



University of California, Berkeley
Institute of Governmental Studies
109 Moses Hall, #2370
Berkeley, CA 94720-2370
Tel: 510-642-1473
Fax: 510-642-3020
Email: igs@berkeley.edu

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Three in four Californians believe it's very important for health insurance plans to cover treatment for mental health conditions and alcohol or drug use problems.

By Mark DiCamillo, Director, Berkeley IGS Poll (o) 510-642-6835 (c) 415-602-5594

According to a new *Berkeley IGS Poll*, three in four Californians (74%) believe it is “very important” for health insurance plans to cover treatment for mental health conditions, and alcohol or drug use problems. The public attaches high levels of importance to such coverage, which is required in most plans as a result of the nation’s Affordable Care Act (ACA). The support for mental health and substance use disorder coverage spans all major regions and demographic subgroups of the state’s adult population, as well as nearly six in 10 Republican voters and those who describe themselves as politically conservative.

Underlying this support is the widely shared belief that treatment for mental health conditions and alcohol or drug use problems helps those with such issues to lead healthy and productive lives. In addition, a large majority of residents (83%) say that they would be likely to seek such help if they needed it.

The poll also finds that two in three insured Californians (65%) believe that their health insurance plan provides them with coverage for mental health and alcohol or drug use counseling and treatment, although fewer Medi-Cal recipients (47%) say this, even though Medi-Cal does include this coverage. Medi-Cal is the public program providing health insurance to low-income Californians.

Greater than one in five Californians (22%) report that they or a family member sought out counseling or treatment for a mental health condition like depression or anxiety in the past year, while a far smaller proportion (4%) did so for an alcohol or drug use problem.

The latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* was conducted by telephone in six languages and dialects on behalf of the California Health Care Foundation (CHCF) May 4-31, 2017.

“While Congress is debating changes and cuts to health insurance programs, the people of California are clear that they value coverage for mental health and substance use disorders, coverage that many insurance plans failed to offer before the ACA,” said Catherine Teare, an associate director with the California Health Care Foundation. “This is something that conservatives and liberals can agree on in this state.”

Three in four say health coverage for mental health conditions and alcohol or drug use problems is very important

When asked how important health insurance coverage for mental health conditions and alcohol or drug use treatment is to people in California, three in four (74%) say this is “very important,” while another 16% consider it “somewhat important.”

1a*

Large majorities across all demographics and in all regions of the state consider this coverage highly important. The subgroups most inclined to say coverage is “very important” are African Americans (87%), registered Democrats (86%), women (83%), Latinos (83%), Medi-Cal recipients (82%), and political liberals (81%).

1b

Factors underlying belief in the importance of providing insurance coverage for mental health and substance use disorder treatment

Among the factors underlying the high level of importance that Californians attach to health insurance plans continuing to cover mental health counseling and alcohol or drug use treatment is that three in four residents agree that such treatment helps people with mental illness and alcohol or drug use problems lead healthy and productive lives.

2

In addition, 66% of residents say they would be “very likely” to seek professional help if they needed counseling or treatment for a mental health condition, like depression or anxiety, and 65% say this with regard to alcohol or drug use problems, including addiction.

3a

Larger proportions of insured than uninsured Californians report being very likely to seek counseling or treatment if they had such problems and were covered by insurance.

3b

Most insured Californians recognize that their health plan covers behavioral health counseling and treatment

As a result of the Affordable Care Act, the national health reform law signed into law by President Barack Obama in 2010, almost all health insurance plans must include coverage for the treatment of mental health conditions and alcohol or drug use problems.

When insured Californians are asked if they thought their own health plan provides such coverage, two in three (65%) said that their plan did, while 11% said it did not. Another 24% don’t know. This represents a five percentage-point increase in the proportion of insured Californians who recognize that their plan provides them with such coverage compared to a similar statewide survey completed for CHCF in 2014.

4a

* refers to table numbers in the attached PowerPoint graphs where percentage distributions are reported in more detail.

Recognition among insured Californians that their health plan provides them with coverage for mental health treatment and counseling is greatest among those who receive their coverage through their own or a family member's employer or labor union (75%), and is significantly lower among Medi-Cal beneficiaries (47%), although, as noted earlier, Medi-Cal does include this coverage.

About one in five say they or a family member sought treatment for a mental health condition in the past year

When asked whether they or a family member had sought treatment or counseling for a mental health condition like depression or anxiety in the past year, 22% report having done so. Far fewer Californians (4%) say this when asked about treatment or counseling for an alcohol or drug use problem, including addiction. 5a

Insured Californians are twice as likely as uninsured residents to report having sought such treatment. 5b

Those who reported seeking treatment for a mental health condition in the past year were also asked whether they had encountered any problems when attempting to obtain care for their condition. The survey finds that 15% of this population reported having a problem getting such care, while 83% did not. The most common complaints from those reporting difficulties were that they couldn't find a counselor or doctor who would accept their insurance or that they couldn't afford the cost. 6

Note: The attached PowerPoint slides summarize the findings in graphic form.

About the Survey

The findings in this report come from a telephone survey completed by the Institute of Governmental Studies, at the University of California, Berkeley on behalf of the California Health Care Foundation. The survey included a statewide sample of 1,628 California adults, and an oversampling of residents of the Central Valley, yielding a total of 1,845 interviews. To capture the diversity of the state's adult population, the survey was administered in six languages and dialects – English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese and Korean. Interviewing was completed May 4-31, 2017 by professionally trained and supervised interviewers calling from Davis Research in Calabasas (Los Angeles County), California.

The survey was administered with adults either on their cell or landline telephone using a dual frame random digit dial cell and landline sampling methodology. In this survey over 85% of the interviews were conducted with residents on their cell phone. Up to six attempts were made to reach, screen and interview each randomly selected adult on different days and times of day during the interviewing period. After the completion of interviewing, weights were developed to align the combined statewide sample and augmented Central Valley oversample to their proper population proportions, and to a wide range of demographic characteristics of the state's adult population.

The maximum sampling error for results from the overall statewide sample is +/- 2.4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Results from the poll's subsamples are subject to somewhat larger margins of sampling error, and depend on its sample size and the percentage distributions being examined. Below are the wordings of the questions reported in this release.

Regional Definitions

Los Angeles County: Los Angeles County

South Coast: San Diego and Orange counties

Inland Empire: Riverside and San Bernardino counties

San Joaquin Valley: San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, and Kern

Sacramento/North Valley: Shasta, Tehama, Glenn, Butte, Colusa, Yuba, Placer, Sutter, Yolo, El Dorado, and Sacramento

San Francisco Bay Area: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Sonoma, and Solano

Questions Asked

Do you currently have any kind of health care coverage, including health insurance through your or your spouse's employer, a plan you buy independently, or through a government plan, such as Medicare or Medi-Cal? **IF COVERED:** Do you receive your coverage through your or your spouse's employer, through a policy that you or your spouse purchased independently from an insurance provider or the state's Covered California health exchange, are you covered under Medicare, or are you covered through Medi-Cal or Medicaid, or through Tri-Care, the military insurance program?

IF COVERED: Does your current health insurance plan provide you with coverage for counseling or treatment for a mental health condition, like depression or anxiety, or for alcohol or drug use problems, including addiction?

Today, most health insurance plans, including Medi-Cal, must cover counseling or treatment for a mental health condition or for alcohol or drug use problems, including addiction. How important is this coverage to people in the state of California - very important, somewhat important, not too important or not at all important?

If you needed counseling or treatment for a mental health condition, like depression or anxiety, and these services were covered by insurance and created no financial burden for you, how likely would you be to seek professional help or treatment for this – very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely or not at all likely?

