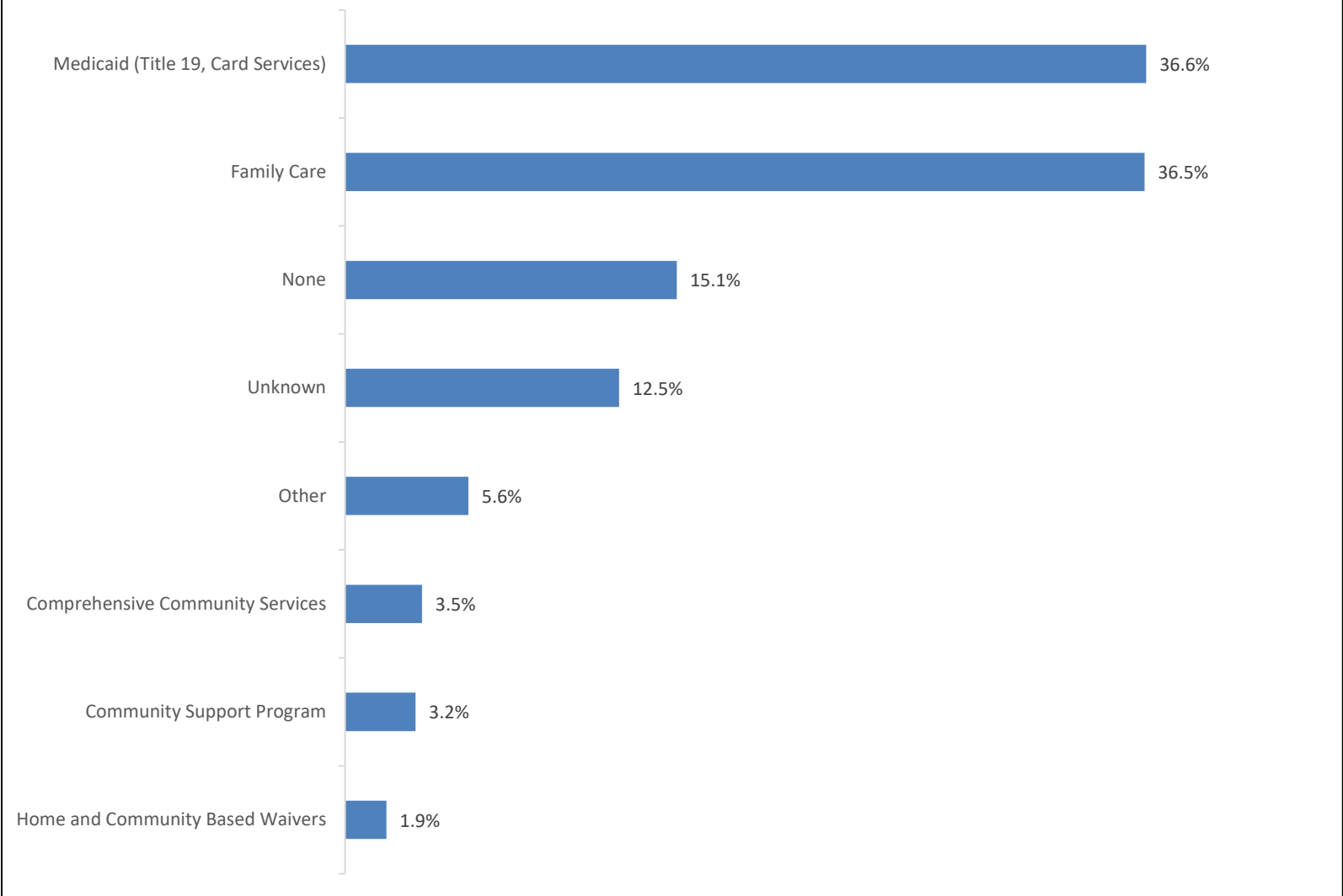
## County and State Funded Programs That Have Served Adult At Risk Adults

