

# Telehealth Visit Use Among U.S. Adults

AUGUST 2021

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BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER

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## Methodology

- SSRS, on behalf of Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC), launched a survey on experiences with telehealth services on the weekly SSRS Omnibus from June 28-July 18, 2021
  - Dual frame random digit dial (RDD) sample of landline and cell phone numbers reaching US adults age 18+
- Focused on barriers faced by consumers, types of services used, and perceptions of quality and effectiveness
- Total of 1,776 adults interviewed including an oversample of older adults, rural residents as well as Hispanic and Black adults
- Conducted in English and Spanish (appx 35 interviews in Spanish per week)
- Weighted to provide nationally representative estimate of the US adult population age 18+

# Key Findings

1

**Older adults (65+) were most likely to have had a telehealth visit in the past year.**

- Almost one-third of U.S. adults had a telehealth visit for themselves or a dependent last year (31%).
- 44% of Medicare beneficiaries had a telehealth visit in the past year.

2

**8 in 10 adults said their primary health issue was resolved with a telehealth visit.**

- 63% of telehealth visits were for a preventive service, routine visit for chronic illness such as diabetes, or for prescription refills.
- Audio-only visits were as likely to resolve patient issues as video visits.

3

**Rural residents and older adults reported the most technology-related barriers to accessing telehealth.**

- Overall, 45% reported some type of technical issue as an obstacle to accessing telehealth.
- 42% of older adults and 35% of rural residents said access to high-speed internet/broadband was an obstacle.

4

**Older adults were more likely to have had an audio-only versus a video visit.**

- 4 in 10 adults who used telehealth had an audio-only versus video visit.
- Of the respondents that had a telehealth visit, nearly half (47%) of older adults had an audio-only visit compared to 42% of adults under 65.

5

**About 1 in 7 people who had a telehealth visit would have sought care in an ED or urgent care if telehealth was not available.**

- 2 in 10 adults would have delayed care or not sought care at all if telehealth was not available.
- Of respondents who had a telehealth visit, 4% were redirected to the ED.

6

**Over 9 in 10 adults were satisfied with the quality of their telehealth visit and many are likely to use telehealth in the future.**

- 95% of Medicare beneficiaries were satisfied with their most recent telehealth visit.
- 8 in 10 adults are likely to use telehealth in the future.

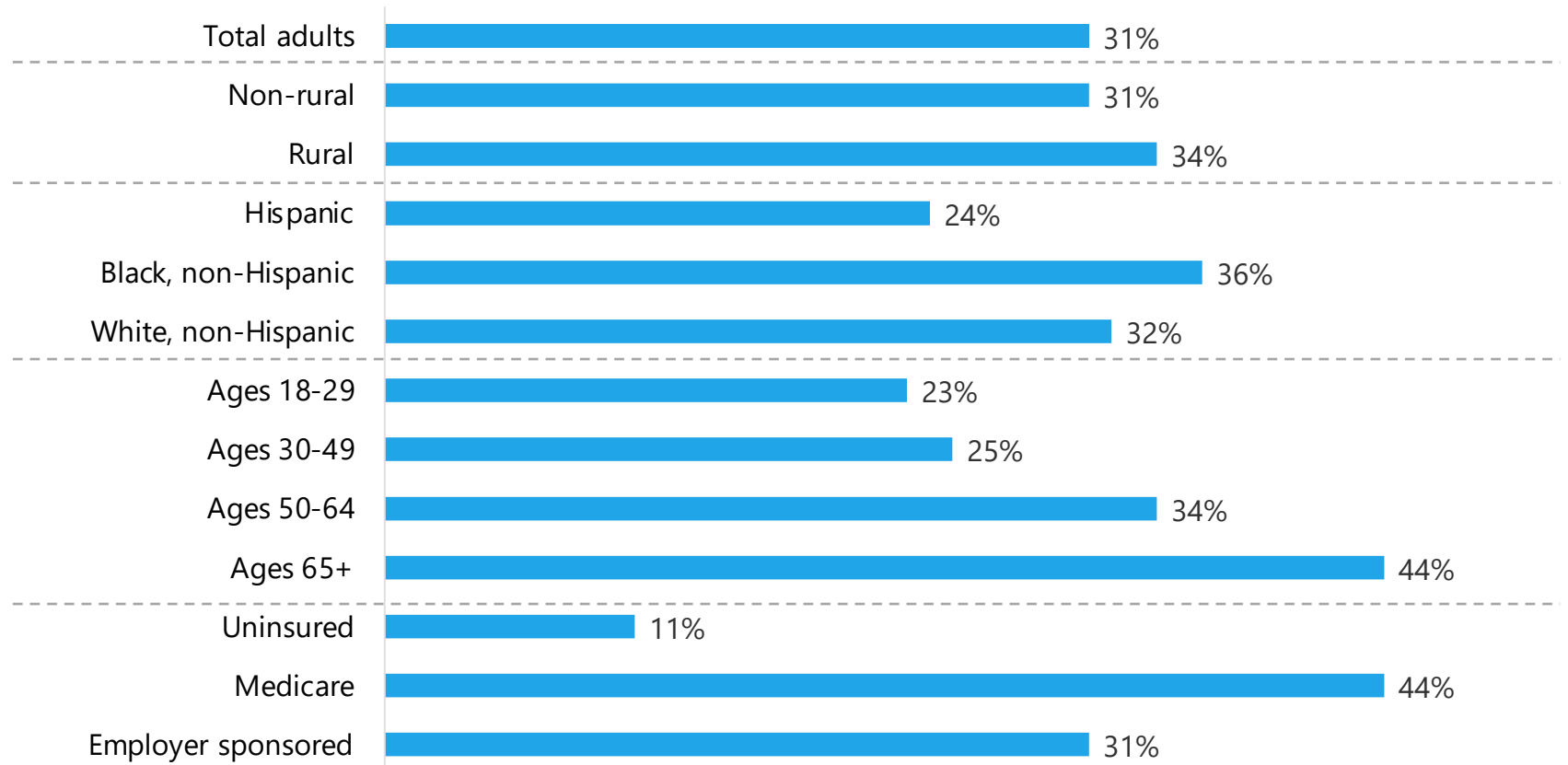
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# Telehealth Use

