



Wisconsin's Annual Elder Abuse and Neglect Report: 2021

A statewide summary of reports
submitted by Wisconsin counties

Division of Public Health
P-00124-21 (06/2022)



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 2021 are the basis of this statewide report: *Wisconsin's Annual Elder Abuse and Neglect Report*.



2021 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.



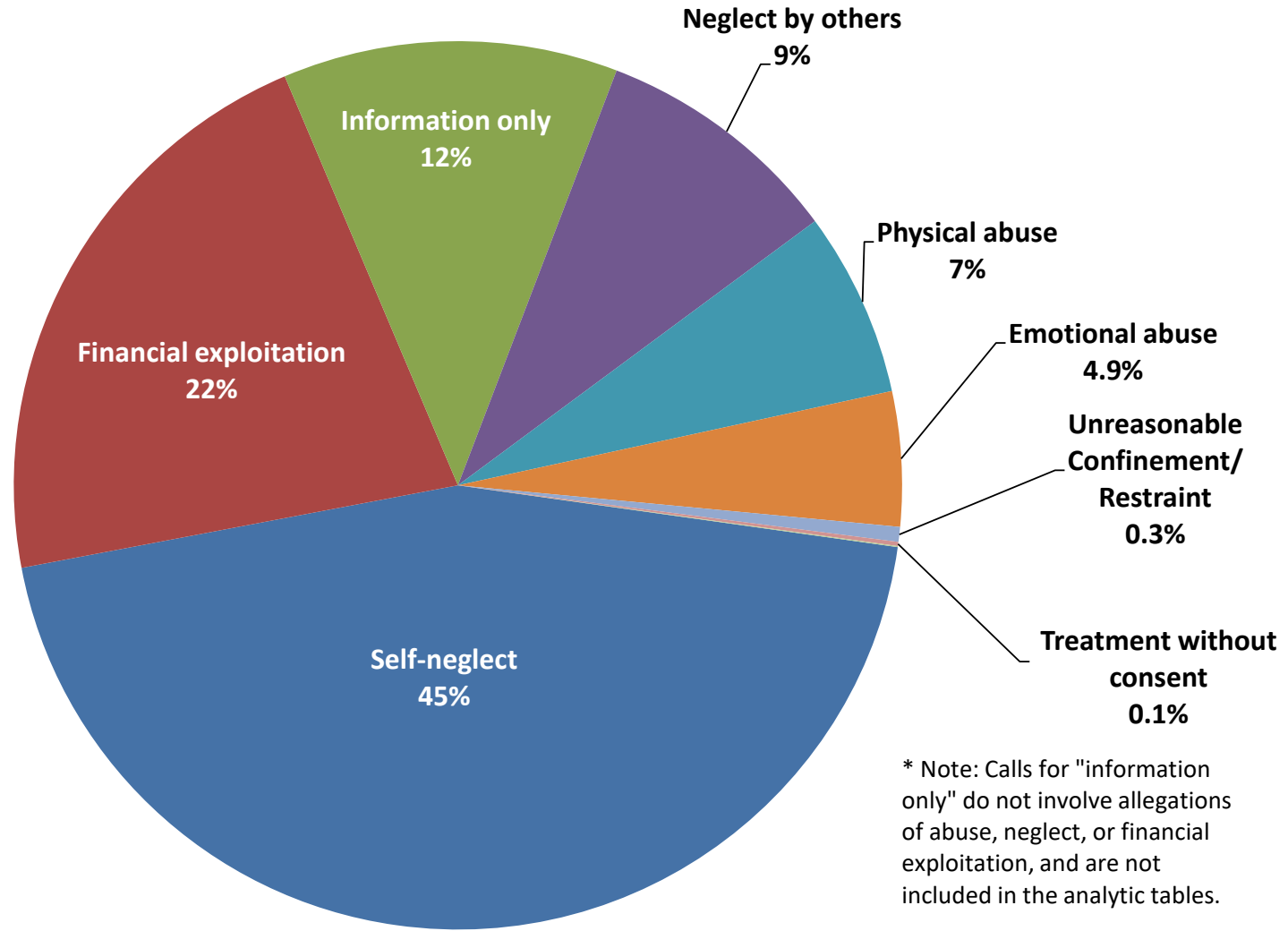
Primary Reason for Call/Issue Identified

	Number	Percent
Self-neglect	4,799	44.8%
Financial exploitation	2,314	21.6%
<i>Information only</i>	1,306	12.2%
Neglect by others	969	9.0%
Physical abuse	721	6.7%
Emotional abuse	525	4.9%
Sexual abuse	58	0.5%
Treatment without consent	16	0.1%
Unreasonable confinement or restraint	4	0.0%
Total	10,712	100.0%

** 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





Previous Report on This Individual?		
	Number	Percent
No	5,807	61.7%
Yes	2,894	30.8%
Unknown	705	7.5%
Total	9,406	100.0%



Where Incident Occurred

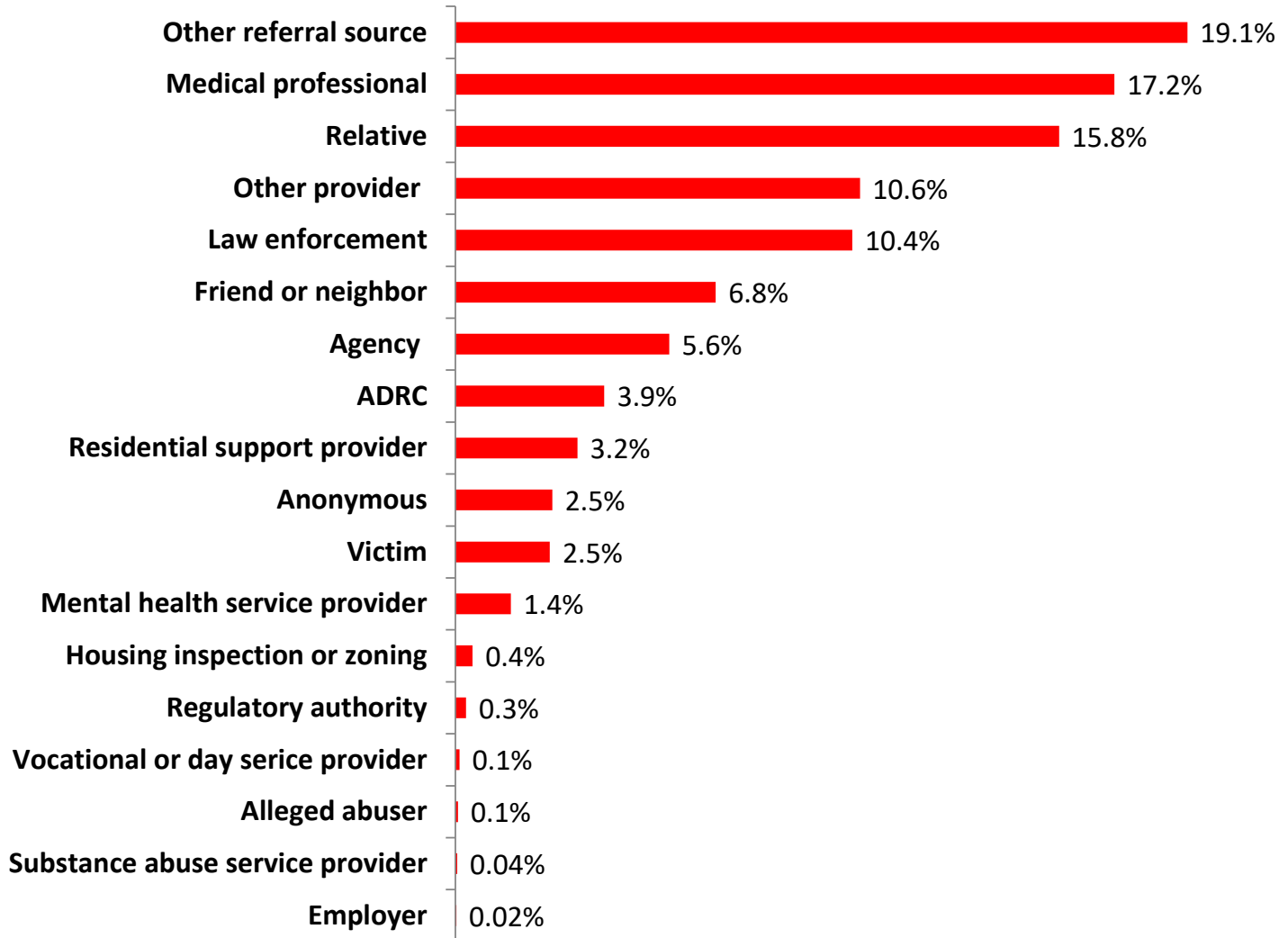
	Number	Percent
Place of residence	8,256	87.8%
Other place	1,015	10.8%
Place of employment or day services	94	1.0%
Transportation	29	0.3%
School	12	0.1%
Total	9,406	100.0%