In the past 12 months, did you or a family member seek counseling or treatment for a mental health condition, like depression or anxiety? **IF YES:** Did you or did another family member have any problems getting care for this? **IF YES:** I am going to read some reasons why people sometimes have problems getting care for a mental health condition, like depression or anxiety. For each, please tell me if this was a reason why you or a family member had problems getting care for this. **(ITEMS READ IN RANDOM ORDER)** (You couldn't afford the cost) (Your insurance wouldn't cover it) (You or a family member didn't know where to go to get care) (You or a family member were afraid or embarrassed to seek care for a mental health condition) (You or a family member didn't think it would do any good) (You or a family member couldn't find a counselor or doctor who would accept your insurance) **(FOR EACH, ASK)** Was this a reason or not?

Please tell me whether you think the following statement is true, false or if you don't know. "Treatment can help people with mental illness lead healthy and productive lives." Would you say this statement is true or false, or don't you know?

If you needed counseling or treatment for alcohol or drug use problems, including addiction, and these services were covered by insurance and created no financial burden for you, how likely would you be to seek professional help or treatment for this – very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely or not at all likely?

In the past 12 months, did you or a family member seek counseling or treatment for alcohol or drug use problems, including addiction?

Please tell me whether you think the following statement is true, false, or if you don't know. "Treatment can help people with alcohol or drug use problems, including addiction, lead healthy and productive lives." Would you say this statement is true or false, or don't you know?

About the Institute of Governmental Studies

The Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) is an interdisciplinary organized research unit that pursues a vigorous program of research, education, publication and public service. A component of the University of California (UC) system's flagship Berkeley campus, it is the oldest organized research unit in the UC system and the oldest public policy research center in the state. It conducts periodic surveys of California public opinion on matters of politics, public policy and public issues through its *Berkeley IGS Poll*, housed within IGS's newly established Jack Citrin Center for Public Opinion Research. A listing of poll stories issued by the *Berkeley IGS Poll* can be found at <https://igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.

About the California Health Care Foundation

The California Health Care Foundation (CHCF) is dedicated to advancing meaningful, measurable improvements in the way the health care delivery system provides care to the people of California, particularly those with low incomes and those whose needs are not well served by the status quo. CHCF seeks to inform policymakers and industry leaders, invest in ideas and innovations, and connect with change makers to create a more responsive, patient-centered health care system. It also commissions research and analysis that policymakers, clinical leaders, payers, consumers and the media depend on to better understand California's health care delivery system. More information about CHCF can be found at www.chcf.org.

Californians' Views About Health Insurance Coverage for Mental Health Conditions and Alcohol or Drug Use Problems

- Results from a new statewide survey conducted for the -
California Health Care Foundation

- by the -
Berkeley IGS Poll
Institute of Governmental Studies
University of California, Berkeley

for publication June 21, 2017

Table 1a

Three in four Californians believe health insurance coverage of treatment for mental health counseling and alcohol or drug use problems is “very important”

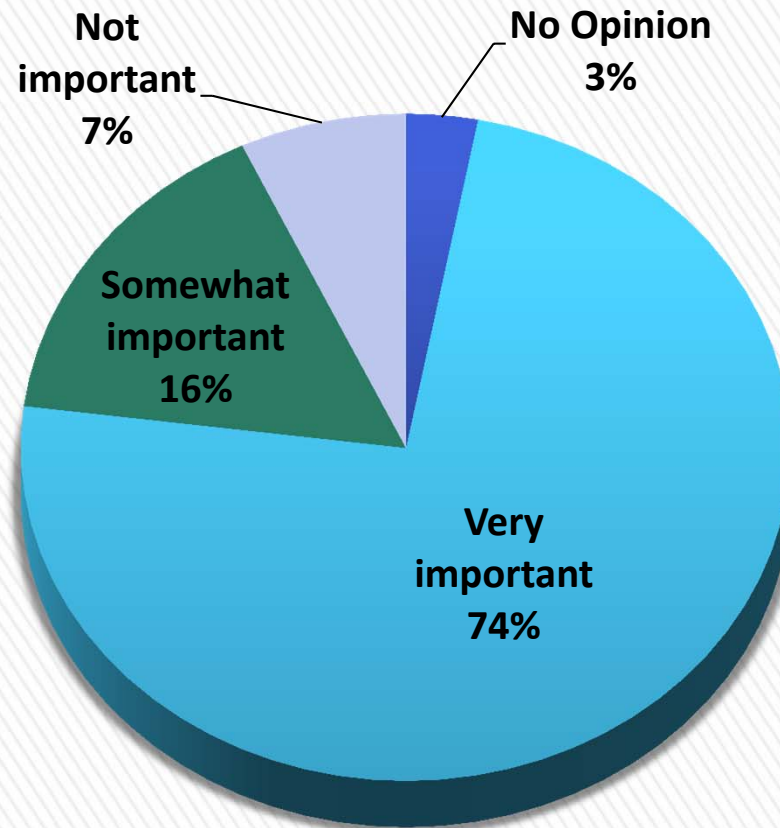
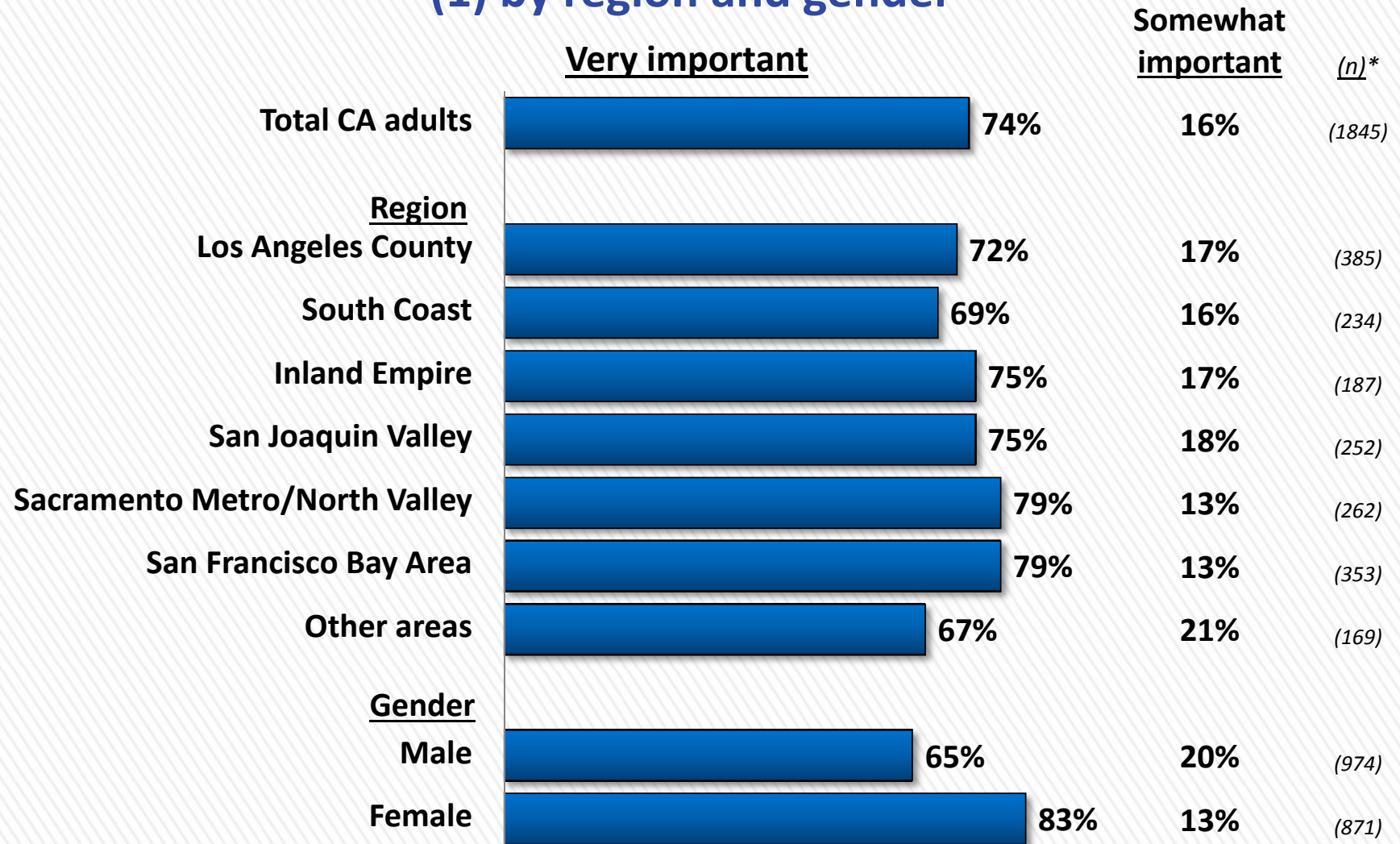


