



# **Wisconsin's Annual Elder Abuse and Neglect Report: 2023**

A statewide summary of reports  
submitted by Wisconsin counties

P-00124 (04/2025)



# 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 2023 are the basis of this statewide report: *Wisconsin's Annual Elder Abuse and Neglect Report*.



# 2023 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 <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/aps/Contacts/aaragencies.htm> for these help line phone numbers.



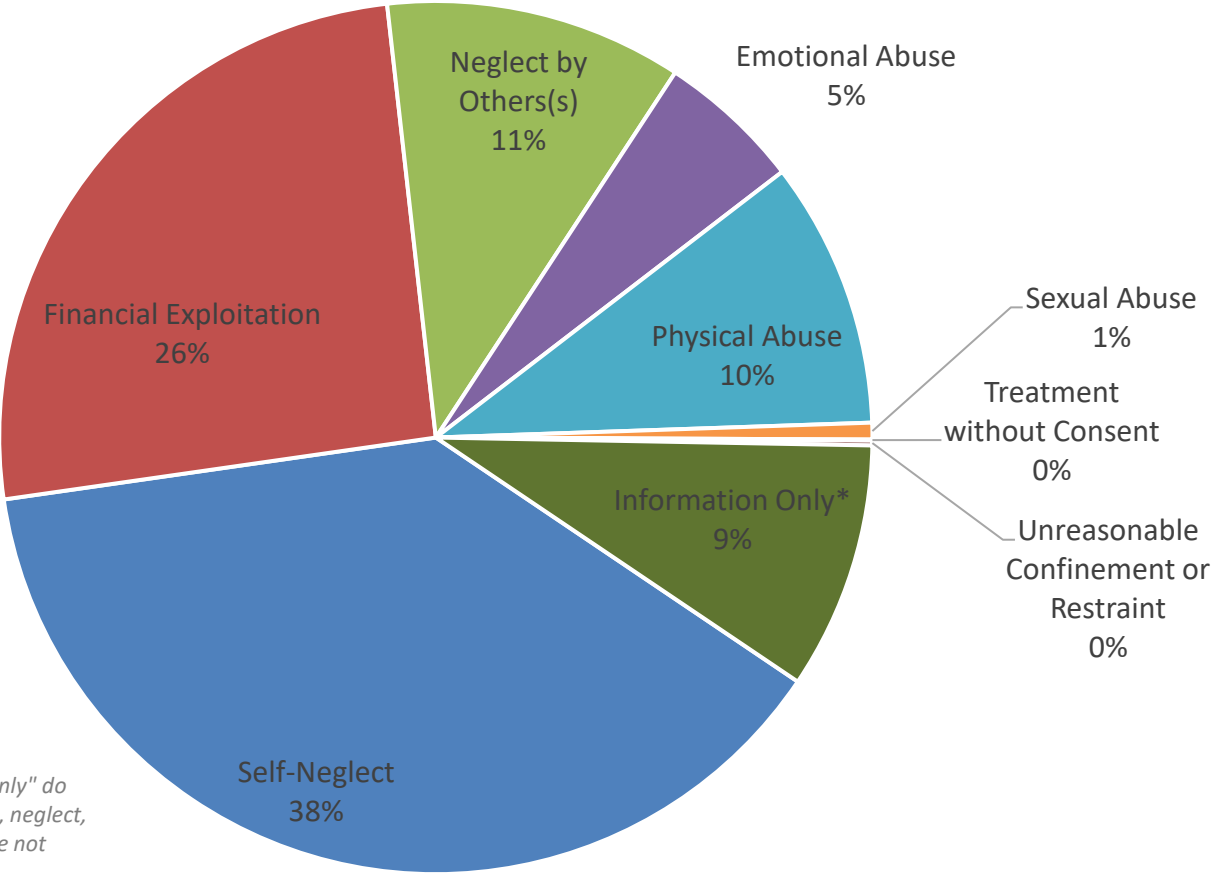
### Primary Reason for Call/Issue Identified

|                                       | Number       | Percentage    |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Self-Neglect                          | 4592         | 38.3%         |
| Financial Exploitation                | 3056         | 25.5%         |
| Neglect by Others(s)                  | 1322         | 11.0%         |
| Emotional Abuse                       | 641          | 5.3%          |
| Physical Abuse                        | 1184         | 9.9%          |
| Sexual Abuse                          | 74           | 0.6%          |
| Treatment without Consent             | 5            | 0.0%          |
| Unreasonable Confinement or Restraint | 21           | 0.2%          |
| Information Only*                     | 1098         | 9.2%          |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>11993</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.*



| Previous Report on This Individual? |        |            |
|-------------------------------------|--------|------------|
|                                     | Number | Percentage |
| Yes                                 | 6650   | 61.0%      |
| No                                  | 3310   | 30.4%      |
| Unknown                             | 935    | 8.6%       |
| Total                               | 10895  | 100.0%     |

