



Bay County Health

Findings from a Telephone Survey of 505 Bay County Residents, Focus Groups among Adults, Parents, and Teachers, and an Online Survey among Bay County Adults

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Methodology

- Conducted a random sample telephone survey of 505 Bay County residents from January 17-22, 2012, using both landline and cell phone numbers. The margin of error is +/- 4.4%
- Conducted three focus groups from April 11-12, 2012 in Bay County, Michigan. The three groups consisted of 1 group of adults missing some preventive care, 1 group of parents with children missing some preventive care and 1 group of teachers and school administrators.
- An online survey was conducted by the Bay County Health Department. This survey reached a total of 183 Bay County residents. This survey is not representative of the entire county, as respondents self-selected to participate.

Executive Summary

- Residents who receive health services from Bay County are generally satisfied with the care they receive. However, many are unfamiliar with the services that are available to them.
 - In focus groups, participants confirmed a lack of knowledge about the services offered by the health department. Those who have interacted with the health department came away with a positive impression.
- A majority of residents say they are in good health, though 25% describe their health as fair or poor.
 - Multiple people in focus groups expressed concerns about the rate of cancer in their community, attributing it to environmental factors and the use of pesticides.
- Nearly half of residents report receiving health services from either the Bay County Health Department, Bay Regional Medical Center or Bay Arenac Behavioral Health.

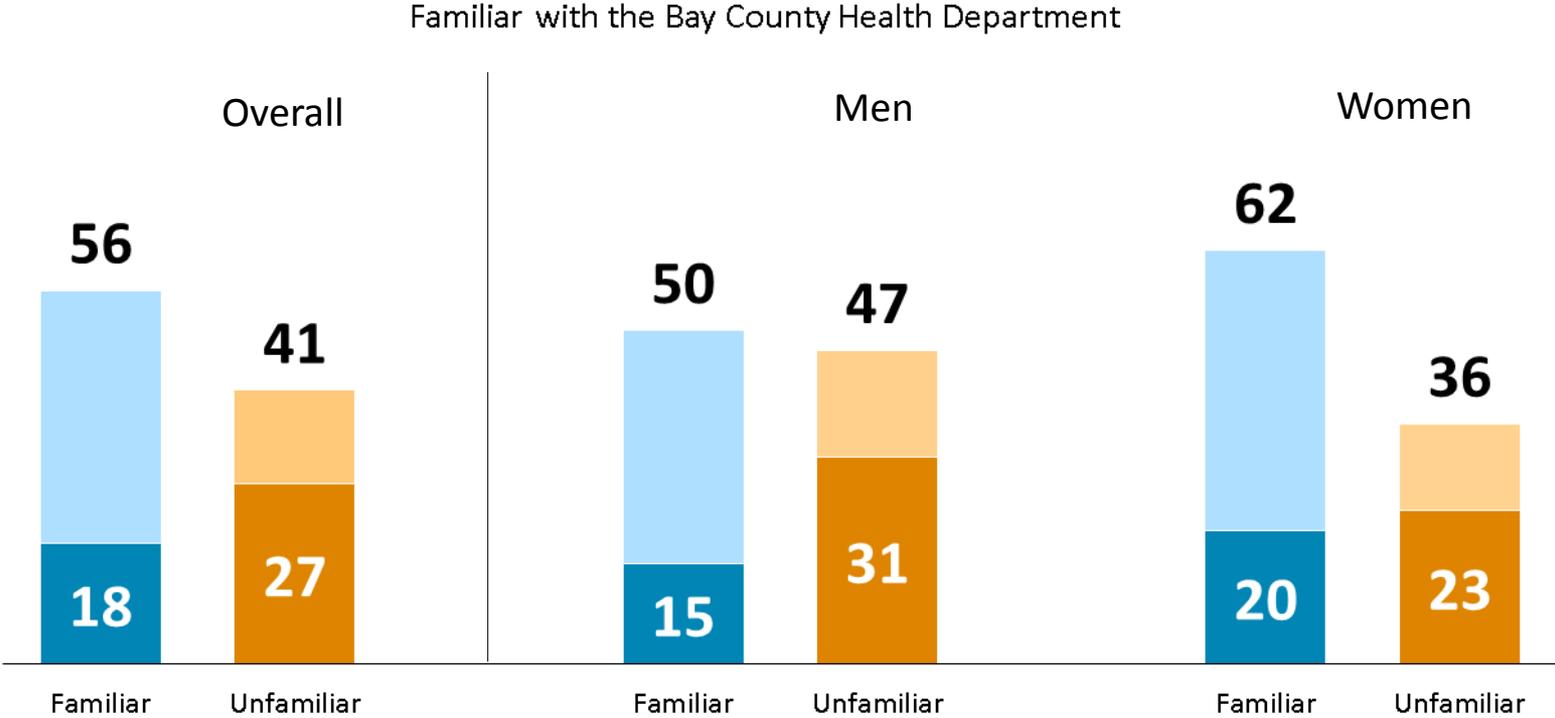
Executive Summary

- A significant number of parents report that their children are not receiving regular dental checkups (26%) or annual pediatrician visits (22%).
 - Focus group participants expected these numbers to be even higher, though most all said they themselves stayed on a regular schedule.
- While majority of residents have health insurance, 15% say they do not, most of whom have been without it for more than 1 year.
- Nearly 3 in 10 residents report at least some issues with mental health, with 15% saying that their mental health has not been good 6 or more days in the past 30.
- Healthy eating emerged as a significant problem in focus groups, one that participants wanted to tackle with a joint effort by schools, parents and the health department.

Perceptions of the Bay County Health Department

Among residents with an impression of the Bay County Health Department, most have a positive impression. Among those who have received services, nearly all have a positive impression.

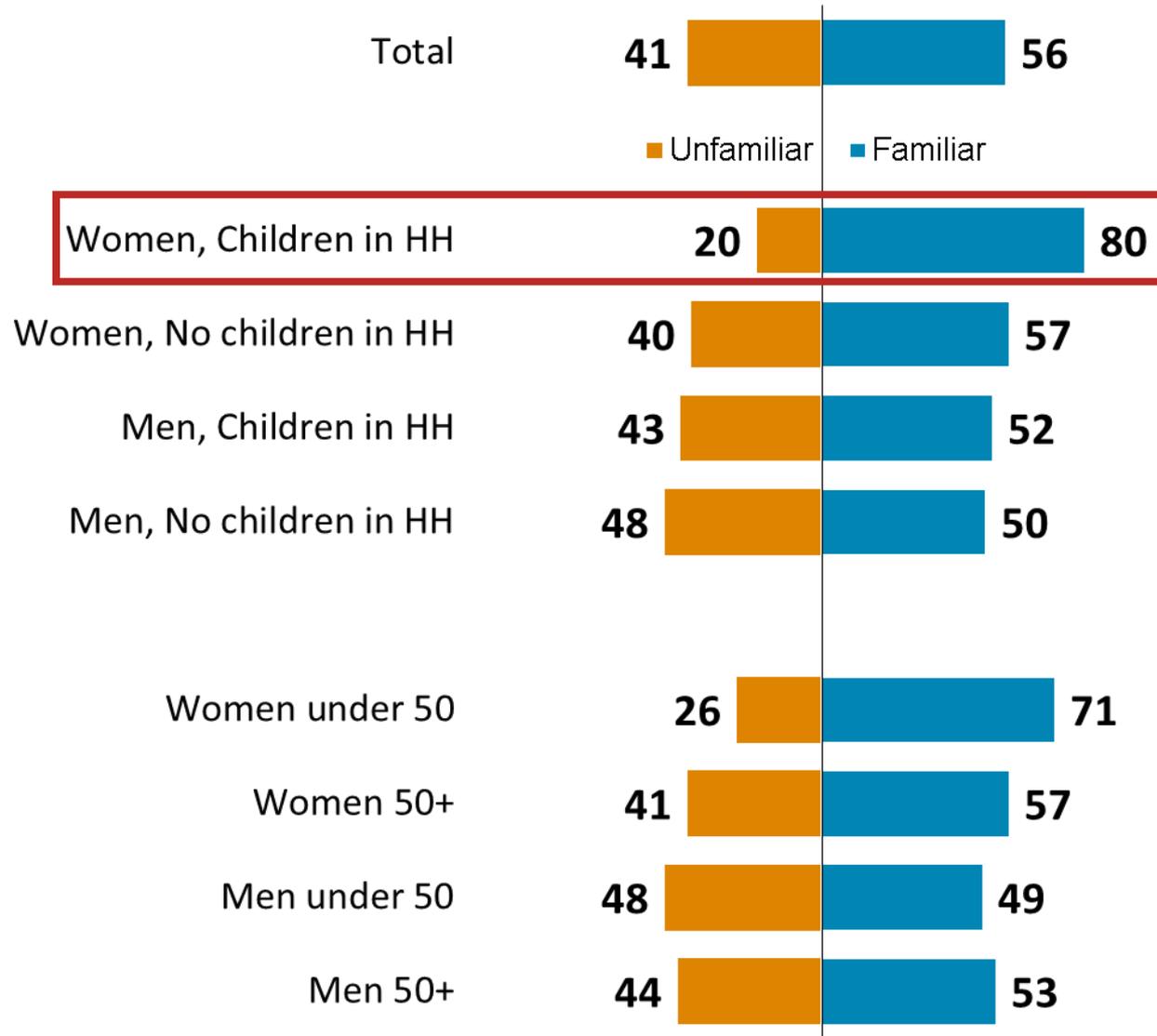
Half of men and 6 in 10 women say they are familiar with services offered by the Bay County Health Department.



How familiar are you with services offered by the Bay County Health Department – would you say you are very familiar, somewhat familiar, somewhat unfamiliar or very unfamiliar?

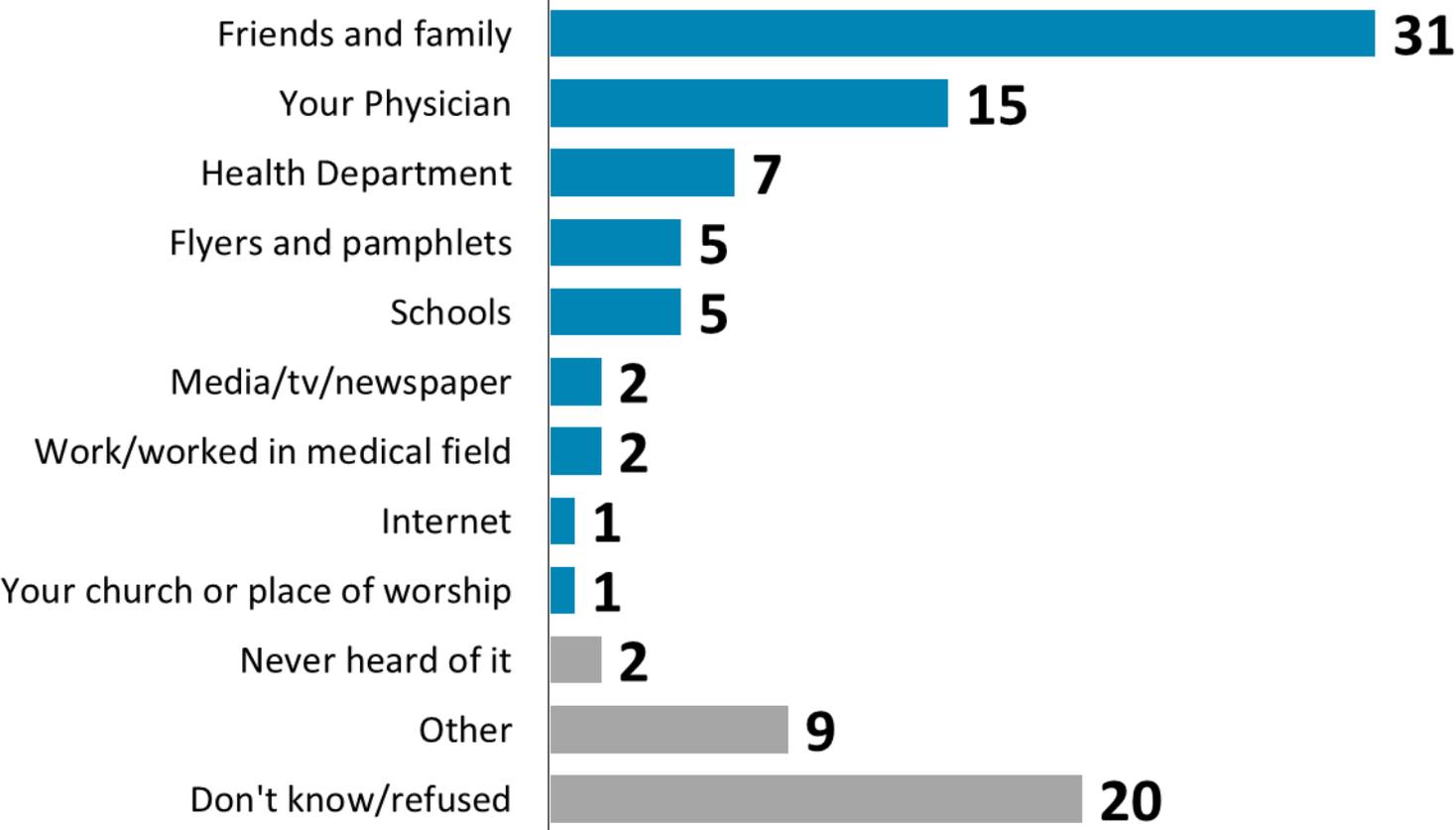
Familiar with Bay County Health Department Services

Women with children are the most familiar with the services offered by the Bay County Health Department, with 80% saying they are familiar. Older men are slightly more familiar than younger men.



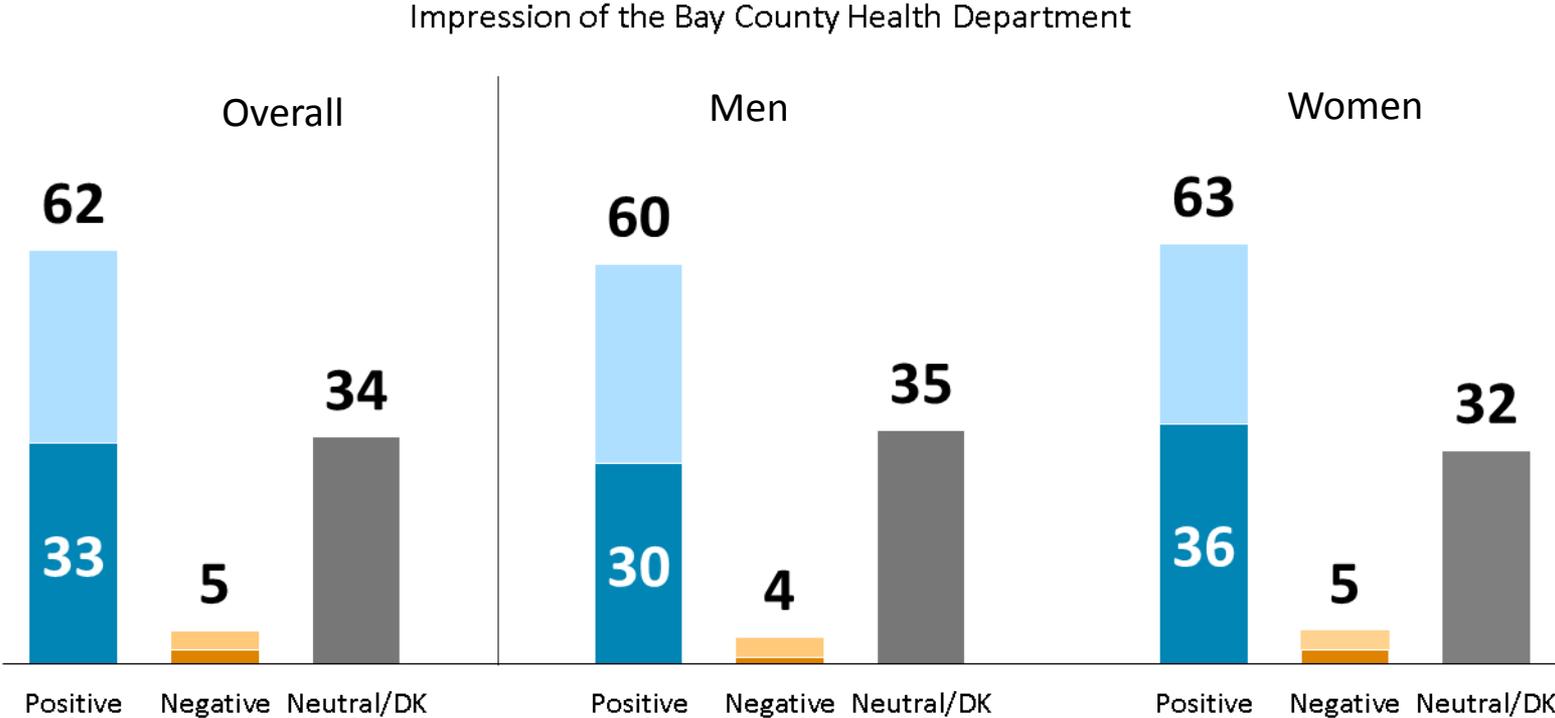
Friends, family and physicians are the most common sources of information about the Bay County Health Department.

First Heard of Services Offered by the Bay County Health Department



Where did you first hear about the services offered by the Bay County Health Department?

Six in ten residents have a positive impression of the Bay County Health Department. One-third are neutral and very few have a negative impression.



Do you have a positive or negative impression of the Bay County Health Department?
 Would you say you have a very (positive/negative) impression or a somewhat (positive/negative) impression?



Impression of Bay County Health Department

Total 5 Negative 62 Positive

■ Negative ■ Positive

Women, Children in HH 6 Negative 74 Positive

Women, No children in HH 5 Negative 60 Positive

Men, Children in HH 8 Negative 70 Positive

Men, No children in HH 3 Negative 57 Positive

Married Men 4 Negative 62 Positive

Married Women 5 Negative 68 Positive

Unmarried Men 5 Negative 58 Positive

Unmarried Women 5 Negative 58 Positive

Familiar with Bay County services 6 Negative 76 Positive

Unfamiliar with Bay County services 3 Negative 44 Positive

Received services from Bay County Health 3 Negative 88 Positive

Received services from Bay Regional 7 Negative 73 Positive

Residents who have either received services from or have heard about services offered by the Bay County Health Department have a favorable impression of the health department. Those with children, especially moms, also have a positive impression.

To improve health in their community, residents suggest the Bay County Health Department focus on education, public service announcements, health fairs, and outreach and partnerships with schools.

“In the junior high, part of the junior high, they establish an office; a doctor’s office where families go, general practitioner...or even an urgent care that is centralized out of you know one of the schools.”

-Father

“I mean it’s amazing how many services are available through the county that not that many people know of to take advantage of.”

-Man

“I always thought the health department should come to the school for immunizations.”

-Teacher/Administrator

“I think the successes we’ve had, when we try alone as a school we fail and when the health department does an initiative, no offense, but they fail. But whenever we work together then it works. So that’s where we have the captive audience, you guys have the services. So come to our place and let’s work together on this.”

-Teacher/Administrator

- Residents would like health services to be more convenient.
- Public service announcements, a more effective online presence, or advertising would help more people take advantages of the services offered.
- Partnering with schools is a popular idea among parents and teachers.

Parents are more aware of the services offered by the Bay County Health Department compared to adults overall. However, they believe the health department could do a better job informing the public about the services that are offered.

“The diet thing they were doing. I don’t know if they still are. My youngest one’s five, so they were doing like if you were on WIC you could get these coupons for like fruits and vegetables as well. They didn’t push it as much as they probably should be pushing it.”

-Mother

“My kids, they get their shots there because the doctor doesn’t do them.”

-Mother

“Yeah and if you’re in there, you go in there then they tell you of all the things that they do. But if you don’t go there, then you don’t know.”

-Mother

“Yeah it’s not on their web site. Their web site is beyond basic. It’s quite pathetic, actually.”

-Mother

“And I think people label the health department as maybe lower class, when actually there’s things for everybody. But I don’t think that’s advertised at all.”

-Mother

- Any role the health department can play in promoting healthy eating would be welcomed.
- Shots and immunizations are an important service, especially for families.
- Improving the Bay County Health Department website could be an easy way to better communicate with the community.
- Portraying the image that the health department is there for everyone, regardless of socio-economic status, is important.

In addition to informing the public about services, residents see transportation as having an important role in helping people take advantage of community programs and the services the Bay County Health Department offers.

“I think transportation might be another (barrier to preventive care).”
-Man

“But anyway like with school related programs, I mean if you’re in a club sport and it’s not part of the school or you still have to do transportation of kids. A lot of times they can’t make it to school.”
-Father

“And another thing like we talked about, if transportation’s an issue, many of the parents already come to school at some point. So now there’s not the confusion either of like now which office is that?”
-Teacher/Administrator

- Transportation was identified as a potential barrier to preventive care. In addition to bringing more awareness to the health services offered at the health department, residents suggest educating people about transportation resources.
- Transportation can also be a barrier to keeping children active, especially as athletic programs are starting to be run outside of the schools.
- Partnering with schools may ease the burden of transportation. Families would know exactly where to go and have easier access.

The role of improving preventive care could fall on many shoulders, including individuals, the Bay County Health Department, employers and schools.

“Who’s the best person to get those results, I’d say probably the health department.”

-Man

-On the Quality of the Bay Health Dept.

“I do think, though, they have some pretty good people working there.

Yeah they do at the health department.”

-Woman

“Absolutely and then these numbers, like I said I’m surprised they’re as high as they were.”

-Man

- Although many recognize parental responsibility, they also say the Bay County Health Department can play a positive role in increasing the number of people who receive preventive care.
- However, after seeing the self-reported statistics on preventive care, many conclude that the health department must be doing a good job.
- Though many have not had any interaction with the health department, those that have come away with a positive impression.

