



# **Wisconsin's Annual Elder Abuse and Neglect Report: 2019**

A statewide summary of reports  
submitted by Wisconsin counties

Division of Public Health  
P-00124-19 (06/2020)



# Introduction: The Annual Elder Abuse and Neglect Report

In Wisconsin, county agencies receive elder 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 elder adults at risk and help ensure their safety.

After responding to a referral, county agencies file an incident 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 Elder Abuse and Neglect Report*.



# 2019 Annual Report

This report documents and summarizes reported incidents in Wisconsin, providing information about:

- The types of abuse and neglect reported.
- The characteristics of elder adults at risk and alleged abusers.
- The local responses that guide the state's efforts to stop elder abuse.

Allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of individuals living in licensed facilities are generally addressed by the Department of Health Services' Office of Caregiver Quality, which is located in the Division of Quality Assurance (DQA).



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

Wisconsin has made great strides in identifying and protecting elders. 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 elder adult at risk (ages 60 and older).

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



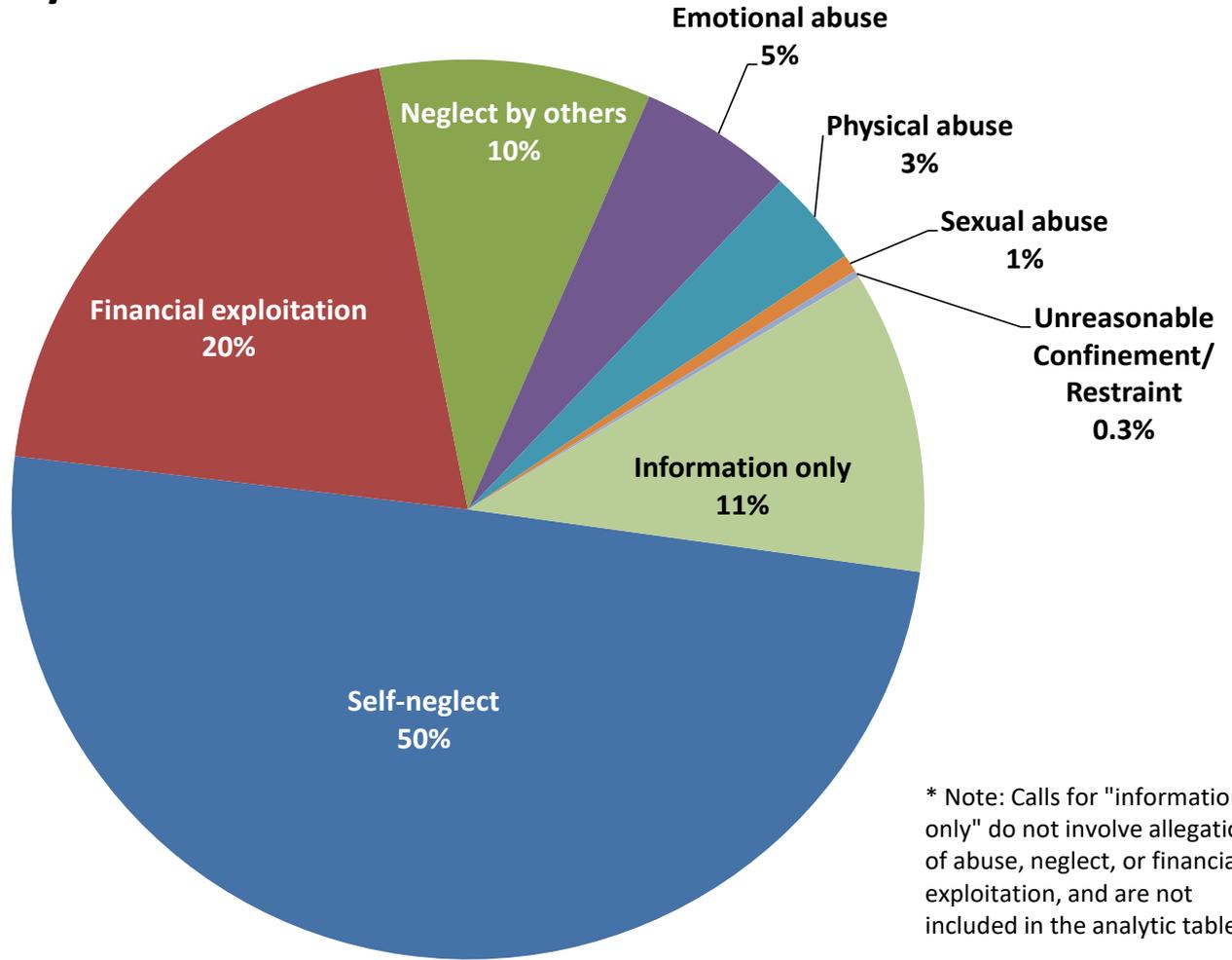
### Primary Reason for Call/Issue Identified

	Number	Percent
Self-neglect	4,976	49.7%
Financial exploitation	2,003	20.0%
Neglect by others	963	9.6%
Emotional abuse	551	5.5%
Physical abuse	348	3.5%
Sexual abuse	64	0.6%
Unreasonable confinement or restraint	22	0.2%
Treatment without consent	2	0.0%
<i>Information only</i>	1,089	10.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,018</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



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



<b>Previous Report on This Individual?</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No	4,982	57.2%
Yes	3,039	34.9%
Unknown	691	7.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,712</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