	Number	Percentage
Medicaid (Title 19, Card Services)	988	36.6%
Family Care	986	36.5%
None	409	15.1%
Unknown	338	12.5%
Other	152	5.6%
Comprehensive Community Services	95	3.5%
Community Support Program	87	3.2%
Home and Community Based Waivers	51	1.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2703</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Multiple responses were allowed, percentages do not total to 100%*



County and State Funded Programs That Have Served Adult At Risk Adults





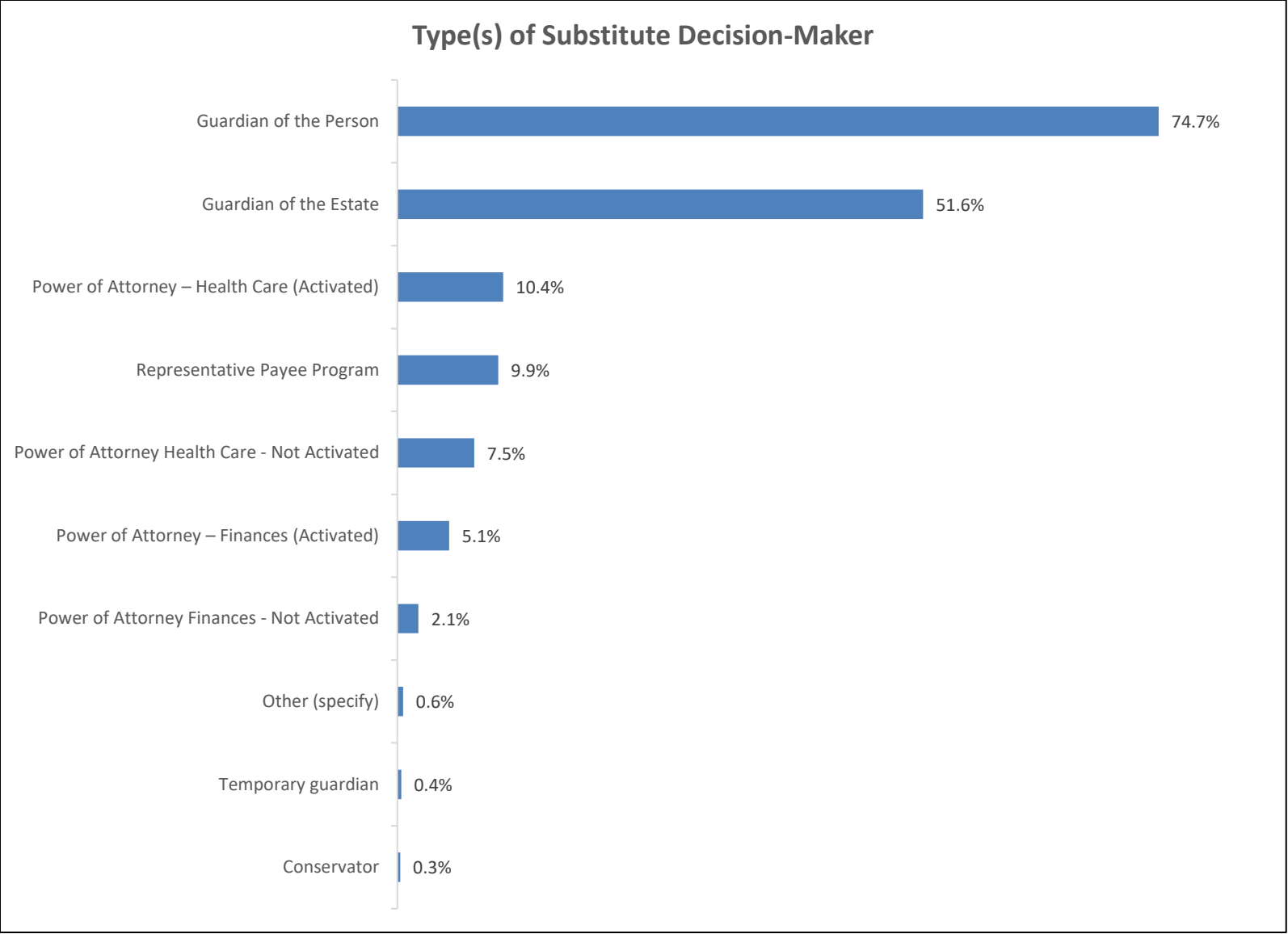
### Does Adult at Risk Have a Substitute Decision-Maker?