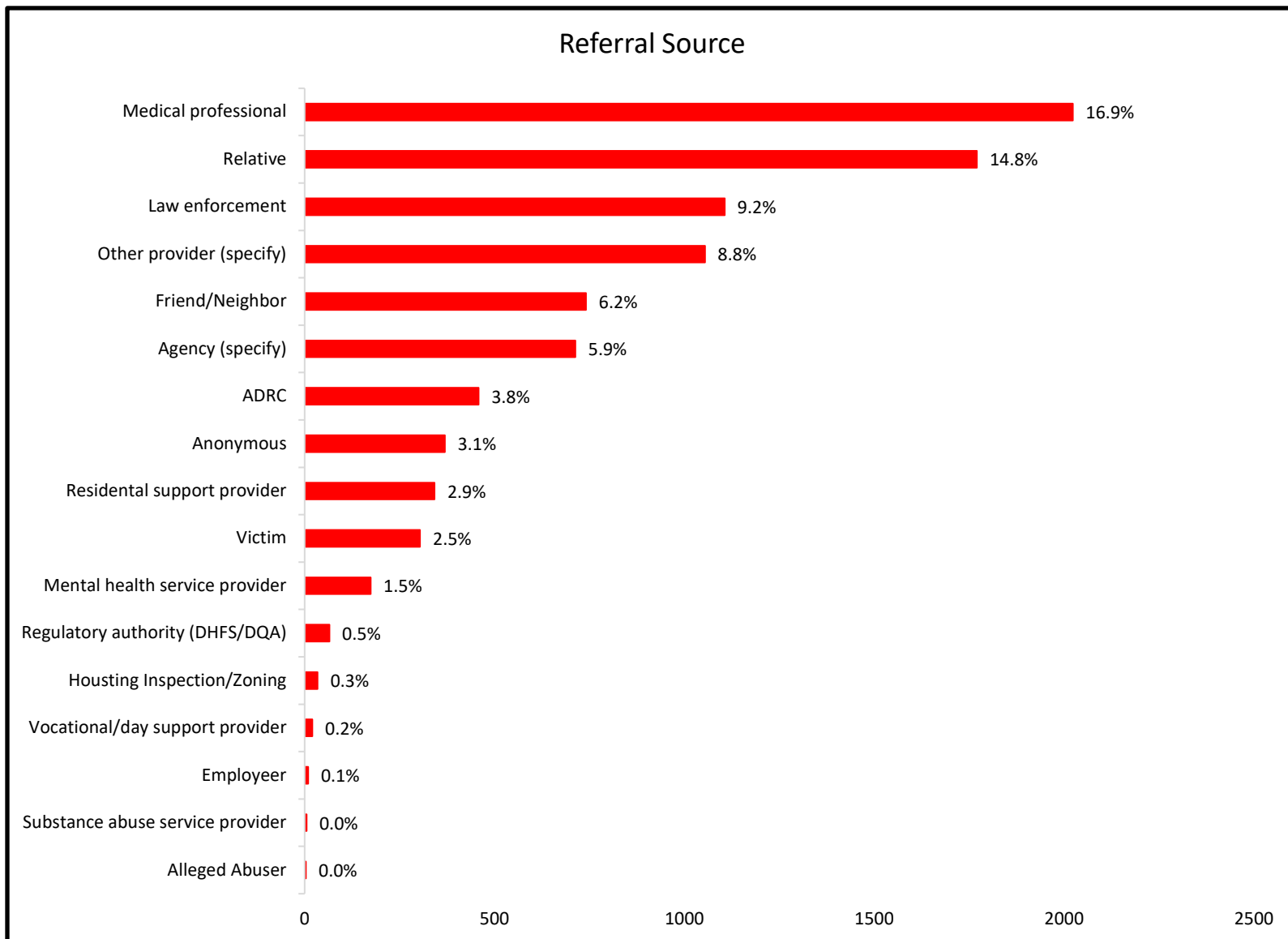
**Where Incident Occurred**

|                                     | Number       | Percentage    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Place of Residence                  | 9446         | 86.7%         |
| Other place                         | 1238         | 11.4%         |
| Place of Employment or day services | 183          | 1.7%          |
| School                              | 12           | 0.1%          |
| Transportation                      | 16           | 0.1%          |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>10895</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |





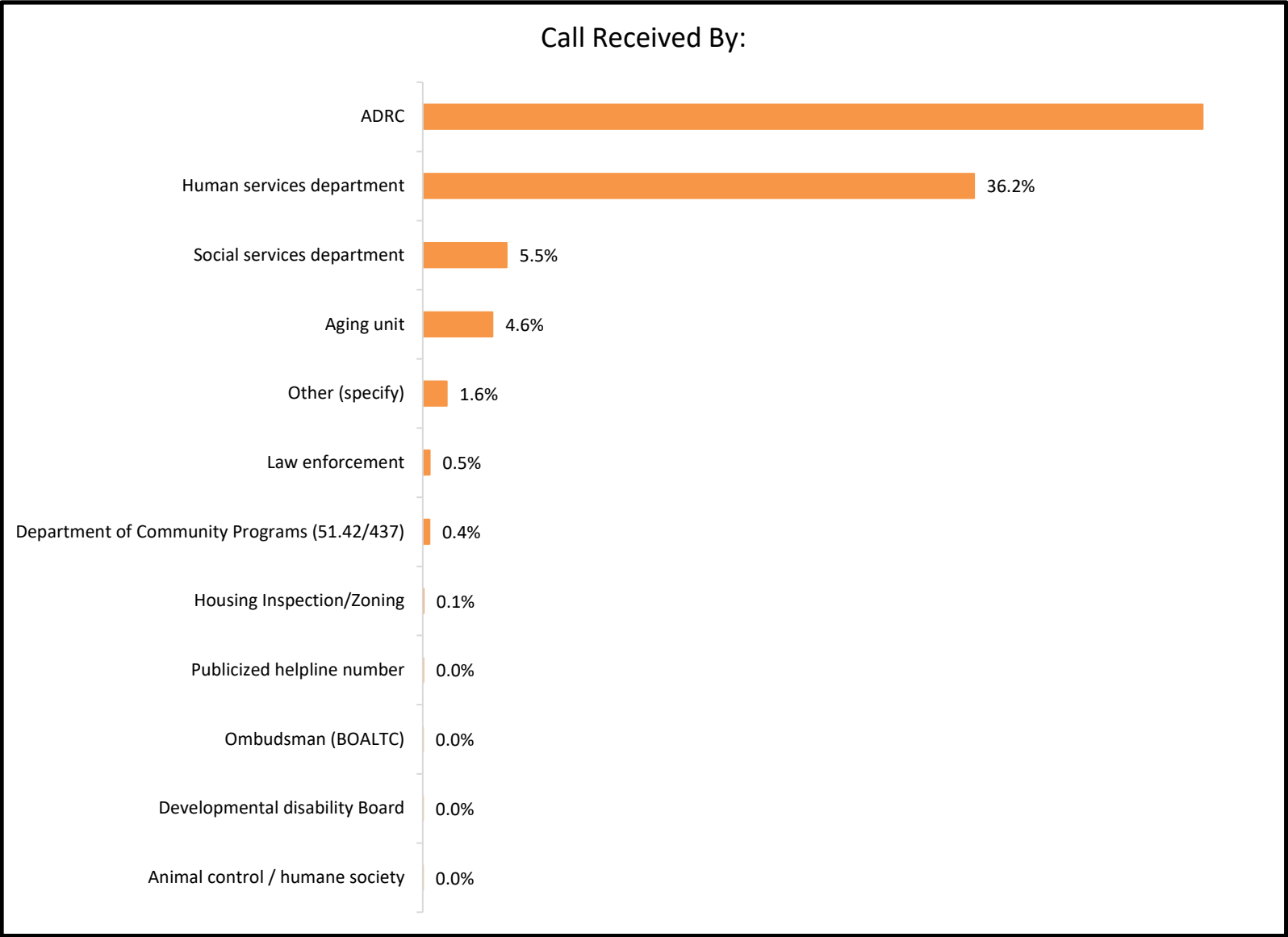
| Referral Source                  |              |               |
|----------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
|                                  | Number       | Percentage    |
| ADRC                             | 458          | 3.8%          |
| Agency (specify)                 | 713          | 5.9%          |
| Alleged Abuser                   | 3            | 0.0%          |
| Anonymous                        | 369          | 3.1%          |
| Employer                         | 9            | 0.1%          |
| Friend/Neighbor                  | 741          | 6.2%          |
| Housing Inspection/Zoning        | 34           | 0.3%          |
| Law enforcement                  | 1106         | 9.2%          |
| Medical professional             | 2023         | 16.9%         |
| Mental health service provider   | 174          | 1.5%          |
| Other provider (specify)         | 1054         | 8.8%          |
| Other referral source (specify)  | 2803         | 23.4%         |
| Regulatory authority (DHFS/DQA)  | 65           | 0.5%          |
| Relative                         | 1770         | 14.8%         |
| Residential support provider     | 342          | 2.9%          |
| Substance abuse service provider | 5            | 0.0%          |
| Victim                           | 304          | 2.5%          |
| Vocational/day support provider  | 20           | 0.2%          |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>11993</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |





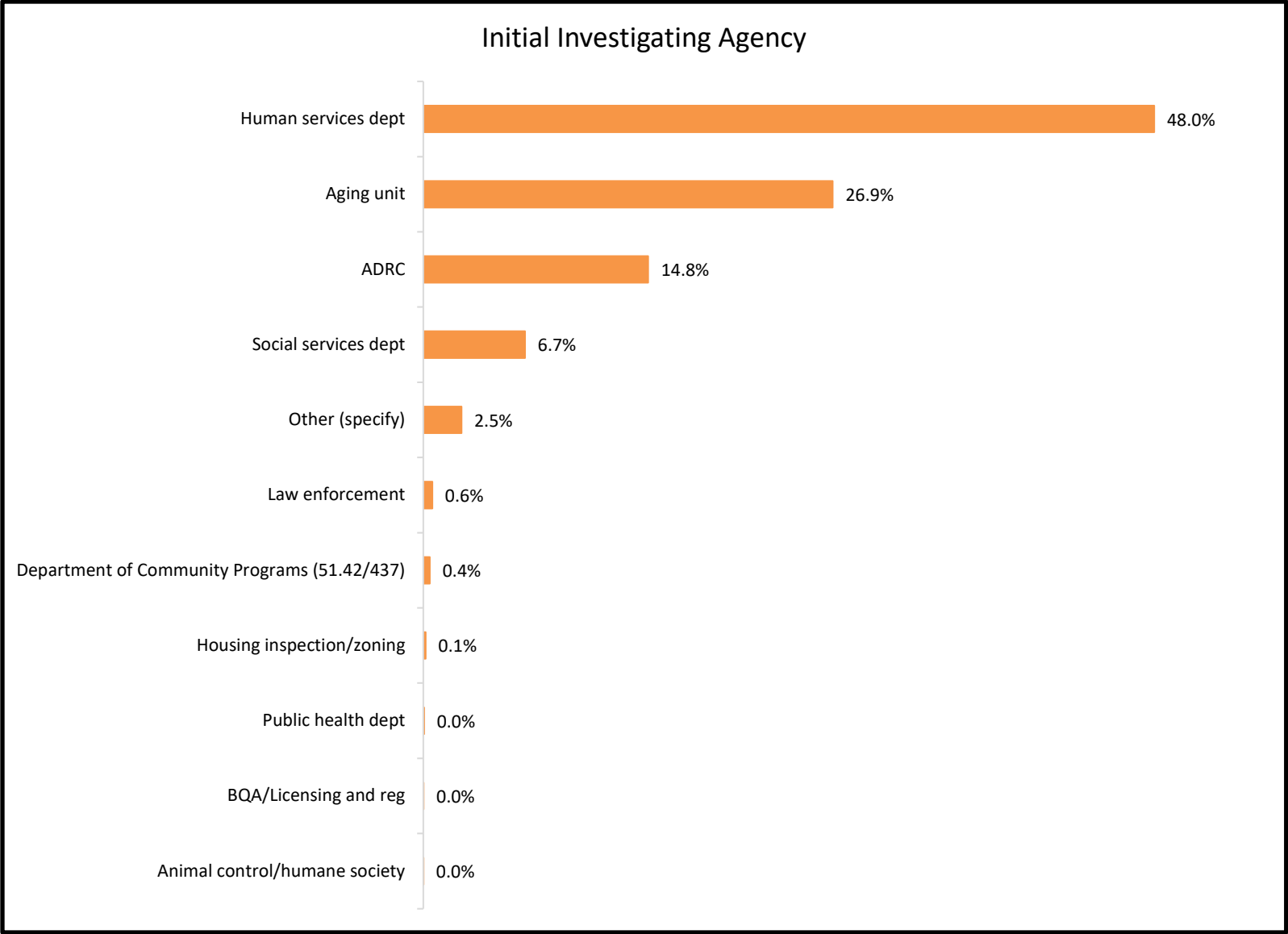
### Call Received By:

|  | Number       | Percentage    |
|--|--------------|---------------|
| ADRC   | 5573         | 51.2%         |
| Aging unit                                   | 499          | 4.6%          |
| Animal control / humane society              | 1            | 0.0%          |
| Department of Community Programs (51.42/437) | 48           | 0.4%          |
| Developmental disability Board               | 1            | 0.0%          |
| Housing Inspection/Zoning                    | 6            | 0.1%          |
| Human services department                    | 3939         | 36.2%         |
| Law enforcement                              | 51           | 0.5%          |
| Ombudsman (BOALTC)                           | 1            | 0.0%          |
| Other (specify)                              | 172          | 1.6%          |
| Publicized helpline number                   | 4            | 0.0%          |
| Social services department                   | 600          | 5.5%          |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>10895</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |





| Initial Investigating Agency                 |              |               |
|--|--------------|---------------|
|  | Number       | Percentage    |
| Human services dept                          | 5226         | 48.0%         |
| Aging unit                                   | 2927         | 26.9%         |
| ADRC   | 1608         | 14.8%         |
| Social services dept                         | 727          | 6.7%          |
| Other (specify)                              | 273          | 2.5%          |
| Law enforcement                              | 64           | 0.6%          |
| Department of Community Programs (51.42/437) | 46           | 0.4%          |
| Housing inspection/zoning                    | 16           | 0.1%          |
| Public health dept                           | 5            | 0.0%          |
| BQA/Licensing and reg                        | 2            | 0.0%          |
| Animal control/humane society                | 1            | 0.0%          |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>10895</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |





### Has Adult at Risk Died?

|              | Number     | Percentage    |
|--------------|------------|---------------|
| No           | 352        | 74.3%         |
| Yes          | 118        | 24.9%         |
| Unknown      | 4          | 0.8%          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>474</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

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

### Was Death Related to the Incident?

|              | Number     | Percentage    |
|--------------|------------|---------------|
| No           | 42         | 35.6%         |
| Yes          | 45         | 38.1%         |
| Unknown      | 31         | 26.3%         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>118</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

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

### Was Death Directly Caused by Incident?

|              | Number    | Percentage    |
|--------------|-----------|---------------|
| No           | 7         | 15.6%         |
| Yes          | 28        | 62.2%         |
| Unknown      | 10        | 22.2%         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>45</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

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

**Elder Adult at Risk's Age**

|                  | Number       | Percentage    |
|------------------|--------------|---------------|
| 60-69 years      | 3607         | 33.1%         |
| 70-79 years      | 3779         | 34.7%         |
| 80-89 years      | 2786         | 25.6%         |
| 90 years or more | 723          | 6.6%          |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>10895</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

**Elder Adult at Risk's Gender**

|              | Number       | Percentage    |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Female       | 6237         | 57.2%         |
| Male         | 4645         | 42.6%         |
| Unknown      | 13           | 0.1%          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>10895</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