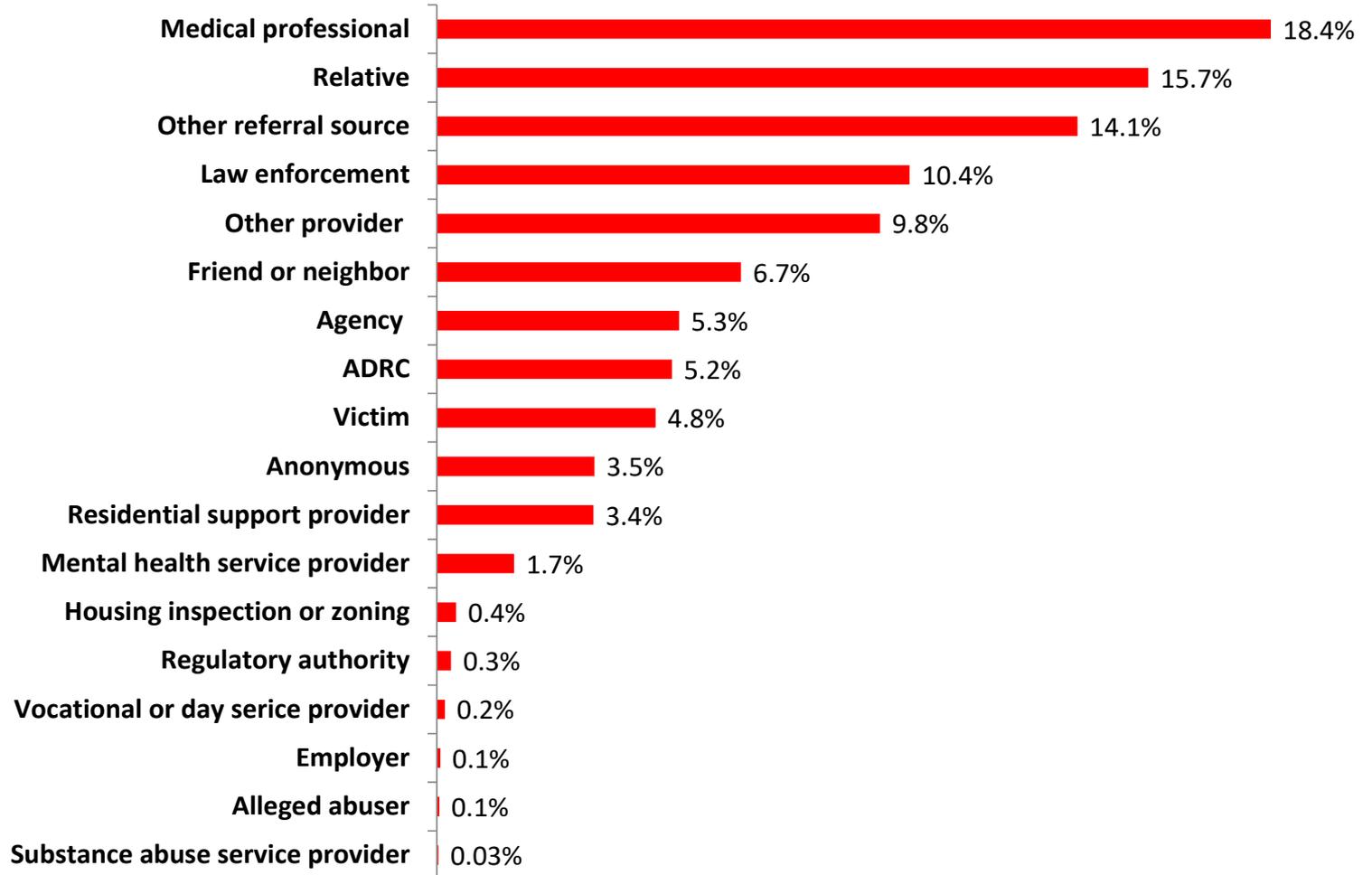
<b>Where Incident Occurred</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Place of residence	7,849	87.9%
Other place	957	10.7%
Place of employment or day services	79	0.9%
Transportation	33	0.4%
School	11	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,929</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



<b>Referral Source</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Medical professional	1,639	18.4%
Relative	1,398	15.7%
Other referral source	1,259	14.1%
Law enforcement	929	10.4%
Other provider	871	9.8%
Friend or neighbor	598	6.7%
Agency	476	5.3%
ADRC	462	5.2%
Victim	430	4.8%
Anonymous	310	3.5%
Residential support provider	308	3.4%
Mental health service provider	152	1.7%
Housing inspection or zoning	38	0.4%
Regulatory authority	28	0.3%
Vocational or day service provider	16	0.2%
Employer	7	0.1%
Alleged abuser	5	0.1%
Substance abuse service provider	3	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,929</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



### Referral Source

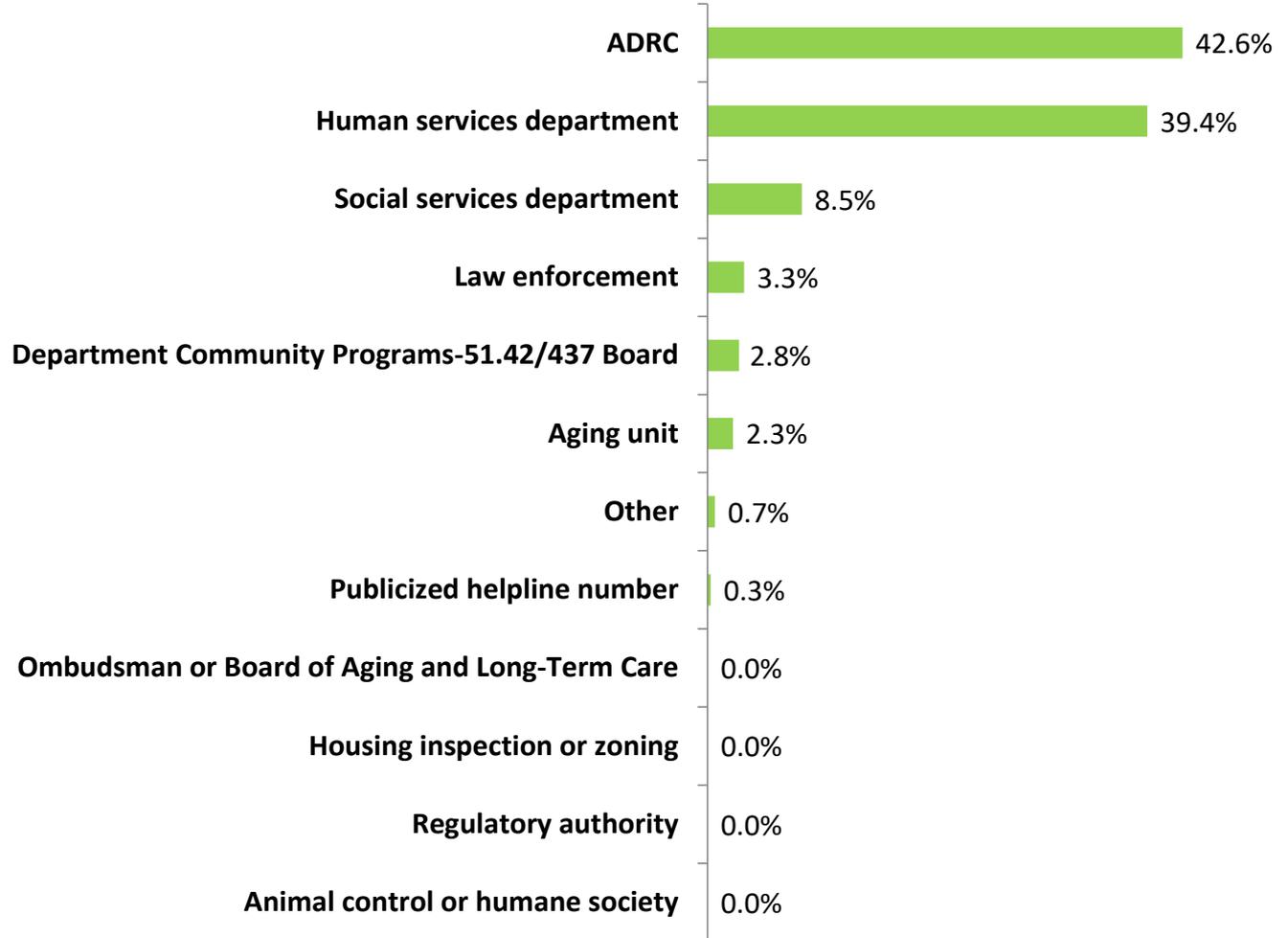




<b>Call Received By:</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
ADRC	3,805	42.6%
Human services department	3,522	39.4%
Social services department	755	8.5%
Law enforcement	294	3.3%
Department Community Programs-51.42/437 Board	252	2.8%
Aging unit	205	2.3%
Other	60	0.7%
Publicized helpline number	26	0.3%
Housing inspection or zoning	3	0.0%
Ombudsman or Board of Aging and Long-Term Care	3	0.0%
Animal control or humane society	2	0.0%
Regulatory authority	2	0.0%
Developmental disability board	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,929</b>	<b>0.0%</b>