Referral Source		
	Number	Percent
ADRC	366	3.9%
Agency	526	5.6%
Alleged abuser	6	0.1%
Anonymous	238	2.5%
Employer	2	0.0%
Friend or neighbor	640	6.8%
Housing inspection or zoning	42	0.4%
Law enforcement	976	10.4%
Medical professional	1,621	17.2%
Mental health service provider	136	1.4%
Other provider	995	10.6%
Other referral source	1,801	19.1%
Regulatory authority	26	0.3%
Relative	1,485	15.8%
Residential support provider	300	3.2%
Substance abuse service provider	4	0.0%
Victim	232	2.5%
Vocational or day service provider	10	0.1%
Total	9,406	100.0%



Referral Source



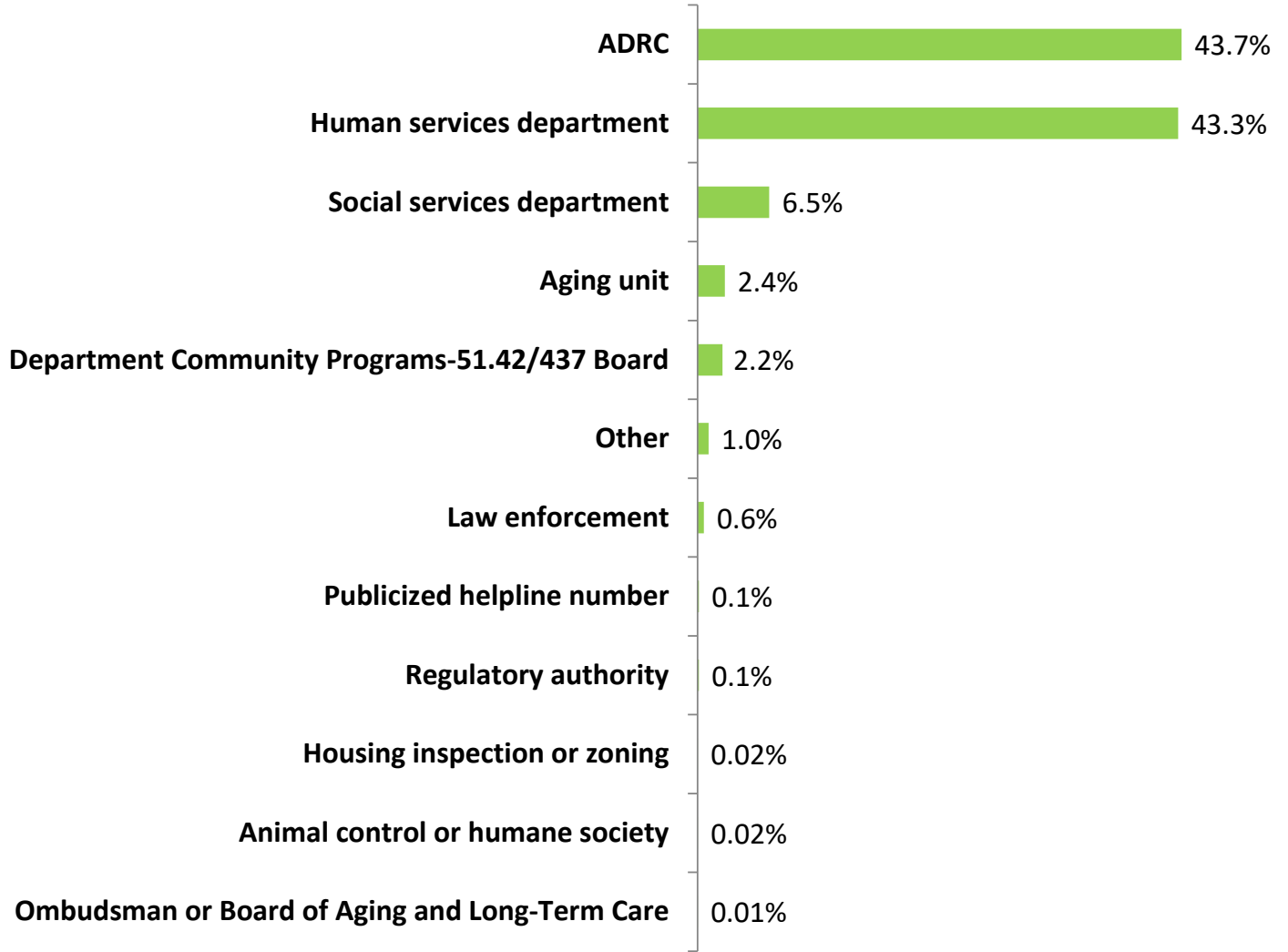


Call Received By:

	Number	Percent
ADRC	4,106	43.7%
Human services department	4,076	43.3%
Social services department	608	6.5%
Aging unit	230	2.4%
Department Community Programs-51.42/437 Board	211	2.2%
Other	94	1.0%
Law enforcement	54	0.6%
Publicized helpline number	11	0.1%
Regulatory authority	10	0.1%
Animal control or humane society	2	0.0%
Housing inspection or zoning	2	0.0%
Developmental disability board	1	0.0%
Ombudsman or Board of Aging and Long-Term Care	1	0.0%
Total	9,406	0.0%