Overall Health of Bay County Residents

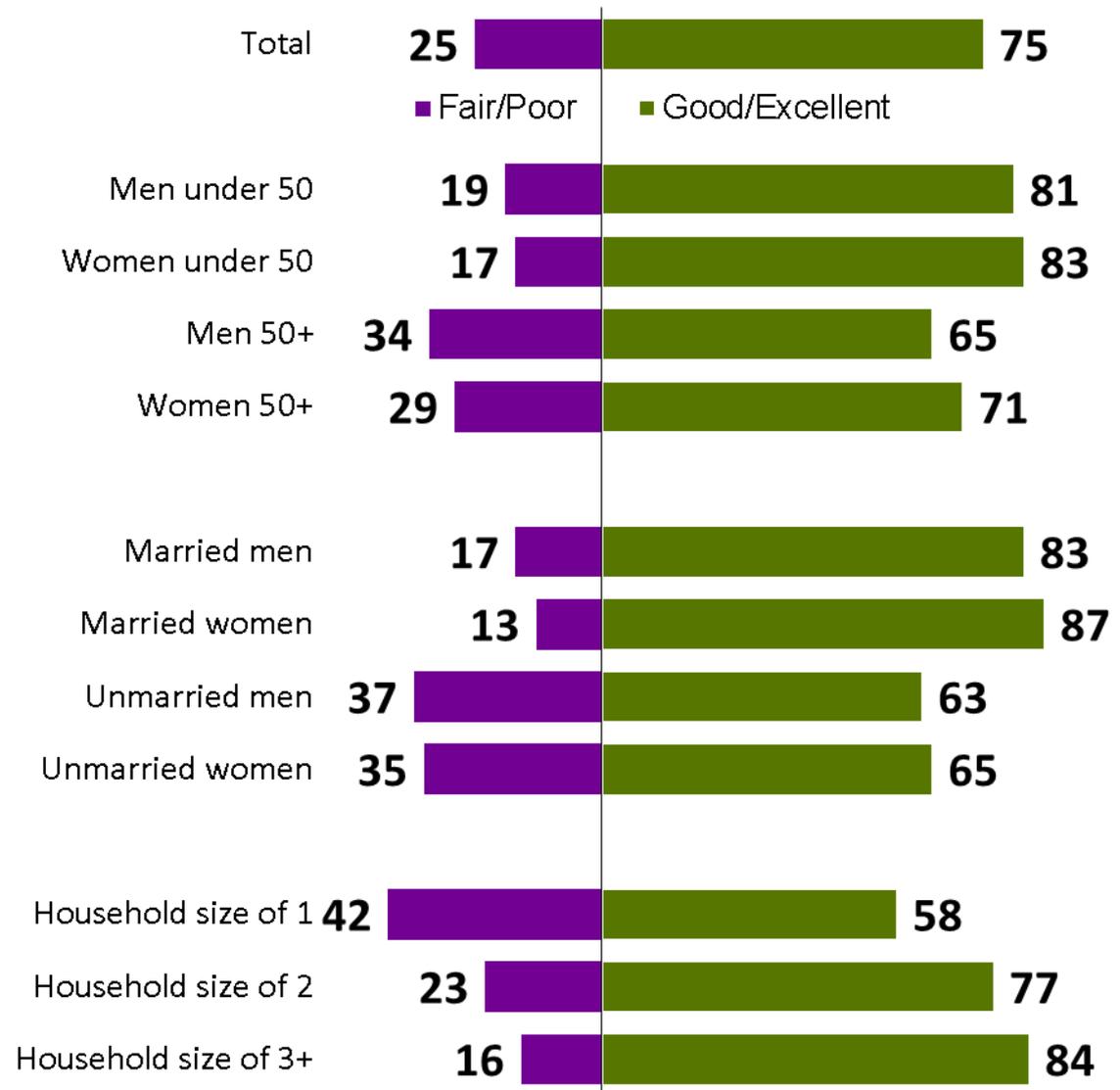
One-quarter of residents say their health is fair or poor, including 42% of residents who live alone.

One in 4 residents describe their health as fair or poor. Six in 10 say it's good or very good, with 16% describing their health as excellent.



In general, which of the following best describes your health: Poor, fair, good, very good or excellent?

Description of Your Health

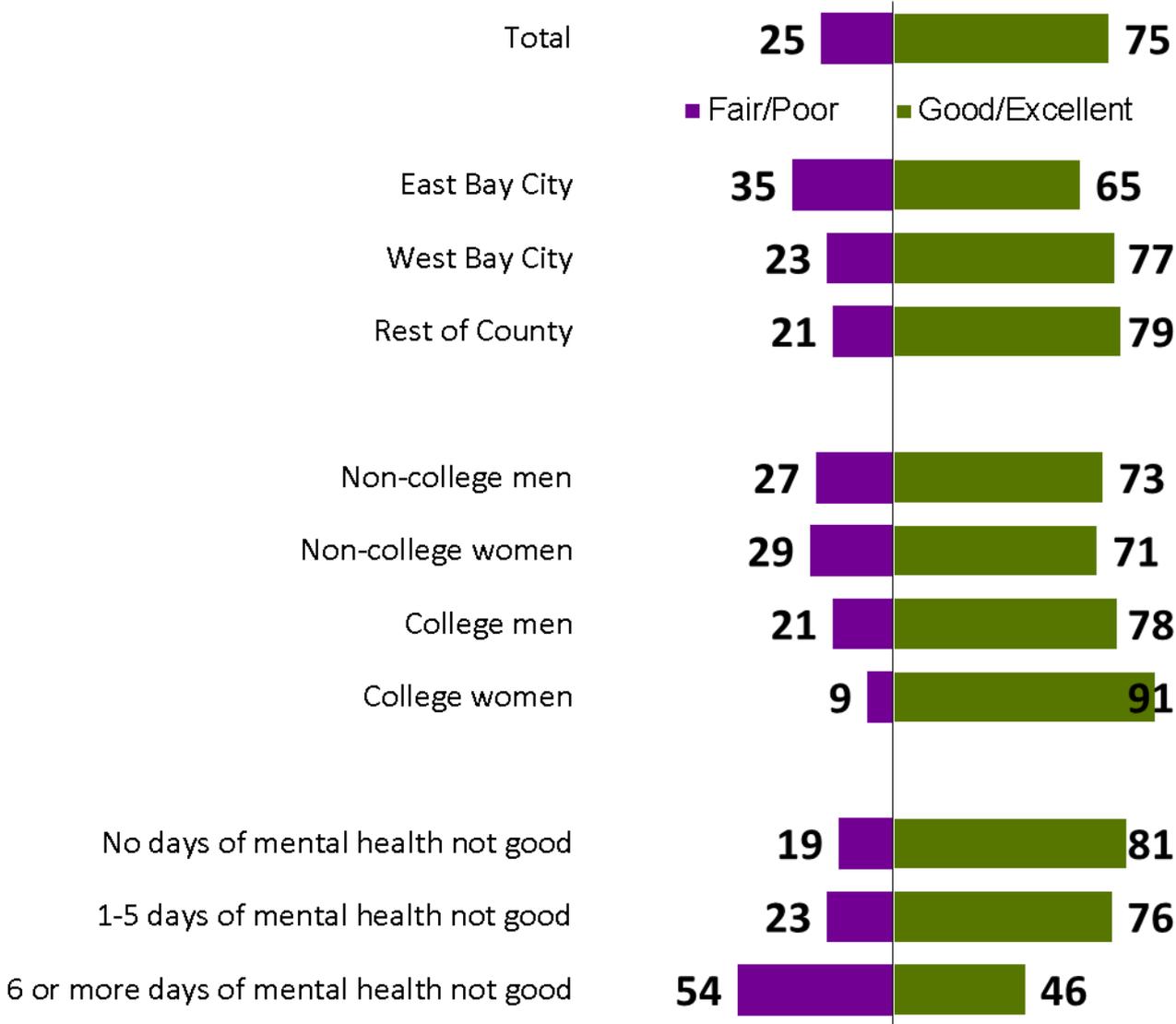


Age and marital status correlate strongly with health status. Among those who live alone, 42% say their health is fair or poor, compared to just 23% in a household of two.

Description of Your Health

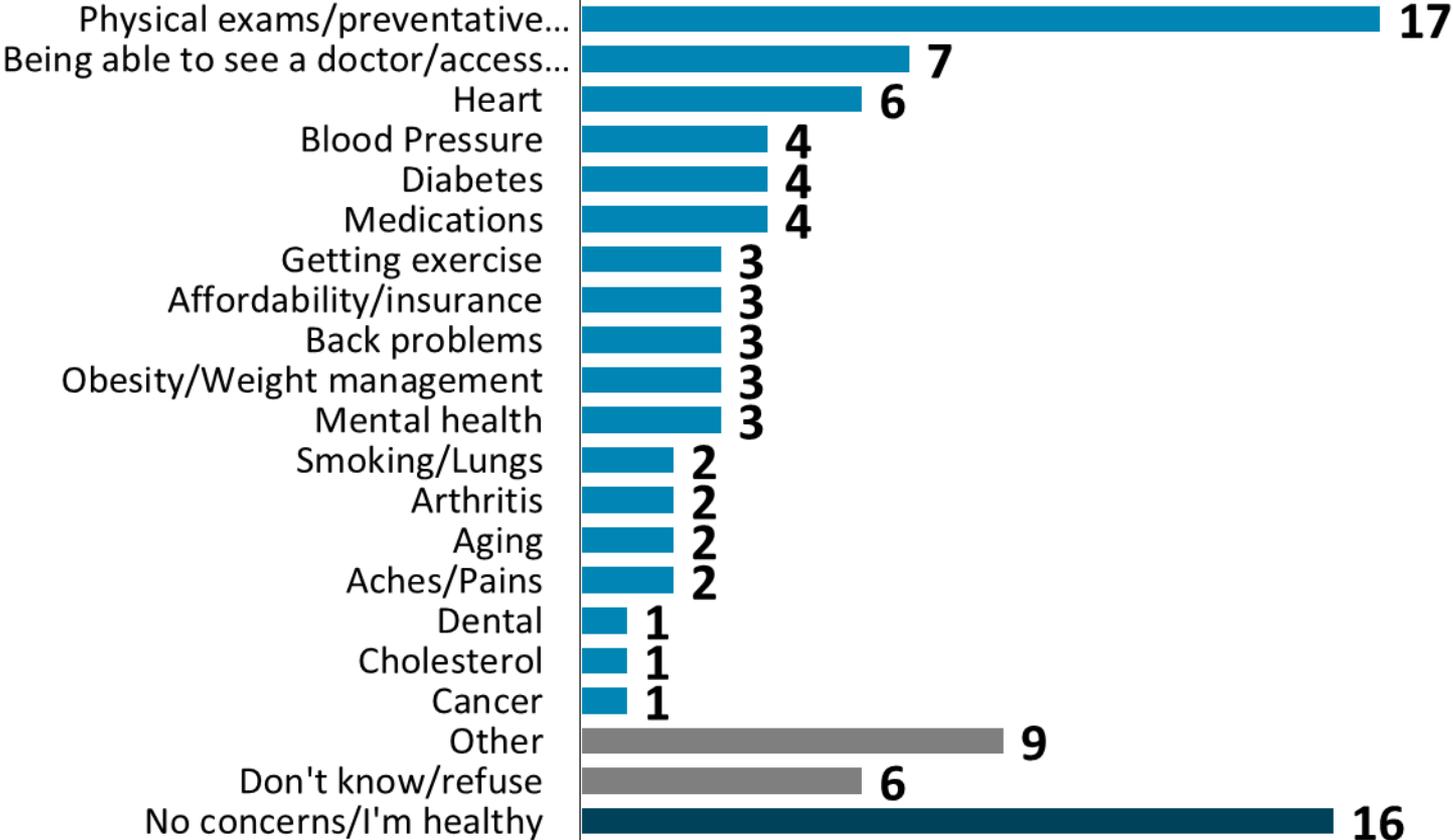
Residents in East Bay City rate their health status lower, with 35% saying fair or poor.

Among those who say they have had 6 or more days in the last 30 with mental health that is not good, 46% still rate their overall health as good or excellent.

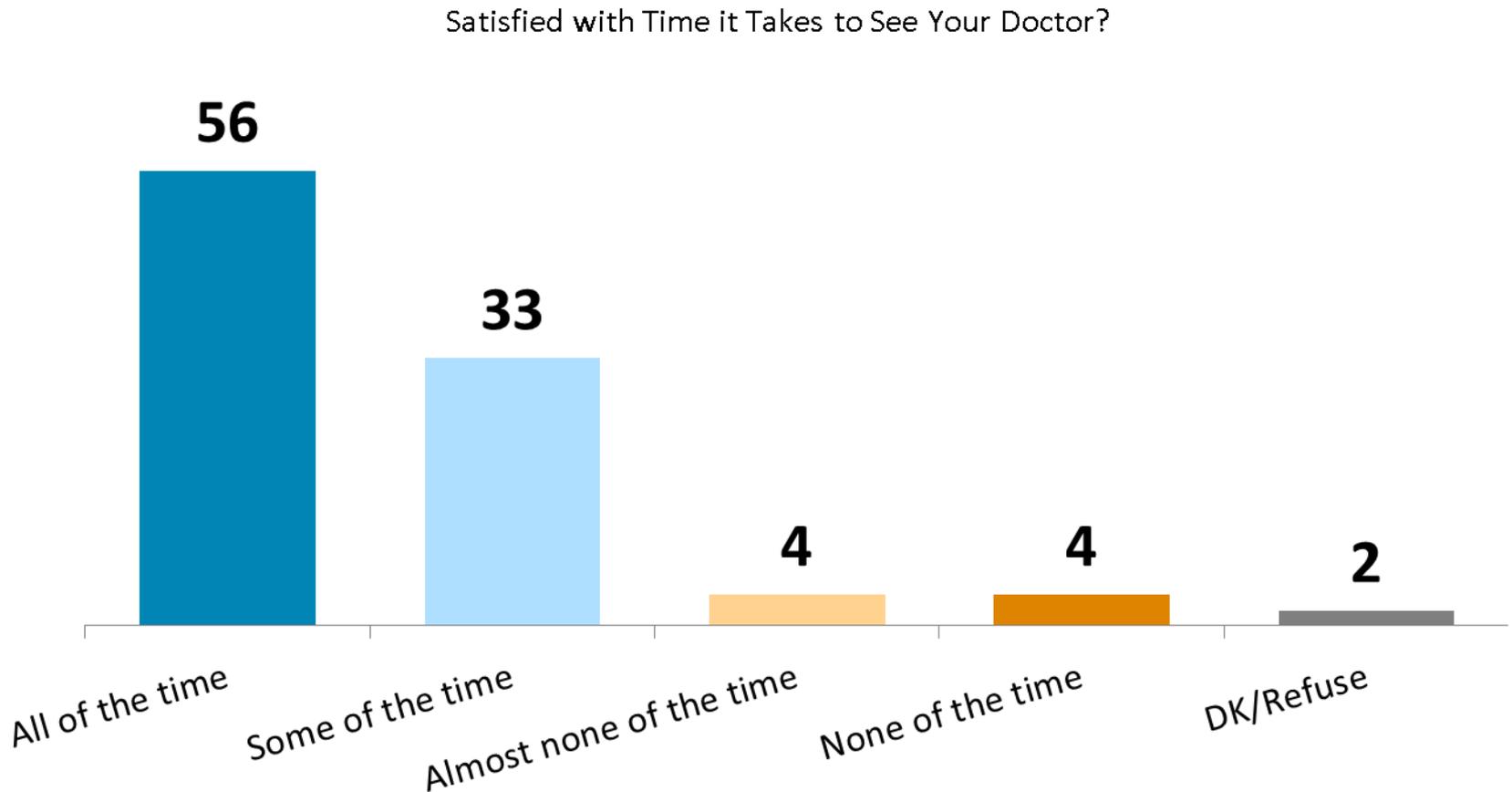


In an open-end question about their most important health care need, residents gave a variety of responses, with 17% saying physical exams or preventive care, while 16% report no concerns.

Most Important Health Care Need – Open End Response



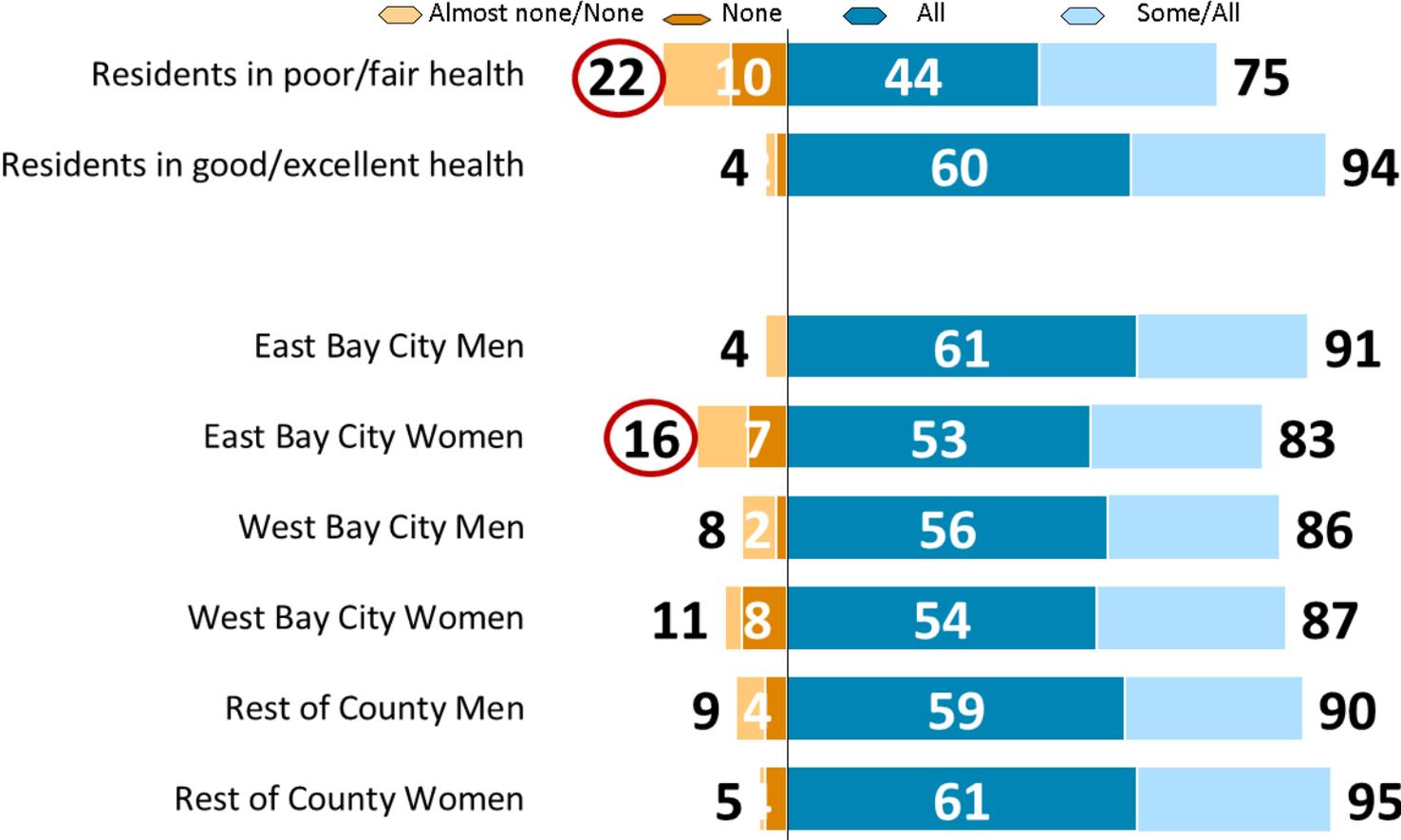
A majority (56%) are always satisfied with the time it takes to see their doctor, while one-third are satisfied some of the time and 8% are rarely or never satisfied.



When you feel you need to see your doctors, how often are you satisfied with the time it takes to get in to see your doctor - all of the time, some of the time, almost none or none of the time?

Nearly all residents in good or excellent health are satisfied with the time it takes to see a doctor, while 75% of those in poor or fair health say the same thing.

Satisfied with the Time it Takes to See Your Doctor



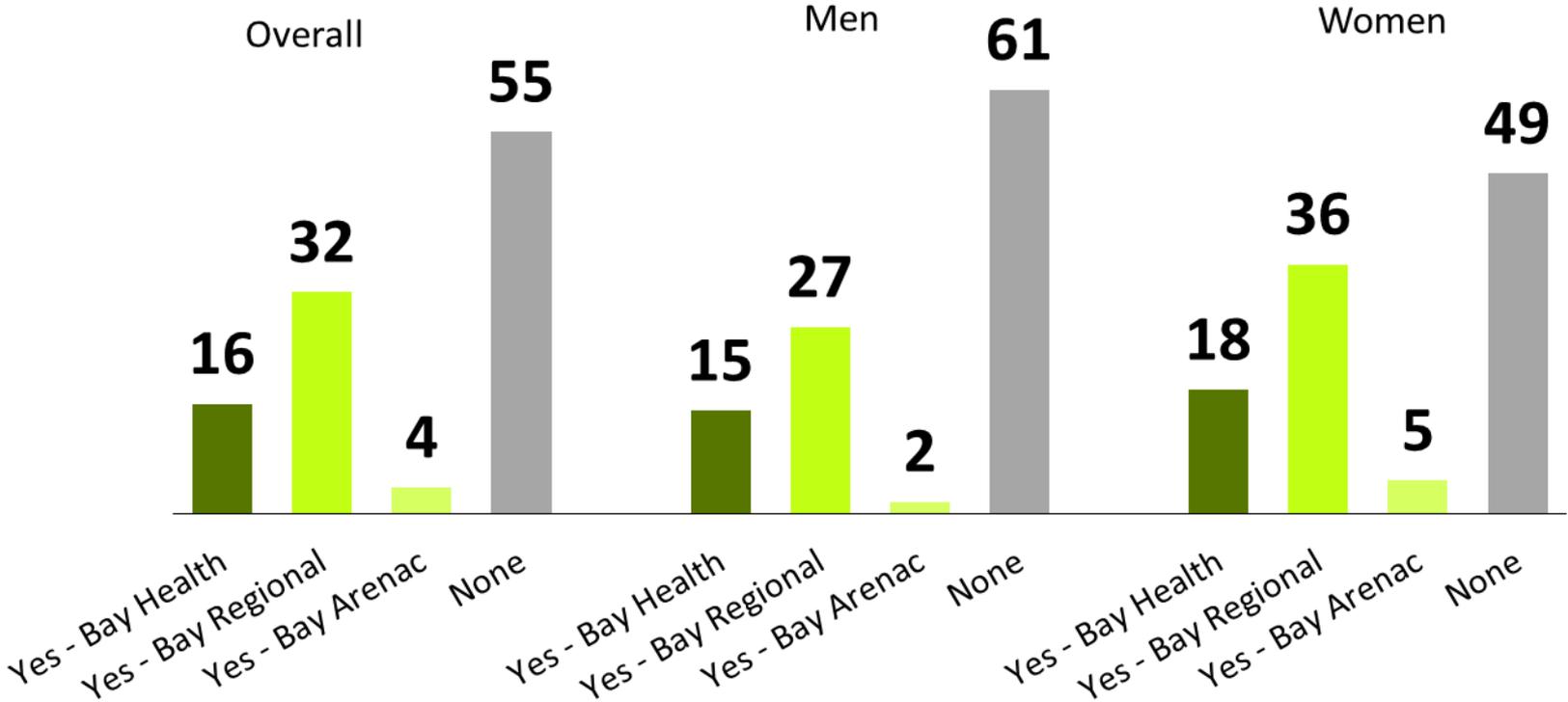
When you feel you need to see your doctors, how often are you satisfied with the time it takes to get in to see your doctor -- all of the time, some of the time, almost none or none of the time?