### Call Received By:

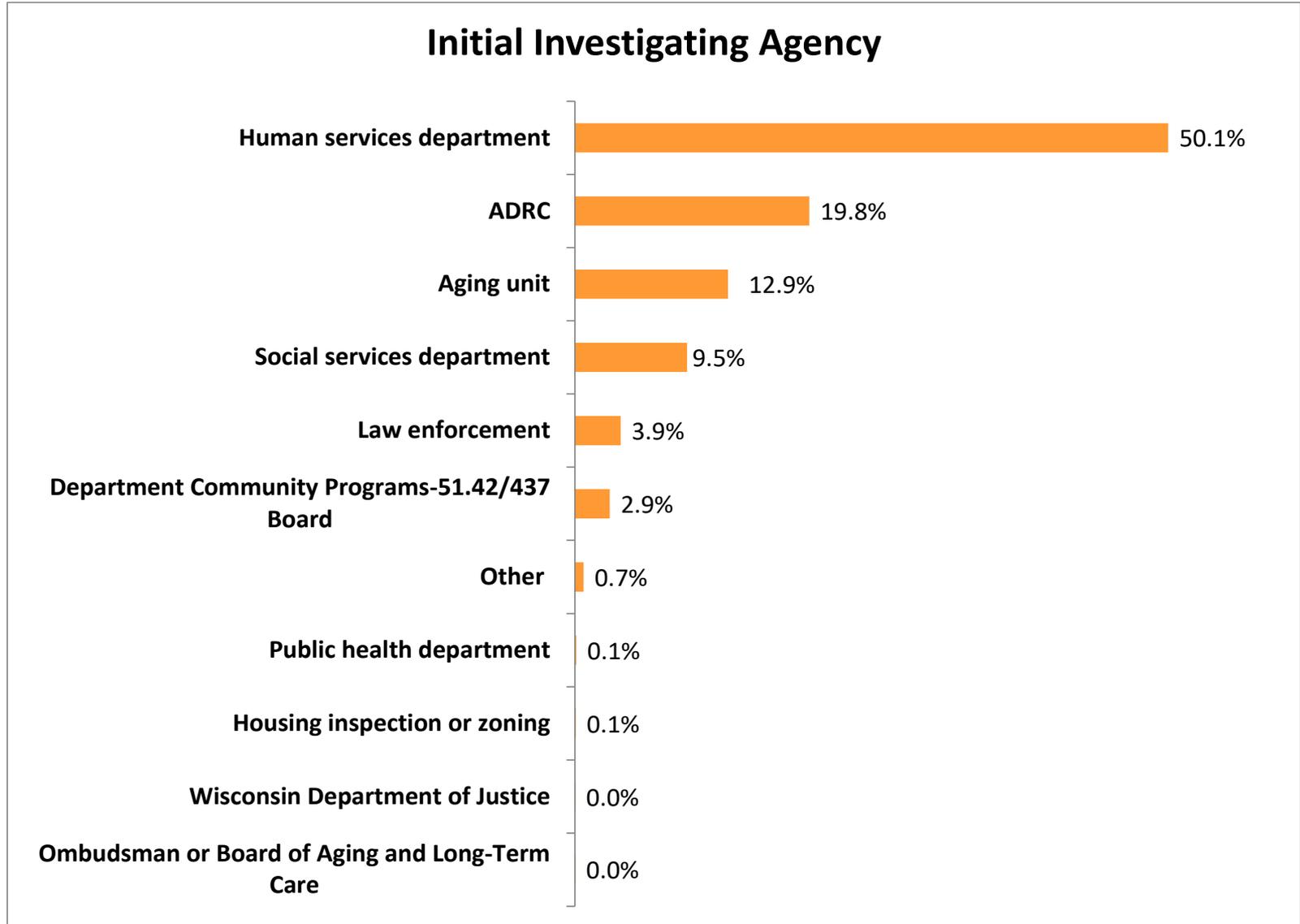




<b>Initial Investigating Agency</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Human services department	4,472	50.1%
ADRC	1,766	19.8%
Aging unit	1,154	12.9%
Social services department	845	9.5%
Law enforcement	344	3.9%
Department Community Programs-51.42/437 Board	261	2.9%
Other	65	0.7%
Public health department	10	0.1%
Housing inspection or zoning	6	0.1%
Ombudsman or Board of Aging and Long-Term Care	2	0.0%
Wisconsin Department of Justice	2	0.0%
Animal control or humane society	1	0.0%
Division of Quality Assurance or Licensing and Regulation	1	0.0%
Developmental Disability Board	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,929</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



### Initial Investigating Agency





Was Incident Life Threatening?		
	Number	Percent
No	8,038	90.0%
Yes	530	5.9%
Unknown	361	4.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,929</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Has Elder Adult at Risk Died?		
	Number	Percent
No	432	81.5%
Yes	95	17.9%
Unknown	3	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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

Was Death Related to the Incident?		
	Number	Percent
No	37	38.9%
Yes	31	32.6%
Unknown	27	28.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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

Was Death Directly Caused by Incident?		
	Number	Percent
No	9	29.0%
Yes	18	58.1%
Unknown	4	12.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Note: Percents represent share of all incidents with death related to incident.*



<b>Elder Adult at Risk's Age</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
60-69 years	2,344	26.3%
70-79 years	3,024	33.9%
80-89 years	2,603	29.2%
90 years or more	958	10.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,929</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