	Number	Percentage
No	1311	48.5%
Yes	1060	39.2%
Unknown	332	12.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2703</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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

	Number	Percentage
Guardian of the Person	792	74.7%
Guardian of the Estate	547	51.6%
Power of Attorney – Health Care (Activated)	110	10.4%
Representative Payee Program	105	9.9%
Power of Attorney Health Care - Not Activated	80	7.5%
Power of Attorney – Finances (Activated)	54	5.1%
Power of Attorney Finances - Not Activated	22	2.1%
Other (specify)	6	0.6%
Temporary guardian	4	0.4%
Conservator	3	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1060</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Percents represent share of all those with any kind of substitute decision-maker (n=1060). Multiple responses are allowed, so percents do not total 100%.*





Adult at Risk's Characteristics		
	Number	Percentage
Deaf or hard of hearing	923	34.1%
Incontinent	667	24.7%
Morbidly obese	308	11.4%
Unemployed	258	9.5%
Medically fragile	241	8.9%
Limited English Proficiency	231	8.5%
Chronic alcoholic	225	8.3%
Brain injury	213	7.9%
Abuser financially dependent on elder	157	5.8%
Developmentally disabled	134	5.0%
Disoriented/confused	133	4.9%
None	114	4.2%
Adult-at-Risk financially dependent on alleged abuser	102	3.8%
Diabetic	101	3.7%
Homebound	99	3.7%
Physically disability	87	3.2%
Stroke-related impairments	86	3.2%
Alcohol abuse	81	3.0%
Mental illness	76	2.8%
Functionally illiterate	75	2.8%
Blind/visually impaired	54	2.0%
Challenging/dangerous behavior	54	2.0%
Alzheimer's or related dementia	46	1.7%
Serious and persistent mental illness	33	1.2%
Drug abuse	31	1.1%
Mobility impaired	29	1.1%
Other medical condition (specify)	27	1.0%
Other (specify)	23	0.9%
Frail elderly	17	0.6%
Communication disorder	3	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2703</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<i>Percents refer to share of adults at risk having this characteristic. Multiple responses are allowed, so percents do not total to 100%.</i>		



### Age of Alleged Abuser(s)

	Number	Percentage
Under 25 years	30	1.8%
25 to 44 years	198	11.7%
45 to 59 years	228	13.4%
60 to 79 years	142	8.4%
80 years or over	15	0.9%
No abuser or age unknown	1085	63.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1698</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<i>Total includes all alleged abusers; some incidents involve more than one.</i>		

### Alleged Abusers' Gender

	Number	Percentage
Female	788	46.4%
Male	565	33.3%
Unknown	345	20.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1698</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