Call Received By:

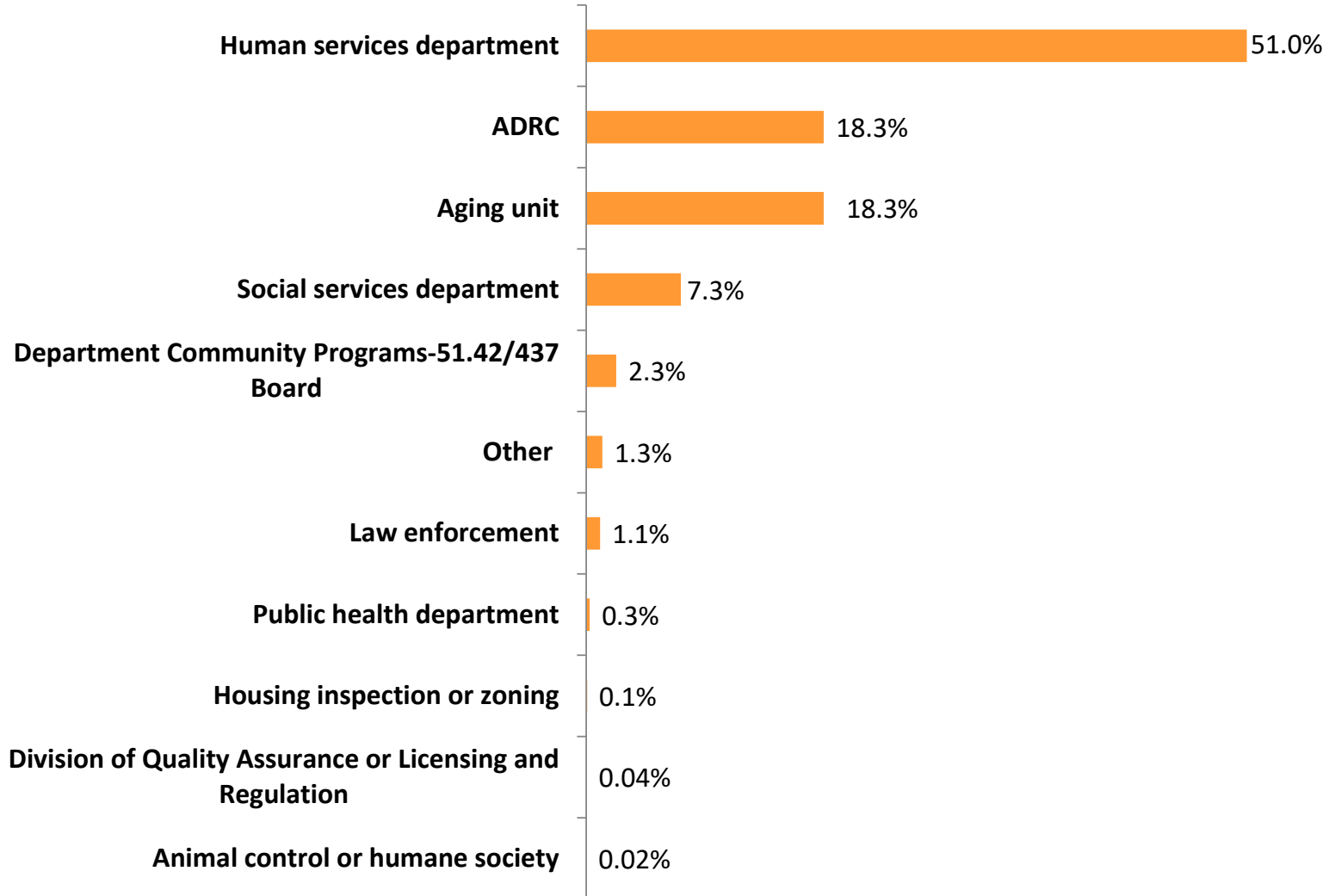




Initial Investigating Agency		
	Number	Percent
Human services department	4,793	51.0%
ADRC	1,724	18.3%
Aging unit	1,723	18.3%
Social services department	688	7.3%
Department Community Programs-51.42/437 Board	218	2.3%
Other	118	1.3%
Law enforcement	101	1.1%
Public health department	26	0.3%
Housing inspection or zoning	7	0.1%
Division of Quality Assurance or Licensing and Regulation	4	0.0%
Animal control or humane society	2	0.0%
Ombudsman or Board of Aging and Long-Term Care	1	0.0%
Wisconsin Department of Justice	1	0.0%
Developmental Disability Board	0	0.0%
Total	9,406	100.0%



Initial Investigating Agency





Was Incident Life Threatening?		
	Number	Percent
No	8,478	90.1%
Yes	510	5.4%
Unknown	418	4.4%
Total	9,406	100.0%

Has Elder Adult at Risk Died?		
	Number	Percent
No	358	70.2%
Yes	151	29.6%
Unknown	1	0.2%
Total	510	100.0%
<i>Note: Percents represent share of all life-threatening incidents.</i>		

Was Death Related to the Incident?		
	Number	Percent
No	65	43.0%
Yes	52	34.4%
Unknown	34	22.5%
Total	151	100.0%
<i>Note: Percents represent share of all incidents involving a death.</i>		

Was Death Directly Caused by Incident?		
	Number	Percent
No	11	21.2%
Yes	26	50.0%
Unknown	15	28.8%
Total	52	100.0%
<i>Note: Percents represent share of all incidents with death related to incident.</i>		



Elder Adult at Risk's Age		
	Number	Percent
60-69 years	3,135	33.3%
70-79 years	3,238	34.4%
80-89 years	2,378	25.3%
90 years or more	655	7.0%
Total	9,406	100.0%