Table 1b

Importance of health insurance coverage of treatments for mental health conditions and drug use problems spans all subgroups (1) by region and gender



**In this and succeeding tables, this column reports the survey's unweighted sample sizes for each subgroup.*

Table 1c

Importance of health insurance coverage of treatments for mental health conditions and drug use problems spans all subgroups (2) by voter registration and political ideology

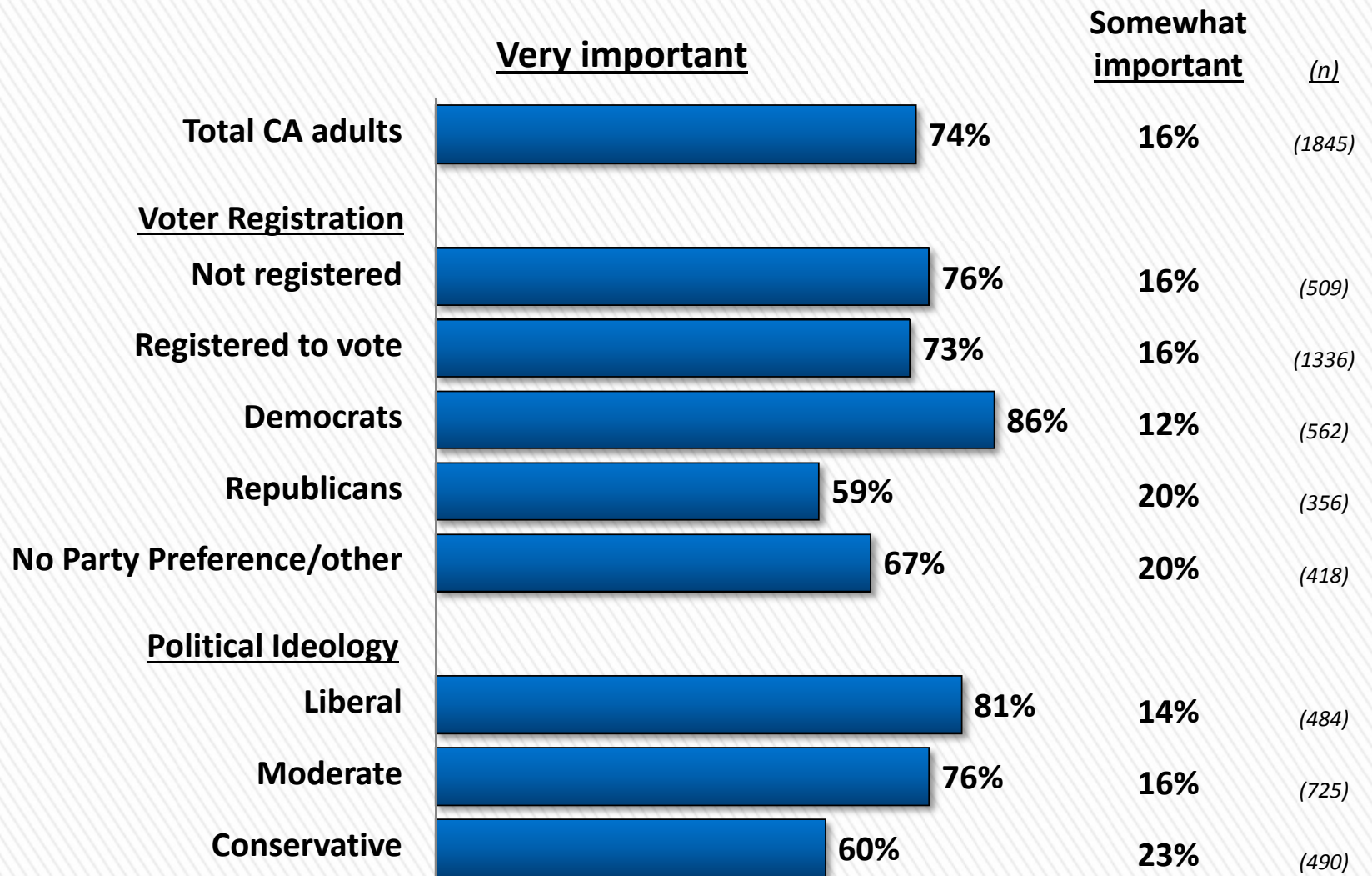


Table 1d

Importance of health insurance coverage of treatments for mental health conditions and drug use problems spans all subgroups (3) by race/ethnicity and age