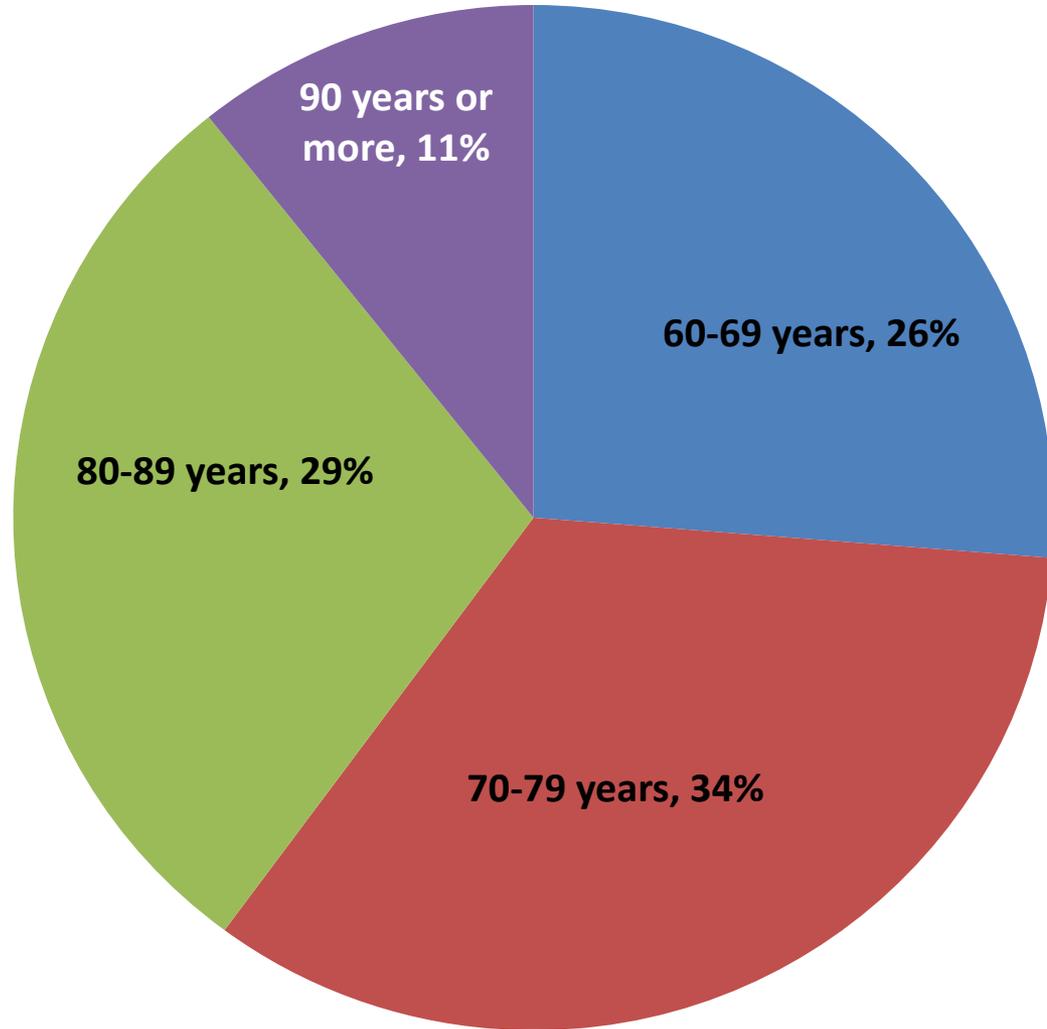
<b>Elder Adult at Risk's Gender</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Female	5,253	58.8%
Male	3,672	41.1%
Unknown	4	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,929</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>Elder Adult at Risk's Race</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
White	5,917	66.3%
Black or African American	423	4.7%
Native American or Alaska Native	129	1.4%
Asian	36	0.4%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	10	0.1%
Other race	119	1.3%
Not reported or unknown	2,295	25.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,929</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*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.*



### Elder Adult at Risk's Age

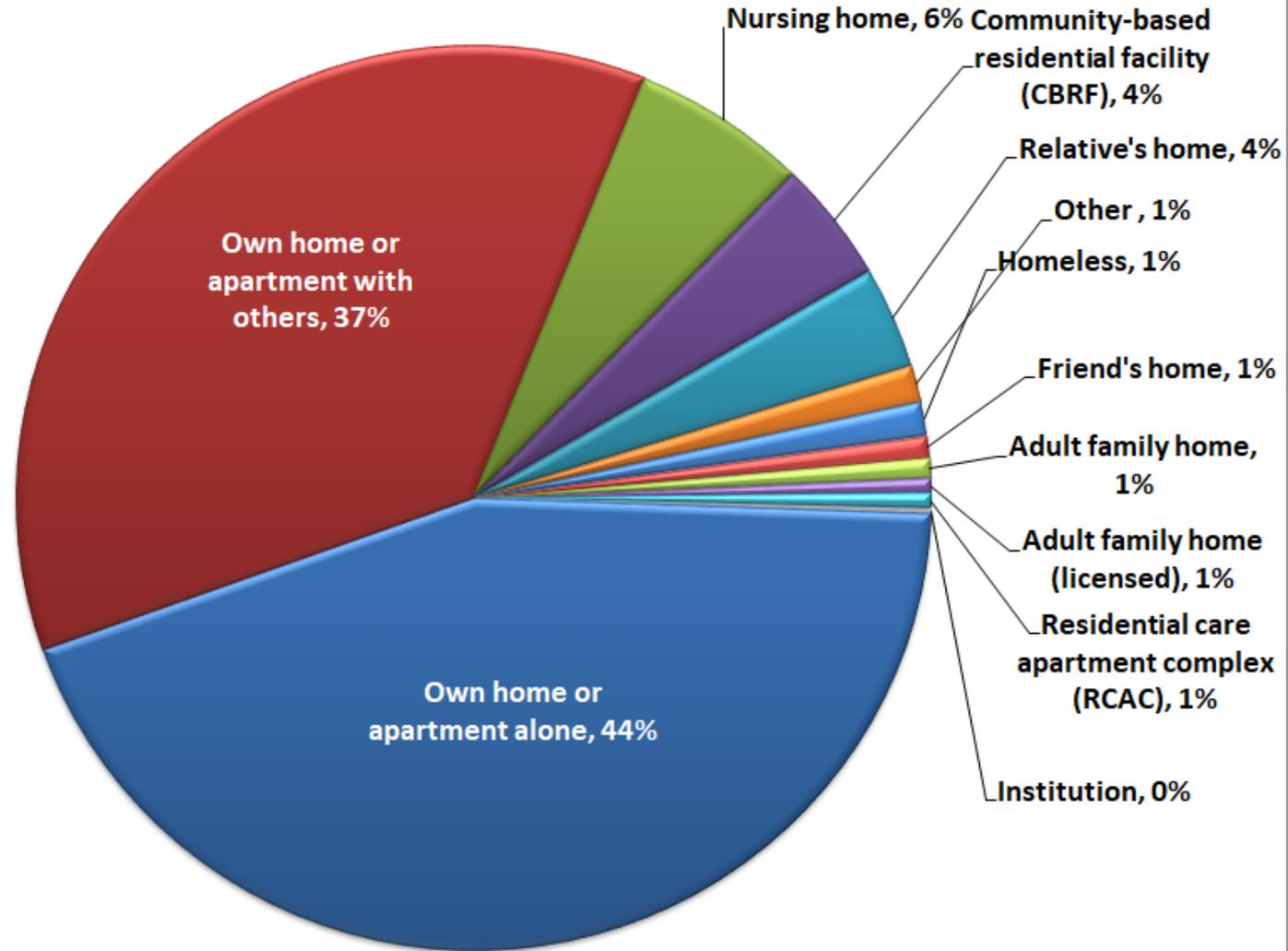




<b>Elder Adult at Risk's Living Arrangement</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Own home or apartment alone	3,929	44.0%
Own home or apartment with others	3,263	36.5%
Nursing home	553	6.2%
Community-based residential facility (CBRF)	387	4.3%
Relative's home	325	3.6%
Other	120	1.3%
Homeless	107	1.2%
Friend's home	73	0.8%
Adult family home	62	0.7%
Adult family home (licensed)	46	0.5%
Residential care apartment complex (RCAC)	46	0.5%
Institution	18	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,929</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