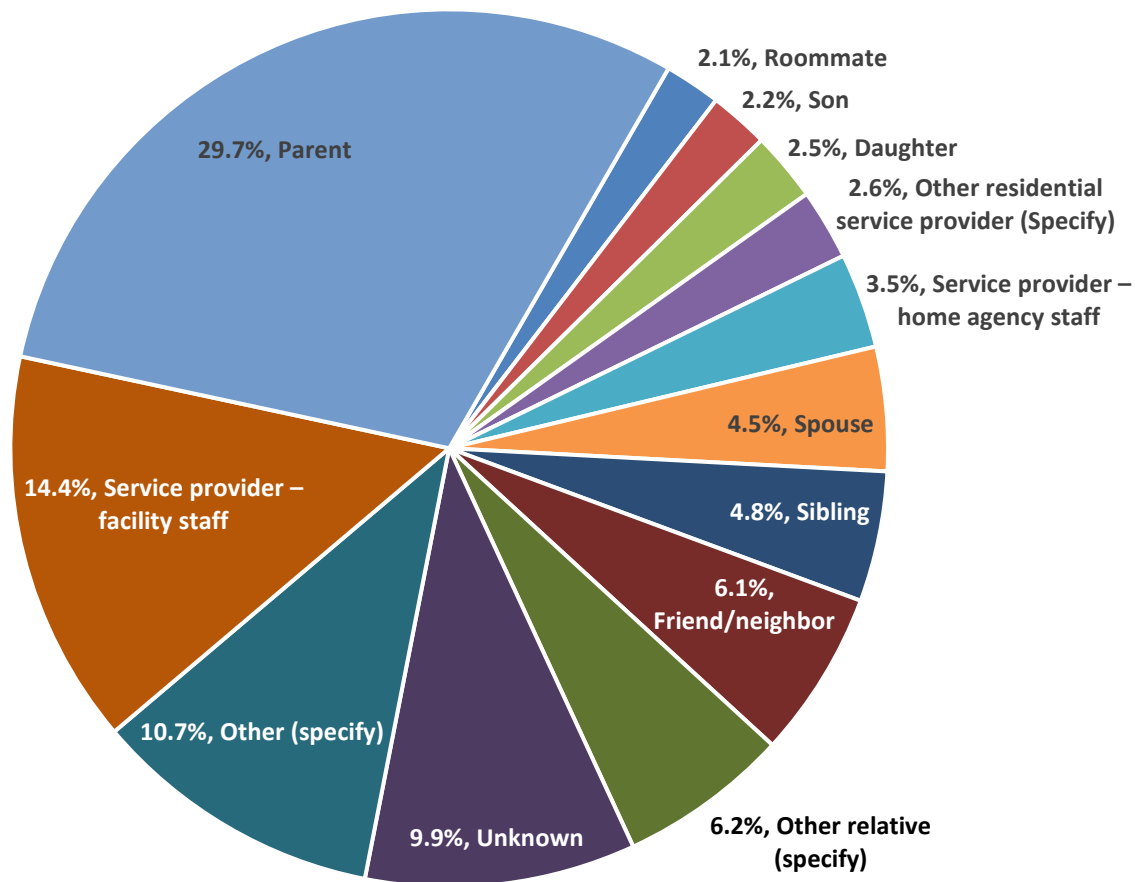


Alleged Abusers' Relationship to Victim		
	Number	Percentage
Parent	505	29.7%
Service provider – facility staff	245	14.4%
Other (specify)	181	10.7%
Unknown	168	9.9%
Other relative (specify)	106	6.2%
Friend/neighbor	104	6.1%
Sibling	81	4.8%
Spouse	77	4.5%
Service provider – home agency staff	59	3.5%
Other residential service provider (Specify)	44	2.6%
Daughter	43	2.5%
Son	37	2.2%
Roommate	35	2.1%
Vocational/day service provider	5	0.3%
Transportation provider	4	0.2%
Grandchild	2	0.1%
Employer	2	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1698</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Is Alleged Abuser a Caregiver?		
	Number	Percentage
Yes	856	50.4%
No	702	41.3%
Unknown	140	8.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1698</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



## Alleged Abuser's Relationship to Victim





### Do Alleged Abusers Live with Adult at Risk?

	Number	Percentage
No	891	52.5%
Yes	699	41.2%
Unknown	108	6.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1698</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Does Alleged Abuser have Legal or Substitute Decision-Maker Status?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	765	45.1%
No	933	54.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1698</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



### Abusers' Legal Status

	Number	Percentage
None	851	50.1%
Unknown	308	18.1%
Guardian of the Person	263	15.5%
Guardian of the Estate	179	10.5%
Representative payee	50	2.9%
Power of Attorney Health Care - Activated	33	1.9%
Power of Attorney Finances - Activated	19	1.1%
Power of Attorney Health Care - Not Activated	14	0.8%
Other (specify)	9	0.5%
Power of Attorney Finances - Not Activated	4	0.2%
Temporary guardian	2	0.1%
Conservator	1	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1698</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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