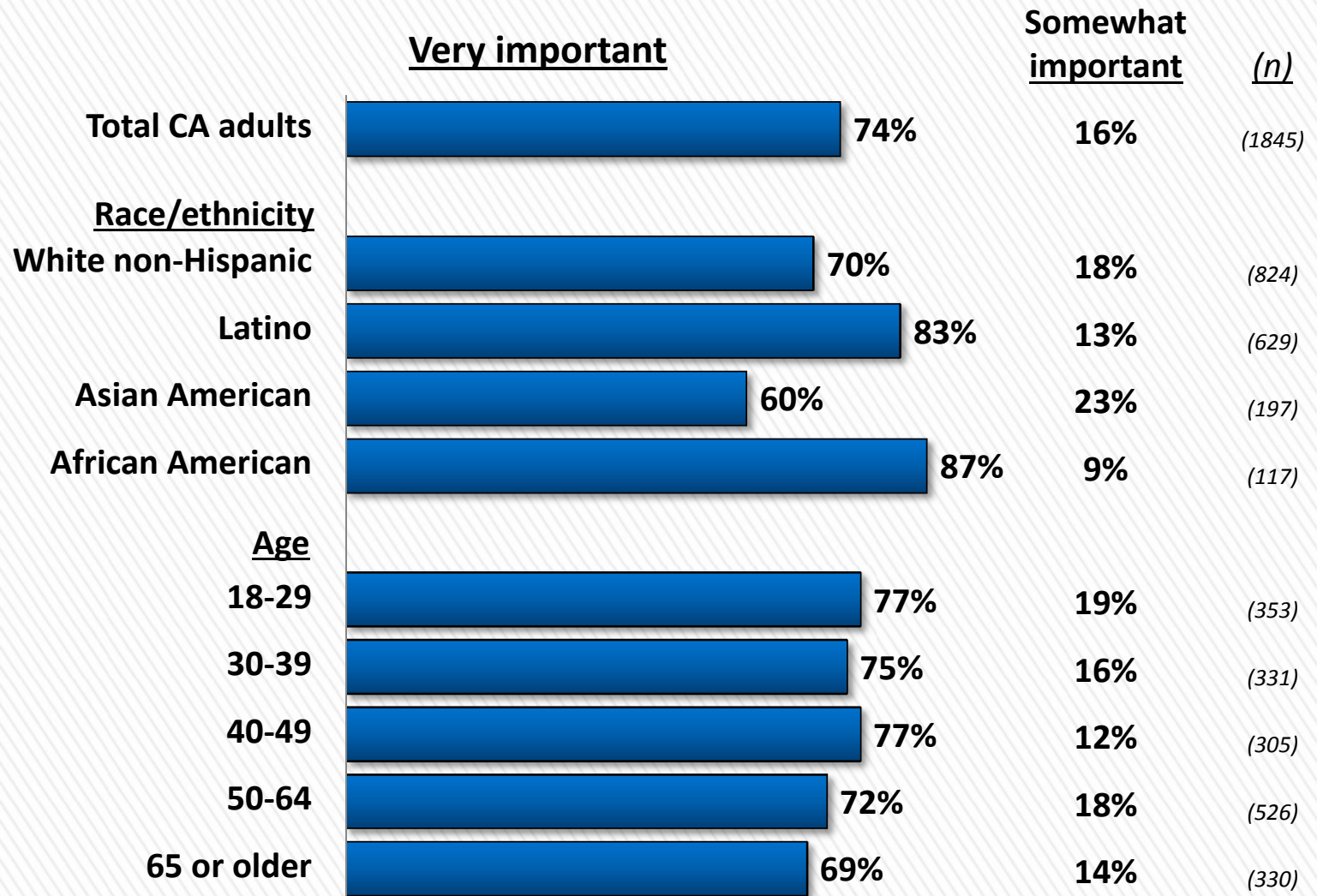


Table 1e

Importance of health insurance coverage of treatments for mental health conditions and drug use problems spans all subgroups (4) by insurance and disability status

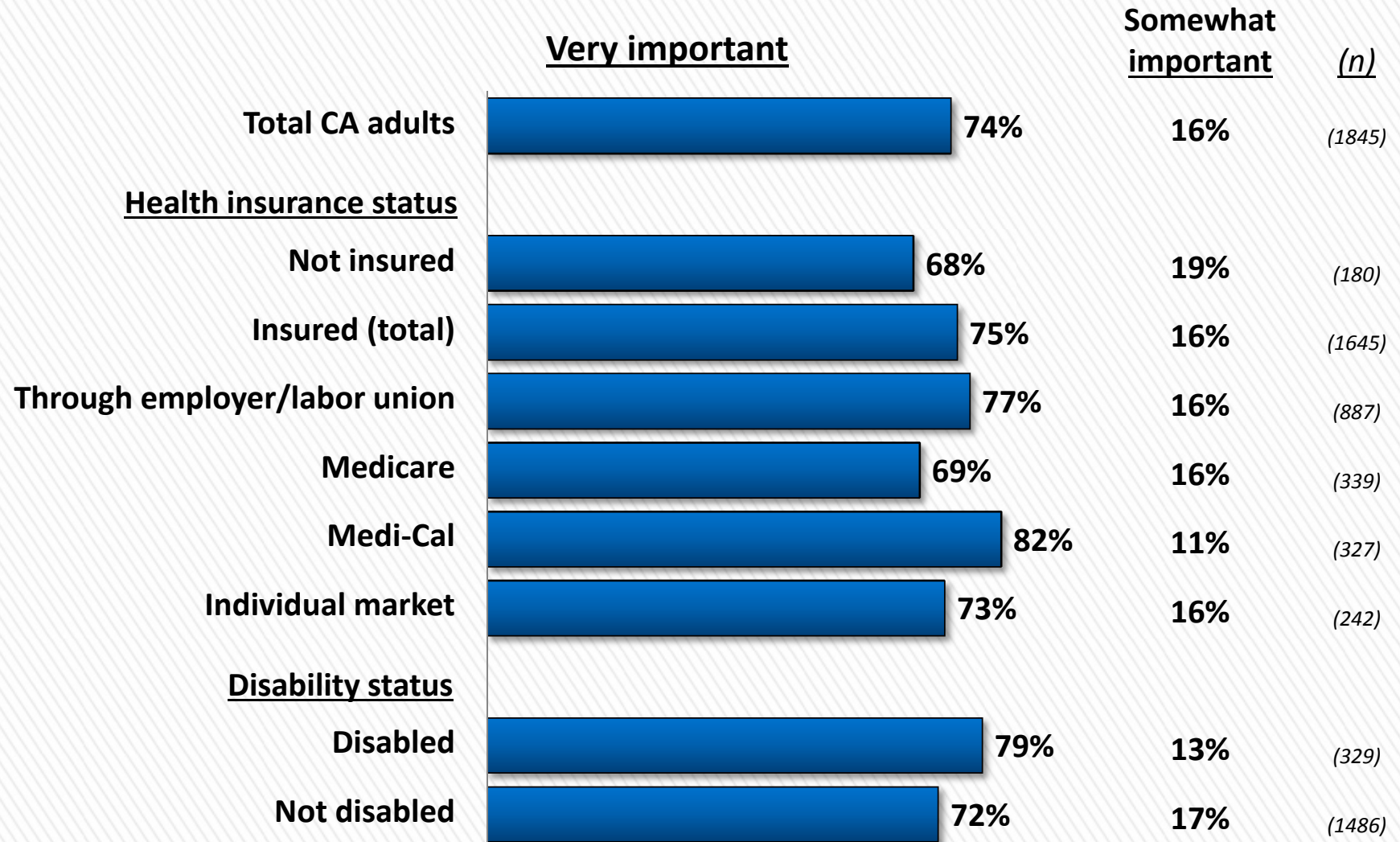
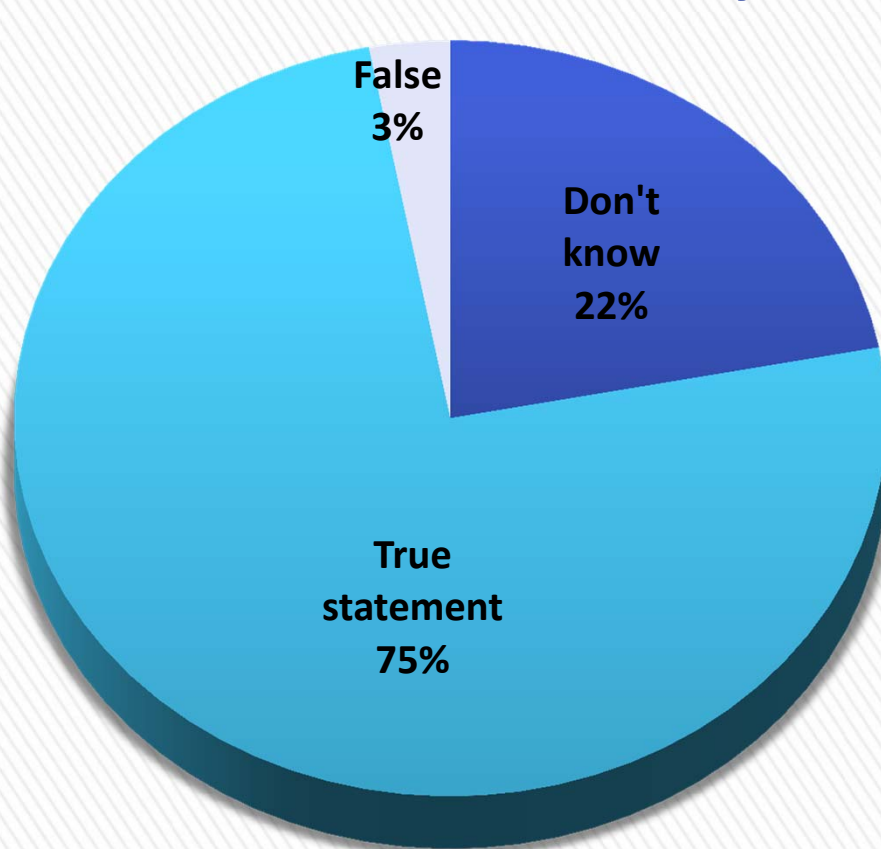
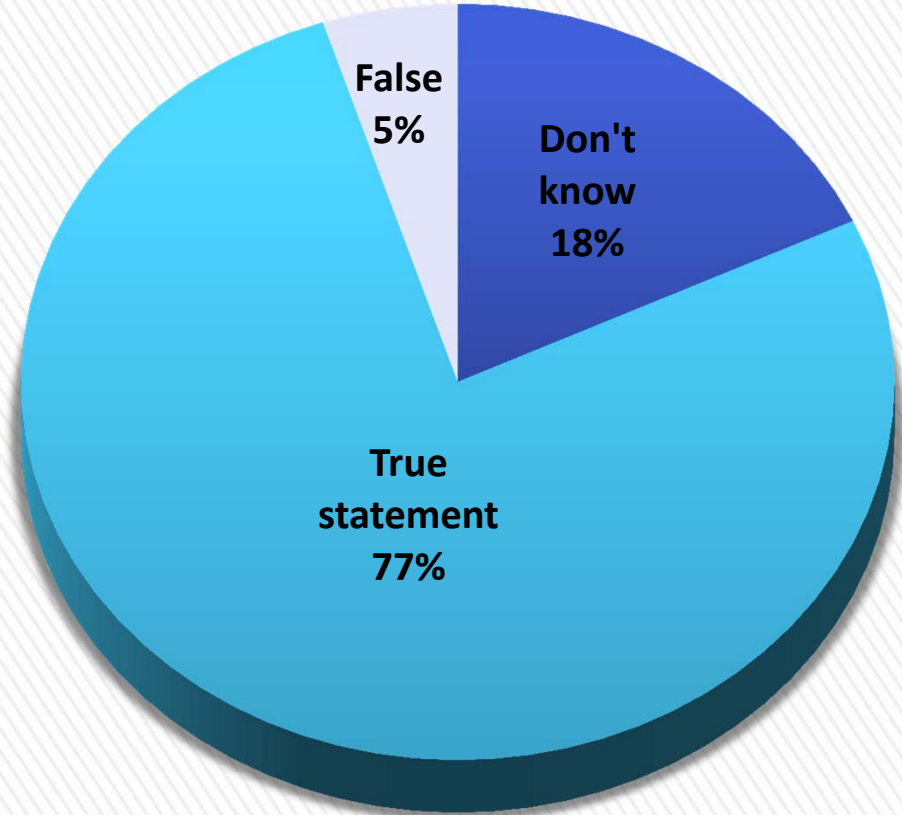