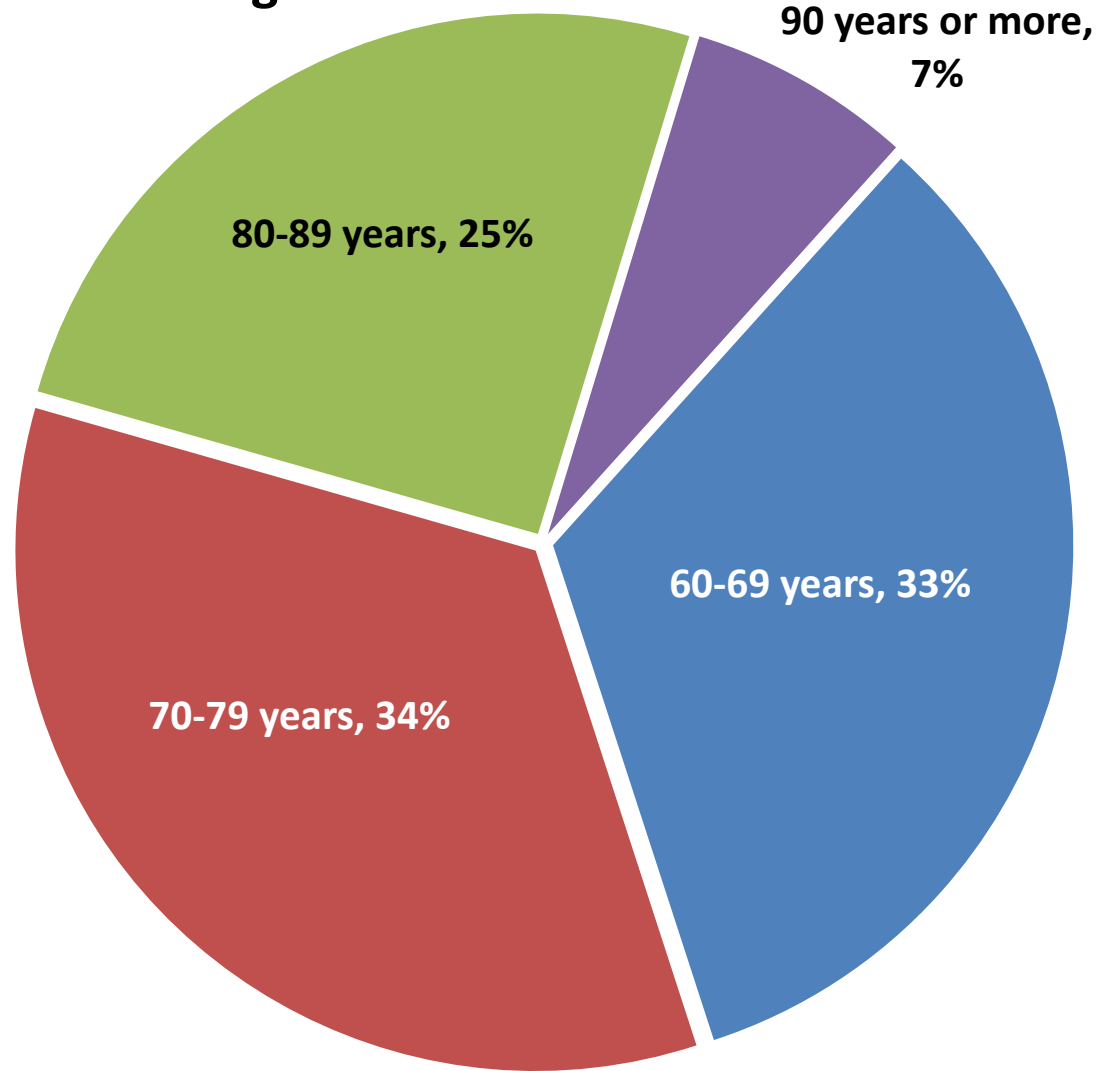
Elder Adult at Risk's Gender		
	Number	Percent
Female	5,231	55.6%
Male	4,167	44.3%
Unknown	8	0.1%
Total	9,406	100.0%

Elder Adult at Risk's Race		
	Number	Percent
White	5,369	57.1%
Black or African American	577	6.1%
Native American or Alaska Native	129	1.4%
Asian	48	0.5%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	13	0.1%
Other race	151	1.6%
Not reported or unknown	3,119	33.2%
Total	9,406	100.0%

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



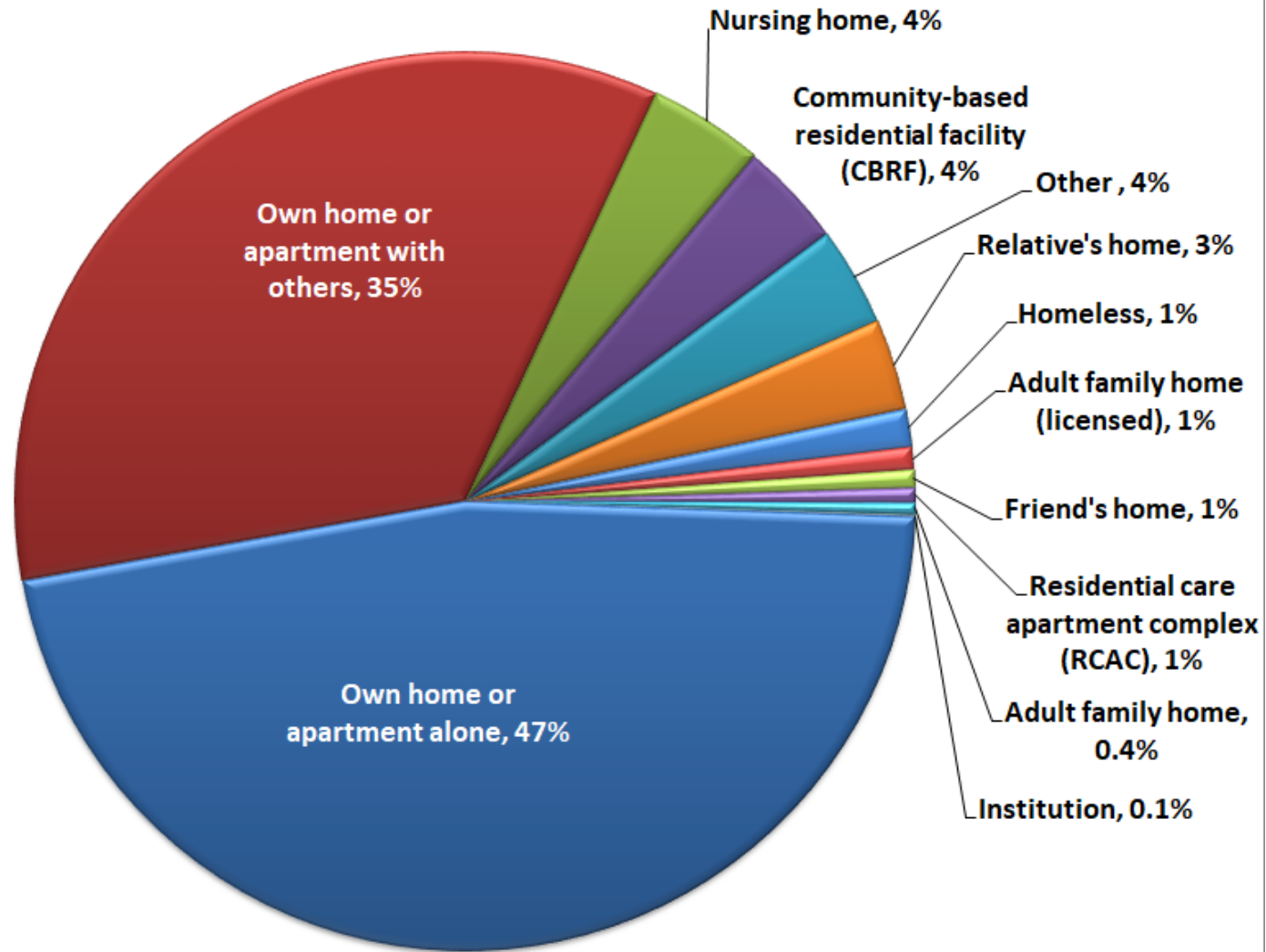


Elder Adult at Risk's Living Arrangement

	Number	Percent
Own home or apartment alone	4,383	46.6%
Own home or apartment with others	3,274	34.8%
Nursing home	389	4.1%
Community-based residential facility (CBRF)	355	3.8%
Other	339	3.6%
Relative's home	306	3.3%
Homeless	128	1.4%
Adult family home (licensed)	75	0.8%
Friend's home	61	0.6%
Residential care apartment complex (RCAC)	50	0.5%
Adult family home	38	0.4%
Institution	8	0.1%
Total	9,406	100.0%