**Elder Adult at Risk's Race**

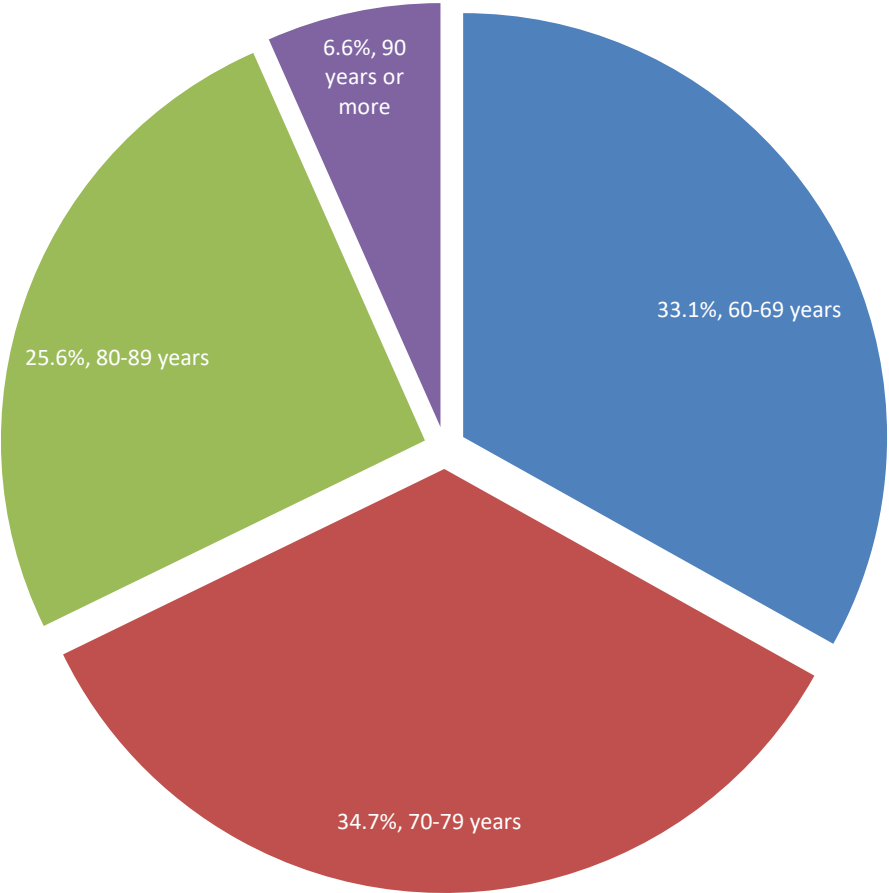
|                                  | Number       | Percentage    |
|----------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| White                            | 5801         | 53.2%         |
| Black or African American        | 591          | 5.4%          |
| Native American or Alaska Native | 43           | 0.4%          |
| Other                            | 459          | 4.2%          |
| Asian                            | 104          | 1.0%          |
| Hawaiian or Pacific Islander     | 2            | 0.0%          |
| Not Reported                     | 3901         | 35.8%         |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>10895</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

*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.*





Elder Adult at Risk's Age



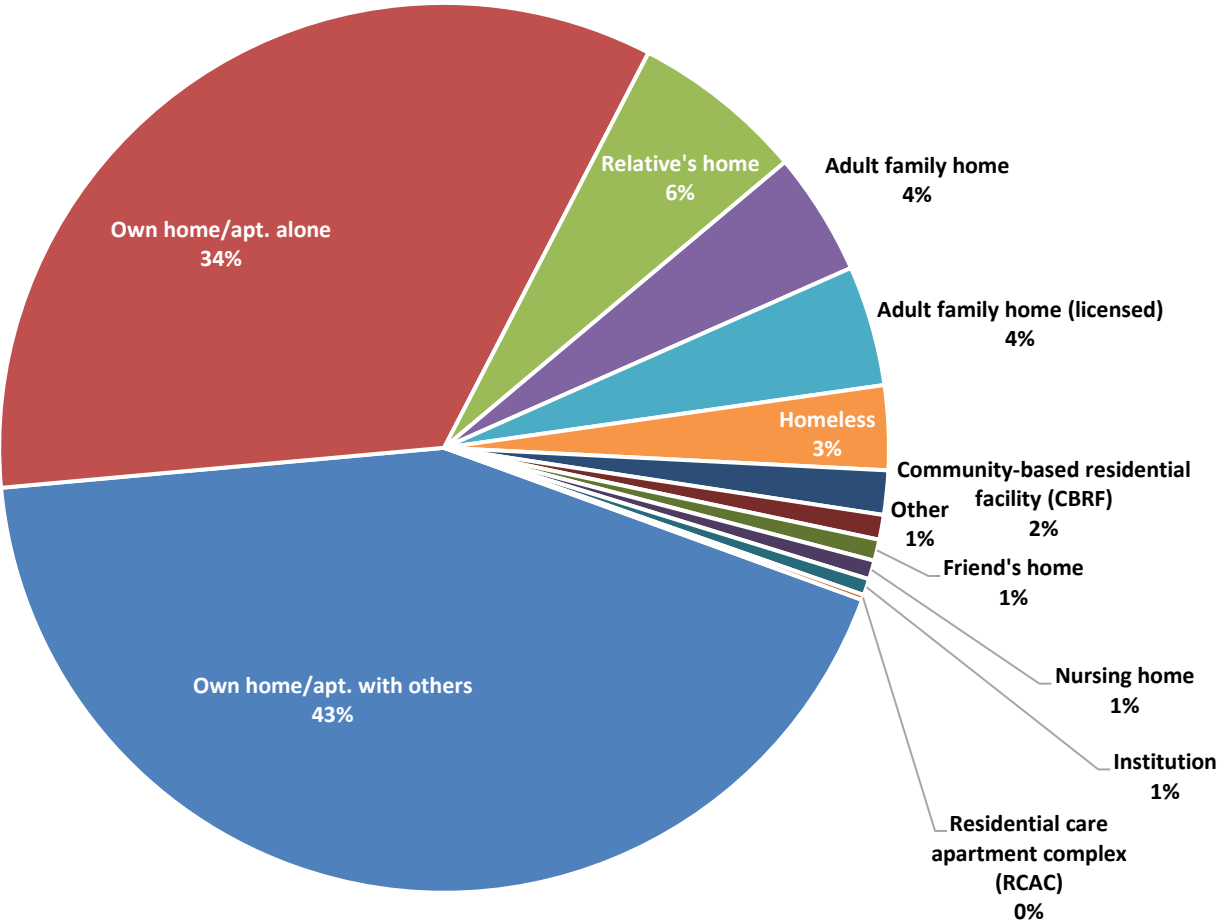


### Elder Adult at Risk's Living Arrangement

|   | Number       | Percentage    |
|---|--------------|---------------|
| Own home/apt. with others                   | 4686         | 43.0%         |
| Own home/apt. alone                         | 3708         | 34.0%         |
| Relative's home                             | 686          | 6.3%          |
| Adult family home                           | 488          | 4.5%          |
| Adult family home (licensed)                | 476          | 4.4%          |
| Homeless                                    | 334          | 3.1%          |
| Community-based residential facility (CBRF) | 175          | 1.6%          |
| Other                                       | 98           | 0.9%          |
| Friend's home                               | 84           | 0.8%          |
| Nursing home                                | 75           | 0.7%          |
| Institution                                 | 65           | 0.6%          |
| Residential care apartment complex (RCAC)   | 20           | 0.2%          |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>10895</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |



Elder Adult at Risk's Living Arrangement





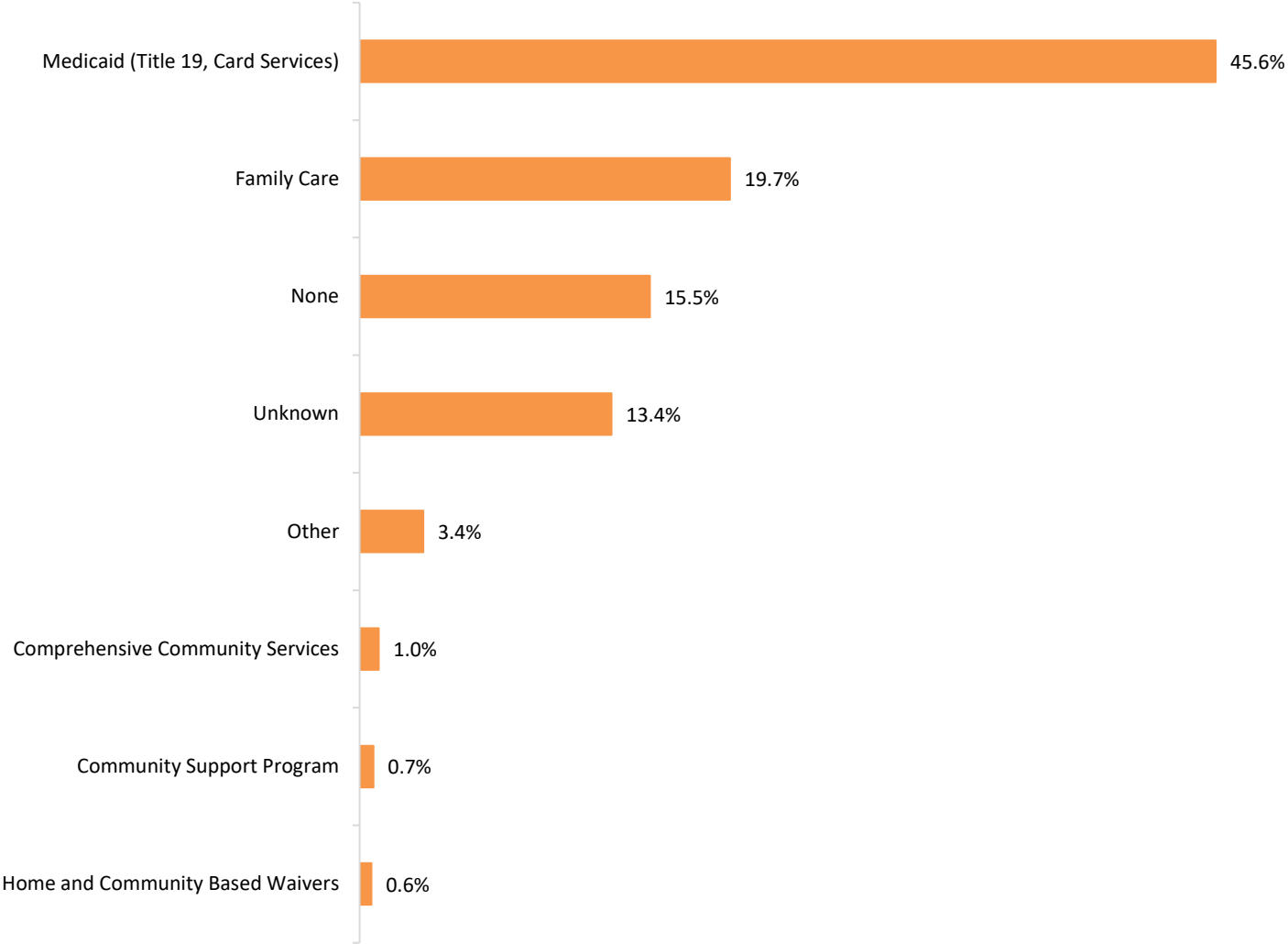
## County and State Funded Programs That Have Served Elder Adult At Risk Adults

|                                    | Number       | Percentage    |
|------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| None                               | 4856         | 45.6%         |
| Unknown                            | 2101         | 19.7%         |
| Medicaid (Title 19, Card Services) | 1646         | 15.5%         |
| Family Care                        | 1429         | 13.4%         |
| Other                              | 361          | 3.4%          |
| Community Support Program          | 109          | 1.0%          |
| Comprehensive Community Services   | 78           | 0.7%          |
| Home and Community Based Waivers   | 67           | 0.6%          |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>10647</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





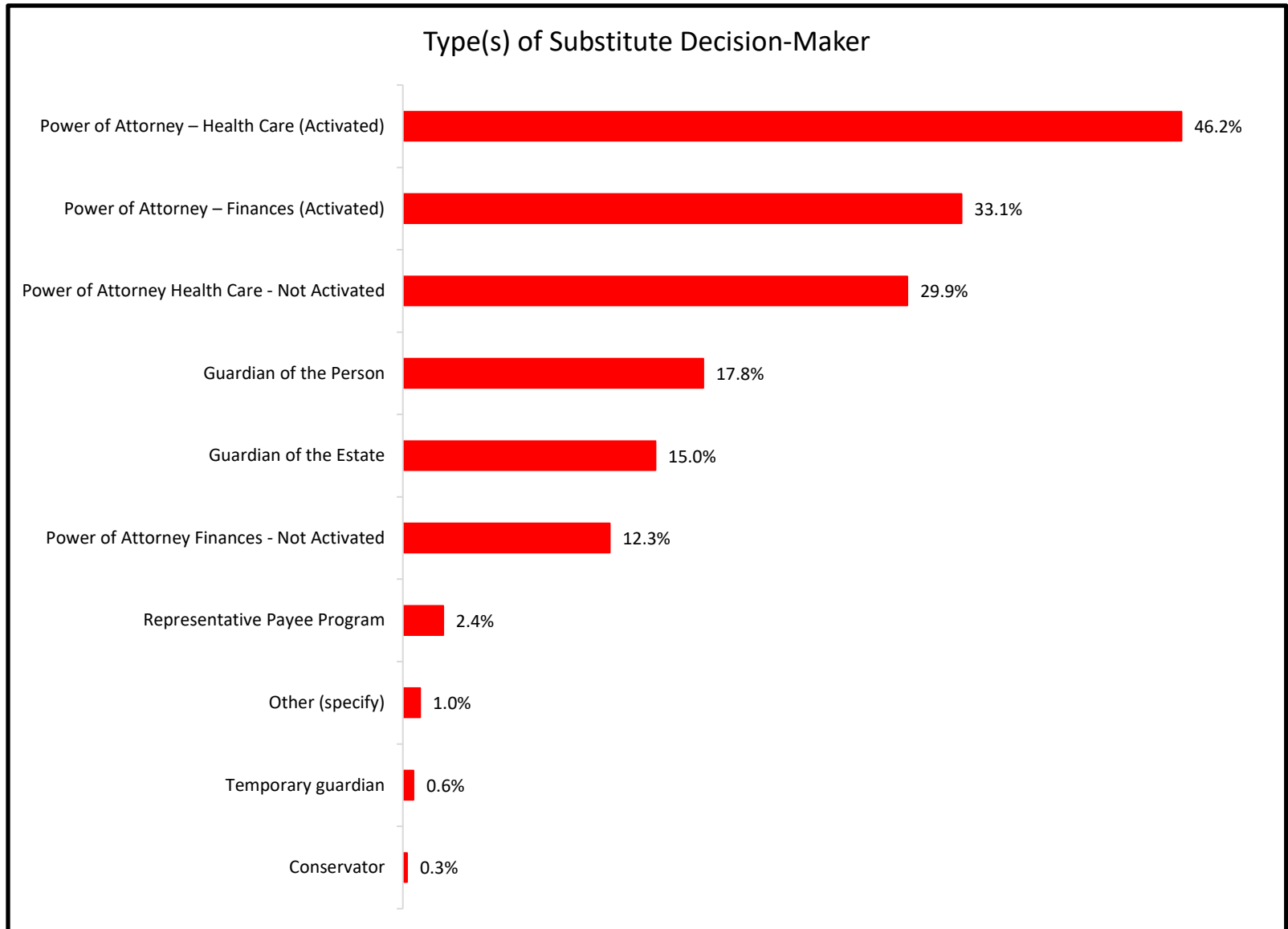
### Does Elder Adult at Risk Have a Substitute Decision-Maker?