Table 2

Three in four Californians believe treatment for mental health conditions and alcohol or drug use problems can help people lead healthy and productive lives



Mental health problems



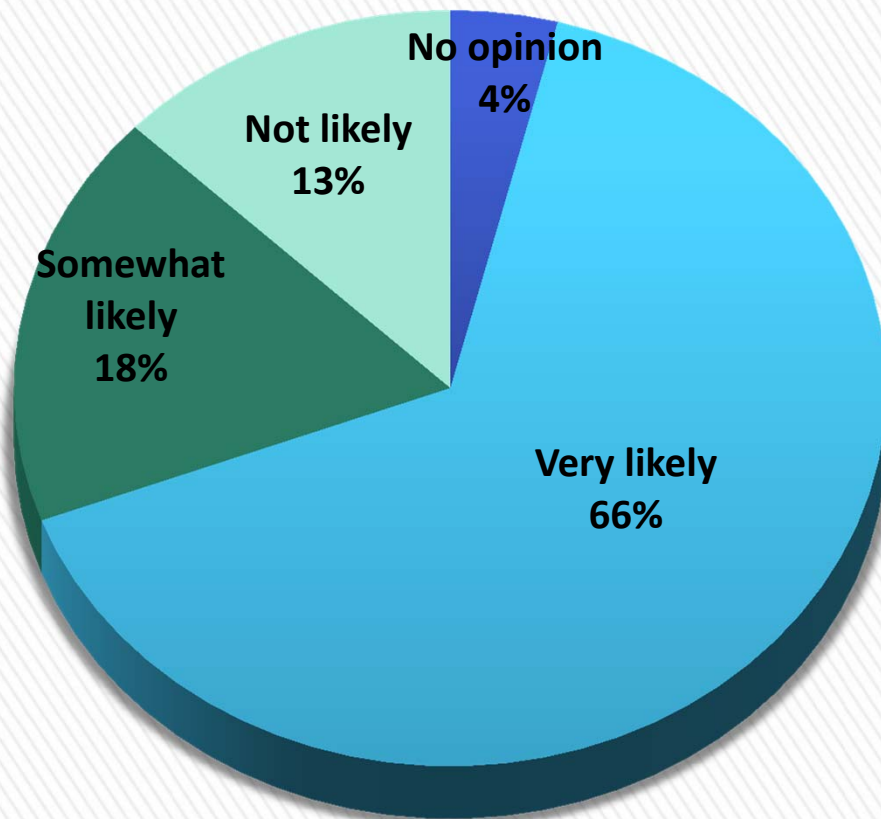
Alcohol or drug use problems

Questions asked:

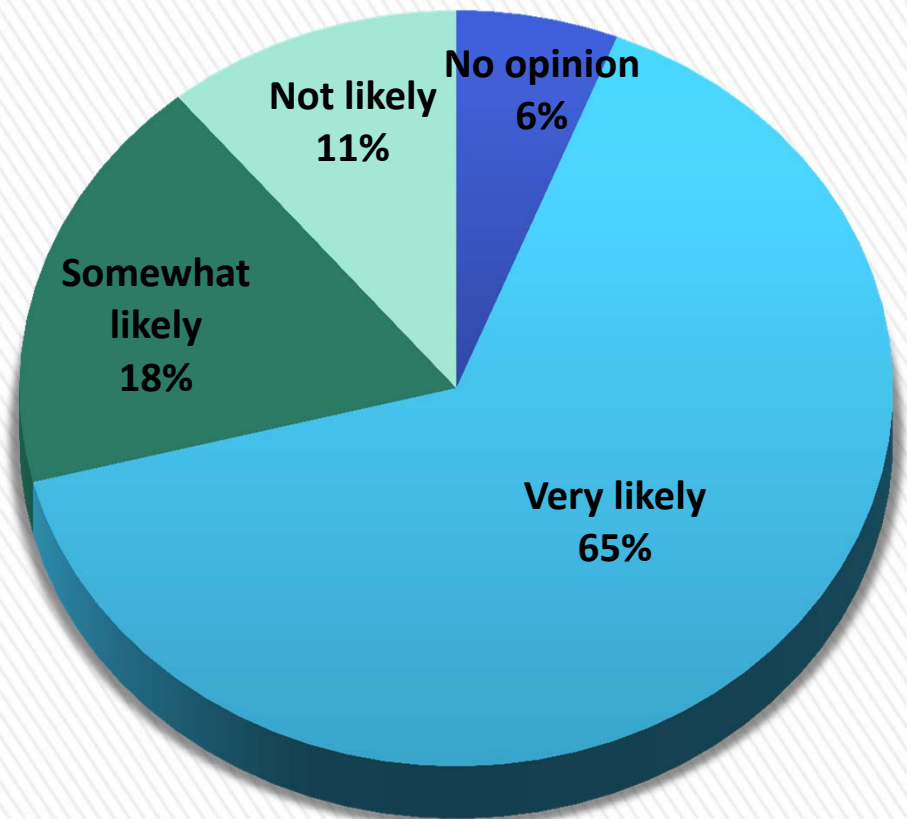
True/False: "Treatment can help people with (mental illness) (alcohol or drug use problems including addiction) lead healthy and productive lives."