Elder Adult at Risk's Living Arrangement





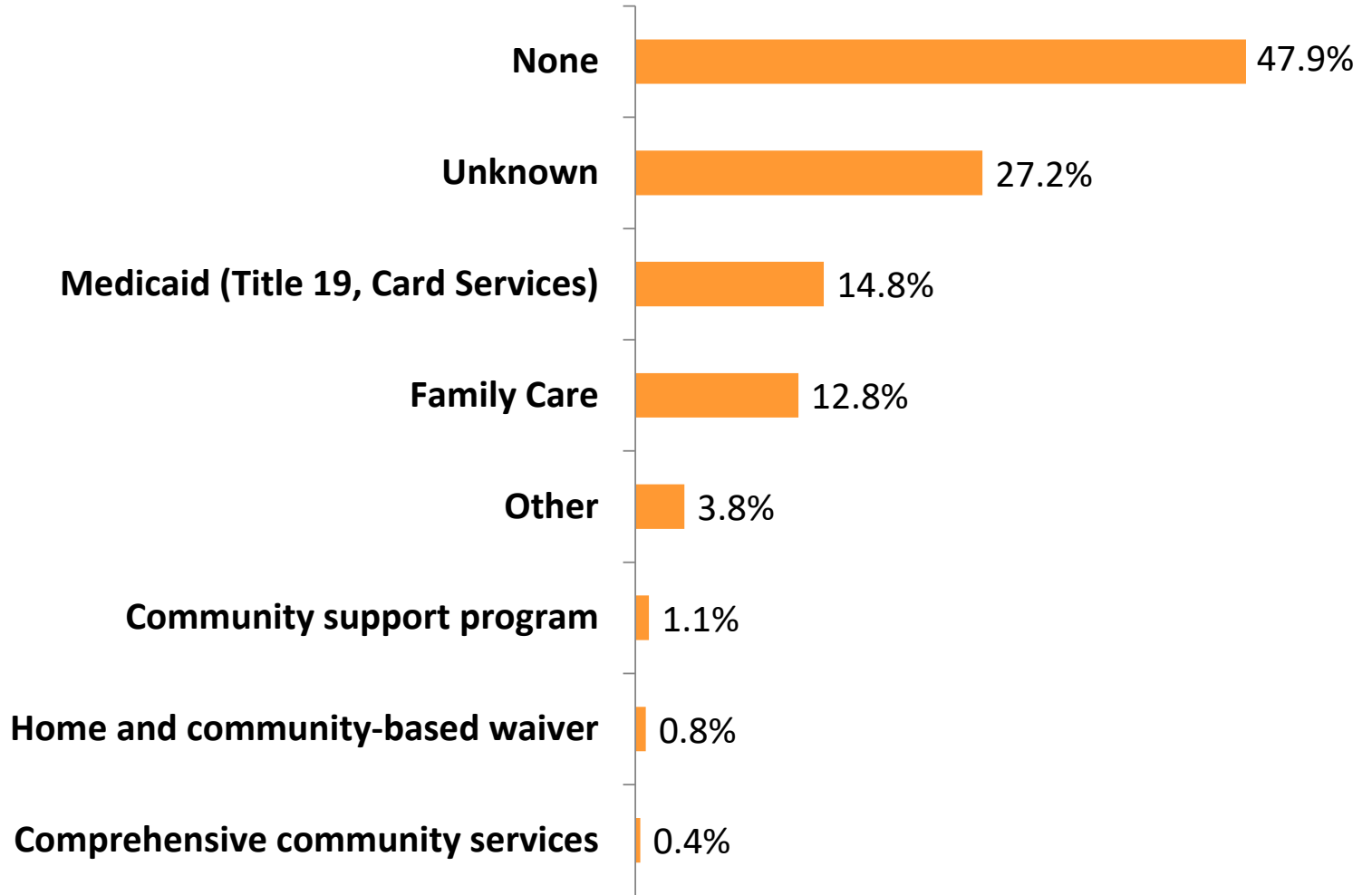
County and State-funded Programs That Have Served Elder Adults at Risk

	Number	Percent
Comprehensive community services	36	0.4%
Home and community-based waiver	77	0.8%
Community support program	100	1.1%
Other	361	3.8%
Family Care	1,202	12.8%
Medicaid (Title 19, Card Services)	1,390	14.8%
Unknown	2,561	27.2%
None	4,505	47.9%
Total	9,406	100.0%

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	4,530	48.2%
Yes	2,729	29.0%
Unknown	2,147	22.8%
Total	9,406	100.0%