**Older adults are almost twice as likely to have had a telehealth visit in the past year compared to those under 30.**

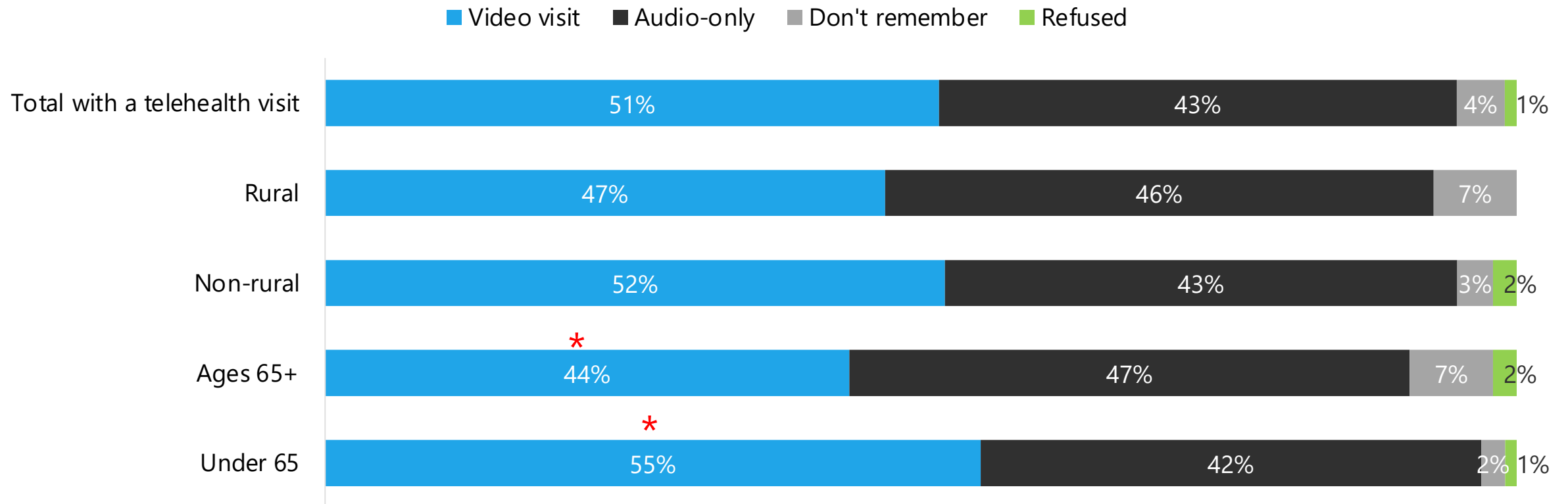
In the past year, did you have a telehealth visit with a doctor or health care provider for yourself or a dependent? Telehealth means a visit with a doctor or health care provider where you are at home, but you talk over the phone or with a computer, smart phone, tablet, or other device.