Health Services from Bay County

Nearly half of residents report using either the Bay County Health Department, Bay Regional Medical Center, or Bay Arenac Behavioral Health for health services in the past year.

Half of women say they have received services from at least 1 of the 3 facilities- Bay County Health Department, Bay Regional Medical Center or Bay Arenac Behavioral Health - in the past year.

Personally Receive Services (multiple response)



Have you personally received any services from the Bay County Health Department, Bay Regional Medical Center or Bay Arenac Behavioral Health in the past year?

Younger women receive services from both the Bay County Health Department and Bay Regional Medical Center. Four in 10 women over 50 say they have received services at Bay Regional.

Receive Services	Bay County Health Dept	Bay Regional Medical Center	Bay Arenac Behavioral Health	None
Women under 50	28	28	6	44
Women 50+	11	41	4	52
Men under 50	18	26	3	60
Men 50+	10	29	2	62
East Bay City men	13	36	4	57
East Bay City women	13	45	6	47
West Bay City men	21	21	1	62
West Bay City women	19	38	5	46
Rest of County men	4	30	3	65
Rest of County women	12	26	4	60

Bay County residents are concerned about the quality of doctors in their community.

“For myself I lived in Bay County about 10 years and I think I prefer to go to Saginaw County for any medical reasons (and have heard others say), ‘if I get really sick I may go to Flint or Saginaw because they have better quality doctors.’”
-Mother

“I would say the quality of care that we received maybe was like at a six for Bay County, but the Covenant (in Saginaw) doctors that I have now is a probably 9.”
-Mother

“Well I had just about a couple months ago I went and was told that I had cervical cancer, went to two different doctors and told that I didn’t have it and that was all in Bay County and...Yeah, I’d say the doctors around here, the foreign doctors seem to be a lot of them around here I have nothing against that, but I’m just saying that like...the competency level.”
-Woman

- Residents perceive that better care is offered in Saginaw, resulting in some traveling there for their health care needs.
- The quality of care in Bay County is seen as lower than it should be.

However, others have had good experiences in Bay County.

“I think that my doctor, I would rate him as a 10,
and he’s in Bay County.”
-Mother

“Our pediatrician is phenomenal, I would give
him a 10 definitely. Um my gynecologist who
I’ve had for years, I would give her a 10, she
delivered my last three children all at Bay Med.”
-Mother

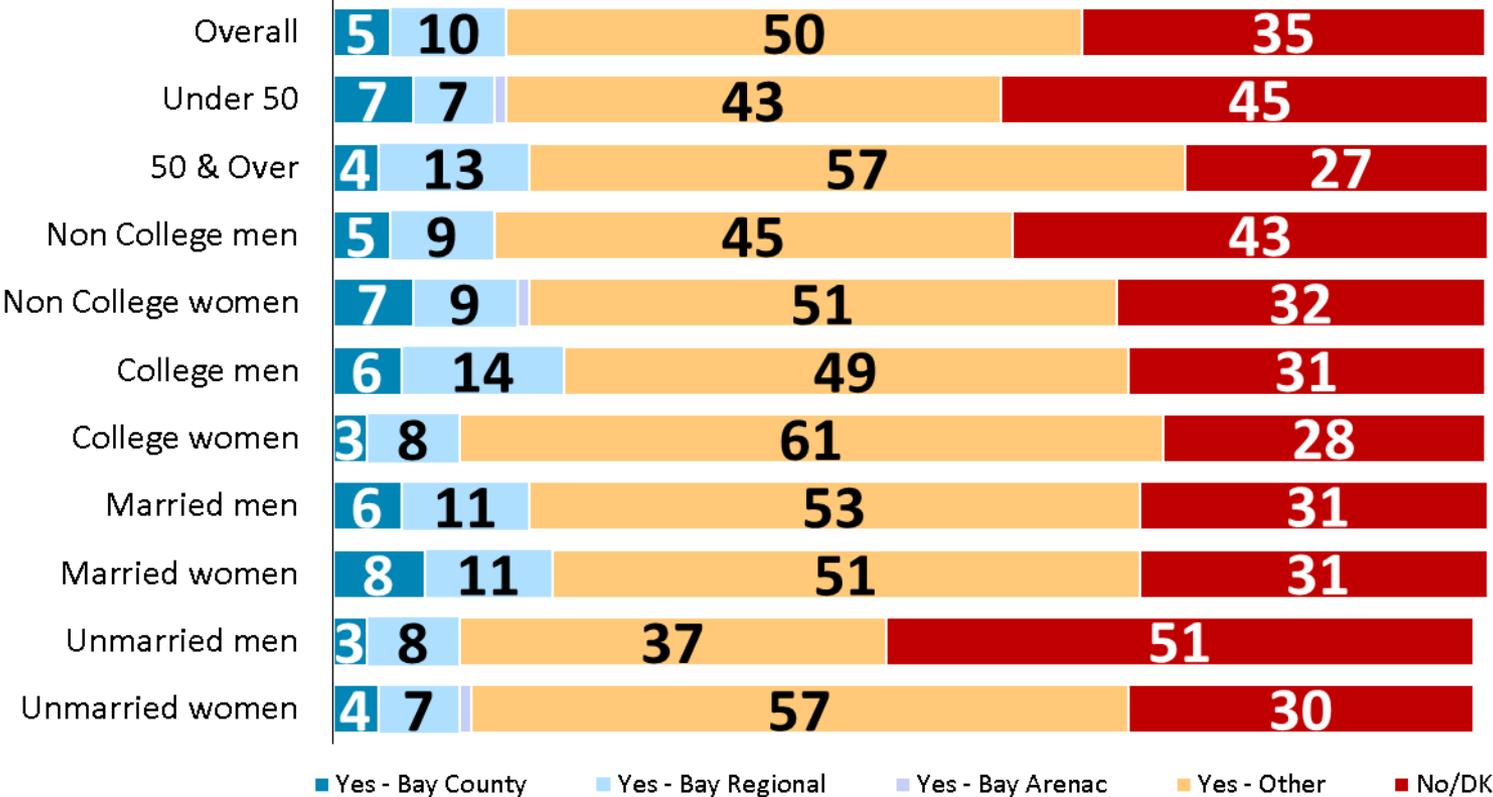
“As far as the emergency care I would definitely
go to Bay County still. We’ve always been very
quick served there and I haven’t had any
issues...They were very thorough.”
-Mother

“I spent a lot of time with the hospital lately and
um, my father recently passed away. He had
congestive heart failure so I spent a lot of time
in the coronary care unit at Bay Regional and
they were fantastic, they were exceptional. I
would give them a 10.”
-Father

- Those that have found a doctor they are happy with are very satisfied with the care they receive in Bay County.

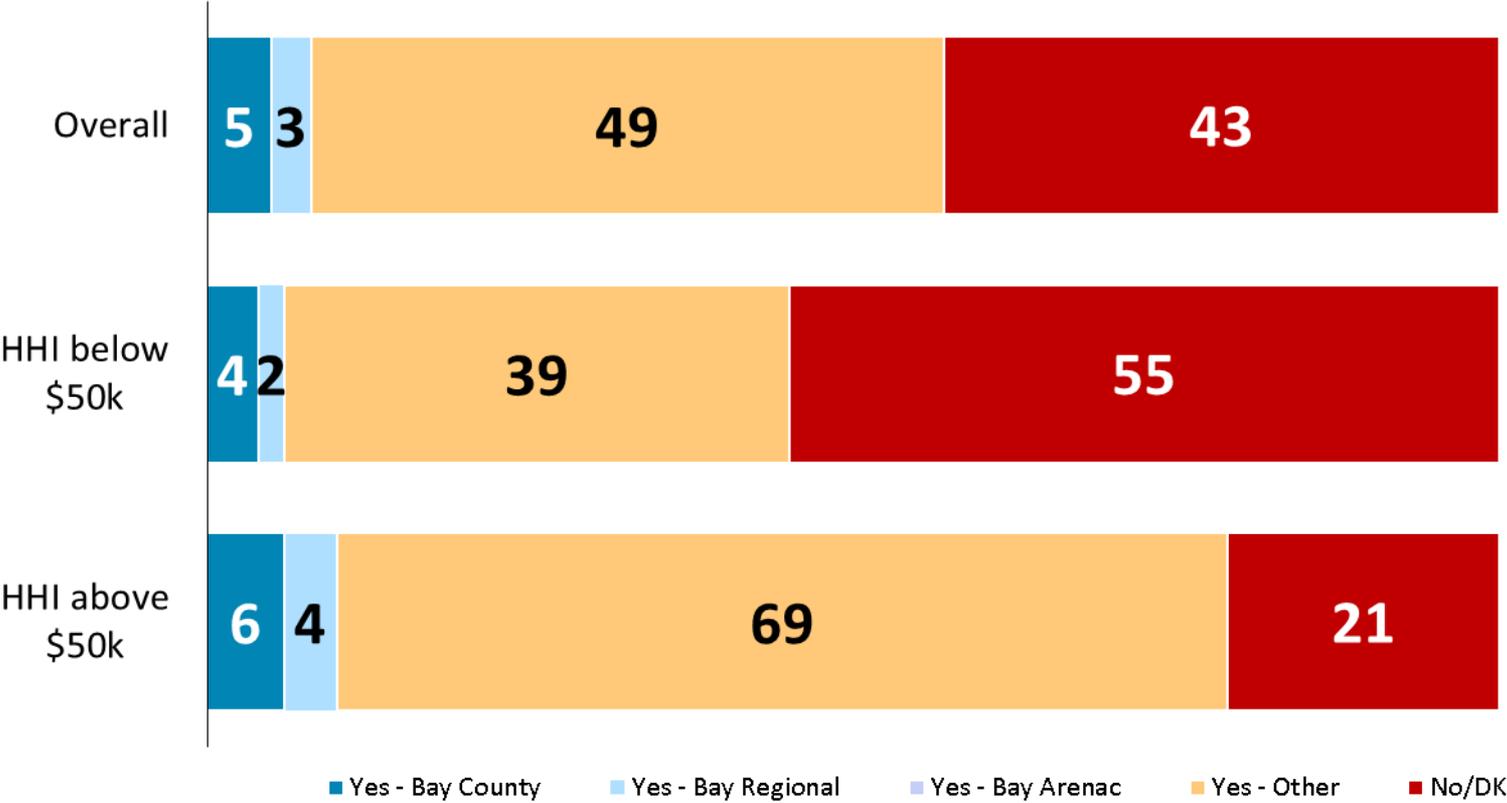
Half of unmarried men report that they have not had a physical exam in the last 12 months. Most residents who report having a physical say they have received it somewhere other than the health department, Bay Regional or Bay Arenac Behavioral Health.

Routine Physical exam in last 12 months?



More than 4 in 10 residents say they have not had a dental checkup in the past 12 months, including 55% of those in households earning less than \$50,000 per year.

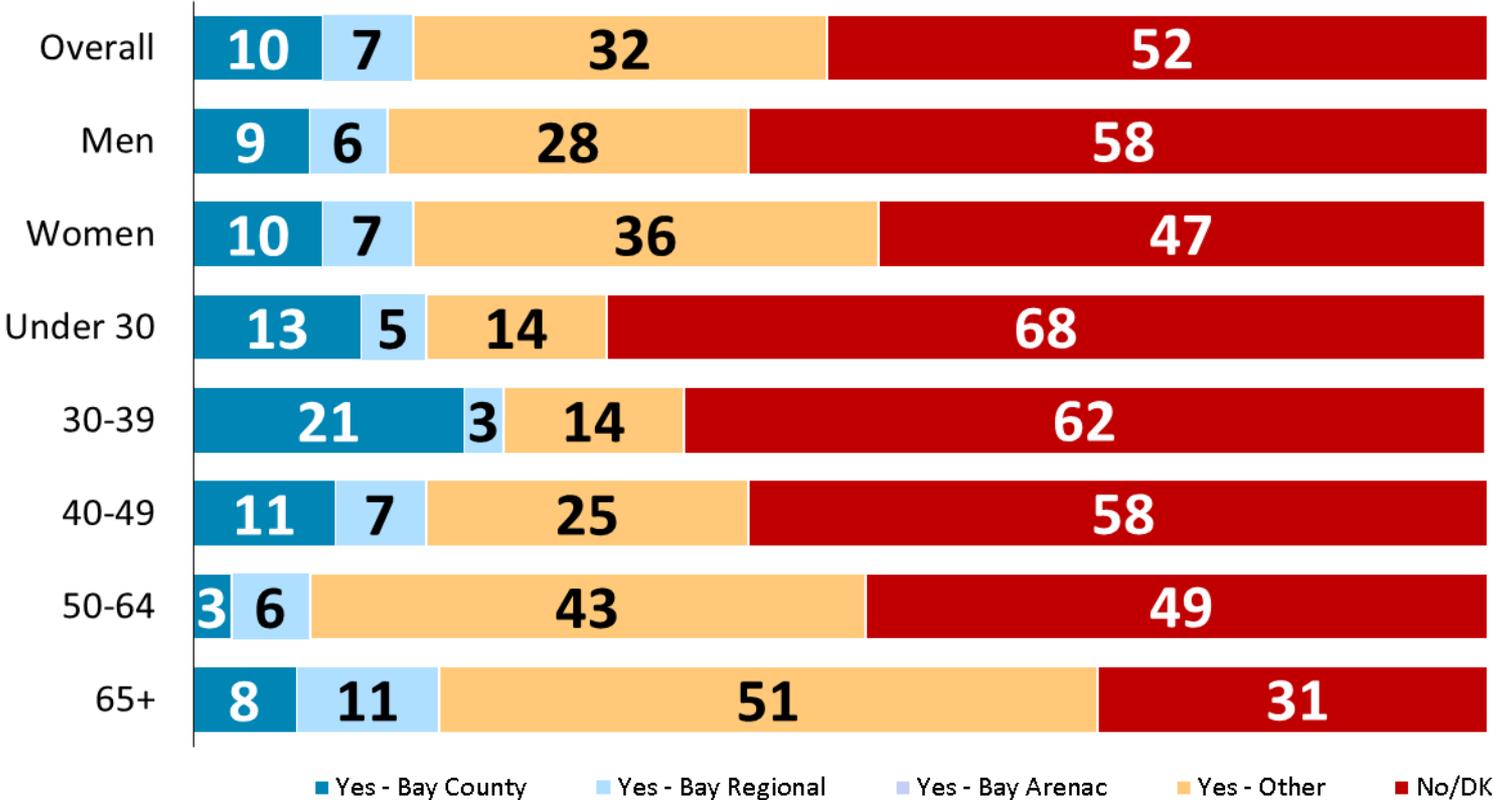
Dental Check-up in past 12 months?



In the past 12 months, which of the following preventive services have you had?
 [IF YES] Where did you receive this service?

Getting a flu shot is strongly correlated with age. Younger residents report getting a flu shot at a much lower rate than older residents.

Flu Shot in past 12 months?



Many perceive that flu shot rates are low, and will never reach high levels due to personal objections and misinformation.

“My sister is a nurse and she absolutely refuses to have her, her children, anyone to have it. She’s seen nothing but bad things and she has an asthmatic son. So and they’re the ones that are supposed to have it.”
-Mother

“I’ve never had one. I was going to say I personally don’t care about that I don’t want to get the shot honestly.”
-Woman

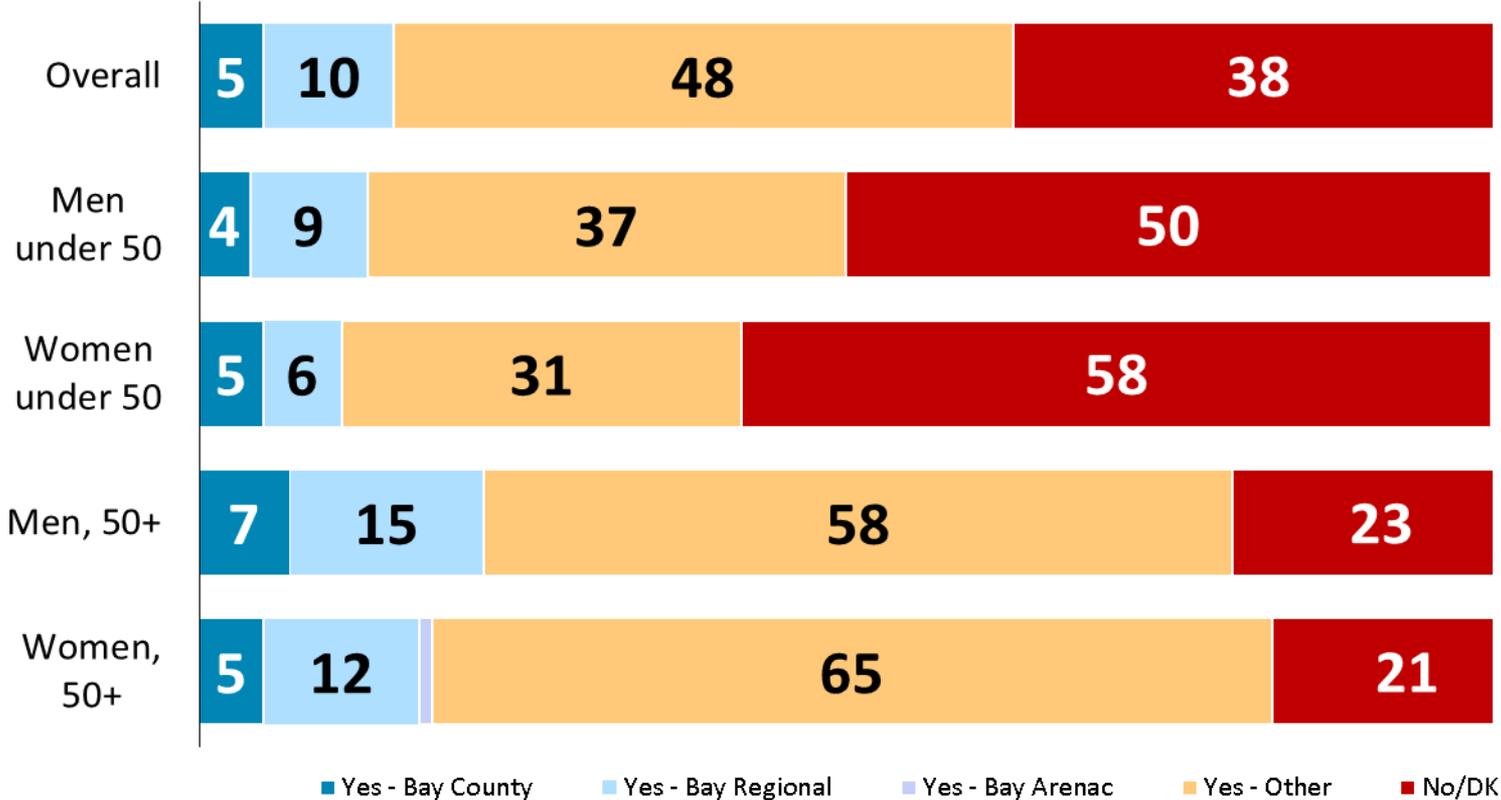
“I think it’s good if you’re older.”
-Mother

“And I think the idea of the flu shots and the importance of that is that we need to be more informed on that. For instance, I have two kids in the house and only one child got a flu shot and why is that? Because one happened to be with us when we got our flu shots at Rite Aid you know.”
-Mother

- One focus group participant reported that even her sister who works as a nurse doesn’t believe flu shots are good.
- Some just see no reason why they need one if they are healthy.
- Flu shots are associated more with at-risk populations for some.
- Even among those that do get flu shots, they are not a high priority.