Table 3a

Two in three Californians say they would be very likely to seek professional help if they needed counseling or treatment for a mental health condition or alcohol/drug use problem



**Mental health conditions
like depression or anxiety**



**Alcohol or drug use problems
including addiction**

Table 3b

Insured Californians, especially Medi-Cal recipients, more likely than the uninsured to say they'd seek professional help for a mental health condition or alcohol/drug use problem

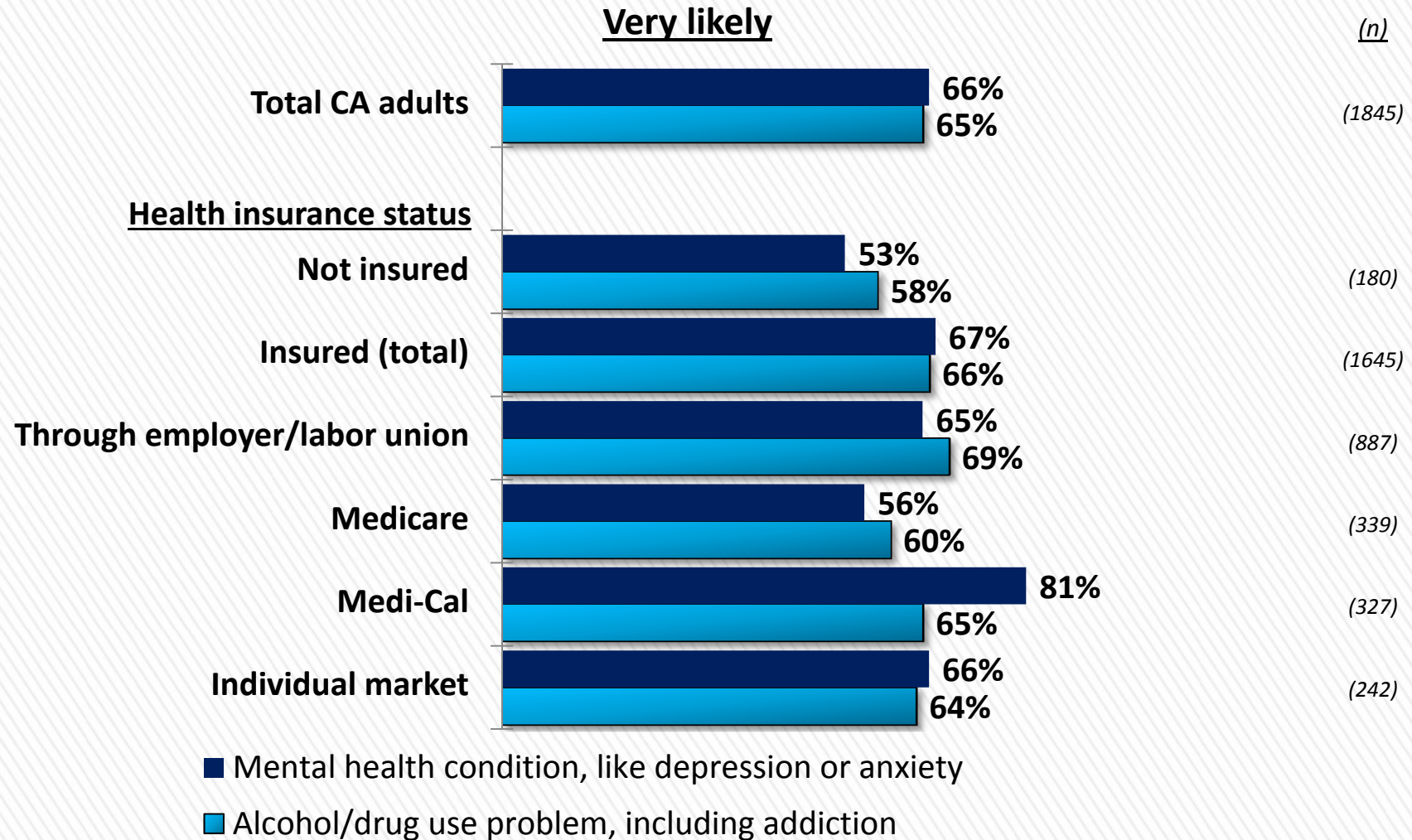
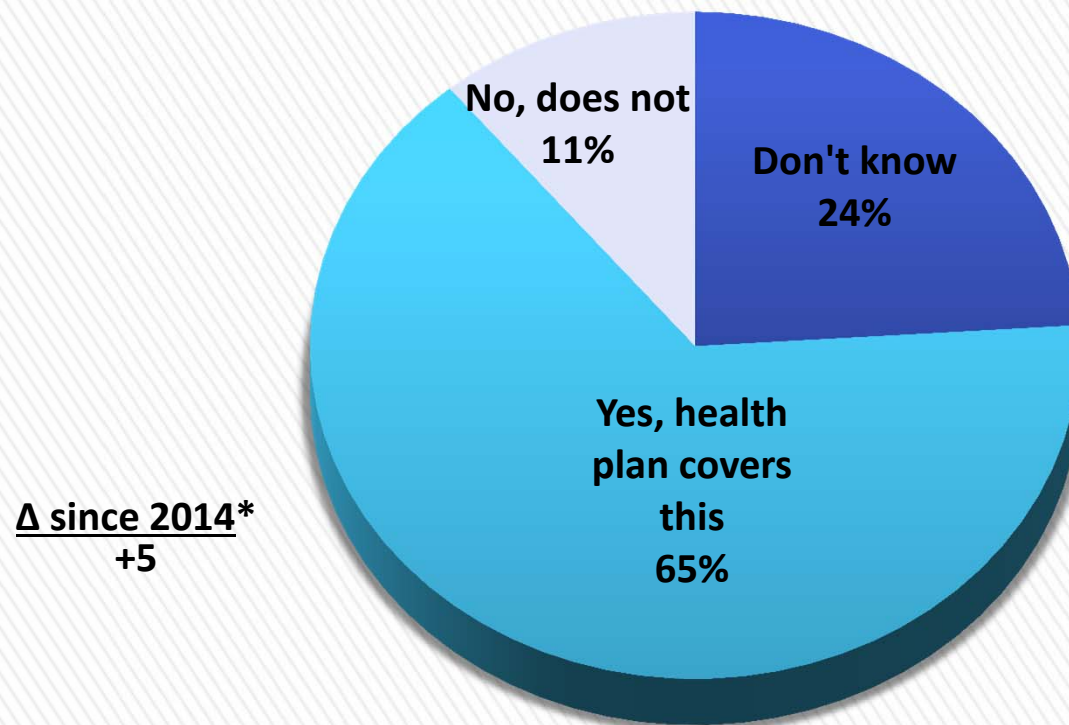