## Elder Adult at Risk's Living Arrangement





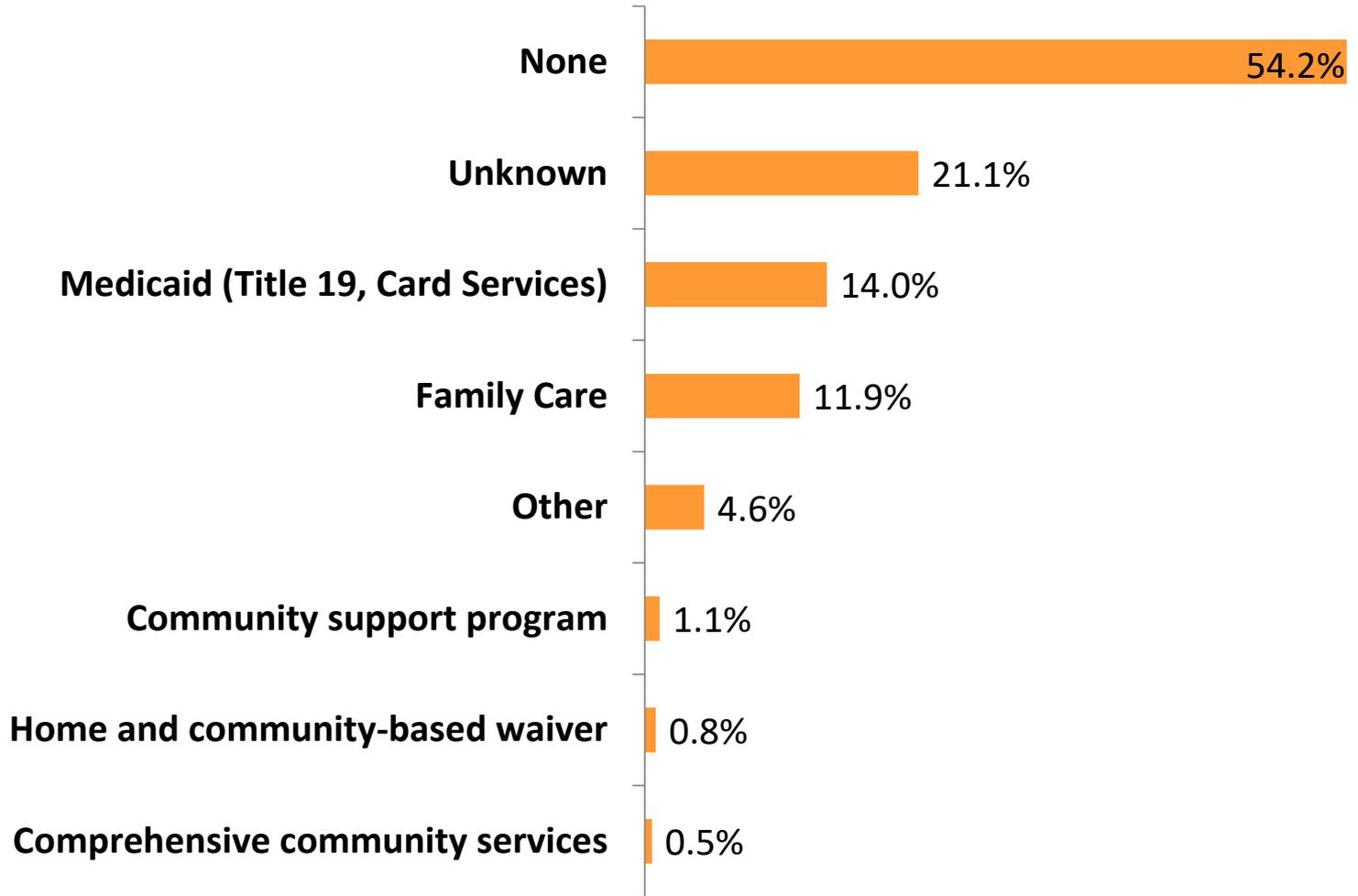
## County and State-funded Programs That Have Served Elder Adults at Risk

	Number	Percent
None	4,837	54.2%
Unknown	1,884	21.1%
Medicaid (Title 19, Card Services)	1,254	14.0%
Family Care	1,066	11.9%
Other	408	4.6%
Community support program	101	1.1%
Home and community-based waiver	75	0.8%
Comprehensive community services	48	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,929</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Note: Elder Adult at Risk may be served by more than one program, so sum does not equal 100%.*



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





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

	Number	Percent
No	4,203	47.1%
Yes	3,211	36.0%
Unknown	1,515	17.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,929</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