Alleged Abuser's Characteristics		
	Number	Percentage
None of the listed characteristics	1041	61.3%
Other characteristic	130	7.7%
Financial dependence: alleged abuser dependent on adult at risk	67	3.9%
Mental illness	55	3.2%
Challenging or dangerous behavior	54	3.2%
Developmentally disabled	54	3.2%
Unemployed	52	3.1%
Drug abuse	32	1.9%
Frail elderly	31	1.8%
Alcohol abuse	30	1.8%
Physically disability	24	1.4%
Financial dependence: Adult-at-Risk financially dependent on alleged abuser	23	1.4%
Serious and persistent mental illness	22	1.3%
Other medical condition	21	1.2%
Mobility impaired	19	1.1%
Medically fragile	11	0.6%
Diabetic	7	0.4%
Alzheimer's or related dementia	6	0.4%
Morbidly obese	6	0.4%
Chronic alcoholic	4	0.2%
Limited English Proficiency	3	0.2%
Homebound	3	0.2%
Blind/visually impaired	3	0.2%
Disoriented/confused	3	0.2%
Brain injury	3	0.2%
Communication disorder	2	0.1%
Stroke-related impairments	2	0.1%
Functionally illiterate	1	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1698</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Multiple responses are allowed so numbers do not add up to 100%. Percents refer to share of all alleged abusers.		



More than One Alleged Abuser?		
	Number	Percent
No, one alleged abuser only	1,303	92.0%
Yes	113	8.0%
Total	1,416	100.0%



Was Hurt or Harm Substantiated?		
	Number	Percentage
Substantiated	961	35.6%
Unsubstantiated	1086	40.2%
Unable to Substantiate	656	24.3%
Total	2703	100.0%



## Actions Taken to Assist Adult at Risk

	Number	Percent
Services not needed	526	22.6%
Services offered-some accepted	386	16.6%
Services offered-not accepted	339	14.5%
Services offered-all accepted	322	13.8%
Guardian referral	266	11.4%
Outreach continues	175	7.5%
Referral made to other agency	169	7.2%
Investigation not accepted	145	6.2%
Referral to law enforcement or Department of Justice	127	5.4%
Referral to regulatory authority	122	5.2%
Protective services placement	108	4.6%
Other disposition	103	4.4%
Referral to caregiver misconduct registry	94	4.0%
Other legal action	48	2.1%
Mental health commitment	38	1.6%
Referral to protection or advocacy agencies	35	1.5%
Response or investigation continues	28	1.2%
Services needed are not available	17	0.7%
Referral made to state agency	4	0.2%
Referral to detoxification services	4	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,332</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%.*