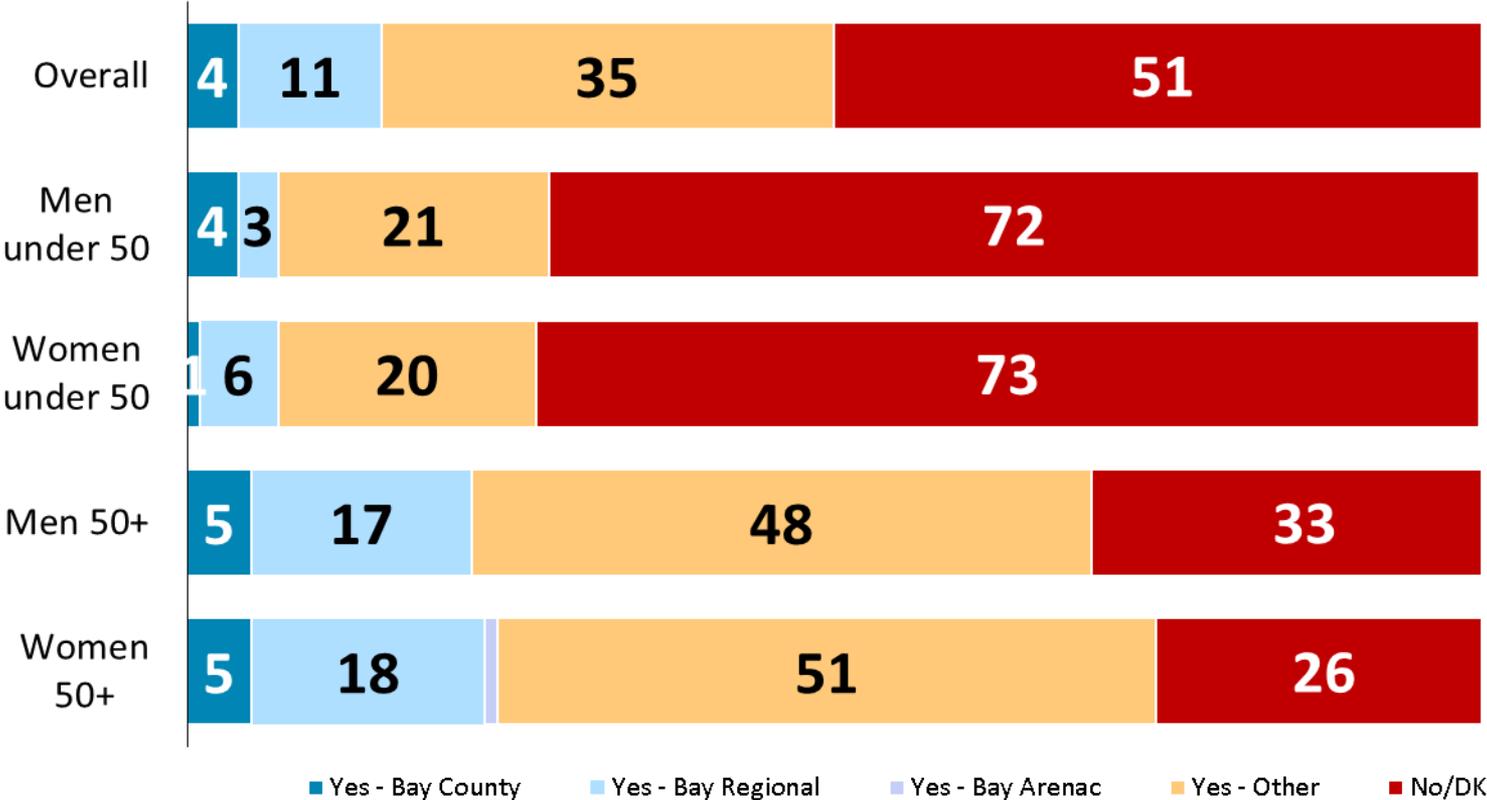
Nearly 4 in 10 residents report not having a blood pressure screening in the past 12 months, including 58% of women under 50.

Blood Pressure Screening in past 12 months?



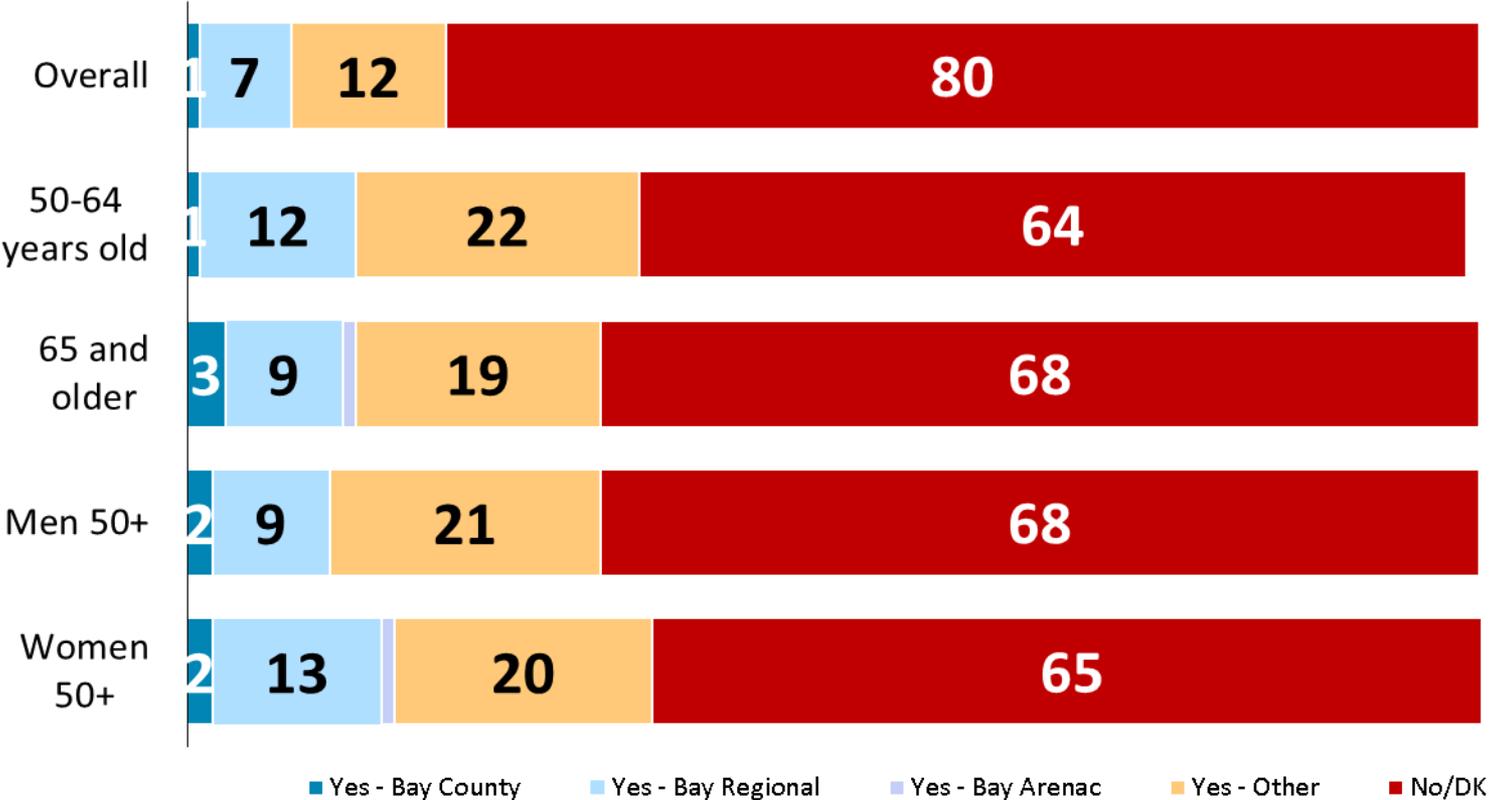
Half of Bay County residents have not had a cholesterol screening in the past 12 months, including the vast majority of men and women under 50 years old.

Cholesterol Screening in past 12 months?



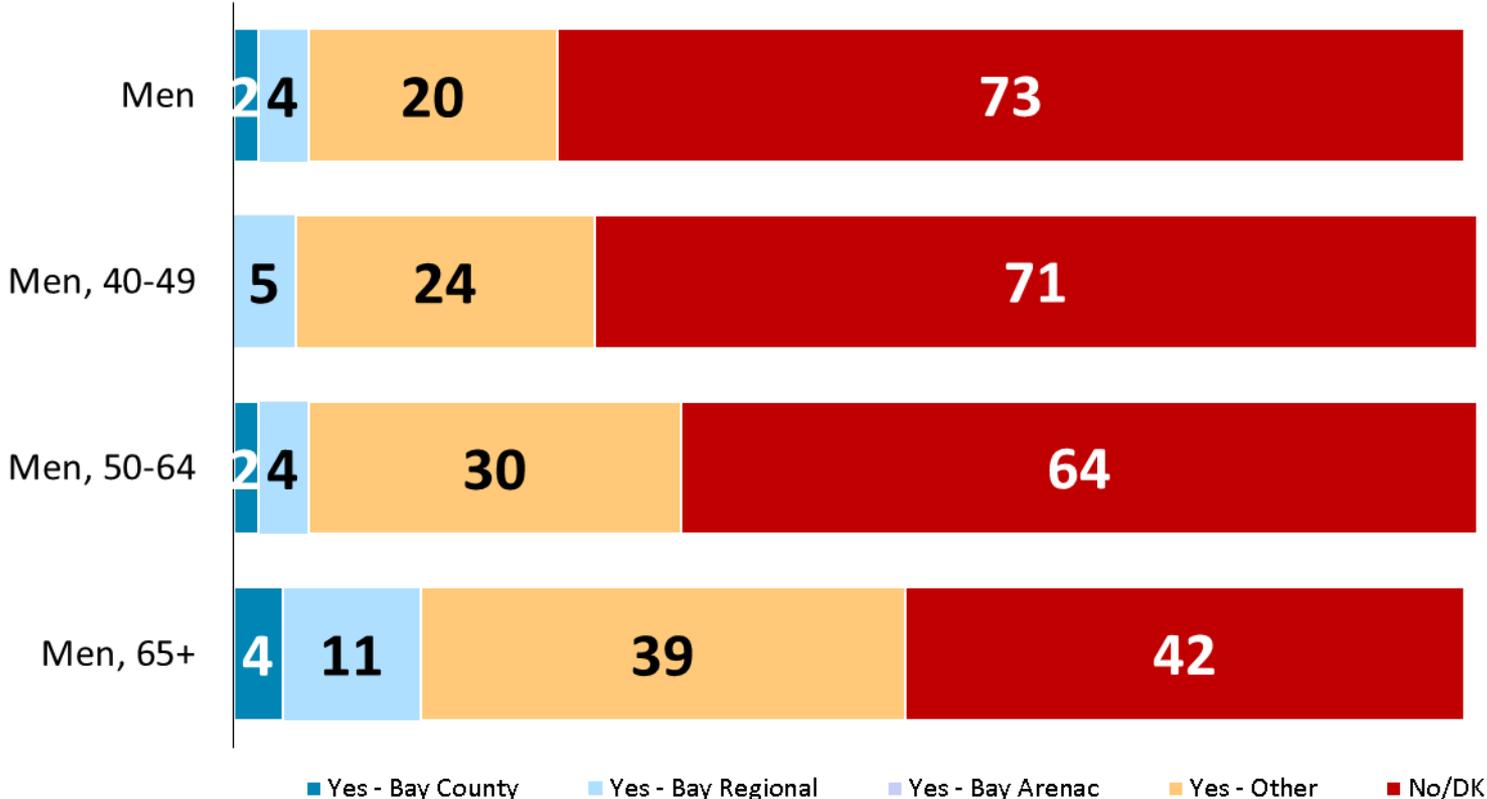
Two-thirds of residents over age 50 say they have not had a colonoscopy or colon cancer screening within the past 12 months.

Colonoscopy/Colon Cancer Screening in past 12 months?



Seven in 10 men 40-49 and 64% of men 50-64 report that they have not had a prostate exam in the past 12 months.

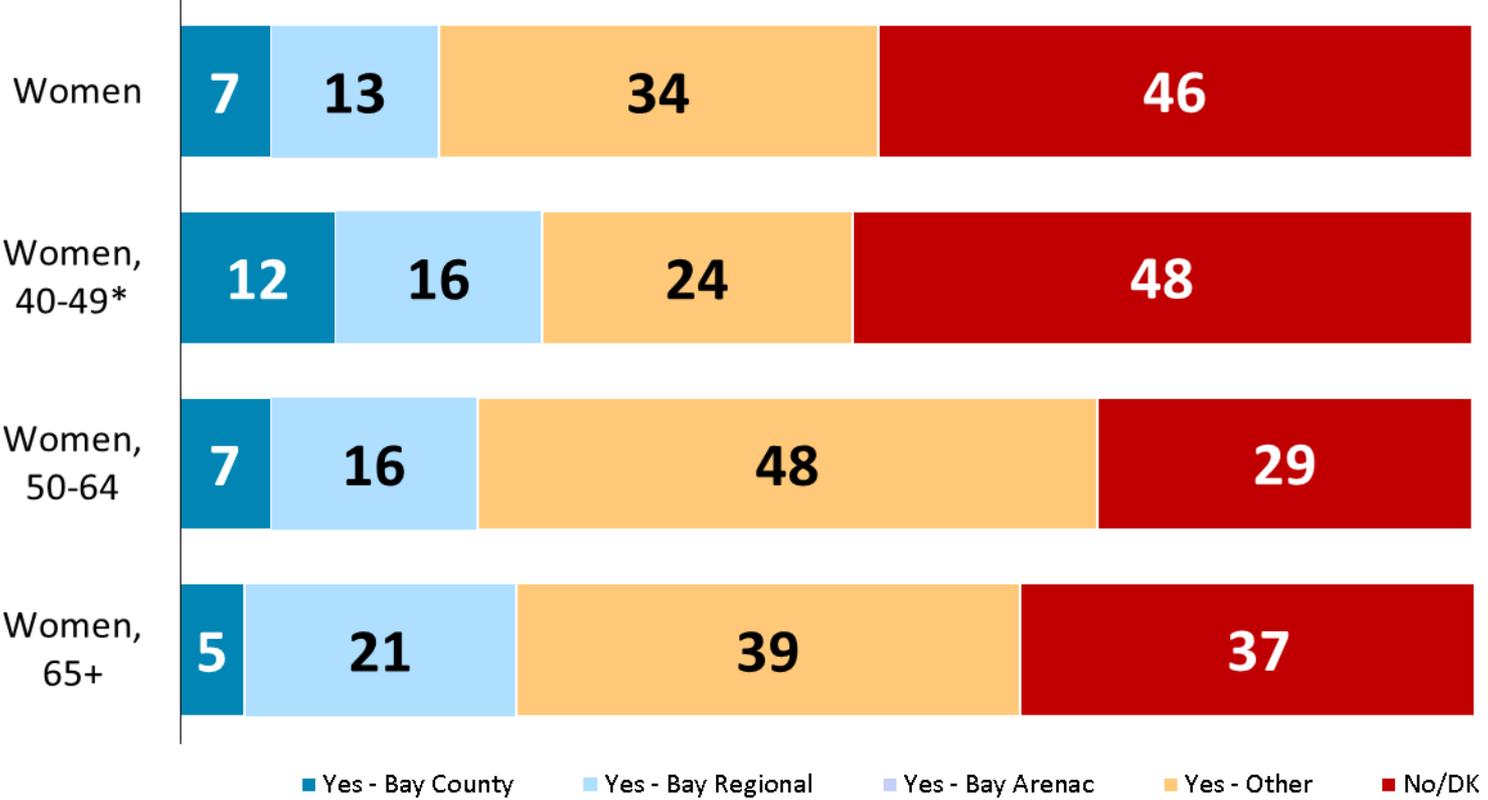
Prostate Exam in past 12 months?



In the past 12 months, which of the following preventive services have you had?
 [IF YES] Where did you receive this service?

Nearly 30% of women 50-64 say they have not had a mammogram within the past 12 months, while 37% of women 65 years or old say the same.

Mammogram/Breast Cancer Screening in past 12 months?

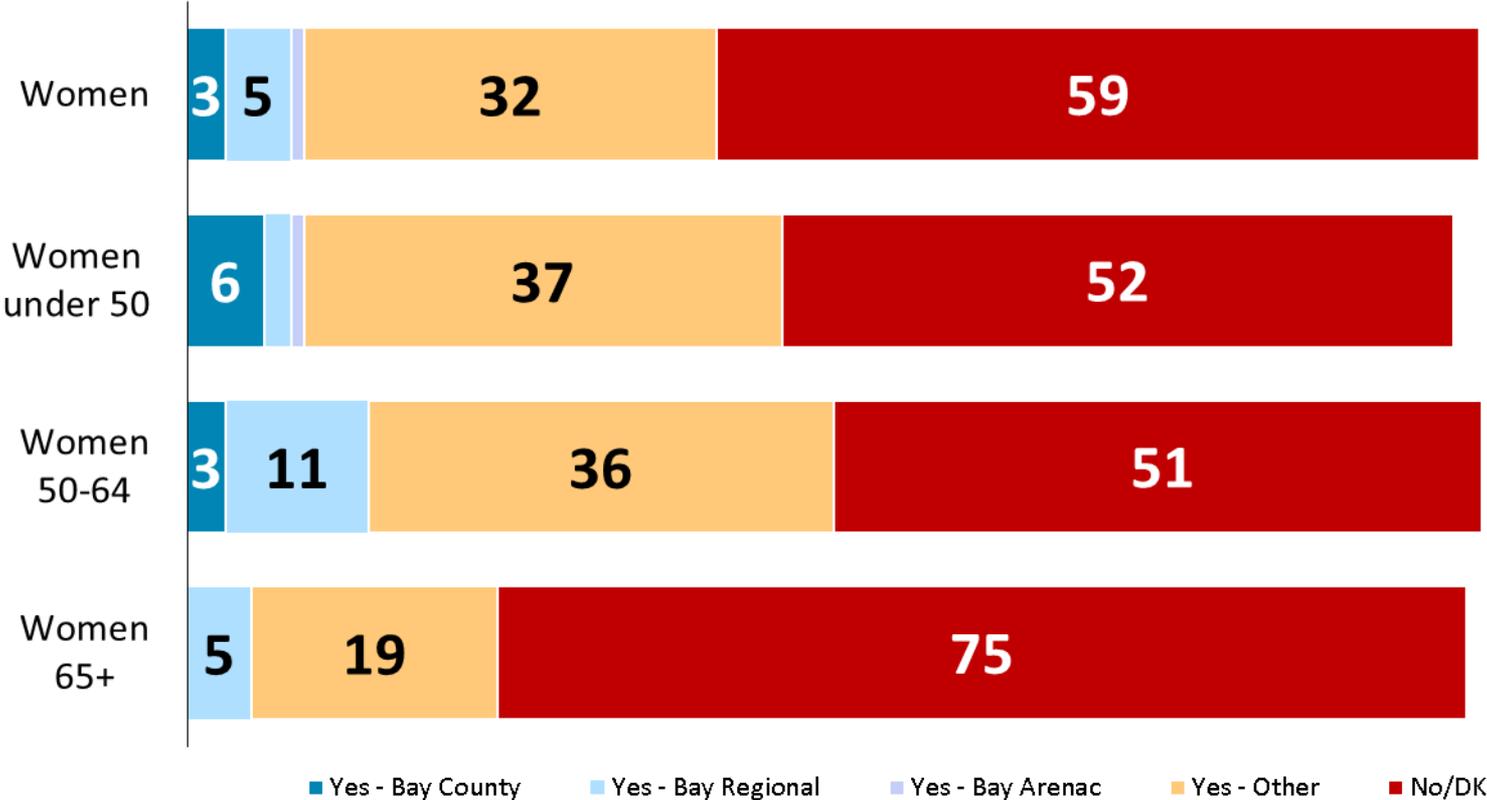


*Small N Size

In the past 12 months, which of the following preventive services have you had?
 [IF YES] Where did you receive this service?

Nearly 6 in 10 women say they have not had a pap smear or pelvic exam in the past 12 months, including 52% of women under 50 years old.

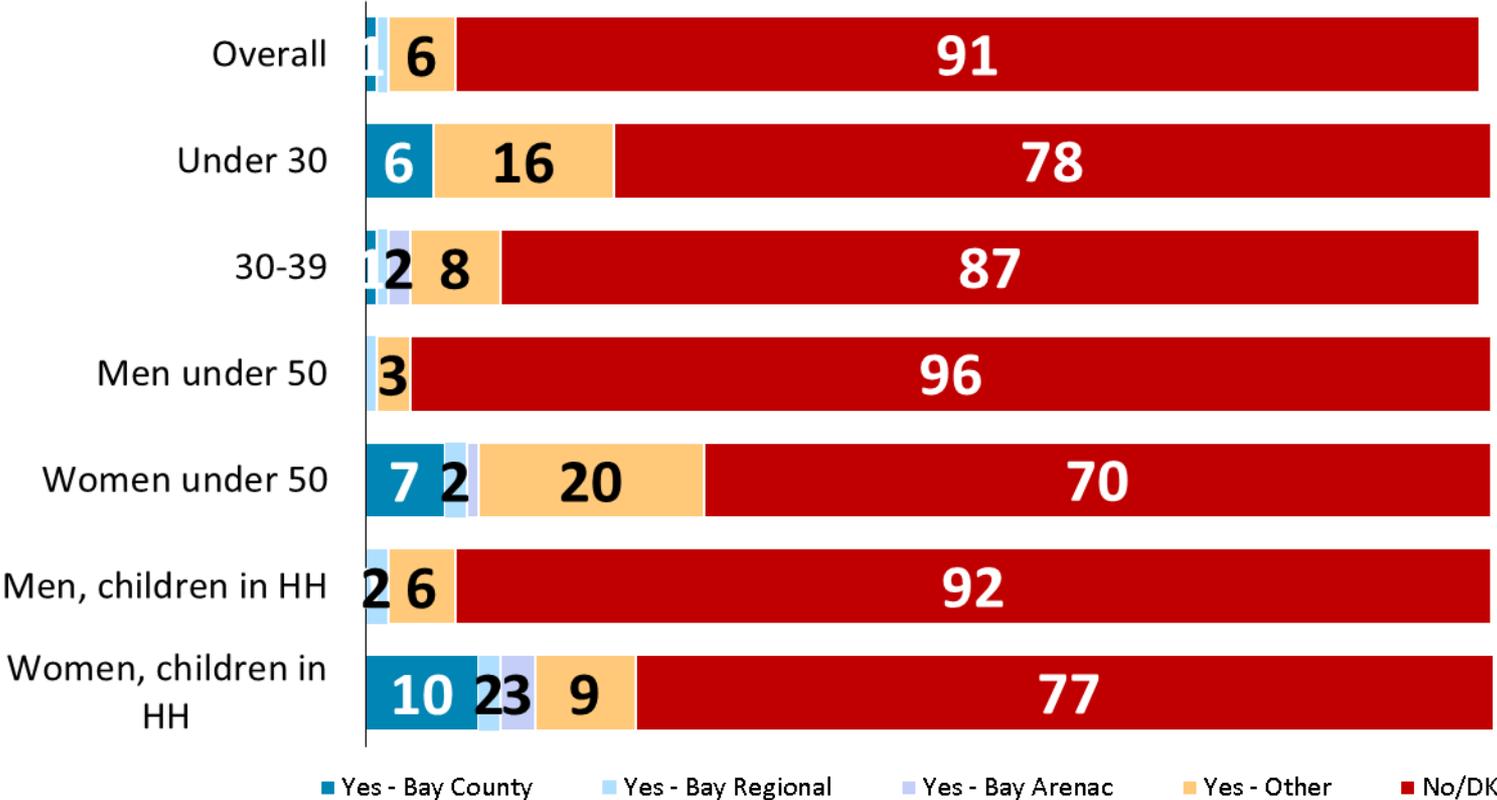
Pap Smear/Pelvic Exam in past 12 months?



In the past 12 months, which of the following preventive services have you had?
 [IF YES] Where did you receive this service?