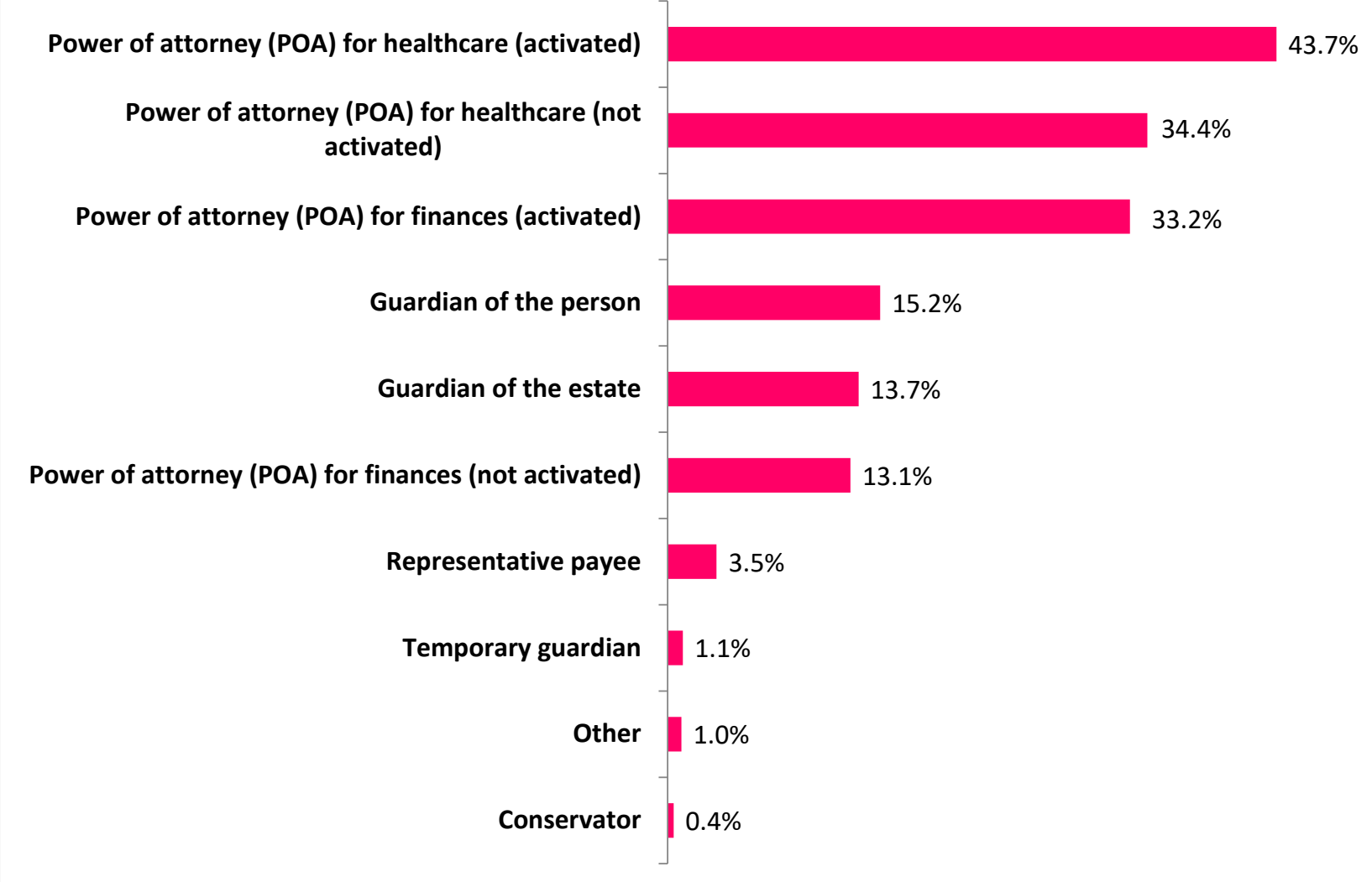
Type(s) of Substitute Decision-Maker

	Number	Percent
Conservator	12	0.4%
Guardian of the estate	374	13.7%
Guardian of the person	416	15.2%
Other	27	1.0%
Power of attorney (POA) for finances (activated)	905	33.2%
Power of attorney (POA) for finances (not activated)	358	13.1%
Power of attorney (POA) for healthcare (activated)	1,192	43.7%
Power of attorney (POA) for healthcare (not activated)	939	34.4%
Representative payee	96	3.5%
Temporary guardian	30	1.1%
Total	2,729	100.0%

Percents represent share of all those with any kind of substitute decision-maker (n=2,729). Multiple responses are allowed, so percents do not total 100%.



Type(s) of Substitute Decision-Maker





Elder Adult at Risk's Characteristics

	Number	Percent
Frail elderly	3,347	35.6%
Dementia	1,981	21.1%
Mobility impaired	1,427	15.2%
Medically fragile	1,088	11.6%
Disoriented and confused	1,034	11.0%
None of the listed characteristics	1,011	10.7%
Mental illness	991	10.5%
Other characteristic	833	8.9%
Other medical condition	720	7.7%
Physical disability	655	7.0%
Diabetes	531	5.6%
Homebound	504	5.4%
Alcohol abuse	496	5.3%
Incontinent	466	5.0%
Challenging or dangerous behavior	417	4.4%
Stroke-related condition	320	3.4%
Chronic mental illness	293	3.1%
Deaf or hard of hearing	270	2.9%
Morbidly obese	231	2.5%
Developmental disability	192	2.0%
Chronic alcoholic	191	2.0%
Unemployed	191	2.0%
Blind or visually impaired	166	1.8%
Financial dependence: alleged abuser dependent on adult at risk	157	1.7%
Brain injury	105	1.1%
Drug abuse	104	1.1%
Communication disorder	65	0.7%
Financially dependent on abuser	28	0.3%
Limited English proficiency	22	0.2%
Functionally illiterate	19	0.2%
Total	9,406	100.0%

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



Alleged Abusers' Gender

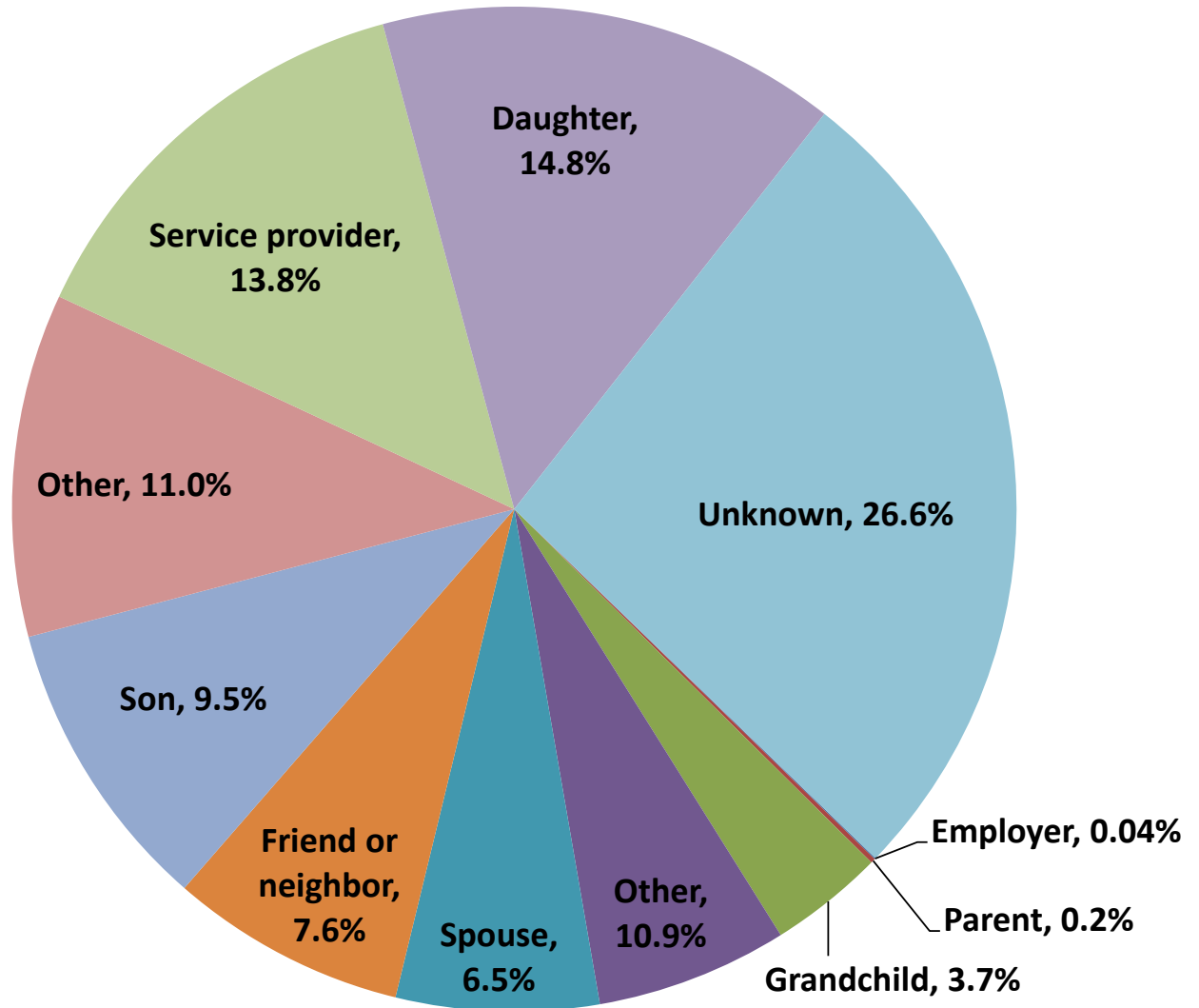
	Number	Percent
Female	1,982	37.3%
Male	2,218	41.7%
Unknown	1,114	21.0%
Total	5,314	100.0%