Table 4a

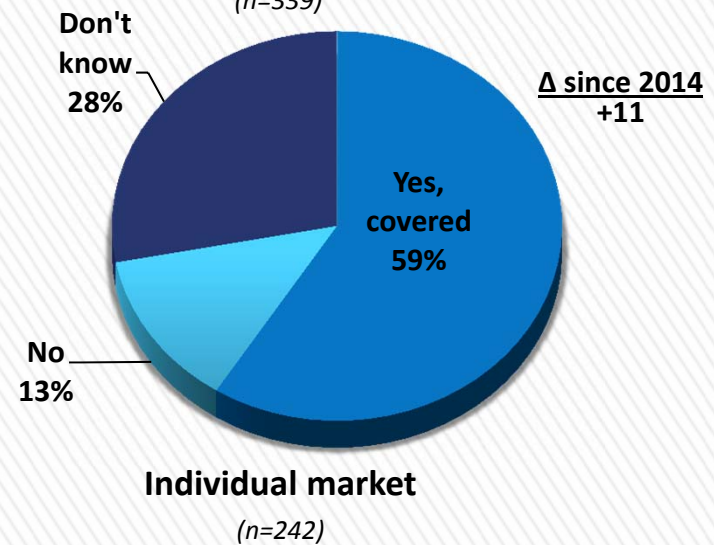
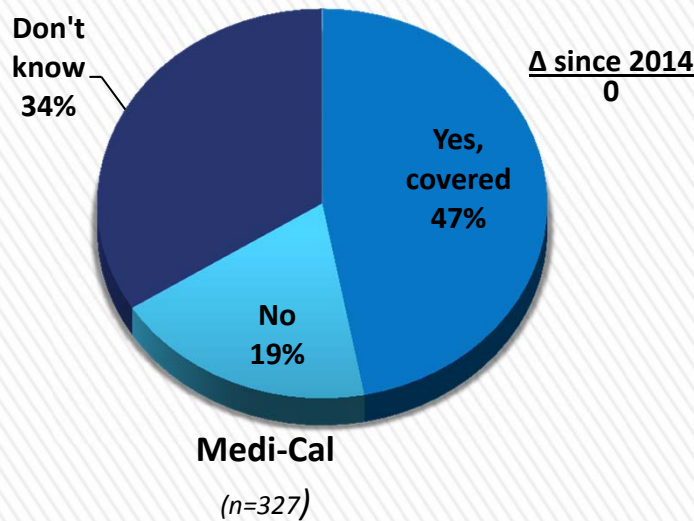
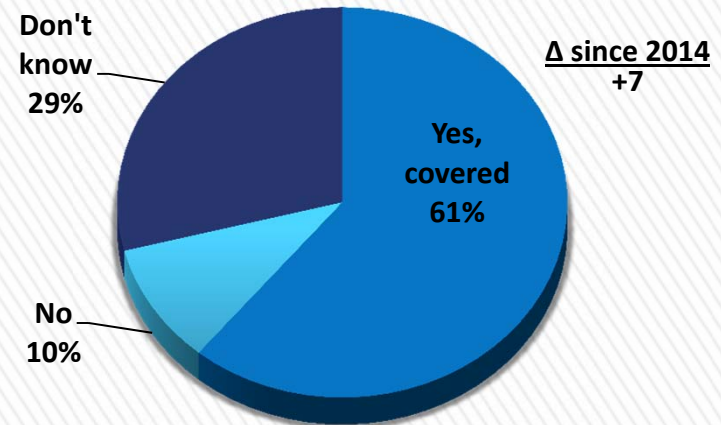
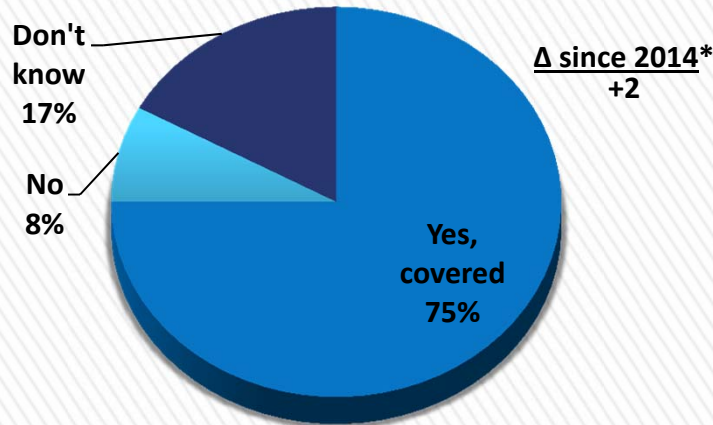
Two in three insured Californians say that their health plan provides coverage for counseling and treatment for mental health conditions and alcohol or drug use problems



**Comparisons made to a June 2014 statewide survey of insured California adults conducted by the California Health Care Foundation.*

Table 4b

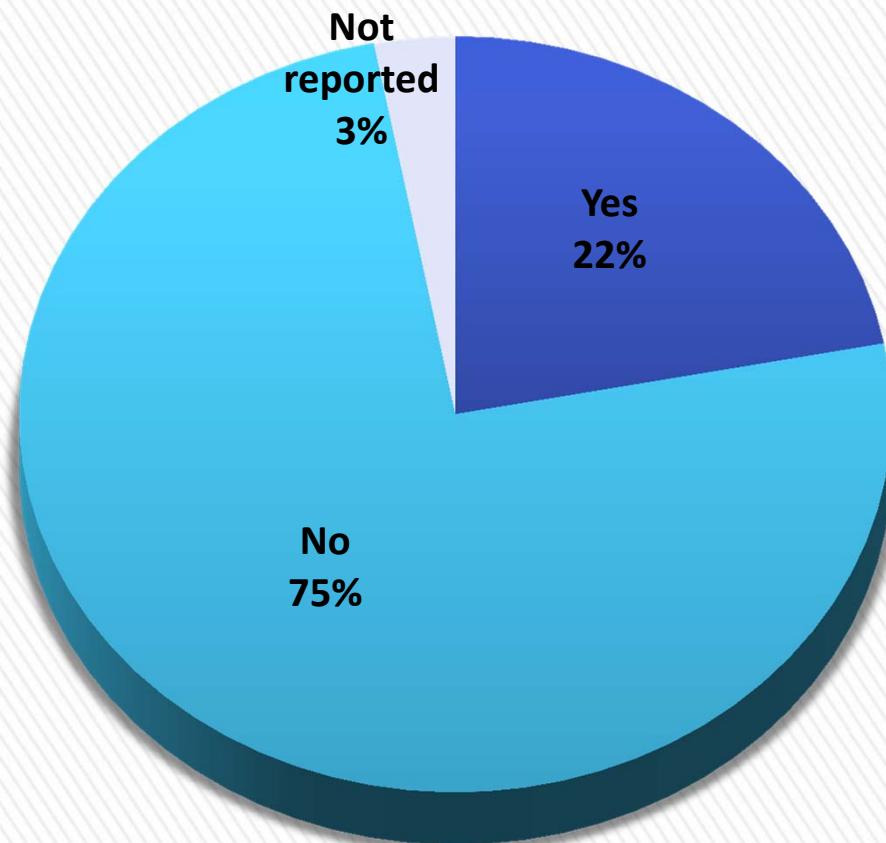
Californians with employer-provided insurance most likely and Medi-Cal recipients least likely to believe their health plan covers mental health or alcohol/drug use treatments



*Comparisons made to a June 2014 statewide survey of insured California adults conducted by the California Health Care Foundation.

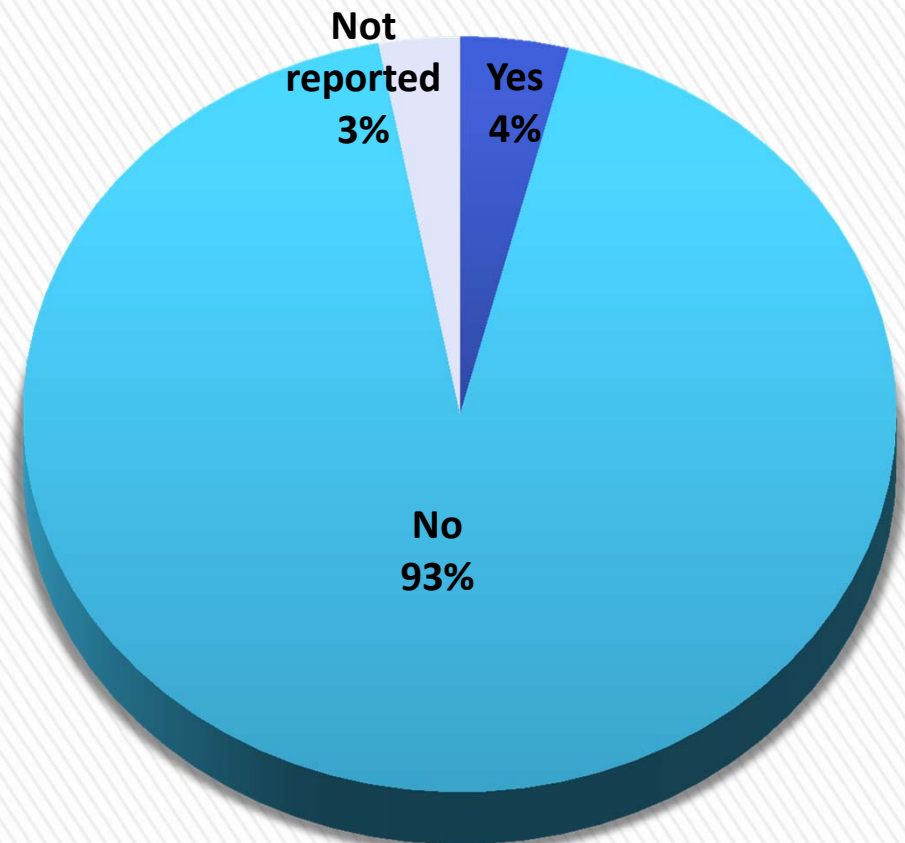
Table 5a

Californians are far more likely to say they or a family member sought treatment for a mental health condition than for an alcohol or drug use problem in the past year



Respondent/family member sought treatment in past year for...