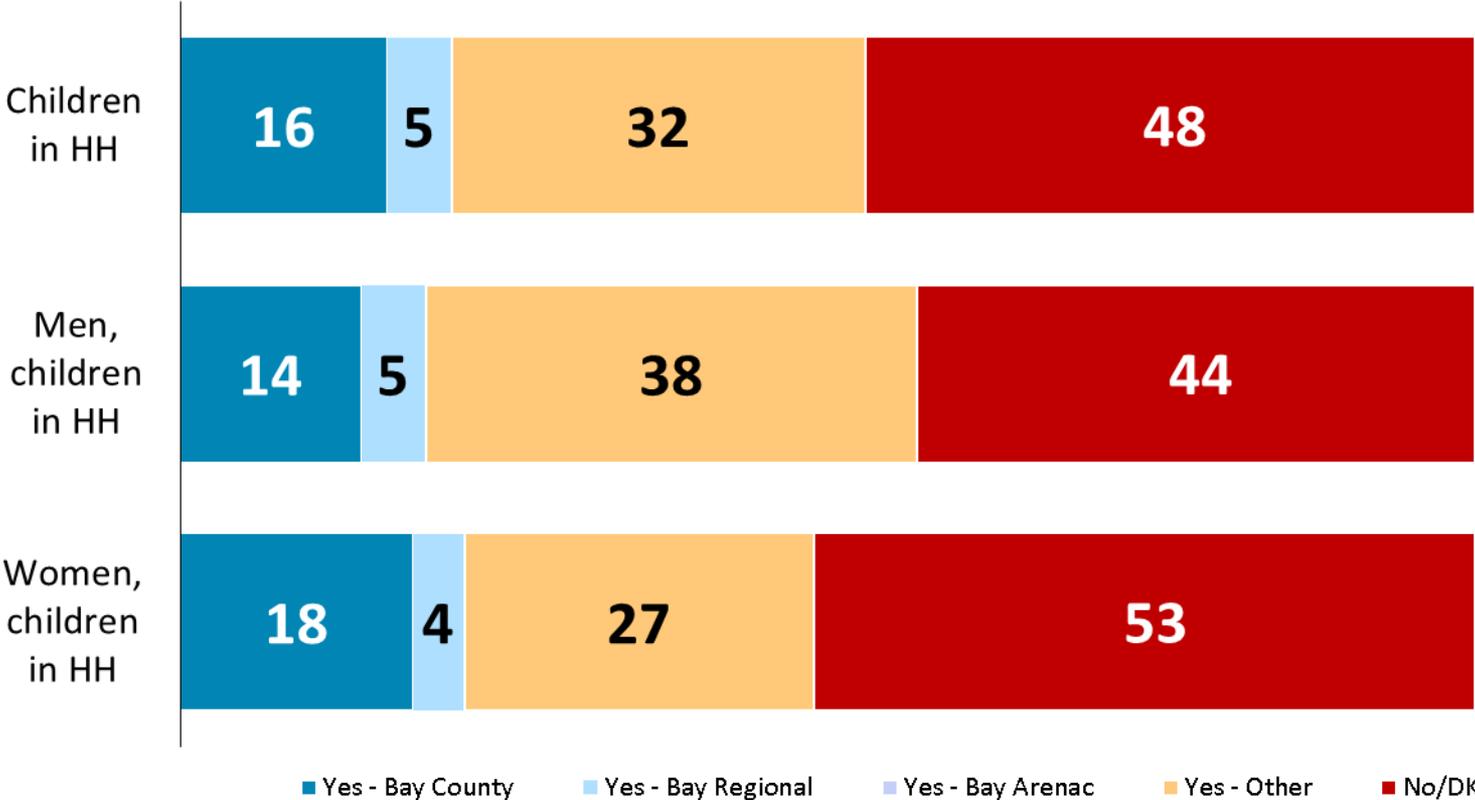
Mothers with children are more likely to receive birth control services from Bay County than other women.

Birth Control in past 12 months?



Two in 10 (21%) parents have used Bay County services to get vaccinations for their children, but nearly half of parents have not obtained a vaccination for their children in the past year.

Vaccination for your children in past 12 months?



In the past 12 months, which of the following preventive services have you had?
 [IF YES] Where did you receive this service?

While many residents in focus groups say they stay on top of preventive care for themselves and their families, others also acknowledge that they don't always keep a regular schedule.

“My dentist happens to be closed on the one day that is the easiest for me to get out so I know, instead of every six months it winds up getting extended a lot more than that sometimes.”

-Man

“It's usually work-related...With everything always being open till 5 o'clock and you work till 5 it makes it a little bit difficult.”

-Mother

“Yeah I go to the dentist once a year for myself, everybody else goes to the dentist um when they get their yearly checkups.”

-Father

- Scheduling issues can result in delayed check-ups. Dental appointments are a lower priority for some.
- Some allow work or other conflicts to get in the way of scheduled preventive care appointments. This is more likely to get in the way of an appointment for a parent, rather than their children.
- For some, visiting the dentist twice per year is not the norm.

A tier of care within families exists with children at the top, most likely to receive regular preventive care.

“For my children we get you know regular checkups; you know the yearly and all that good stuff so it’s the dentist and the eye doctors, but for myself it’s not really a priority.”

-Father

“As a parent I would have to say that you really don’t think of yourself. Your top priority is just your children. You really don’t even think about yourself as number one ‘cause you have your children.”

-Mother

“My kids get a lot more attention and I think I get the least amount of attention.”

-Father

“My husband is, doesn’t go for a yearly checkup, I mean every couple of years usually and the dentist for sure once, but tries to hit it twice, but definitely not the doctors really like the rest of us.”

-Mother

- Most parents say dental check-ups and physical examinations are routine for their children.
- Parents acknowledge that they put their children first, with preventive care for the adults in the family more likely to slip.
- In families, moms are also more likely to keep a regular preventive care schedule than dads.

However, even for children, some parents acknowledge that as their child gets older, regular doctor appointments are more likely to slip.

“I really think that it sort of like wanes off. When a baby’s born then the doctor’s office makes sure you come in every, you know three weeks, six weeks, twelve weeks ... then as the child gets older and older it just sort of like, okay you’re good, you’re not sick today and then we don’t reschedule one for next year or six months and pretty soon it’s you’re only coming when you’re sick.”
-Woman

“For my boys I don’t have a family doctor. I’m bouncing from doctor to doctor because no one doctor has made a real impression on me where I want to say I want to stay there with my child. And I’m very fortunate. My boys are very healthy so I take them on an average of every year and a half to every two years for a physical when needed.”
-Mother

“Well they weren’t accepting new patients anywhere in Bay City, in Bay County for oh about six months.”
-Mother

- The attention to a regular schedule correlates with a child’s age for some. Parents are more likely to skip or delay preventive care for their teenagers than their toddlers.
- One mother’s reason for not having a strict schedule of annual physicals for her sons was that they are both healthy and she hasn’t found a doctor she likes.
- Along with the quality of doctor, finding a doctor that is accepting new patients can be a challenge that makes it harder to have an annual schedule for physicals.

Though many say their family stays up to date with prevention, they all believe that significant portions of their community are lacking in dental exams and yearly physical examinations.

“They were higher than I thought they would be too.”
-Father

“Well I agree with Angela. I think they were high. I was kind of surprised...Especially some of the kids I see with their teeth.”
-Father

“Giving them all the means and they still won’t go. And that’s a very low percentage. But then you throw the economic means, transportation, you know...but willingness to get up out of your chair and go do it; take care of somebody you know. I just think that’s high.”
-Father

“I brought all my kids in. Every single one of them had at least four cavities and they had just been on the dental bus.”
-Mother

- Hearing that 74% of parents in Bay County report that their children have seen a dentist in the past year, focus group participants believe the actual rate is even lower.
- A reported 78% of parents taking their children to annual physical examinations was also met with skepticism.
- The dental bus at schools is a way to expand dental care, but there are concerns about the quality of care it offers.

Residents also acknowledge that when costs get in the way of care, prevention is the first type of care to skip.

“I’m one of them people that fall right in the crack. I don’t qualify for My Child, I don’t qualify for Medicaid and I don’t have insurance.”
-Woman

“I don’t have insurance, that’s probably why it’s not really priority for myself, but my children do.”
-Father

“Can we get health department people to come in so that we can refer the kids that we know have unmet needs...It’s not gonna cost you hardly a thing or a thing.”
-Teacher/Administrator

- Some say their income level makes it difficult to afford preventive care, but is too high to qualify for assistance.
- Informing those without insurance about services available to them could be an important part of improving health in Bay County.
- Cost can also lead parents to choose their children’s health over their own.
- If cost is a barrier for children, teachers suggest providing care right in the school, with help from the health department.

Triggers are important to remind families they need to go in for check-ups. These include birthdays, school sports schedules, or an empty pill bottle with no refills left.

“Sporting events for kids if they join something new you’ve got to get them a physical.”
-Father

“I run out of my medicine. Oh I’ve got to get more refills. I’ve got to make an appointment.”
Mother

“Just making the next visit appointment, and making the next appointment. You know when you’re there.”
-Mother

“Nope because by the time you make those appointments and you’re six months ahead of time or you’re ---, like I know where I’m gonna be for that day. And that’s kind of, that’s usually when it ends up getting rescheduled.”
-Mother

- Those with children in sports receive a reminder that they need a physical exam before the season starts. In partnership with schools, this may be a good time to emphasize that all children need an exam, not just those in sports.
- The most efficient way seems to be making your next appointment before you leave the doctor’s office during your current appointment.
- On the other hand, some prefer to fit an appointment into their schedule instead of scheduling the rest of their day around an appointment.

Reasons why people may not take preventive steps include costs, fear, time, feelings of invincibility, and laziness.

“Lazy...I’m guilty of that.”
-Father

“Or maybe this idea that we’re invincible and we are invincible (laughter) and we’re gonna be around for a long time. The older I get that changes, I don’t know why.”
-Father

“Cost, if you don’t have health insurance or maybe even transportation.”
-Mother

“Maybe you do have health insurance but the deductible is so much.”
-Father

- Laziness and a sense of invincibility as reasons why someone would skip getting preventive care tended to apply more to men than women or children.
- Cost of course is an issue for some, especially those without insurance.
- However, insurance sometimes is not enough. Deductibles can be cost prohibitive as well.
- In the online survey, 16% of respondents said that costs have prevented them from going to the doctor within the past year.

Starting early is key. Residents think children should learn about prevention from an early age, including education at school.

“Well it starts with being at school for one thing. They’re taking away all their recesses, they don’t have the recesses like we did when we were kids so they took that away. They feed them all that unhealthy fattening food. I mean we’re not really showing our kids much. And then a lot of times parents are too scared to let their kids run around and play because of what media shows all the time.”

-Mother

“But a lot of these children in schools aren’t being taught and maybe a nutritionist in the different schools, you know and each child spends so much time with that nutritionist in a given year whether it be an hour or two hours.

You know make that available to them.”

-Mother

“Maybe teaching them to cook and bringing back the Home EC and stuff like that that they learned in middle school might help.”

-Mother

- Schools have a role to play in keeping children healthy, including providing healthy lunches and maintaining recess time.
- Some like the idea of a nutritionist coming into the schools to teach children healthy habits.
- Even basic cooking skills and an appreciation for fresh fruits and vegetables are lacking. Parents may not have the skills needed to teach their children.

Looking at a series of scenarios involving why one may not get preventive care, one with a mom skipping appointments because her kids seem healthy and another with a dad who lost his job and insurance ring true to focus group participants.

“I think number four (Nancy scenario) is myself ‘cause my kids are healthy. I don’t take them to a yearly family doctor but I take them to the dental twice a year.”
-Mother

“Cause I thought he’s either too prideful or he doesn’t want to take advantage of the system.”
-Father

“It’s embarrassing, too. So you’ve been a proud working person and you’re working hard and all of a sudden you’re [unable to provide].”
-Father

- **Scenario:** Nancy is 30 years old. She had been good about taking her children in for yearly physical examinations when they were younger, but they are 6 and 8 years old, doing well in school and seem healthy. She has no plans to take them in for a check up this year.
- **Scenario:** Carl is 45 years old. He was laid off a year and a half ago and lost his health insurance. He hasn’t been able to take his 13 and 15 year old daughters to a doctor or dentist since he lost his job. He is not sure how much the missed appointments would have cost, but is sure they would be too expensive. A friend mentioned he could get information from the Health Department, but he hasn’t checked it out yet.

Postcards from Focus Group Participants on Prevention

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." This old adage applies to you. Diet, sleep, physical activity and regular doctor/dental visits are very important. Don't wait until you are experiencing problems.

Place Stamp Here

To: Student

From: Your Teacher

Getting preventive care can detect problems early and prevent major problems. It may seem like a waste of time but will be good in the long run and may even save your life.

Place Stamp Here

To: Friend

From: Adult

It is imperative you get preventive care for your child. it is the best way to catch any early onset issues, to teach him how to take care of himself, and give him the greatest opportunity to grow as a healthy adult. Preventive health care shows that you care.

Place Stamp Here

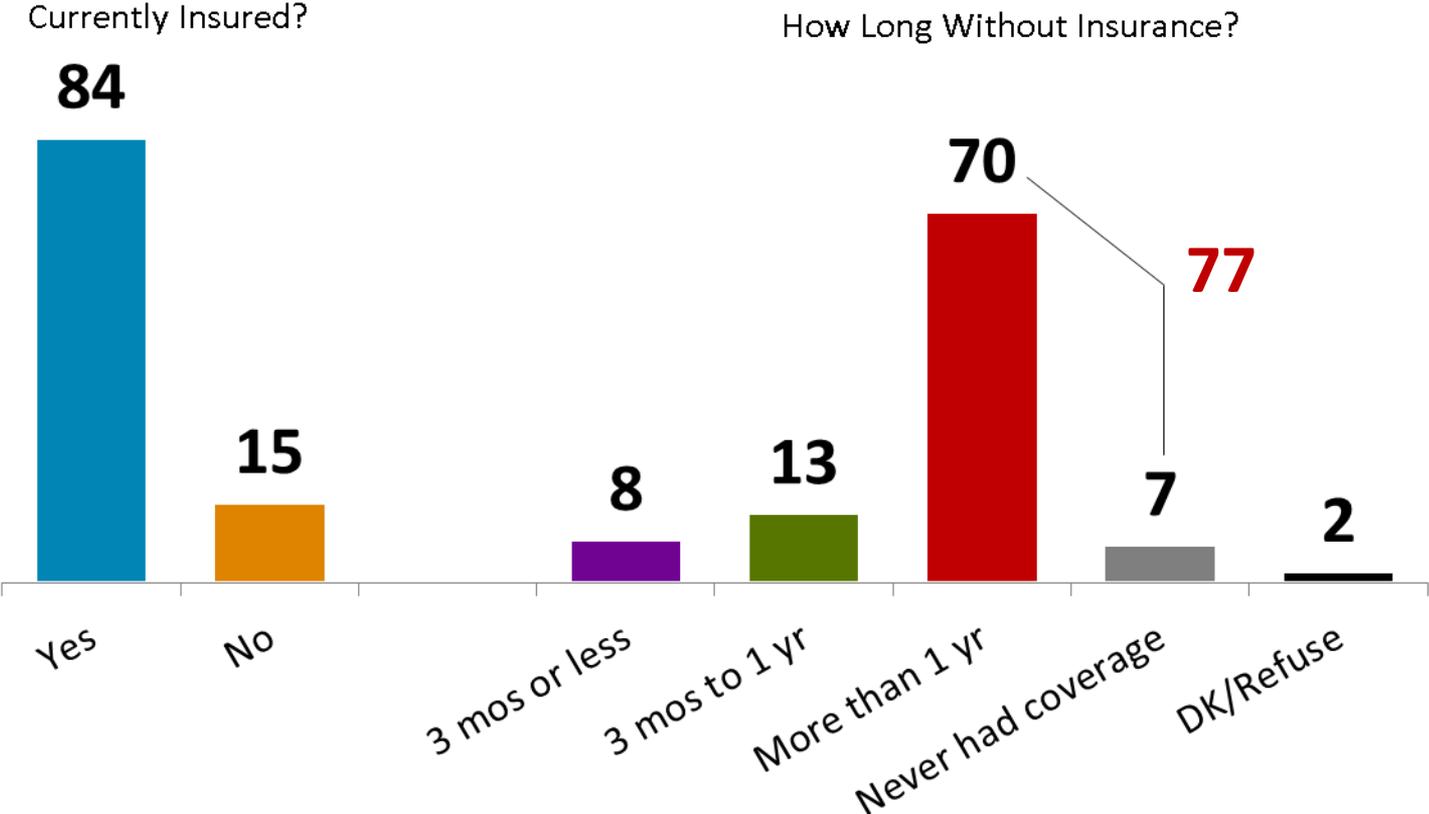
To: Friend with children

From: Parent

Access to Health Care Coverage

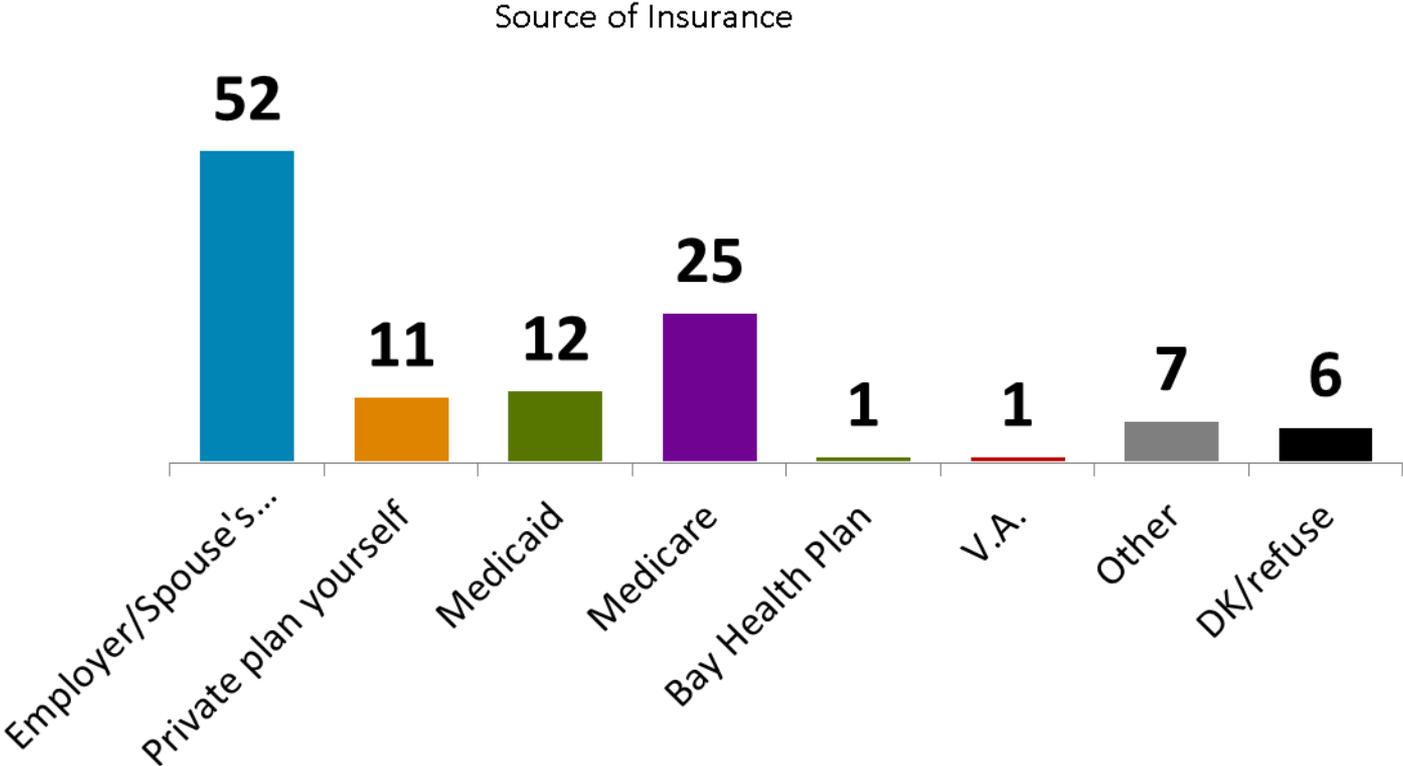
Most residents have health insurance. Among those that do not (15%), nearly 8 in 10 have been without insurance for more than 1 year. Among those with insurance (84%), only a few report instances of being denied care due to problems with their insurance.

Of the 15% of residents currently without health insurance, 77% of them have been without it for more than 1 year.