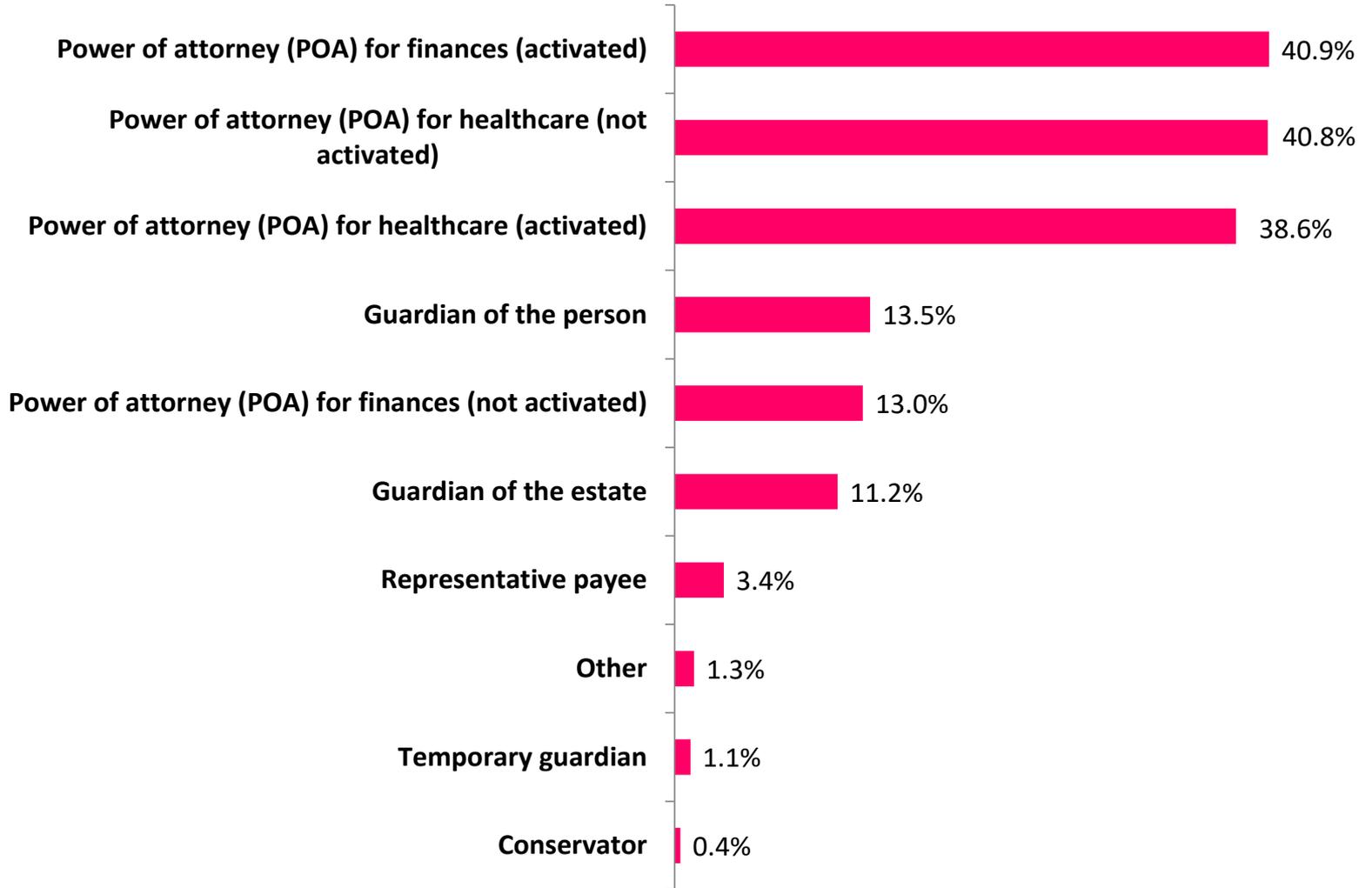
### Type(s) of Substitute Decision-Maker

	Number	Percent
Power of attorney (POA) for finances (activated)	1,313	40.9%
Power of attorney (POA) for healthcare (not activated)	1,310	40.8%
Power of attorney (POA) for healthcare (activated)	1,240	38.6%
Guardian of the person	432	13.5%
Power of attorney (POA) for finances (not activated)	416	13.0%
Guardian of the estate	360	11.2%
Representative payee	109	3.4%
Other	43	1.3%
Temporary guardian	35	1.1%
Conservator	13	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,211</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Percents represent share of all those with any kind of substitute decision-maker (n=3,211). Multiple responses are allowed, so percents do not total 100%.*



## Type(s) of Substitute Decision-Maker





<b>Elder Adult at Risk's Characteristics</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Frail elderly	3,260	36.5%
Dementia	2,551	28.6%
Mobility impaired	1,447	16.2%
Medically fragile	1,125	12.6%
Mental illness	1,110	12.4%
Disoriented and confused	1,055	11.8%
None of the listed characteristics	873	9.8%
Other medical condition	820	9.2%
Physical disability	683	7.6%
Diabetes	649	7.3%
Homebound	530	5.9%
Incontinent	496	5.6%
Alcohol abuse	483	5.4%
Challenging or dangerous behavior	473	5.3%
Other characteristic	333	3.7%
<i>Stroke-related condition</i>	325	3.6%
Deaf or hard of hearing	314	3.5%
Chronic mental illness	295	3.3%
Financial dependence: alleged abuser dependent on adult at risk	203	2.3%
Morbidly obese	186	2.1%
Developmental disability	185	2.1%
Unemployed	183	2.0%
Chronic alcoholic	182	2.0%
Blind or visually impaired	171	1.9%
Brain injury	101	1.1%
Drug abuse	69	0.8%
Financially dependent on abuser	45	0.5%
Communication disorder	44	0.5%
Limited English proficiency	32	0.4%
Functionally illiterate	24	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,929</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<i>Percents refer to share of all elder adults at risk having this characteristic. Multiple responses are allowed, so percents do not total 100%.</i>		



### Alleged Abusers' Gender

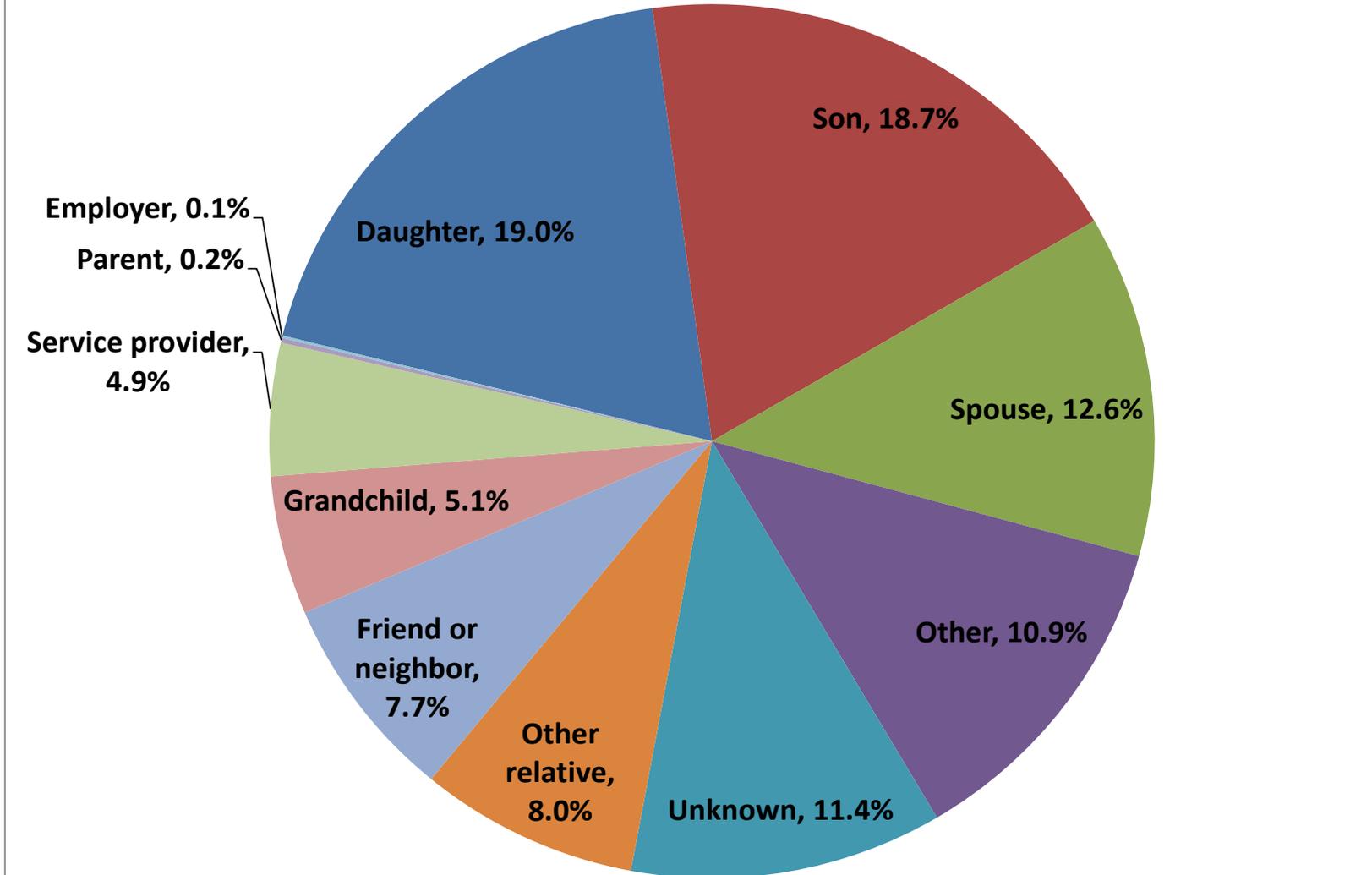
	Number	Percent
Female	1,990	43.6%
Male	1,949	42.7%
Unknown	623	13.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,562</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Alleged Abusers' Relationships to Elder Adult at Risk