**A mental health
condition like
depression/anxiety**



**Alcohol or drug use
problems including
addiction**

Table 5b

Insured Californians more likely than the uninsured to have sought care for a mental health condition in the past year

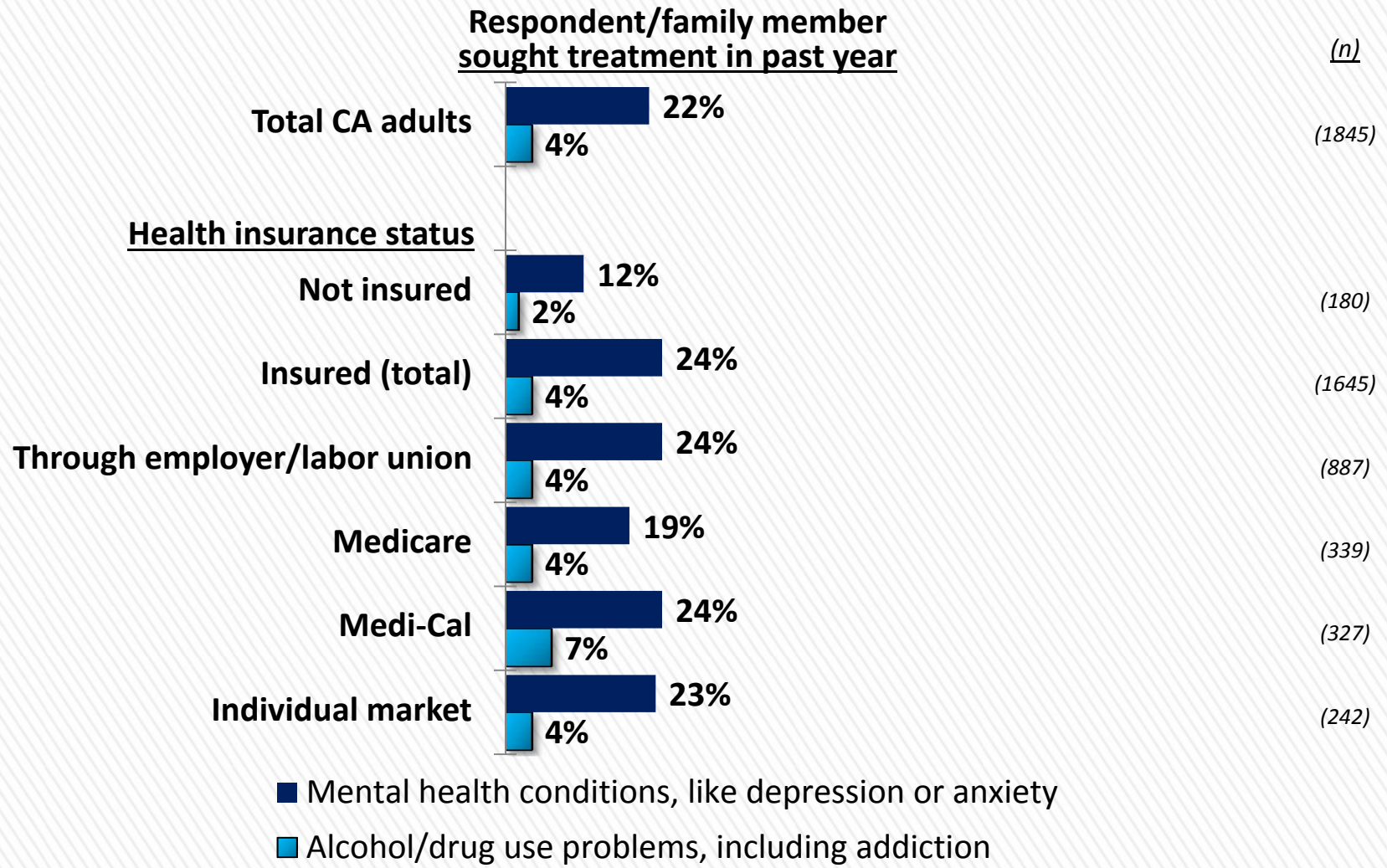
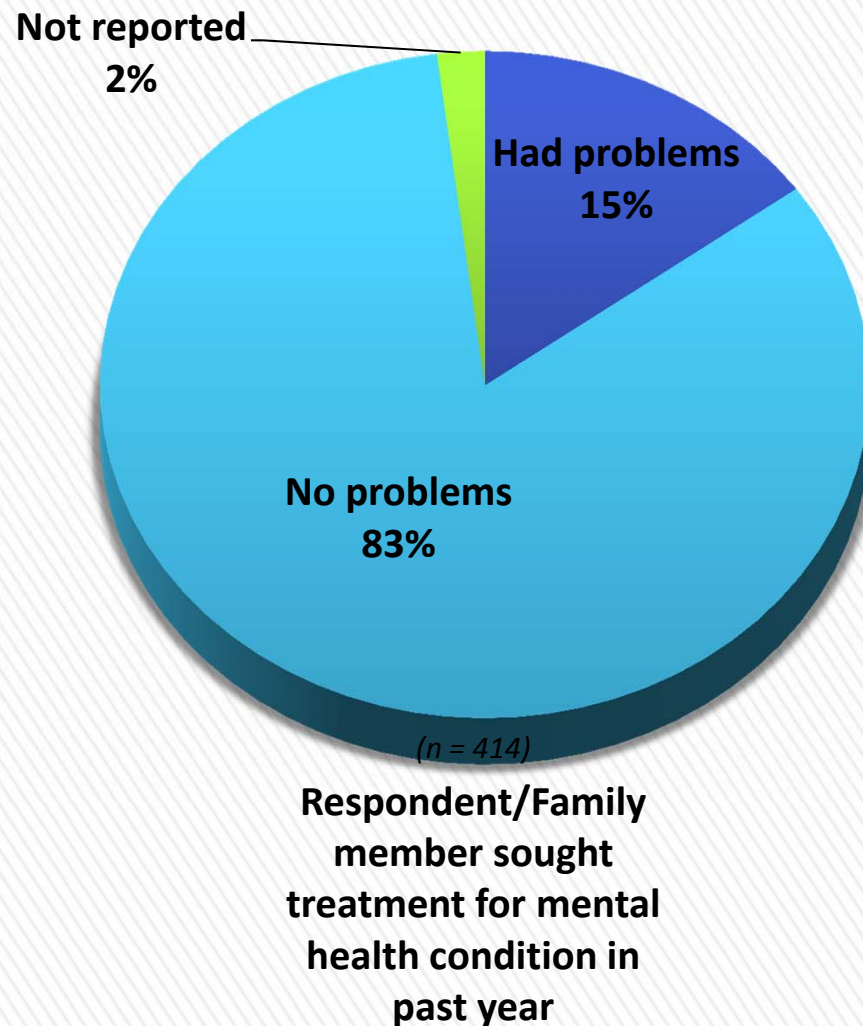


Table 6

15% of those who sought counseling/treatment for a mental health condition said they or a family member had problems getting care



Types of problems*

Couldn't find counselor/doctor who'd accept my insurance	62%
Couldn't afford cost	52%
Insurance wouldn't cover it	49%
Too embarrassed to seek care	42%
Didn't know where to get care	37%
Didn't think it would do any good	31%

**Results based on a small sample (n = 69)*