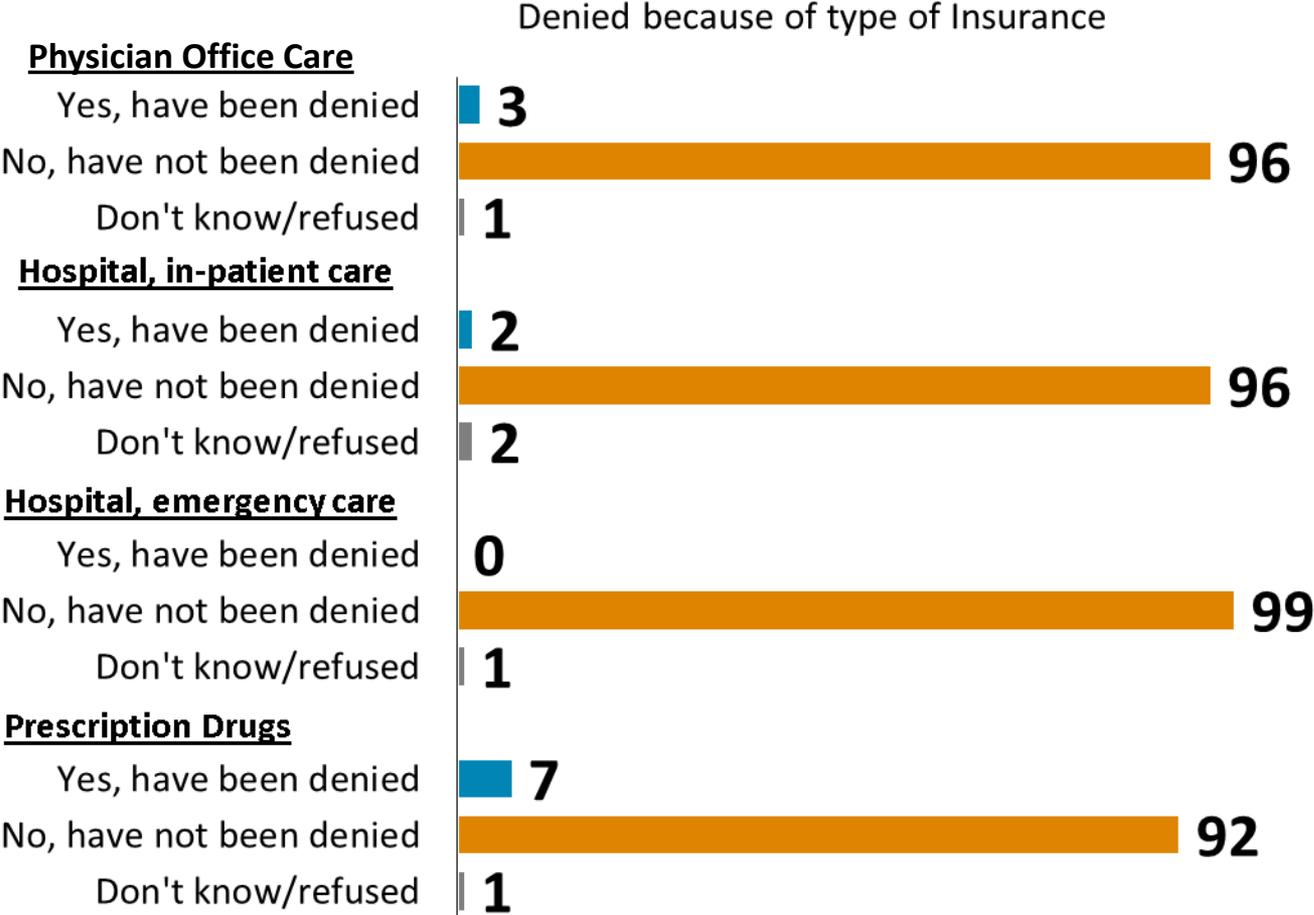
Do you currently have health insurance?
How long have you been uninsured?

Of the 84% with health insurance, half get it through their employer or their spouse's employer. Medicare and Medicaid cover more than one-third of Bay County adults.



Where do you receive your health insurance coverage from? Are you covered through your employer, through a private plan you pay for yourself, Medicaid, Medicare or are you covered by the Bay Health Plan?

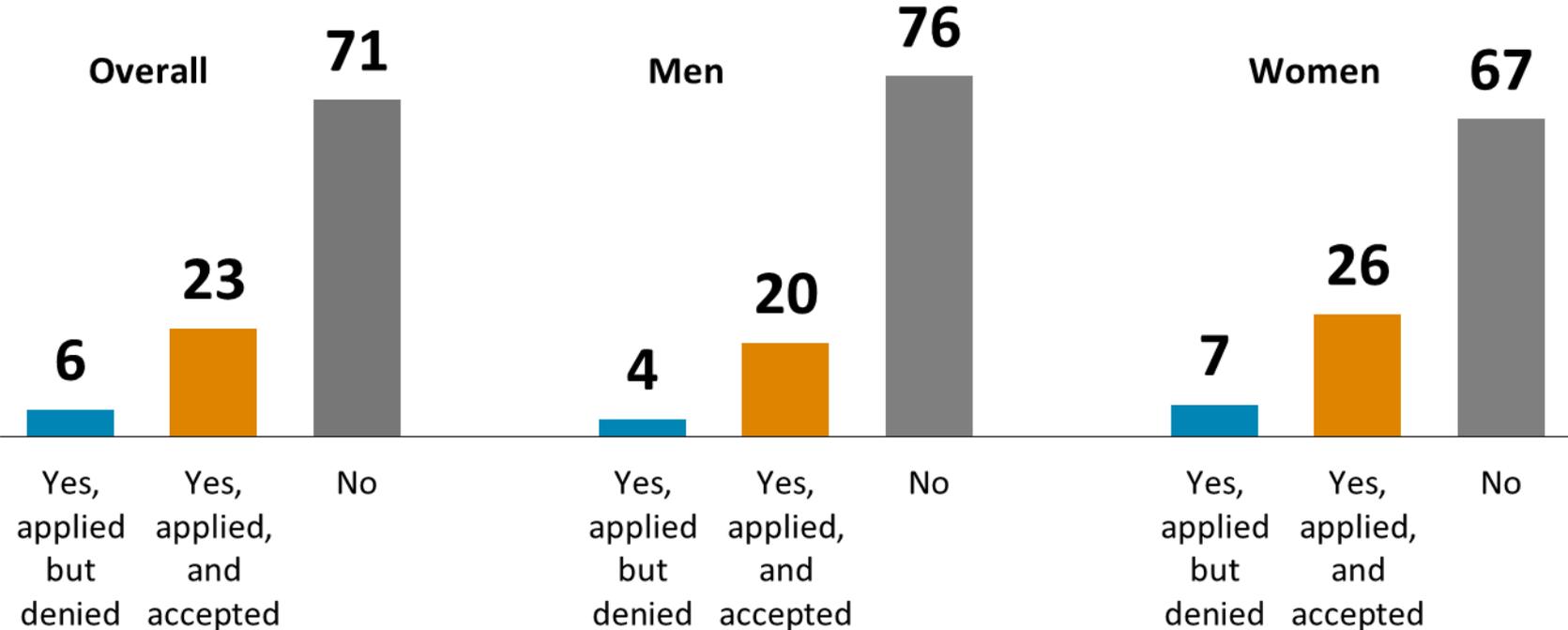
Nearly all report that they have not been denied care due to their insurance, though 7% say they have been denied prescription drugs.



Next, I am going to read a list of different medical services you may have had. For each, please tell me if you have ever been denied that type of service because of the type of insurance you have.

Nearly 3 in 10 residents say they have applied for Medicaid or Medicare disability. Of those, about 1 in 5 say they were denied.

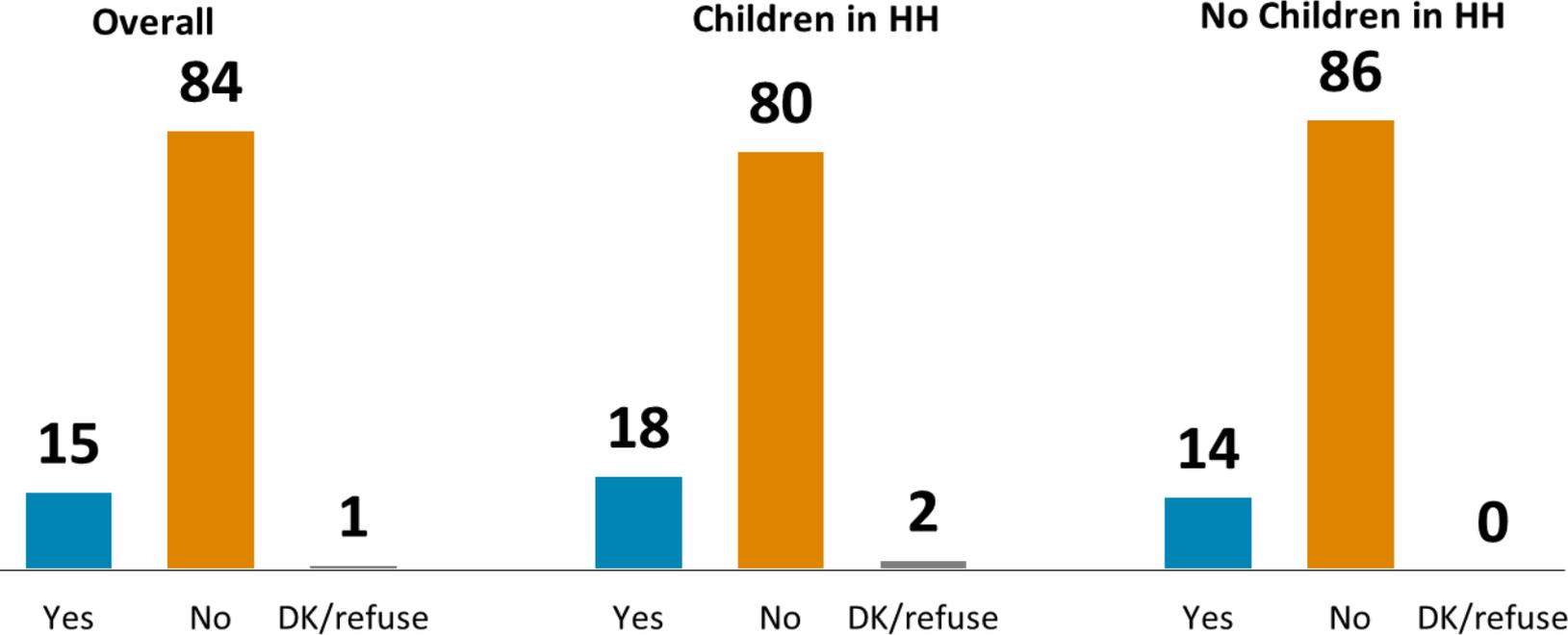
Ever Apply for Medicare Disability or Medicaid?



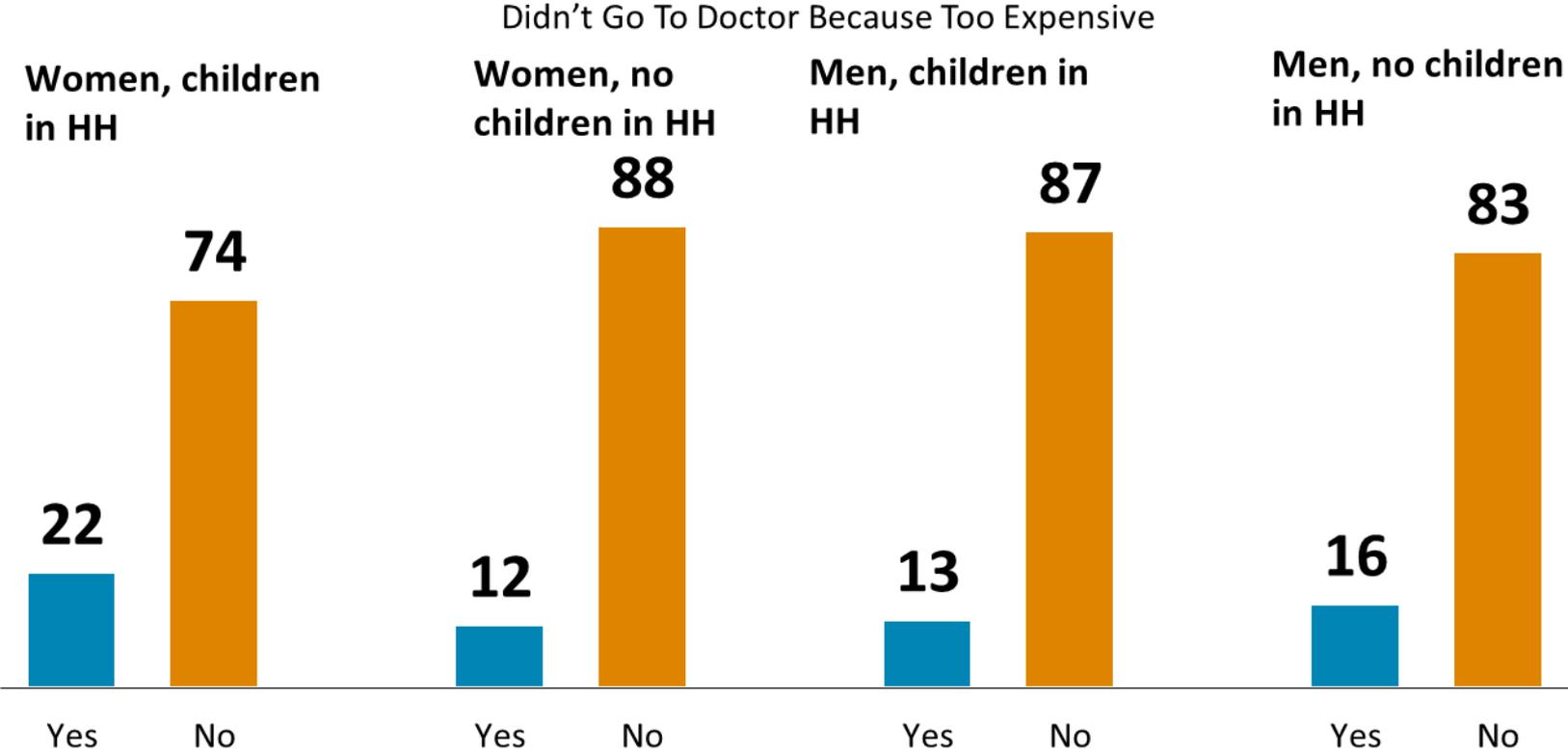
Have you ever applied for Medicare disability or Medicaid?
(IF YES) Were you denied coverage?

Overall, 15% of residents report that there has been a time in the past year that they did not see a doctor because it was too expensive.

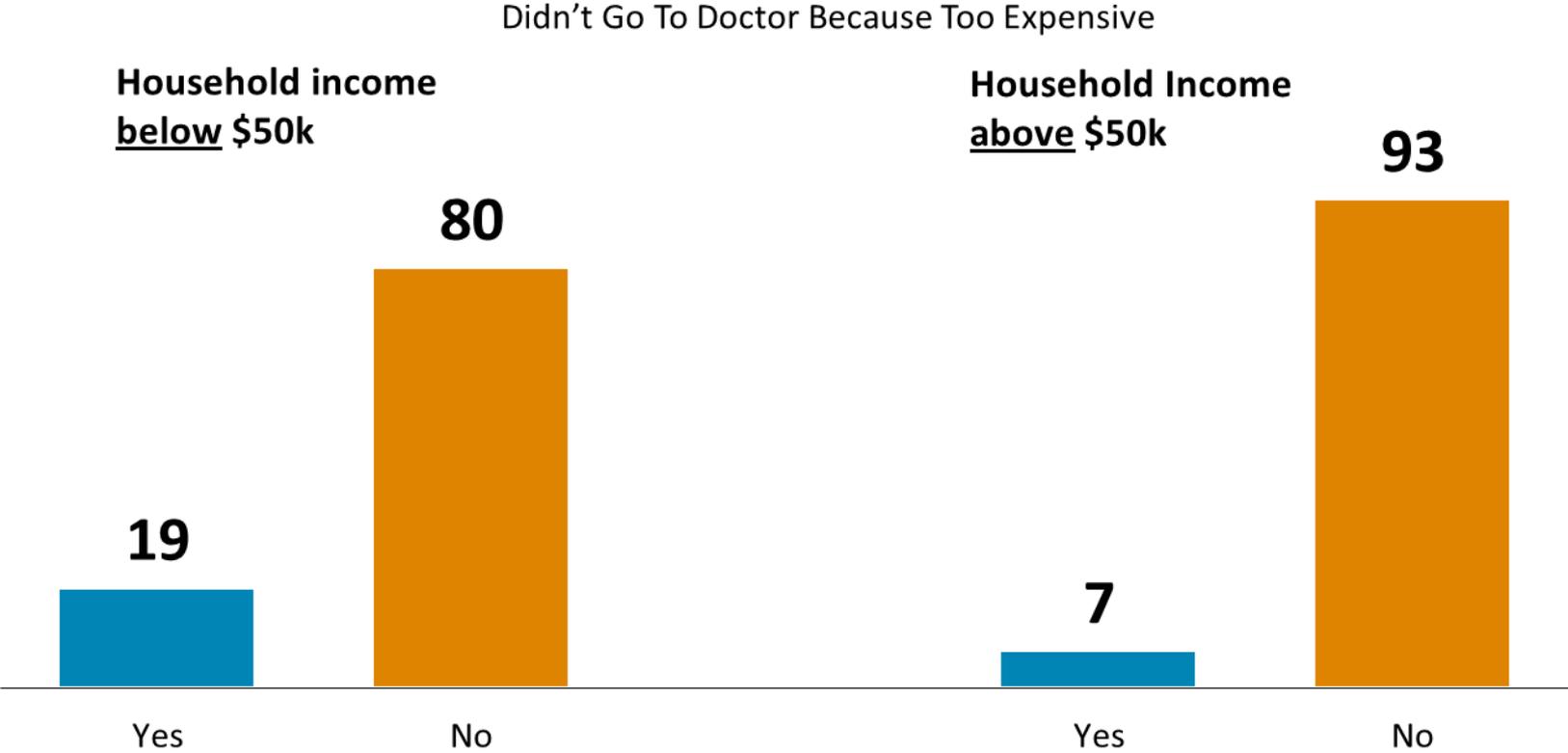
Didn't Go To Doctor Because Too Expensive



More than 1 in 5 (22%) women with children say there has been a time within the past 12 months that they did not go to a doctor because it was too expensive.



Residents in households with incomes under \$50,000 report not seeing a doctor because it was too expensive nearly 3 times more than residents in households with incomes above \$50,000.

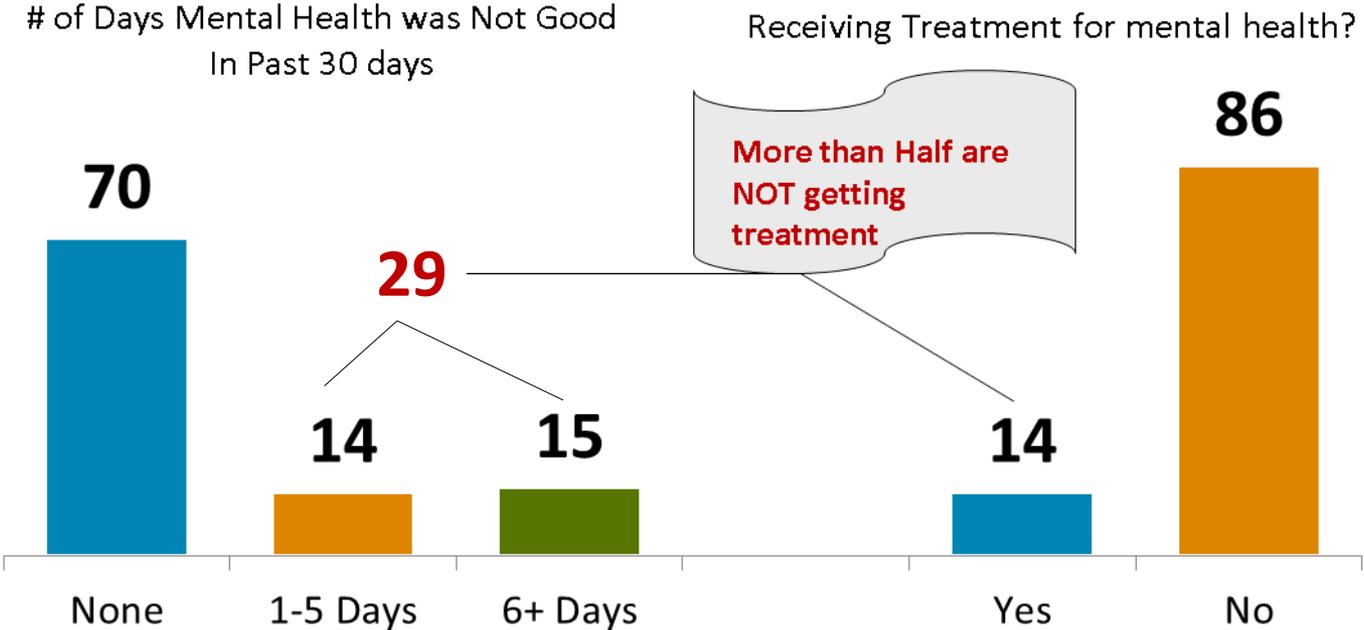


Thinking about the past 12 months, has there ever been a time when you or your children needed to see a doctor, but didn't because it was too expensive?

Mental Health

Three in 10 residents report that their mental health has not been good at least 1 day in the past 30, including 15% who say it has not been good on 6 or more days.

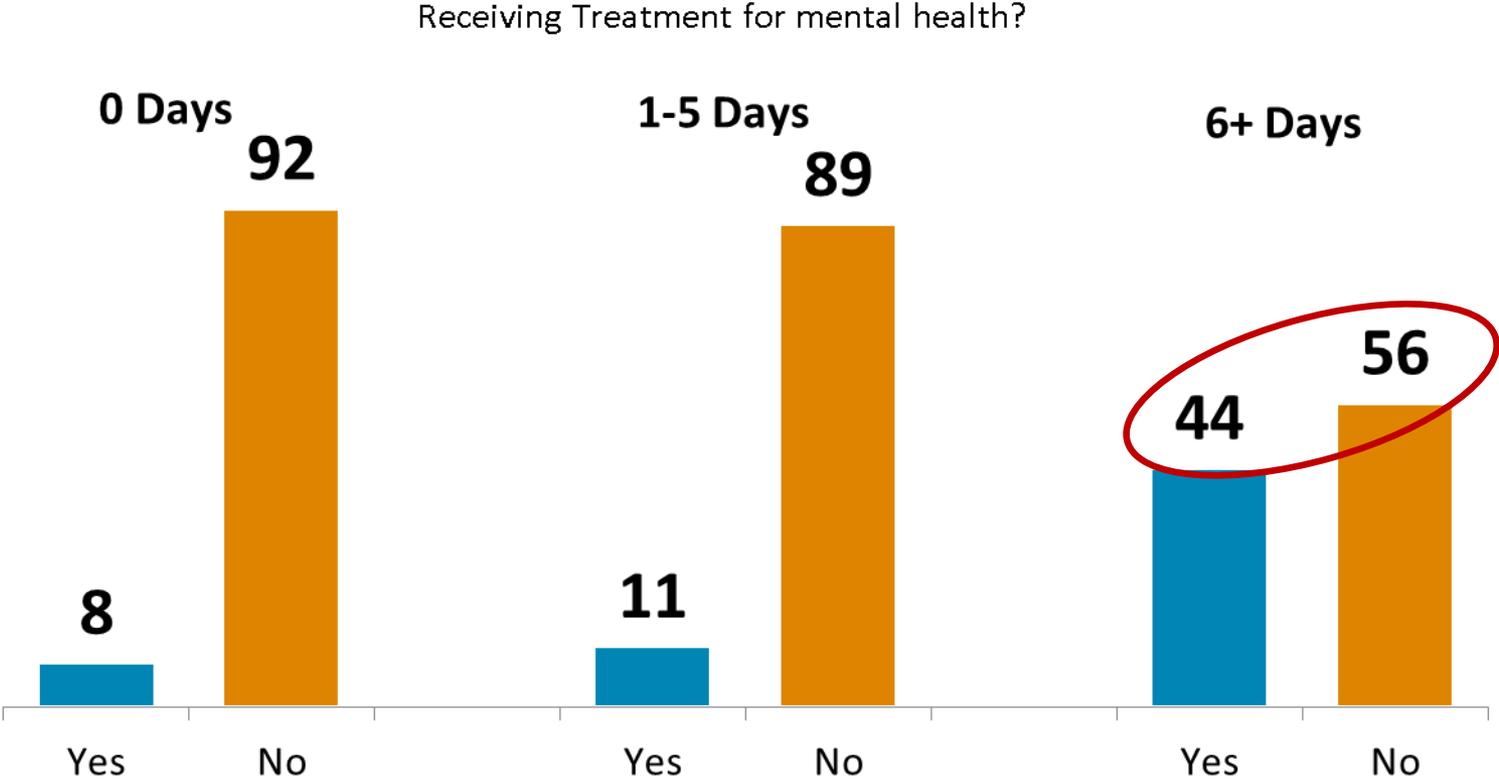
Nearly 3 in 10 residents say their mental health has been not good at least 1 day in the last 30, including 15% who say 6 or more days. Just 14% say they are receiving treatment for mental health.



Thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, depression, and problems with emotions, for how many days during the past 30 days was your mental health not good?

Are you now taking medicine or receiving treatment from a doctor or other health professional for any type of mental health condition or emotional problem?

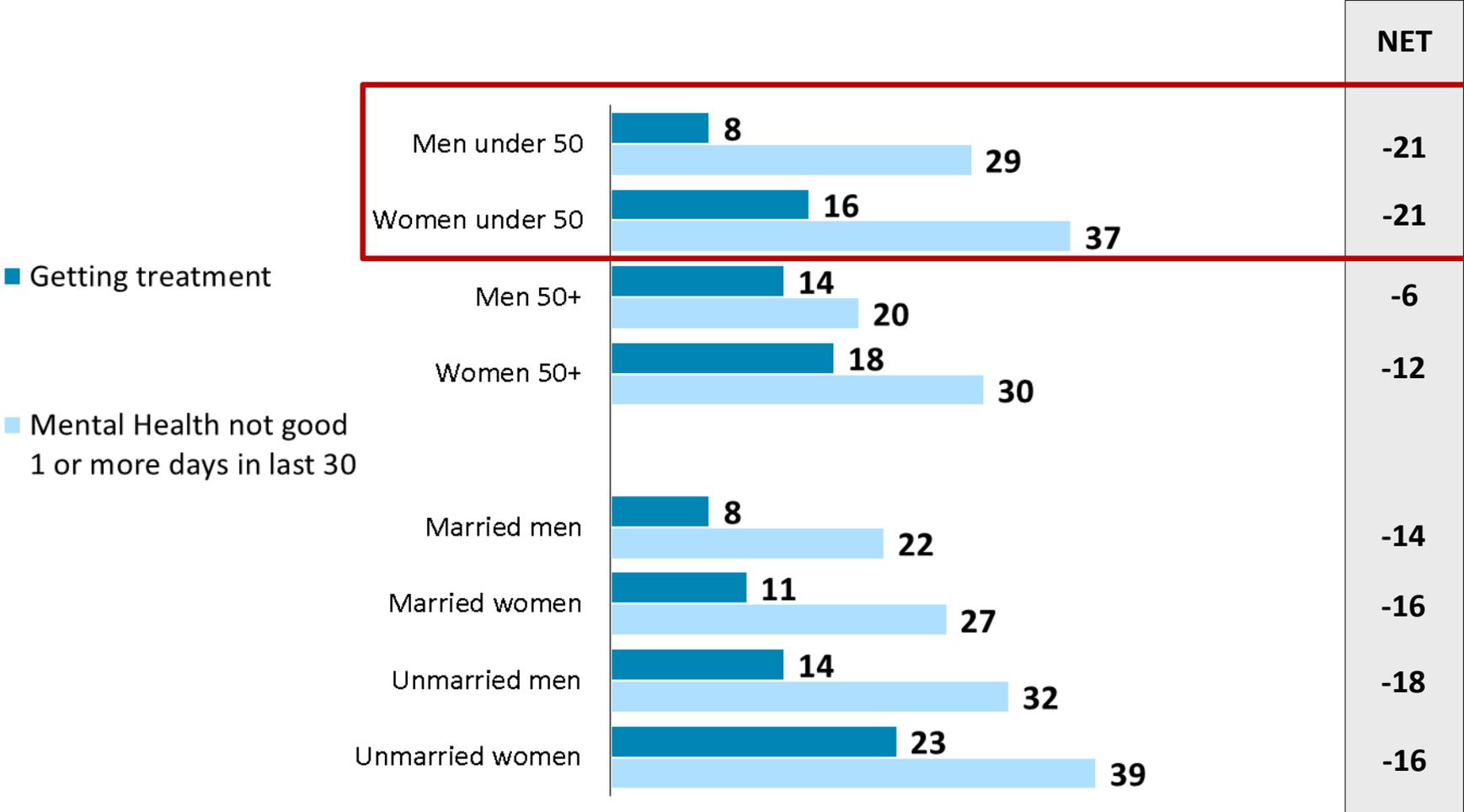
Among residents who have had 6 or more days with mental health that is not good, 44% say they are receiving treatment.



Thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, depression, and problems with emotions, for how many days during the past 30 days was your mental health not good?

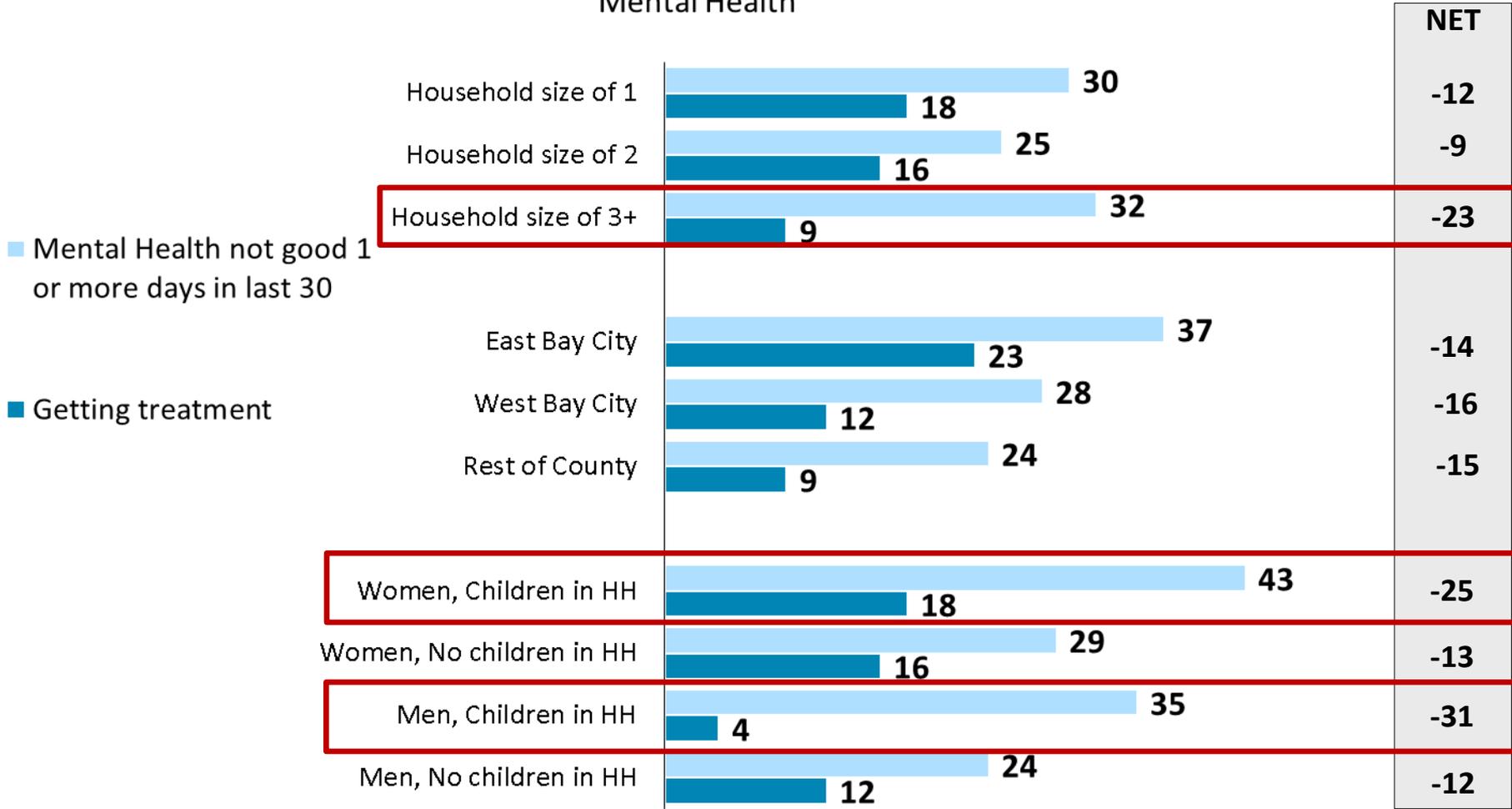
Are you now taking medicine or receiving treatment from a doctor or other health professional for any type of mental health condition or emotional problem?

Nearly 4 in 10 women under 50 say their mental health has not been good at least 1 day in the past 30, while only 16% of women under 50 have received any treatment for mental health.



Parents with children report higher numbers of days with mental health that is not good, including 43% of moms who say they have had mental health that was not good on at least 1 day in the past 30.

Mental Health



Bay residents in need of mental health care and other specialty care face problems of costs, access and quality.

“From everyone I have talked to, this area is lacking a severe amount of psychologists, psychiatrists.”
-Mother

“I have a friend who her child is disabled because they have seizures, etc. and she’s paying thousands, probably five to six thousand dollars a month just for medication and doctor visits out-of-pocket and she can’t get disability.”
-Mother

“They need more communication between the two. My wife’s in adult foster care and that’s one of her biggest complaints is that the psychiatrist doles out these meds and then the primary care physician deals out these meds and they’re not talking to each other.”
-Father

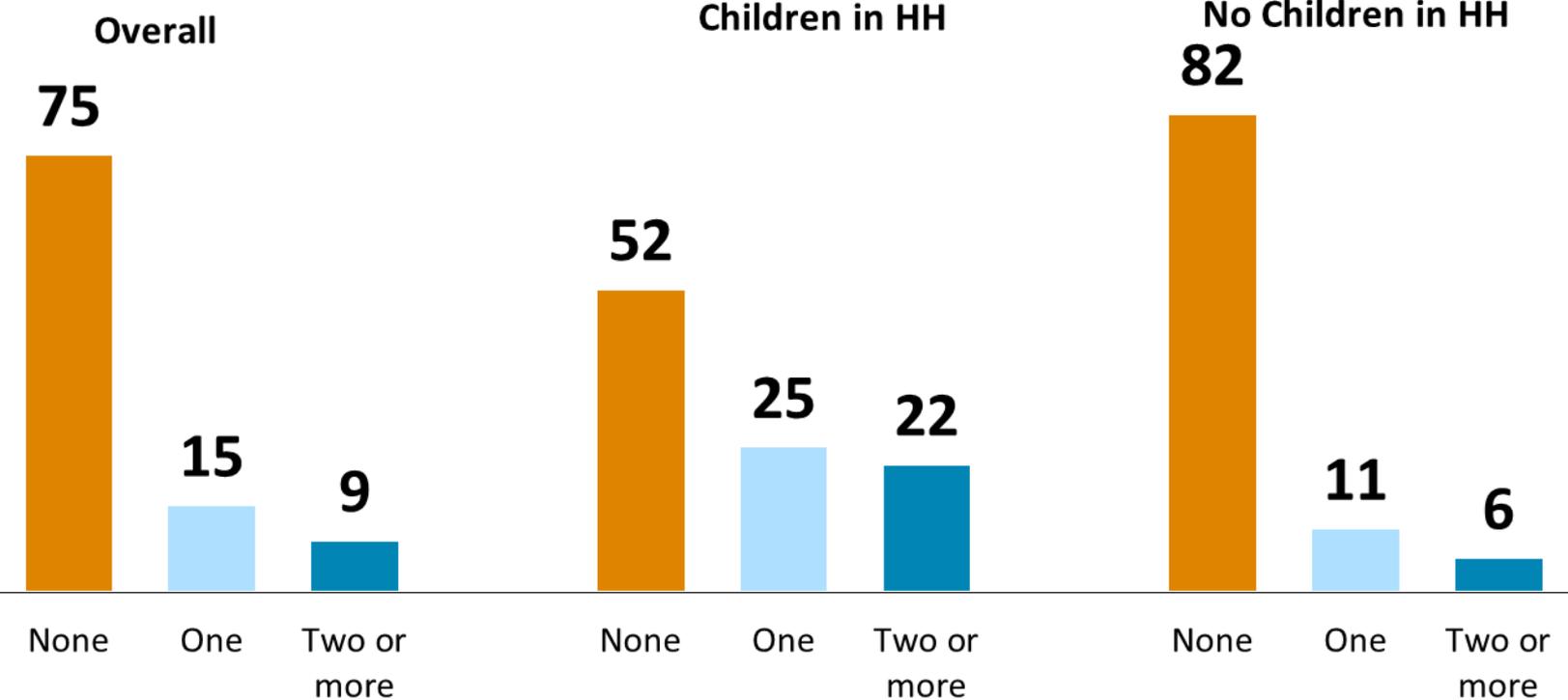
- Many perceive a lack of qualified physicians in Bay County to treat and diagnose mental health problems.
- Cost is also an issue, as mental health care and other specialty care is less likely to be covered by insurance.
- Coordinated care can be a problem as well; residents want to be sure their doctors are talking to each other and not all prescribing medications without regard for one another.

Emergency Room Visits

Parents are much more likely than non-parents to have visited an Emergency Room within the past 6 months and most use Bay Regional, though the choice of ERs is often dependent on where the resident lives.

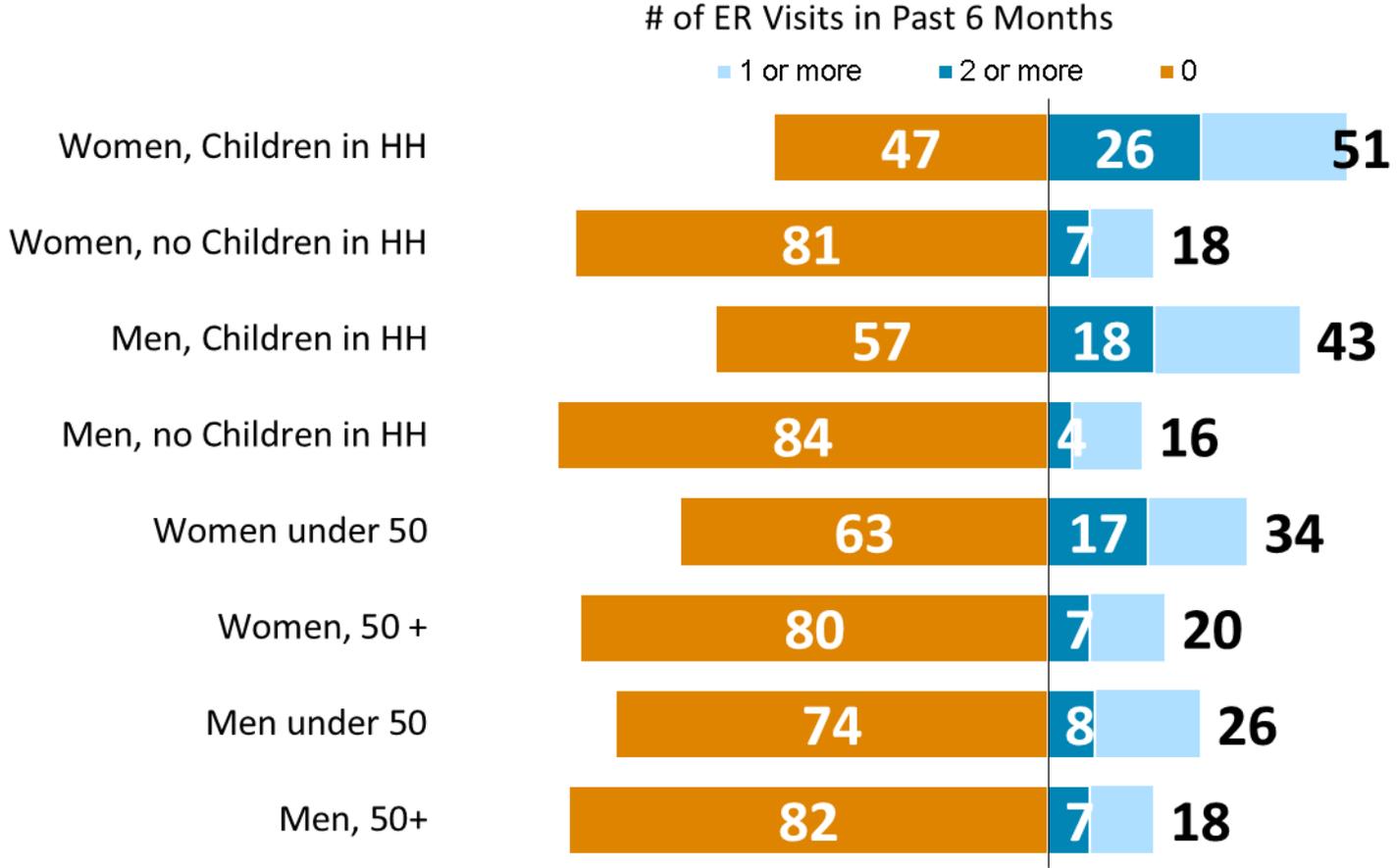
Among residents with children, nearly half have been to the Emergency Room within the past 6 months, including 22% who have been twice or more.

of ER Visits in Past 6 Months

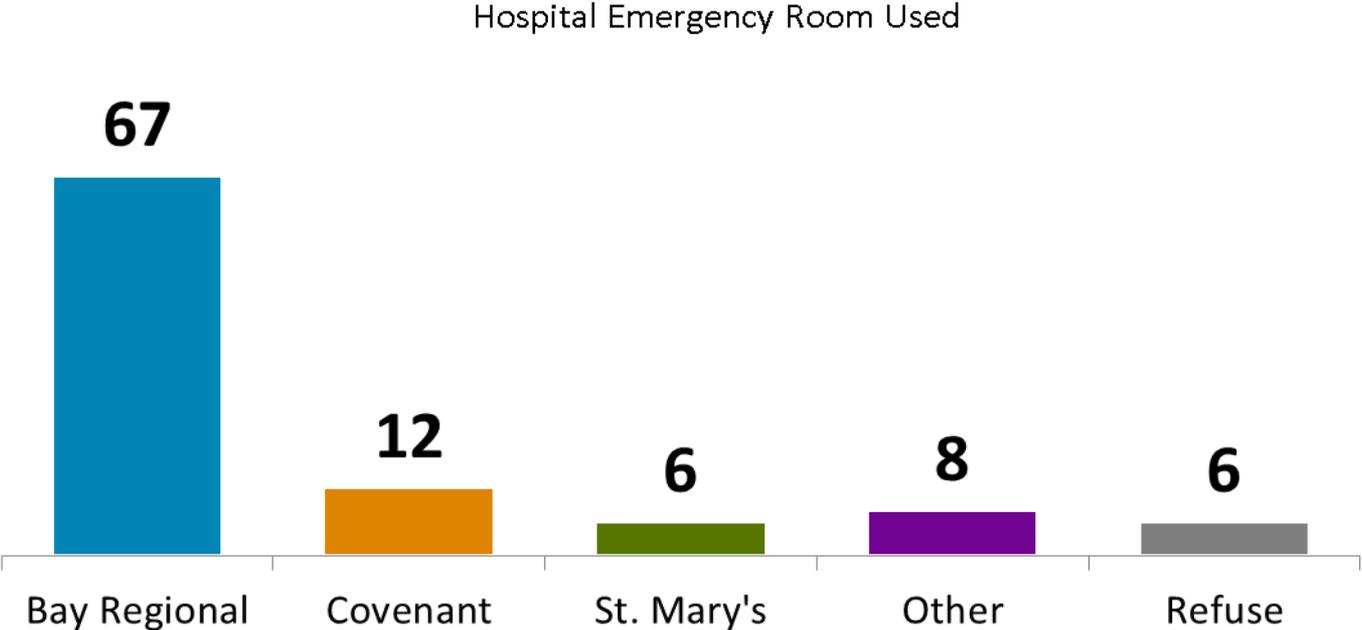


Thinking about the past 6 months, how many times have you or your children used the Emergency Room?

Half of moms with children say they have visited the ER at least once within the past 6 months.