### PERCENT WHO USED TELEHEALTH IN THE LAST YEAR



# Older adults are more likely to have audio-only (rather than video) visits compared to younger adults.

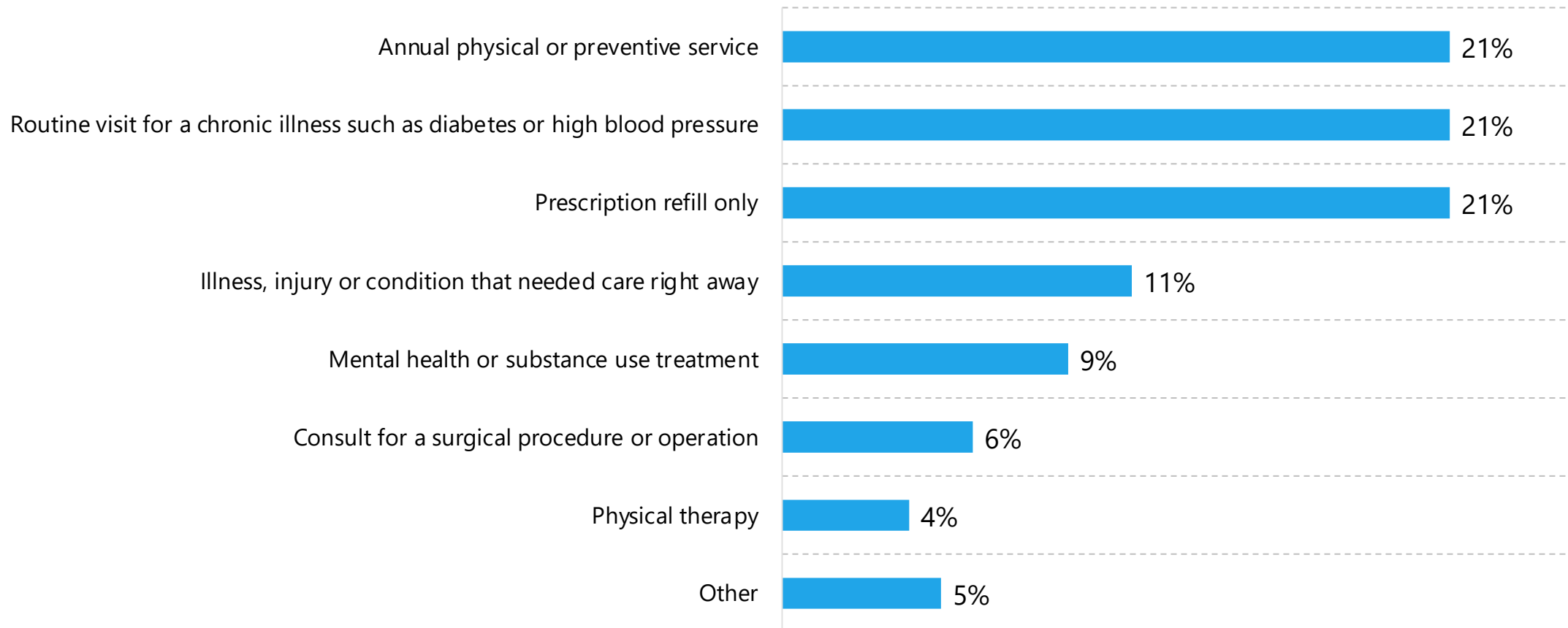
THINKING OF YOU OR YOUR DEPENDENT'S MOST RECENT TELEHEALTH VISIT, WAS THAT VISIT: A TWO-WAY VIDEO VISIT WHERE YOU COULD SEE YOUR DOCTOR OR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER'S FACE AND THEY COULD SEE YOURS OR AN AUDIO-ONLY VISIT THAT IS A PHONE CALL WITH YOUR DOCTOR OR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER?



\*indicates statistically significant difference

# The most common purpose for a telehealth visit was a preventive service, prescription refill, or routine visit for chronic illness.