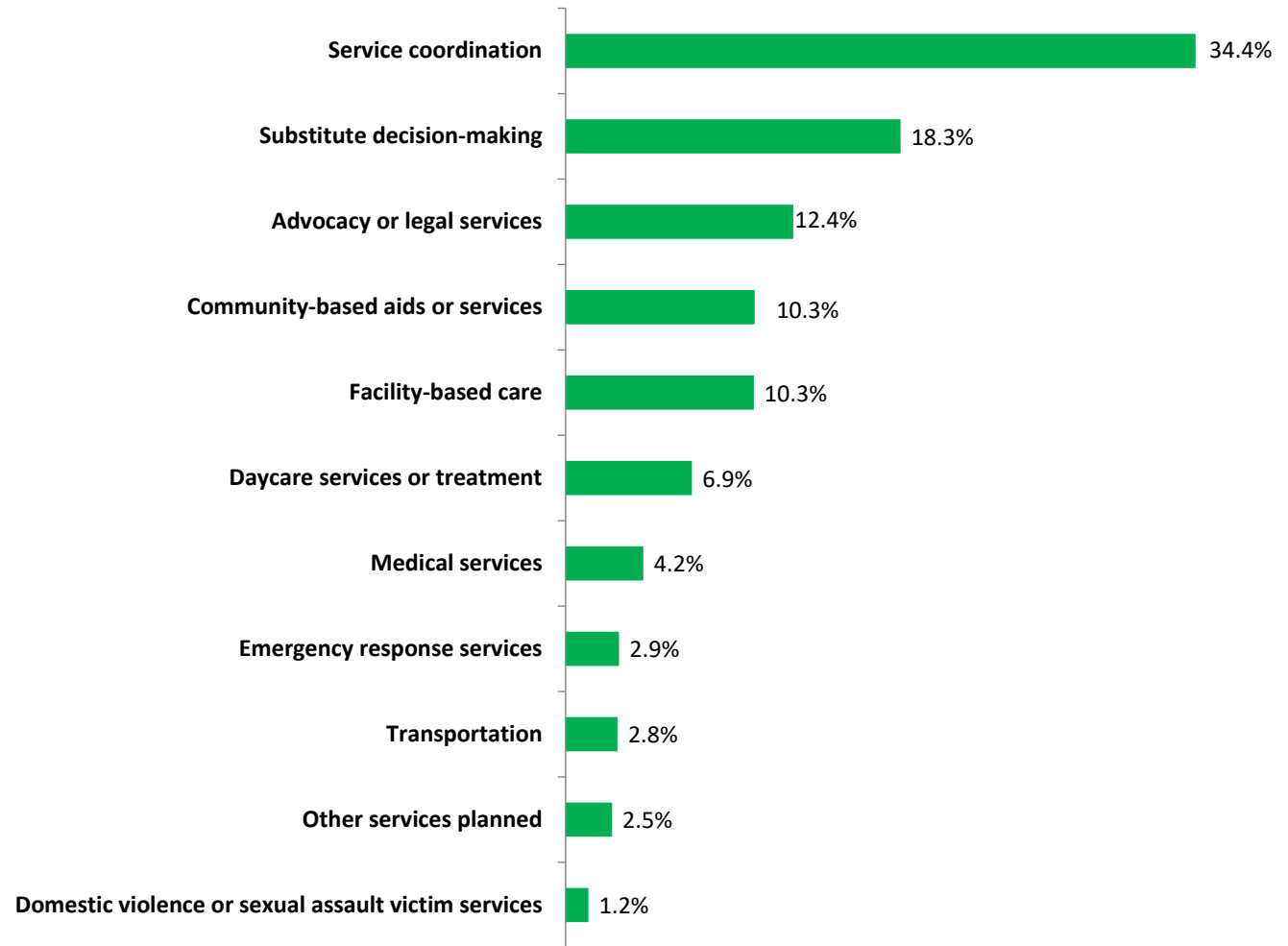
## Services Planned for Adult at Risk

	Number	Percent
Service coordination	803	34.4%
Substitute decision-making	427	18.3%
Advocacy or legal services	290	12.4%
Community-based aids or services	241	10.3%
Facility-based care	240	10.3%
Daycare services or treatment	161	6.9%
Medical services	99	4.2%
Emergency response services	68	2.9%
Transportation	66	2.8%
Other services planned	59	2.5%
Domestic violence or sexual assault victim services	29	1.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,332</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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