Alleged Abusers' Relationships to Elder Adult at Risk

	Number	Percent
Unknown	1,415	26.6%
Daughter	787	14.8%
Service provider	735	13.8%
Other	587	11.0%
Son	505	9.5%
Friend or neighbor	404	7.6%
Spouse	347	6.5%
Other relative	328	6.2%
Grandchild	196	3.7%
Parent	8	0.2%
Employer	2	0.0%
Total	5,314	100.0%



Alleged Abusers' Relationships to Elder Adult at Risk





Do Alleged Abusers Live with Elder Adult at Risk?

	Number	Percent
No	2,567	48.3%
Yes	1,775	33.4%
Unknown	972	18.3%
Total	5,314	100.0%

Do Alleged Abusers Have Any Legal or Substitute Decision-Maker Status?

	Number	Percent
No	4,404	82.9%
Yes	910	17.1%
Total	5,314	100.0%



Alleged Abusers' Legal Status

	Number	Percent
No legal status	3,066	57.7%
Unknown legal status	1,131	21.3%
Power of attorney (POA) for healthcare (activated)	421	7.9%
Power of attorney (POA) for finances (activated)	323	6.1%
Power of attorney (POA) for healthcare (not activated)	224	4.2%
Guardian of the person	97	1.8%
Power of attorney (POA) for finances (not activated)	85	1.6%
Guardian of the estate	81	1.5%
Other legal status	55	1.0%
Representative payee	32	0.6%
Conservator	3	0.1%
Temporary guardian	0	0.0%
Total	5,314	100.0%

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



Alleged Abusers' Characteristics

	Number	Percent
None of the listed characteristics	3,447	64.9%
Other characteristic	473	8.9%
Financial dependence: alleged abuser dependent on adult at risk	389	7.3%
Unemployed	252	4.7%
Drug abuse	244	4.6%
Mental illness	239	4.5%
Alcohol abuse	215	4.0%
Challenging or dangerous behavior	132	2.5%
Frail Elderly	130	2.4%
Dementia	74	1.4%
Mobility impaired	58	1.1%
Chronic alcoholic	54	1.0%
Physical disability	52	1.0%
Chronic mental illness	49	0.9%
Medically fragile	47	0.9%
Other medical condition	44	0.8%
Developmental disability	43	0.8%
Disoriented and confused	40	0.8%
Financial dependence: adult at risk on abuser	34	0.6%
Morbidly Obese	24	0.5%
Deaf or hard of hearing	17	0.3%
Diabetes	16	0.3%
Homebound	16	0.3%
Incontinent	15	0.3%
Stroke-related condition	14	0.3%
Brain injury	10	0.2%
Blind or visually impaired	7	0.1%
Limited English proficiency	5	0.1%
Functionally illiterate	3	0.1%
Communication disorder	2	0.0%
Total	5,314	100.0%

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

Percents refer to share of all alleged abusers.



Was Hurt or Harm Substantiated?		
	Number	Percent
Substantiated	4,487	47.7%
Unsubstantiated	2,923	31.1%
Unable to substantiate	1,996	21.2%
Total	9,406	100.0%



Was Hurt or Harm Substantiated?

	Number	Percent
Substantiated	4,487	47.7%
Unsubstantiated	2,923	31.1%
Unable to substantiate	1,996	21.2%
Total	9,406	100.0%



Actions Taken to Assist Elder Adult at Risk

	Number	Percent
Services offered-not accepted	1,878	20.0%
Services not needed	1,830	19.5%
Services offered-some accepted	1,599	17.0%
Services offered-all accepted	1,154	12.3%
Other legal action	834	8.9%
Outreach continues	750	8.0%
Investigation not accepted	635	6.8%
Referral made to other agency	574	6.1%
Guardian referral	555	5.9%
Other disposition	415	4.4%
Protective services placement	415	4.4%
Referral to law enforcement or Department of Justice	308	3.3%
Referral to regulatory authority	86	0.9%
Response or investigation continues	60	0.6%
Referral to protection or advocacy agencies	55	0.6%
Referral to caregiver misconduct registry	52	0.6%
Mental health commitment	39	0.4%
Services needed are not available	28	0.3%
Referral to detoxification services	9	0.1%
Referral made to state agency	8	0.1%
Total	9,406	100.0%