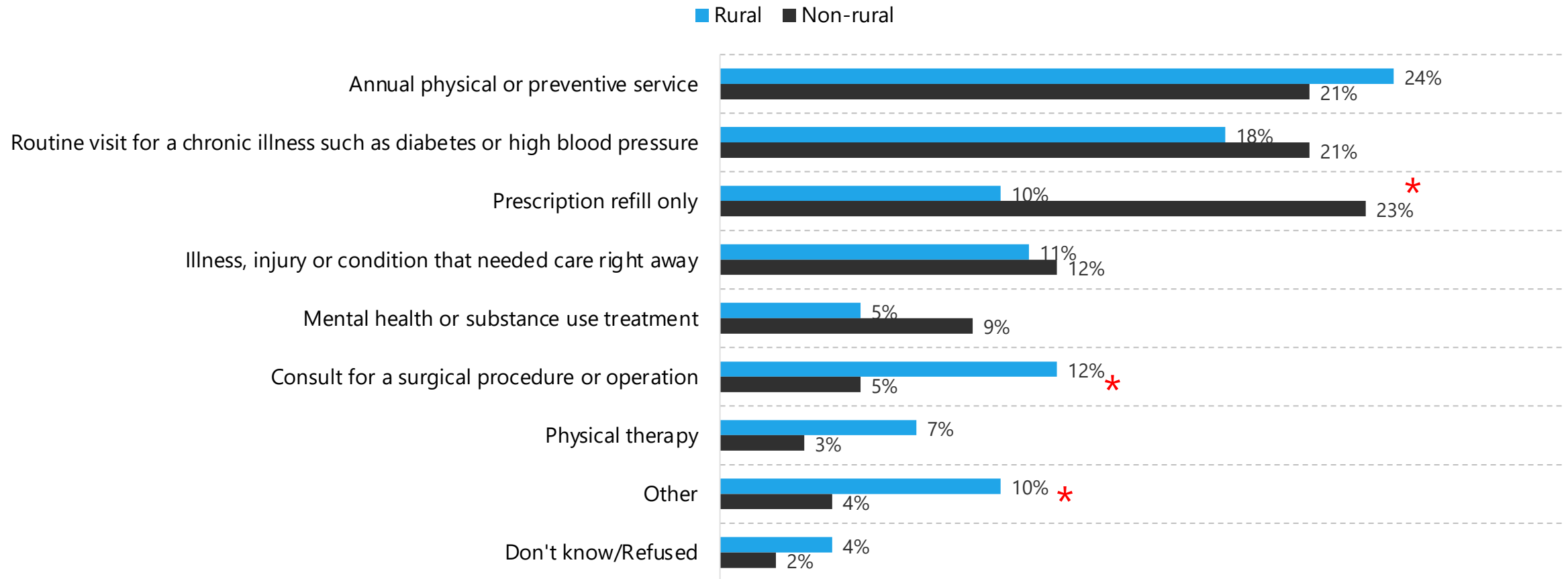
THINKING OF YOU OR YOUR DEPENDENT'S MOST RECENT TELEHEALTH VISIT, WHAT WAS THE PRIMARY PURPOSE?





# Rural residents more likely to use telehealth for surgical consults and non-rural more likely to use for prescription refill.

THINKING OF YOU OR YOUR DEPENDENT'S MOST RECENT TELEHEALTH VISIT, WHAT WAS THE PRIMARY PURPOSE?