### Services Planned for Adult at Risk





### Services Planned for Alleged Abuser(s)

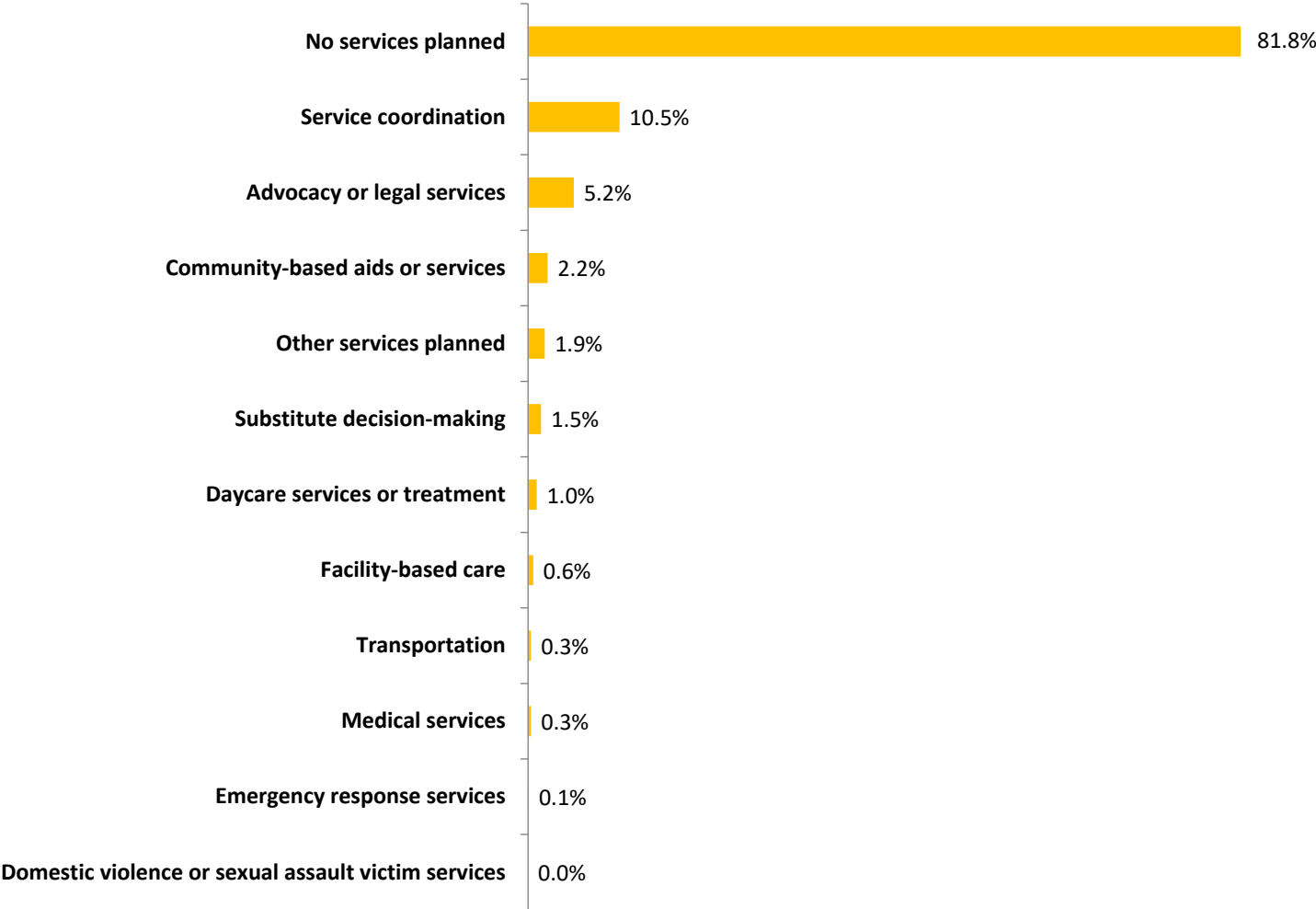
	Number	Percent
No services planned	982	81.8%
Service coordination	126	10.5%
Advocacy or legal services	63	5.2%
Community-based aids or services	27	2.2%
Other services planned	23	1.9%
Substitute decision-making	18	1.5%
Daycare services or treatment	12	1.0%
Facility-based care	7	0.6%
Medical services	4	0.3%
Transportation	4	0.3%
Emergency response services	1	0.1%
Domestic violence or sexual assault victim services	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,201</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Multiple responses are allowed so numbers do not add up to 100%.*

*Percents refer to share of all incidents in which abuse or neglect was alleged.*



### Services Plan for Alleged Abuser(s)





## Contact Information

**Gena Schupp**

APS Coordinator

Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources

Division of Public Health

Department of Health Services

920-572-9610

[Gena.schupp@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Gena.schupp@dhs.wisconsin.gov)