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



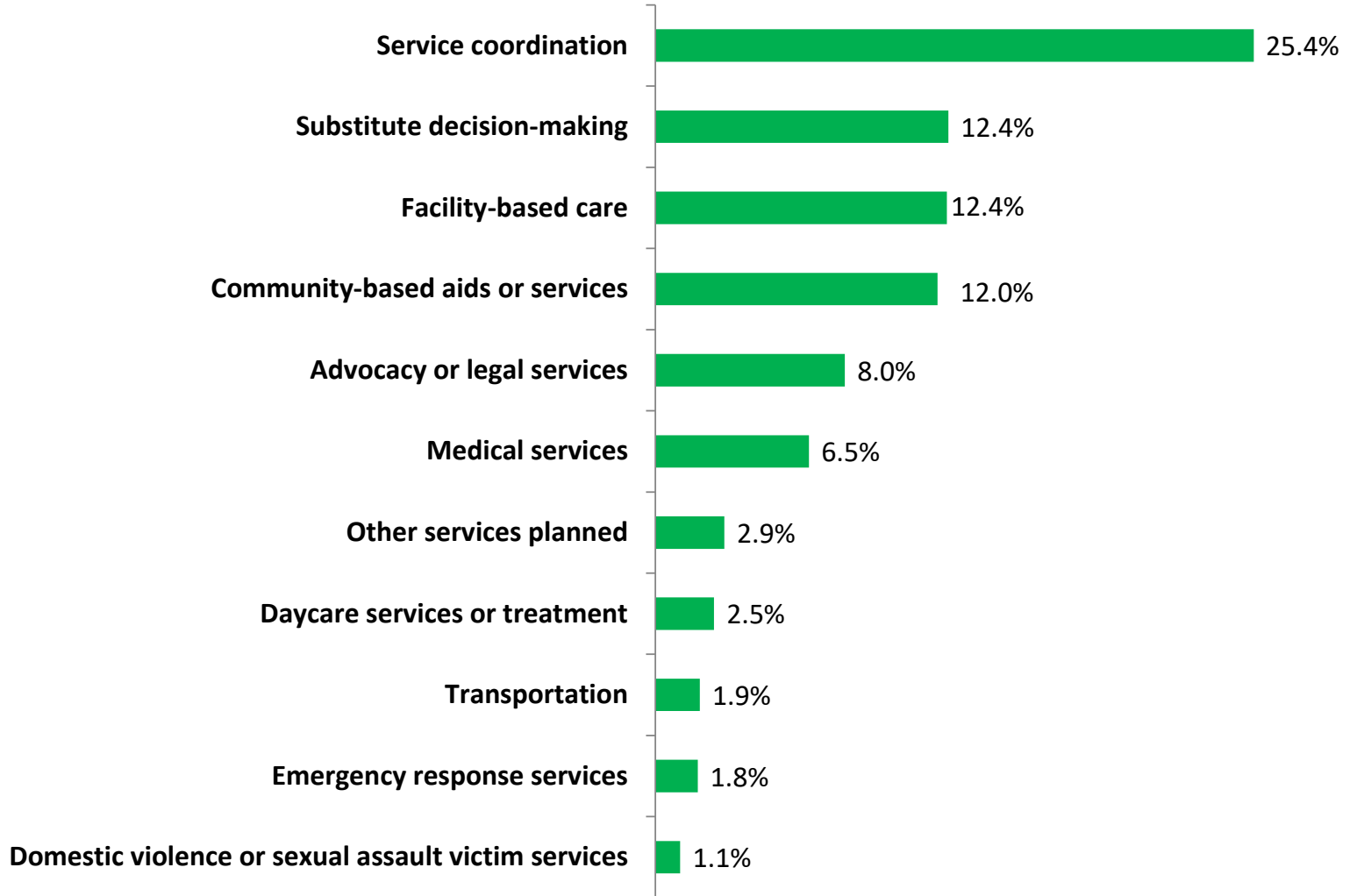
Services Planned for Elder Adult at Risk

	Number	Percent
Service coordination	2,387	25.4%
Substitute decision-making	1,169	12.4%
Facility-based care	1,163	12.4%
Community-based aids or services	1,125	12.0%
Advocacy or legal services	756	8.0%
Medical services	612	6.5%
Other services planned	275	2.9%
Daycare services or treatment	234	2.5%
Transportation	177	1.9%
Emergency response services	169	1.8%
Domestic violence or sexual assault victim services	99	1.1%
Total	9,406	100.0%

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

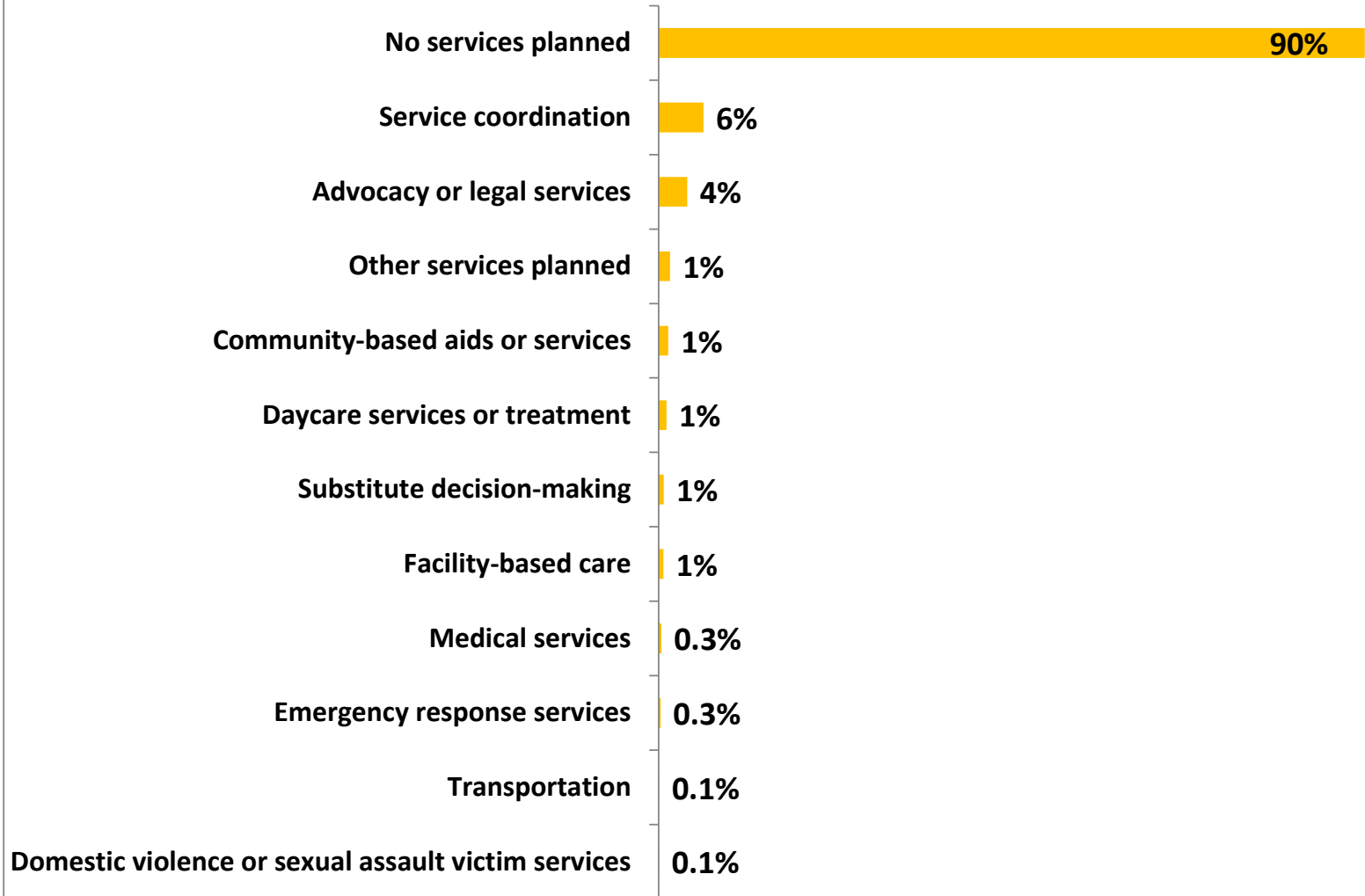




Services Planned for Alleged Abuser(s)		
Service	Number	Percent
No services planned	4,145	90.0%
Service coordination	263	5.7%
Advocacy or legal services	168	3.6%
Other services planned	67	1.5%
Community-based aids or services	57	1.2%
Daycare services or treatment	46	1.0%
Substitute decision-making	30	0.7%
Facility-based care	29	0.6%
Medical services	16	0.3%
Emergency response services	12	0.3%
Transportation	4	0.1%
Domestic violence or sexual assault victim services	3	0.1%
Total	4,607	100.0%
<i>Multiple responses were 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 (n=4,607).</i>		



Services Plan for Alleged Abuser(s)





Contact Information

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