	Number	Percent
Daughter	865	19.0%
Son	855	18.7%
Spouse	577	12.6%
Other	560	12.3%
Unknown	521	11.4%
Other relative	365	8.0%
Friend or neighbor	349	7.7%
Grandchild	234	5.1%
Service provider	224	4.9%
Parent	8	0.2%
Employer	4	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,562</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



## Alleged Abusers' Relationships to Elder Adult at Risk





<b>Do Alleged Abusers Live with Elder Adult at Risk?</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No	2,449	53.7%
Yes	1,863	40.8%
Unknown	250	5.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,562</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	3,352	73.5%
Yes	1,210	26.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,562</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



## Alleged Abusers' Legal Status

	Number	Percent
No legal status	2,464	54.0%
Unknown legal status	882	19.3%
Power of attorney (POA) for healthcare (activated)	523	11.5%
Power of attorney (POA) for finances (activated)	503	11.0%
Power of attorney (POA) for healthcare (not activated)	304	6.7%
Guardian of the person	154	3.4%
Guardian of the estate	124	2.7%
Power of attorney (POA) for finances (not activated)	103	2.3%
Representative payee	50	1.1%
Other legal status	47	1.0%
Conservator	4	0.1%
Temporary guardian	4	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,562</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	2,526	55.4%
Financial dependence: alleged abuser dependent on adult at risk	593	13.0%
Other characteristic	388	8.5%
Unemployed	305	6.7%
Alcohol abuse	251	5.5%
Drug abuse	245	5.4%
Mental illness	217	4.8%
Frail Elderly	173	3.8%
Challenging or dangerous behavior	133	2.9%
Dementia	124	2.7%
Chronic alcoholic	76	1.7%
Physical disability	75	1.6%
Other medical condition	67	1.5%
Mobility impaired	60	1.3%
Chronic mental illness	46	1.0%
Disoriented and confused	41	0.9%
Financial dependence: adult at risk on abuser	41	0.9%
Medically fragile	41	0.9%
Developmental disability	38	0.8%
Morbidly Obese	25	0.5%
Deaf or hard of hearing	23	0.5%
Diabetes	19	0.4%
Stroke-related condition	17	0.4%
Blind or visually impaired	9	0.2%
Homebound	9	0.2%
Incontinent	6	0.1%
Brain injury	5	0.1%
Communication disorder	2	0.0%
Functionally illiterate	2	0.0%
Limited English proficiency	2	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,562</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<i>Multiple responses were 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	4,386	96.1%
Yes	176	3.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,562</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



<b>Was Hurt or Harm Substantiated?</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantiated	4,426	49.6%
Unsubstantiated	2,813	31.5%
Unable to substantiate	1,690	18.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,929</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



<b>Actions Taken to Assist Elder Adult at Risk</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Services offered-not accepted	1,851	20.7%
Services offered-some accepted	1,847	20.7%
Services not needed	1,672	18.7%
Services offered-all accepted	1,042	11.7%
Outreach continues	781	8.7%
Investigation not accepted	757	8.5%
Referral made to other agency	707	7.9%
Guardian referral	665	7.4%
Protective services placement	512	5.7%
Other disposition	460	5.2%
Referral to law enforcement or Department of Justice	352	3.9%
Other legal action	158	1.8%
Response or investigation continues	80	0.9%
Mental health commitment	58	0.6%
Referral to protection or advocacy agencies	49	0.5%
Referral to regulatory authority	47	0.5%
Services needed are not available	25	0.3%
Referral to caregiver misconduct registry	22	0.2%
Referral made to state agency	19	0.2%
Referral to detoxification services	13	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,929</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<i>Percents refer to share of all reports showing this action. Multiple responses are allowed so numbers do not add up to 100%.</i>		



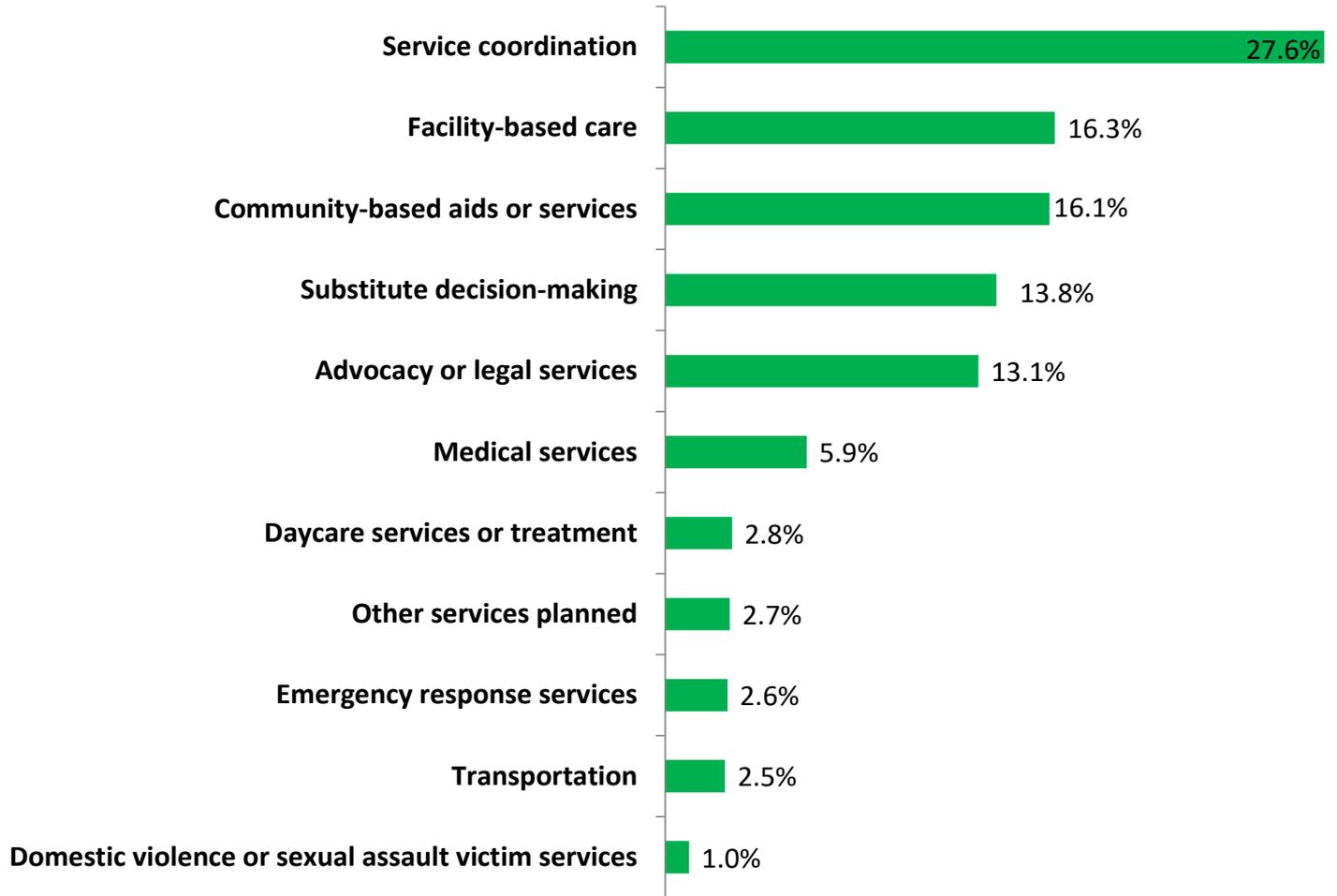
### Services Planned for Elder Adult at Risk