|              | Number       | Percentage    |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| No           | 5277         | 48.4%         |
| Yes          | 3139         | 28.8%         |
| Unknown      | 2479         | 22.8%         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>10895</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

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

|   | Number      | Percentage    |
|---|-------------|---------------|
| Power of Attorney – Health Care (Activated)   | 1449        | 46.2%         |
| Power of Attorney – Finances (Activated)      | 1040        | 33.1%         |
| Power of Attorney Health Care - Not Activated | 939         | 29.9%         |
| Guardian of the Person                        | 559         | 17.8%         |
| Guardian of the Estate                        | 470         | 15.0%         |
| Power of Attorney Finances - Not Activated    | 385         | 12.3%         |
| Representative Payee Program                  | 75          | 2.4%          |
| Other (specify)                               | 32          | 1.0%          |
| Temporary guardian                            | 20          | 0.6%          |
| Conservator                                   | 8           | 0.3%          |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>3139</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%.*





### Elder Adult at Risk's Characteristics

|   | Number        | Percentage    |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| Drug abuse  | 4,165         | 38.2%         |
| Alcohol abuse   | 2,180         | 20.0%         |
| Stroke-related impairments                            | 1,415         | 13.0%         |
| Medically fragile                                     | 1,413         | 13.0%         |
| Limited English Proficiency                           | 1,142         | 10.5%         |
| Incontinent   | 1,112         | 10.2%         |
| None  | 985           | 9.0%          |
| Diabetic  | 916           | 8.4%          |
| Unemployed  | 770           | 7.1%          |
| Morbidly obese  | 737           | 6.8%          |
| Developmentally disabled                              | 640           | 5.9%          |
| Homebound   | 511           | 4.7%          |
| Abuser financially dependent on elder                 | 464           | 4.3%          |
| Functionally illiterate                               | 456           | 4.2%          |
| Brain injury  | 370           | 3.4%          |
| Physically disability                                 | 362           | 3.3%          |
| Serious and persistent mental illness                 | 277           | 2.5%          |
| Chronic alcoholic                                     | 277           | 2.5%          |
| Deaf or hard of hearing                               | 224           | 2.1%          |
| Mental illness  | 181           | 1.7%          |
| Other medical condition (specify)                     | 154           | 1.4%          |
| Alzheimer's or related dementia                       | 152           | 1.4%          |
| Blind/visually impaired                               | 131           | 1.2%          |
| Adult-at-Risk financially dependent on alleged abuser | 110           | 1.0%          |
| Disoriented/confused                                  | 100           | 0.9%          |
| Mobility impaired                                     | 56            | 0.5%          |
| Other (specify)                                       | 45            | 0.4%          |
| Challenging/dangerous behavior                        | 41            | 0.4%          |
| Communication disorder                                | 18            | 0.2%          |
| Frail elderly   | 12            | 0.1%          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>10,895</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

*Percents refer to share of adults at risk having this characteristic. Multiple responses are allowed, so percents do not total to 100%.*





### Alleged Abusers' Gender

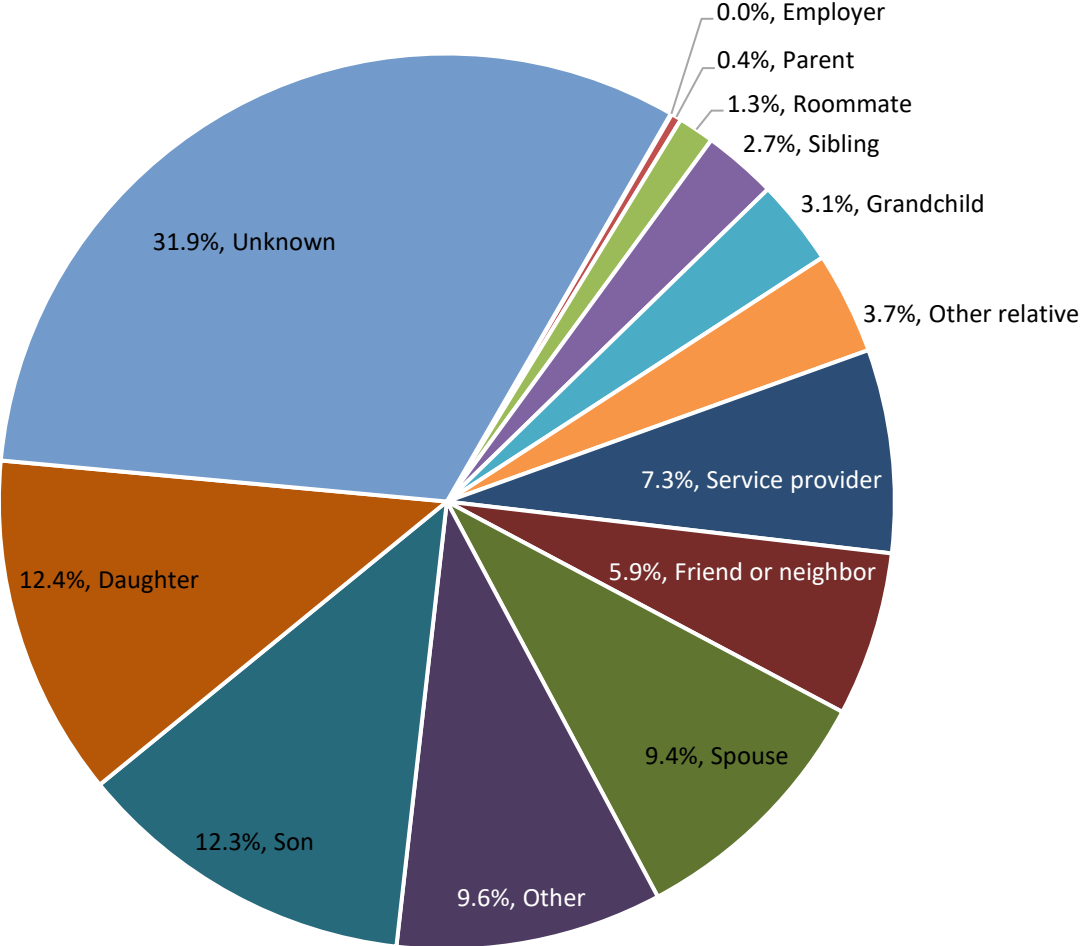
|              | Number      | Percentage    |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| Female       | 2240        | 32.1%         |
| Male         | 2228        | 31.9%         |
| Unknown      | 2510        | 36.0%         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>6978</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

### Alleged Abusers' Relationship to Victim

|                    | Number      | Percentage    |
|--------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Unknown            | 2224        | 31.9%         |
| Daughter           | 862         | 12.4%         |
| Son                | 859         | 12.3%         |
| Other              | 670         | 9.6%          |
| Spouse             | 657         | 9.4%          |
| Friend or neighbor | 414         | 5.9%          |
| Service provider   | 512         | 7.3%          |
| Other relative     | 257         | 3.7%          |
| Grandchild         | 217         | 3.1%          |
| Sibling            | 186         | 2.7%          |
| Roommate           | 91          | 1.3%          |
| Parent             | 26          | 0.4%          |
| Employer           | 3           | 0.0%          |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>6978</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |



Alleged Abuser's Relationship to Elder Adult at Risk





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

|              | Number      | Percentage    |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| No           | 3454        | 49.5%         |
| Yes          | 1964        | 28.1%         |
| Unknown      | 1560        | 22.4%         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>6978</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

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

|              | Number      | Percentage    |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| Yes          | 2915        | 41.8%         |
| No           | 4063        | 58.2%         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>6978</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |



## Abusers' Legal Status

|   | Number      | Percentage    |
|---|-------------|---------------|
| None  | 3914        | 57.7%         |
| Unknown                                       | 1651        | 24.3%         |
| Power of Attorney Health Care - Activated     | 504         | 7.4%          |
| Power of Attorney Finances - Activated        | 410         | 6.0%          |
| Power of Attorney Health Care - Not Activated | 244         | 3.6%          |
| Guardian of the Person                        | 135         | 2.0%          |
| Guardian of the Estate                        | 115         | 1.7%          |
| Power of Attorney Finances - Not Activated    | 91          | 1.3%          |
| Other (specify)                               | 40          | 0.6%          |
| Representative payee                          | 30          | 0.4%          |
| Temporary guardian                            | 2           | 0.0%          |
| Conservator                                   | 2           | 0.0%          |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>6978</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  | 4729        | 67.8%         |
| Other   | 574         | 8.2%          |
| Financial dependence: alleged abuser dependent on adult at risk   | 361         | 5.2%          |
| Unemployed  | 241         | 3.5%          |
| Mental illness  | 231         | 3.3%          |
| Alcohol abuse   | 217         | 3.1%          |
| Drug abuse  | 216         | 3.1%          |
| Frail elderly   | 185         | 2.7%          |
| Challenging or dangerous behavior   | 134         | 1.9%          |
| Alzheimer's or related dementia   | 79          | 1.1%          |
| Physically disability   | 57          | 0.8%          |
| Other medical condition   | 51          | 0.7%          |
| Medically fragile   | 47          | 0.7%          |
| Financial dependence: adult at risk dependent on abuser   | 44          | 0.6%          |
| Serious and persistent mental illness   | 41          | 0.6%          |
| Chronic alcoholic   | 40          | 0.6%          |
| Mobility impaired   | 31          | 0.4%          |
| Developmentally disabled  | 31          | 0.4%          |
| Disoriented and confused  | 28          | 0.4%          |
| Diabetic  | 18          | 0.3%          |
| Stroke-related impairments  | 18          | 0.3%          |
| Deaf or hard of hearing   | 16          | 0.2%          |
| Morbidly obese  | 10          | 0.1%          |
| Blind or visually impaired  | 8           | 0.1%          |
| Incontinent   | 8           | 0.1%          |
| Homebound   | 8           | 0.1%          |
| Brain injury  | 6           | 0.1%          |
| Limited English Proficiency   | 5           | 0.1%          |
| Functionally illiterate   | 1           | 0.0%          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>6978</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |
| Multiple responses are allowed so numbers do not add up to 100%.<br>Percents refer to share of all alleged abusers. |             |               |



| More than One Alleged Abuser? |        |            |
|-------------------------------|--------|------------|
|                               | Number | Percentage |
| No, one alleged abuser only   | 6039   | 94.2%      |
| Yes                           | 372    | 5.8%       |
| Total                         | 6411   | 100.0%     |



| Was Hurt or Harm Substantiated? |        |            |
|---------------------------------|--------|------------|
|                                 | Number | Percentage |
| Substantiated                   | 5017   | 46.0%      |
| Unsubstantiated                 | 3609   | 33.1%      |
| Unable to Substantiate          | 2269   | 20.8%      |
| Total                           | 10895  | 100.0%     |



### Actions Taken to Assist Elder Adult At Risk

|   | Number       | Percentage    |
|---|--------------|---------------|
| Services not needed                           | 2017         | 18.9%         |
| Services offered but not accepted             | 1942         | 18.2%         |
| Services offered - some accepted              | 1751         | 16.4%         |
| Services offered - all accepted               | 1303         | 12.2%         |
| Investigation not accepted                    | 681          | 6.4%          |
| Guardian referral                             | 655          | 6.2%          |
| Referral made to other agency (specify)       | 625          | 5.9%          |
| Outreach continues                            | 580          | 5.4%          |
| Protective services/placement                 | 511          | 4.8%          |
| Other disposition (specify)                   | 423          | 4.0%          |
| Referral to law enforcement/Dept of Justice   | 421          | 4.0%          |
| Other legal action (specify)                  | 291          | 2.7%          |
| Referral to protection/advocacy agencies      | 152          | 1.4%          |
| Referral to regulatory authority/DQA          | 135          | 1.3%          |
| Response/investigation continues              | 93           | 0.9%          |
| Referral to Caregiver Misconduct Registry/DQA | 87           | 0.8%          |
| Mental health commitment                      | 46           | 0.4%          |
| Services needed are not available (specify)   | 38           | 0.4%          |
| Referral to detoxification services           | 14           | 0.1%          |
| Referral made to state agency                 | 12           | 0.1%          |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>10647</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