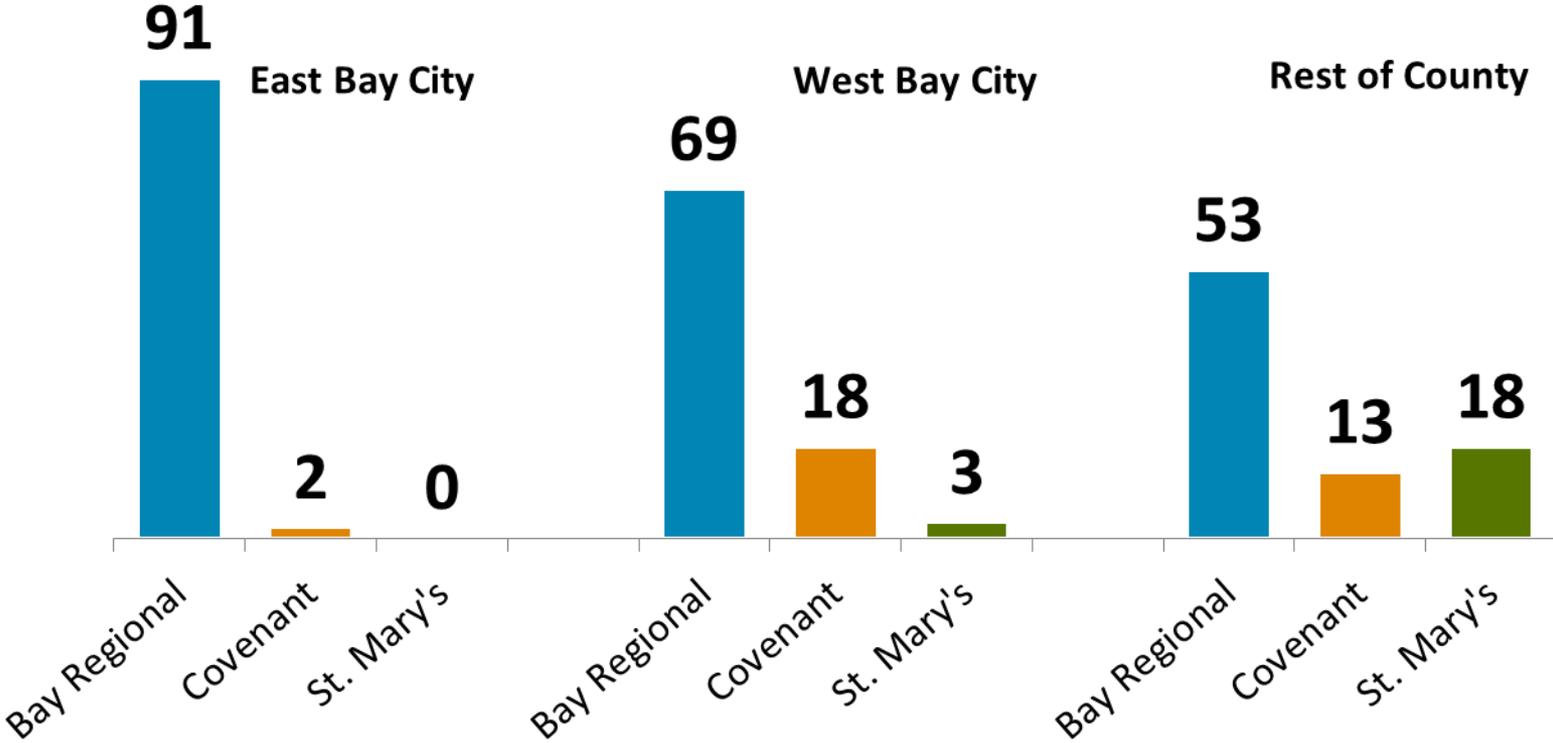
Two-thirds of those who have used an Emergency Room went to Bay Regional Medical Center most recently.



What is the name of the hospital Emergency Room you or your children used?
[IF MORE THAN ONE] What one did you use most recently?

Bay Regional is the near universal choice of Emergency Rooms in East Bay City, while two-thirds in West Bay City and half of residents outside of Bay City use it.

Hospital Emergency Room Used



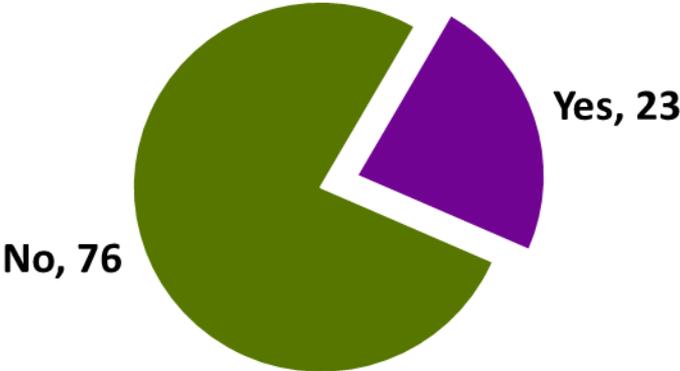
What is the name of the hospital Emergency Room you or your children used?
 [IF MORE THAN ONE] What one did you use most recently?

Health Services for Children

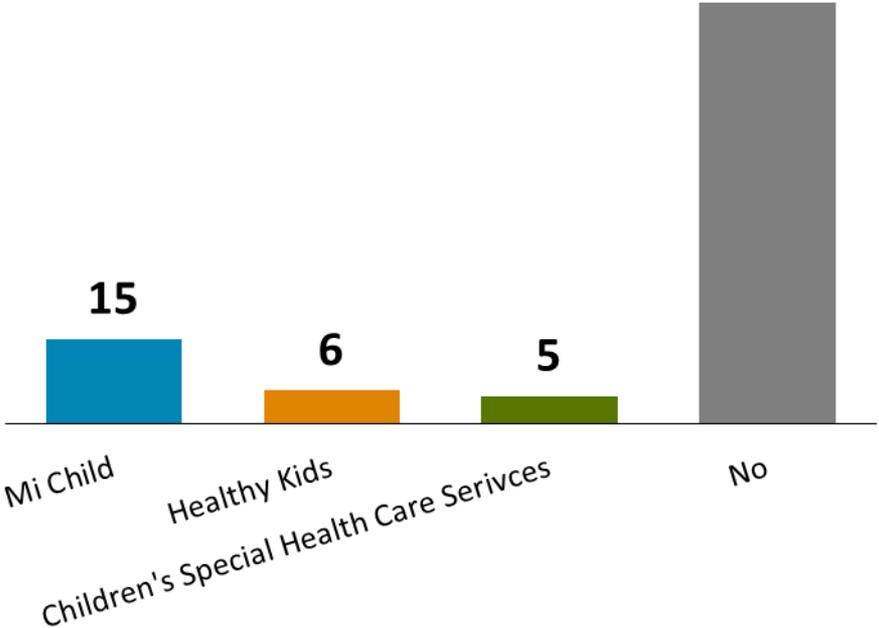
About one quarter of Bay County residents are currently raising children and approximately 1 in 4 of those are not getting the care they need, such as annual pediatrician visits and regular dental checkups.

Of the 23% of residents who currently have children, 15% say they have a child enrolled in MI Child, 6% have a child enrolled in Healthy Kids and 5% say they have a child enrolled in Children’s Special Health Care Services.

Children under 19 years old?



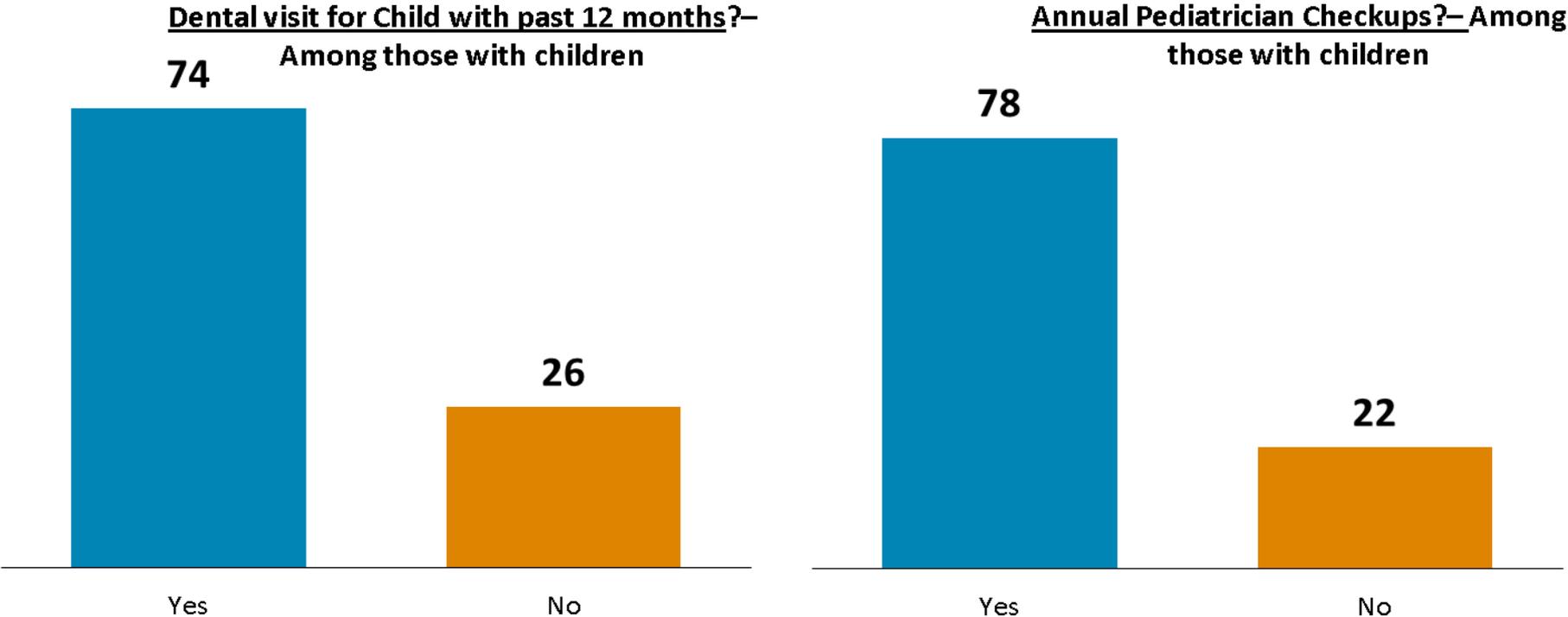
Children enrolled in Program? – Among those with children 74



Do you have any children under the age of 19?

Is your child or are any of your children enrolled in any of the following programs, MiChild [MY-child] or Healthy Kids or Children’s Special Health Care Services?

One in four parents report that their child has not had a dental visit in the past 12 months, while 22% say the same about annual pediatrician checkups.

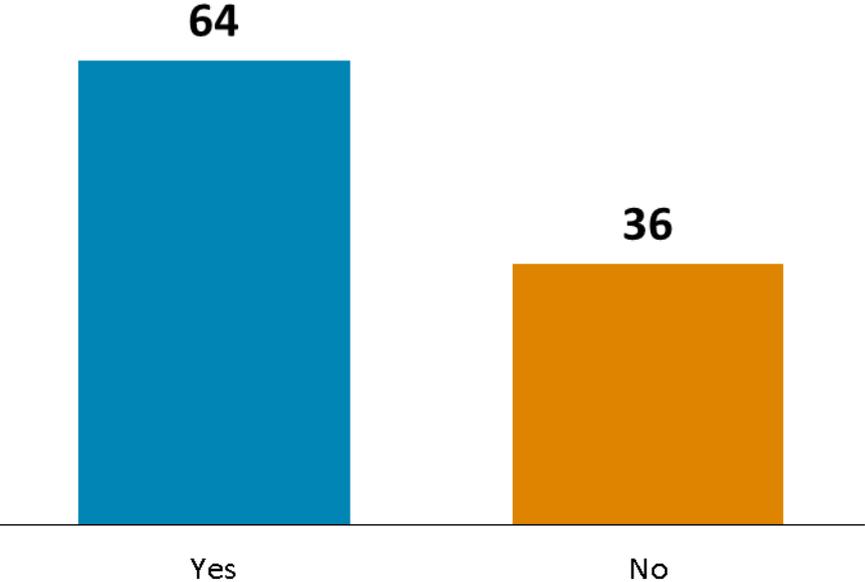


Has your child, or have all your children seen a dentist in the past 12 months?

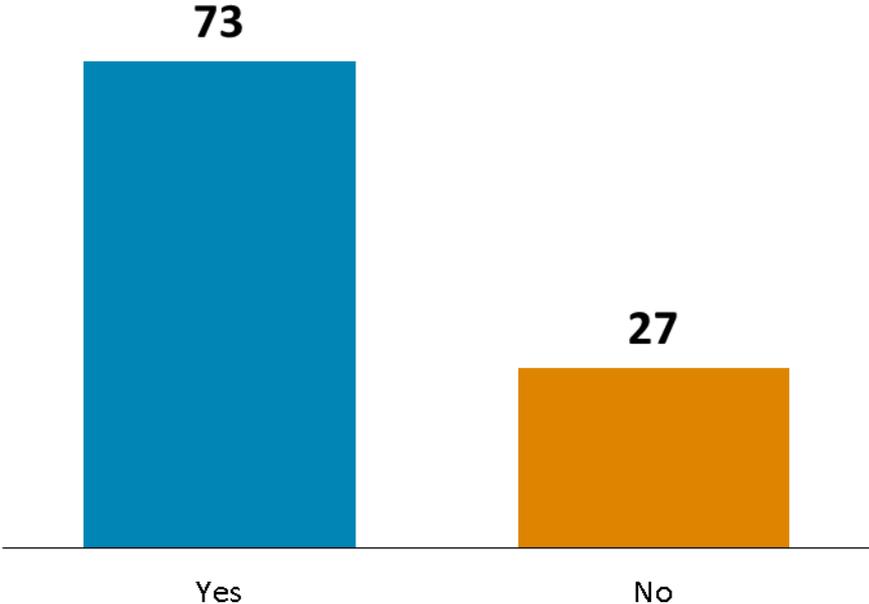
Does your child or do any of your children have regular visits to a doctor or pediatrician for annual checkups?

Among households with income under \$50,000, 36% report that their child has not had a dental visit in the past 12 months, while 27% say the same about annual pediatrician checkups.

Dental visit for Child with past 12 months?—
Among those with children and HHI under \$50k



Annual Pediatrician Checkups?— Among those with children and HHI under \$50k



Has your child, or have all your children seen a dentist in the past 12 months?

Does your child or do any of your children have regular visits to a doctor or pediatrician for annual checkups?

Parents recognize that requiring their children to wear bike helmets is a form of prevention.

“They have them but honestly it’s usually used as a base when they’re playing baseball.”
-Mother

“The two youngest won’t wear them, but it’s like you said with my 8-year-old, she’s like well my sisters don’t wear them, they look geeky, I don’t want to.”
-Mother

“You know they’re trying to change it and they’re trying to make them look better and they bring them into schools and they give them away for free and it’s just so they still won’t wear em.”
-Father

“It’s enforcement. I mean our kids, the only time they wear em is when you tell them they have to. It’s like the seatbelts, we enforce that so now I get in the car with the kids and their seatbelts are on before mine. Why isn’t it we enforce that? But how often as parents do we enforce the kids?”
-Mother

- Parents all say their children have bike helmets, but do not require that they wear them.
- Some seem to suggest to their children that helmets should be worn, but if the child doesn’t want to, that’s okay.
- When it comes to enforcement, bike helmets and seatbelts are completely different. Everyone requires their children to wear seatbelts.
- The effort to increase the use of bike helmets needs to be a joint community effort. No child wants to be the only one of their friends who is wearing one.

Healthy Eating

A healthy diet was raised as a health concern in all three focus groups, which includes everything from the availability and costs of fruits and vegetables to the safety of those fruits and vegetables to the ability to actually prepare a healthy home-cooked meal.

Issues relating to food are very important for families in Bay County, including healthy foods, pesticide-free food, organic options and obesity prevention.

“Let’s say somebody needs some kind of assistance so instead of giving them all these food stamps to go and buy all this premade stuff maybe make it so that they can only buy a 10 pound bag of potatoes once a week. Give them recipes on how to do it. Maybe if it’s their first time coming through give them all the pots and pans that they need.”
-Mother

“We started changing her diet right away and within like I said, three weeks, we saw an instant...everything was back up; very normal. She was fine.”
-Father

“They (schools) say that it’s healthy food, they’re like oh we just have a well balanced diet but they’re giving them pizza like once or twice a week.”
-Mother

- For those receiving food assistance, residents would like them to receive produce and health foods, rather than cheaper processed food.
- One father was dealing with his daughter’s health issue, and after testing other things, ultimately found that improving her diet was the solution.
- Parents think schools could do a better job with helping to prevent obesity by not feeding the students pizza twice per week at lunch.

Cooking is a skill that has dropped off.

“If you put it out there in a way where it is accessible right when they need it so as they walk into a grocery store you know the information in some way is right there for them. You know a lot of people --- and they can kind of look at that.

-Mother

“I think that um they need to show people how to cook. I don’t think people know how to cook anymore. They don’t know how to make homemade food and that is so much more healthier than going in the frozen food section and buying all that premade food.”

-Mother

“I agree with you on that. We had a friend that I gave one of our hams to when we had one of our pigs slaughtered, and she called me, she’s like there’s no directions.”

-Mother

- A suggestion for improving people’s diet includes offering healthy cooking ideas right in the grocery stores.
- However, adults and parents need to be taught how to cook. They don’t have the cooking skills to pass down to their children.
- One participant gave a ham to her neighbor, and discovered that neighbor had no idea what to do with it, since she was used to reading instructions on packages of frozen foods.

Even those who make an effort to cook and eat healthy, they have concerns about pesticides on their fruits and vegetables and the food animals eat before being slaughtered

“It’s like every time you turn around you’re hearing about somebody having breast cancer, somebody having liver cancer, somebody having some sort of cancer and you’re just like why is there so much cancer? Is it from the foods that we are eating? The environment?”

-Mother

“I do have a son who had cancer, a husband that had cancer, a mother that died of cancer, a whole neighborhood that one person in each house died of cancer so it is, it’s scary to me.”

-Woman

“What they also tell people is to buy Michigan native things and locally grown stuff and nobody can because that stuff is more expensive.”

-Woman

- Some speculated that abnormally high rates of cancer are the result of pesticides on their produce.
- One mother shared a story of pesticides being sprayed near her home without notice.
- Another concern is the belief that healthy eating often is more expensive.
- In the online survey, 75% of respondents reported that they eat at least 1 serving of fruit per day, along with 85% for vegetables.

Thinking about the tools people may need to stay healthy, nutrition guides come to mind, along with recipe cards and smart phone apps. In order to actually break through with information, residents suggest public service announcements.

“Our grocery store, --- center right in town has, they have all the time they have cards right by the meat. They’ll have a recipe card for each section and it’s free, just grab your card. I think that that’s a good way to you know get people trying something, a new recipe that’s something that they might like.”
-Mother

“And you mentioned everybody or next to everybody now has the smart phones, why can’t we have an app for that.”
-Mother

- People need to know how easy meals can be to prepare, so they are more comfortable learning how to use fresh ingredients.
- One participant mentioned a grocery store offers free recipes. This may be something the health department can expand upon.
- With the popularity of smart phones, developing or promoting an easy recipe app was another idea to promote health eating.

Viewpoints from Bay County Teachers & Administrators

Teachers see a number of problems that their students face, from drugs and alcohol to bullying to a lack of parental involvement. They recognize that they have an important role in addressing these issues, but know that it needs to be a joint effort with parents.

Teachers have very negative feelings toward how things are going for their students. Drugs, alcohol, parenting, and dental care are all concerning.

“I don’t think the children are being parented.”

-Teacher/Administrator

“I see a lot of our students facing adult issues in the home. Kids who are exposed to alcohol, drugs; not only just the product but the environment of a home of an alcoholic or an abusive parent.”

-Teacher/Administrator

“They don’t brush their teeth. They don’t even allow their children to go to the dental bus and it’s free!”

-Teacher/Administrator

“Alcohol abuse and tobacco and all that is way worse, kids all smoke and I had this little kid ask me for a cigarette one time. I couldn’t believe it, right outside my house.”

-Woman

- Teachers give parents their fair share of responsibility for the problems students are facing.
- They see students living in a poor environment, whether it be with drugs, alcohol or abuse.
- Teachers also see dental care as a problem, despite the presence of a free dental bus.
- Parents also recognize that alcohol and smoking are problems in their community.

Other problems teachers see in their students include obesity, bullying, self-esteem issues, nutrition and depression.

“I’ve got to agree with obesity. I’ve only been in the schools for a very short time here. I came from the hospital and just in general basically I was dealing with parents before that and obesity is probably the number one issue. And you’d see the whole families in there and if it was an obese parent, generally it’s obese kids.”

-Teacher/Administrator

“Self worth being low and these aren’t completely independent of each other because obesity and self worth are strongly correlated too. But geeze guys, I’m telling you right now, I do have kids of my own and I look at most issues, I look at my kids first. They can be a little chubby, but if they dislike themselves that’s a whole bigger issue that I’m gonna tackle.”

-Teacher/Administrator

“I would say depression along with the self worth. I know a lot of our kids, especially the third grade talk about, “I don’t want to be here. I hate my life. I want to go somewhere else. I just want to kill myself.” You know these are 8 and 9 year-olds.”

-Teacher/Administrator

- These issues are often connected, with obesity leading to bullying, leading to self-esteem issues.
- Issues of low self-worth and depression are often seen as more serious for students at such young ages.
- One teacher told a story about a third grader saying he hated himself and wanted to kill himself.

Teachers report that problems with drugs and alcohol extend to parents as well. In these cases, they believe the problems of the parents need to be addressed in order to improve the health of the children.

“I would say about 60% of our kids’ parents are probably drug you know and alcohol.”
-Teacher/Administrator

“Last year I had three students whose fathers were all in prison because of DUIs; or in jail I mean.”
-Teacher/Administrator

“And I think it’s important for the parents to set the ground rules and let everybody know, you know tell your kids what’s right and wrong and teach them not just, not just tell them. Actually do it and promote what you want them to be like.”
- Mother

“I think no matter what you do they don’t care. You have to hit the adults, you can’t hit the kid. The adult has to show the kid the healthy way of eating, you can’t hit a kid with it.”
-Mother

- Teachers see high levels of alcohol and drug use among parents, with one participant noting that last year, 3 of his students had their father in jail.
- Parents agree that they need to be involved in teaching their children healthy behavior and set a positive example.
- Similarly, parents recognize that they can’t only depend on schools to teach nutrition; parents need to emphasize healthy eating with their children.

Teachers take their fair share of responsibility for the wellbeing of the students, want to help more, and acknowledge they spend more time with their students than parents.

“I don’t see a whole lot of value in just pointing fingers at the parents and we have an opportunity to positively affect the kids and we have more hours a day with them than most of their parents do. So I’m gonna go ahead and say I’m not happy with the way we’re handling them during our time.”

-Teacher/Administrator

“Nor do I feel our staff is well trained to handle situations that we are given.”

-Teacher/Administrator

“There used to be it’s called the Michigan Health Model. It was around the early 90’s, late 80’s and teaching health-related issues. Actually there was a curriculum for it and it was laid out for the entire year and it just gradually went away. It wasn’t a priority. Now priorities in schools now are testing, more testing, pretests, posttests, collecting data and as far as a health-related issue being taught in schools, that’s way on the back burner.”

-Father

- Some teachers acknowledge that parenting could be better, but would rather focus on how teachers can be better.
- However, there are some health issues that teachers don’t feel equipped to handle.
- Though parents recognize that they need to be responsible for raising healthy children, they also see a role for schools.



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