	Number	Percent
Service coordination	2,461	27.6%
Facility-based care	1,455	16.3%
Community-based aids or services	1,435	16.1%
Substitute decision-making	1,236	13.8%
Advocacy or legal services	1,169	13.1%
Medical services	528	5.9%
Daycare services or treatment	249	2.8%
Other services planned	241	2.7%
Emergency response services	232	2.6%
Transportation	223	2.5%
Domestic violence or sexual assault victim services	89	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,929</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 Elder Adult at Risk





### Services Planned for Alleged Abuser(s)

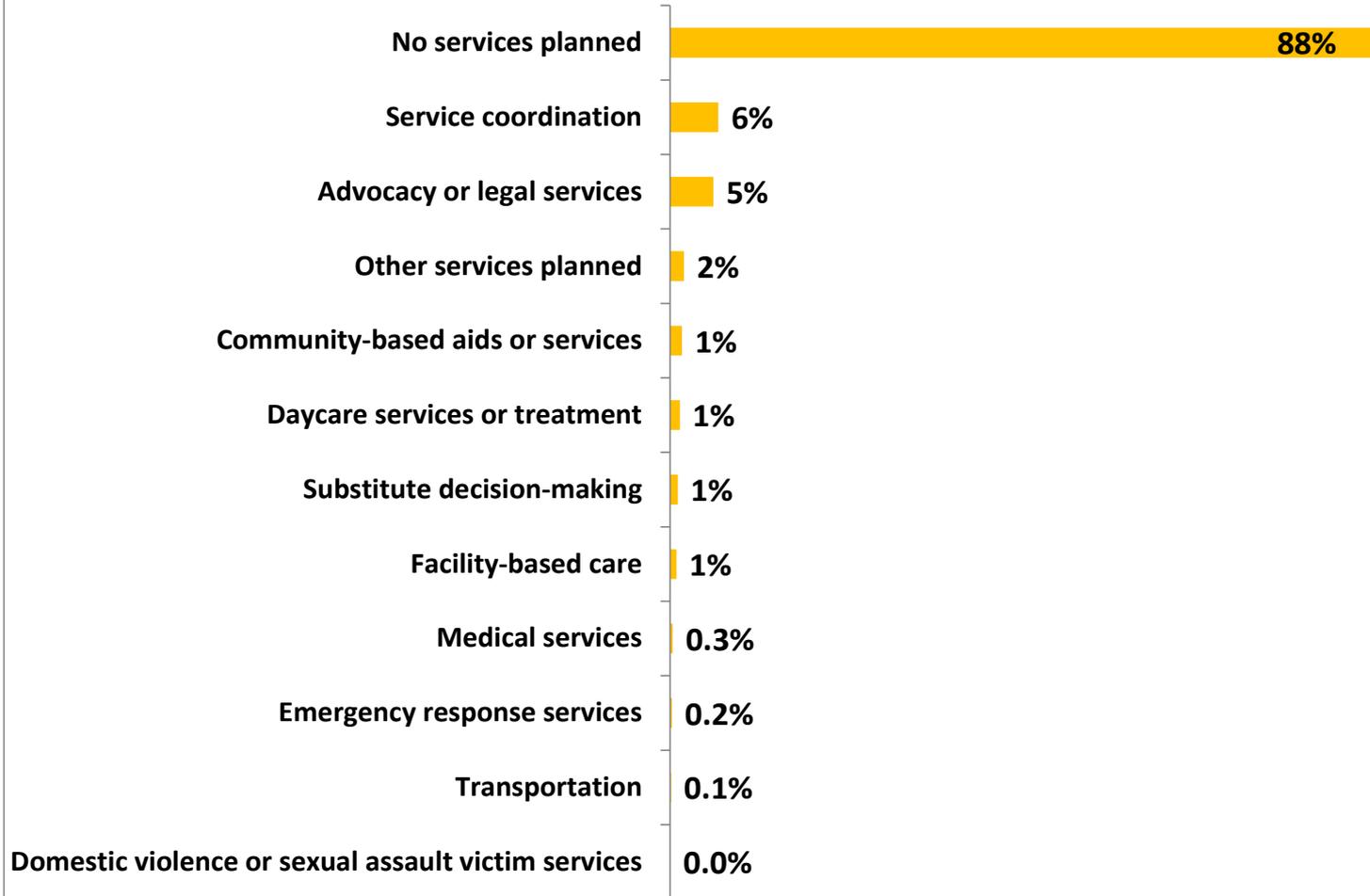
Service	Number	Percent
No services planned	3,482	88.1%
Service coordination	239	6.0%
Advocacy or legal services	214	5.4%
Other services planned	69	1.7%
Community-based aids or services	59	1.5%
Daycare services or treatment	48	1.2%
Substitute decision-making	38	1.0%
Facility-based care	32	0.8%
Medical services	13	0.3%
Emergency response services	9	0.2%
Transportation	5	0.1%
Domestic violence or sexual assault victim services	1	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,953</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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

*Percents refer to share of all incidents in which abuse or neglect was alleged (n=3,953).*



## Services Plan for Alleged Abuser(s)





## Contact Information

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