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

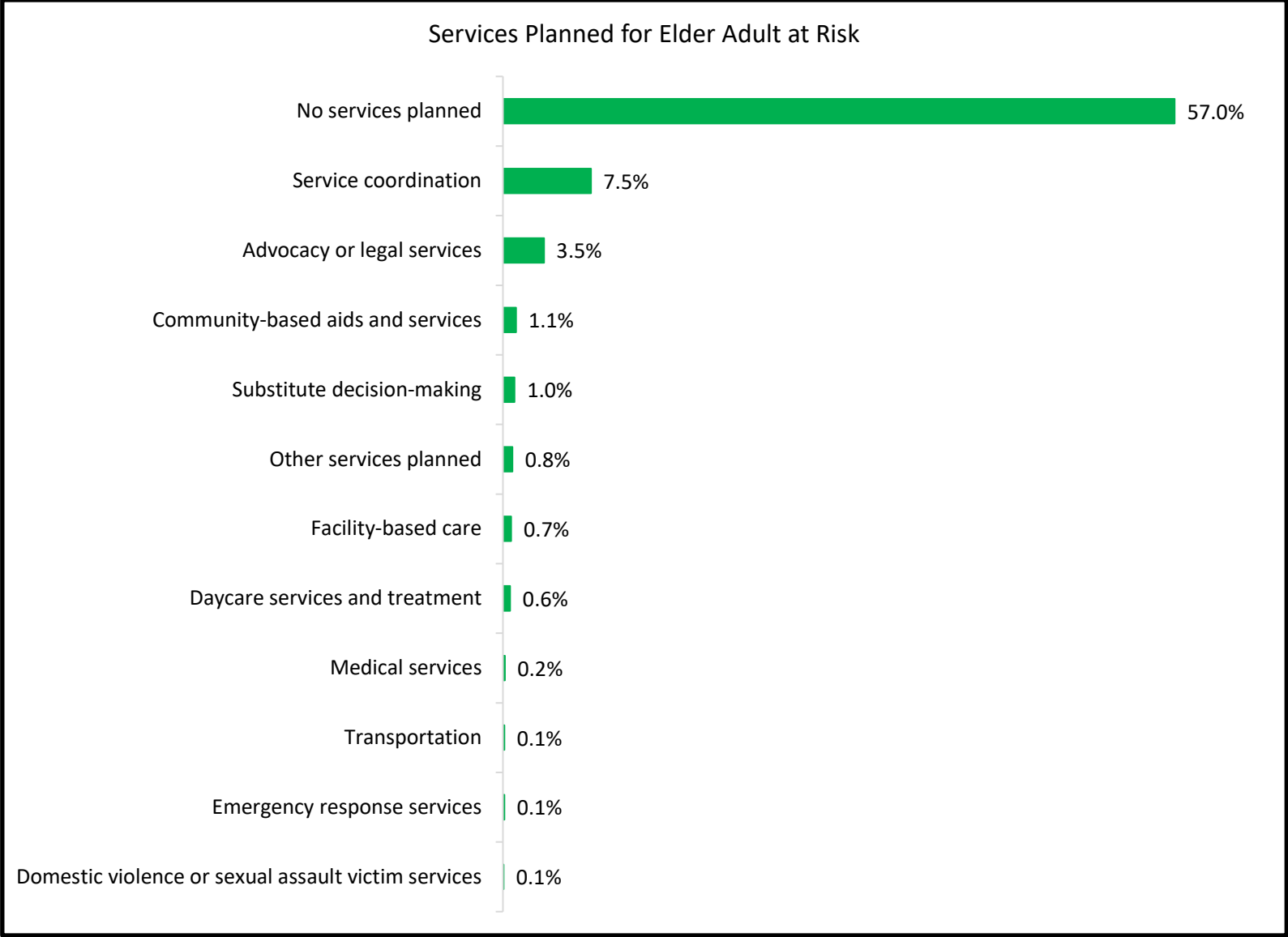




### Services Planned for Elder Adult At Risk

|   | Number       | Percentage    |
|---|--------------|---------------|
| Service coordination                                | 4134         | 38.8%         |
| Substitute decision making                          | 2239         | 21.0%         |
| Community-based aids and services                   | 2213         | 20.8%         |
| Facility-based care                                 | 1392         | 13.1%         |
| Advocacy or legal services                          | 1201         | 11.3%         |
| Medical services                                    | 729          | 6.8%          |
| Daycare services and treatment                      | 384          | 3.6%          |
| Other services planned                              | 272          | 2.6%          |
| Emergency response services                         | 253          | 2.4%          |
| Transportation                                      | 234          | 2.2%          |
| Domestic violence or sexual assault victim services | 102          | 1.0%          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>10647</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

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





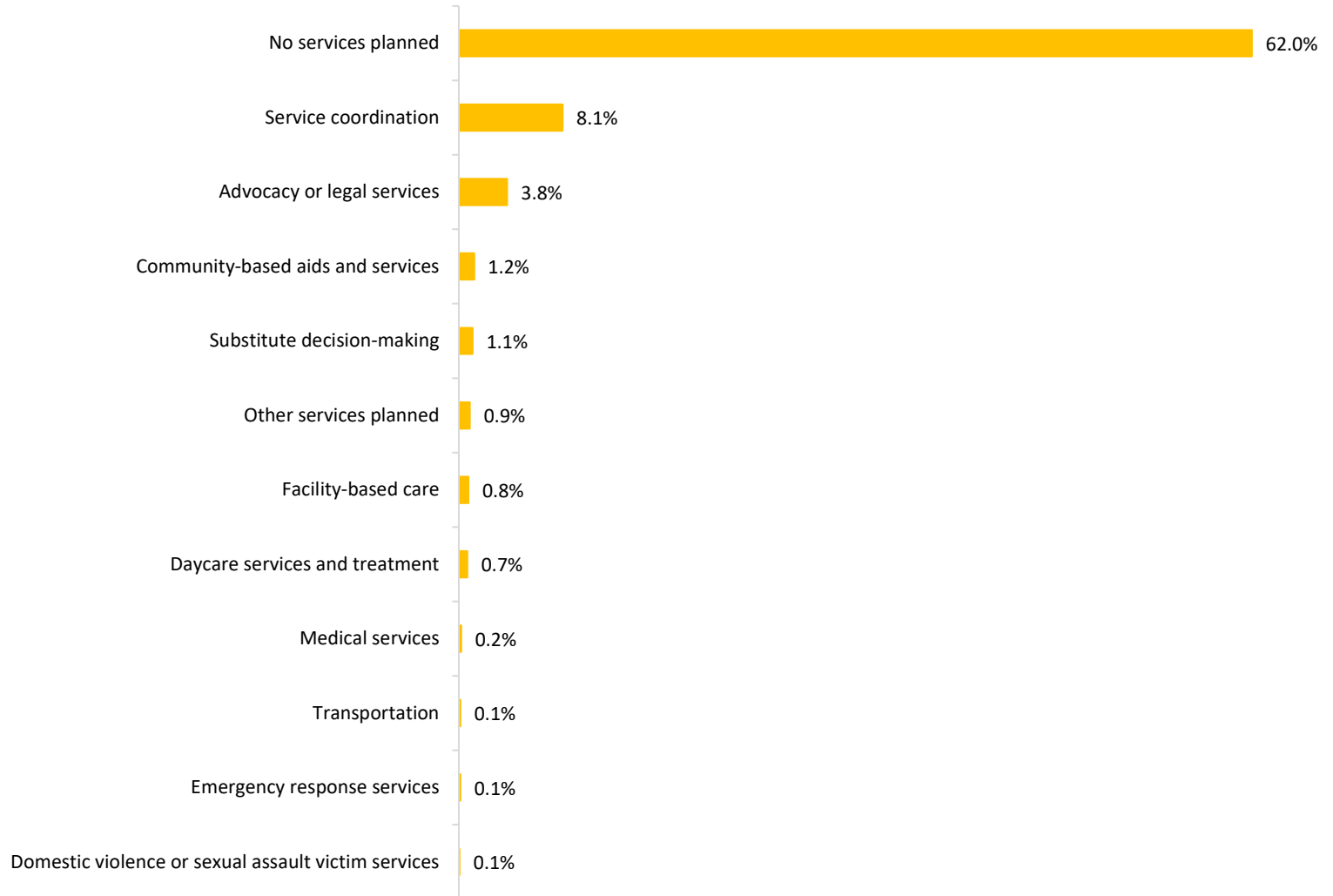
### Services Planned for Alleged Abuser(s)

|   | Number      | Percentage    |
|---|-------------|---------------|
| No services planned                                 | 3978        | 62.0%         |
| Service coordination                                | 521         | 8.1%          |
| Advocacy or legal services                          | 243         | 3.8%          |
| Community-based aids and services                   | 77          | 1.2%          |
| Substitute decision-making                          | 69          | 1.1%          |
| Other services planned                              | 56          | 0.9%          |
| Facility-based care                                 | 49          | 0.8%          |
| Daycare services or treatment                       | 43          | 0.7%          |
| Medical services                                    | 12          | 0.2%          |
| Emergency response services                         | 8           | 0.1%          |
| Transportation                                      | 8           | 0.1%          |
| Domestic violence or sexual assault victim services | 4           | 0.1%          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>6411</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

*Percents refer to share of all reports where abuse was identified (n=6411). Multiple responses are allowed so numbers do not total to 100%.*



### Services Planned for Alleged Abuser(s)





## Contact Information

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