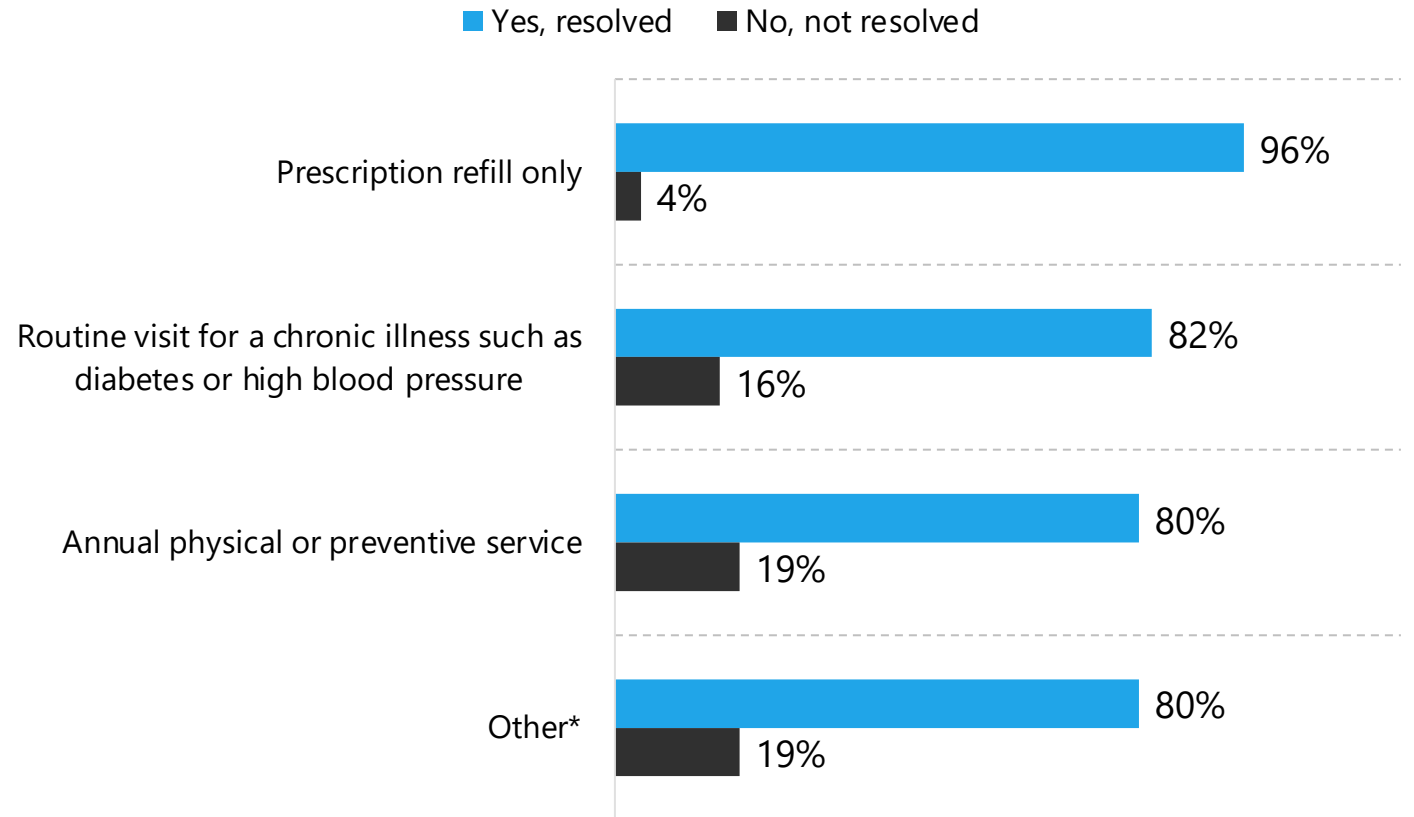
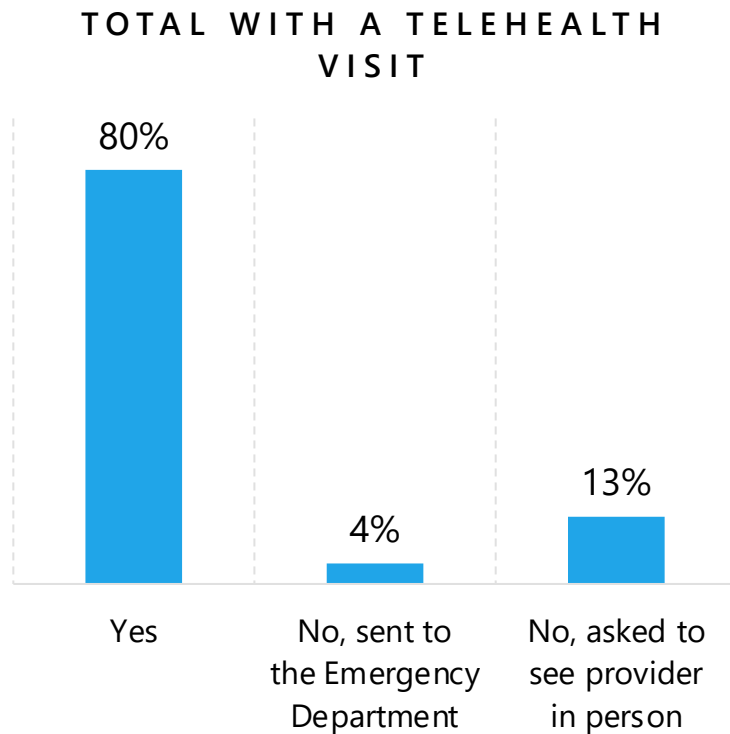
\*indicates statistically significant difference



# Satisfaction with Quality of Care

# 8 in 10 say their primary issue was resolved during telehealth visits.

THINKING OF YOU OR YOUR DEPENDENT'S MOST RECENT TELEHEALTH VISIT, WAS THE PRIMARY ISSUE RESOLVED DURING THE VISIT?



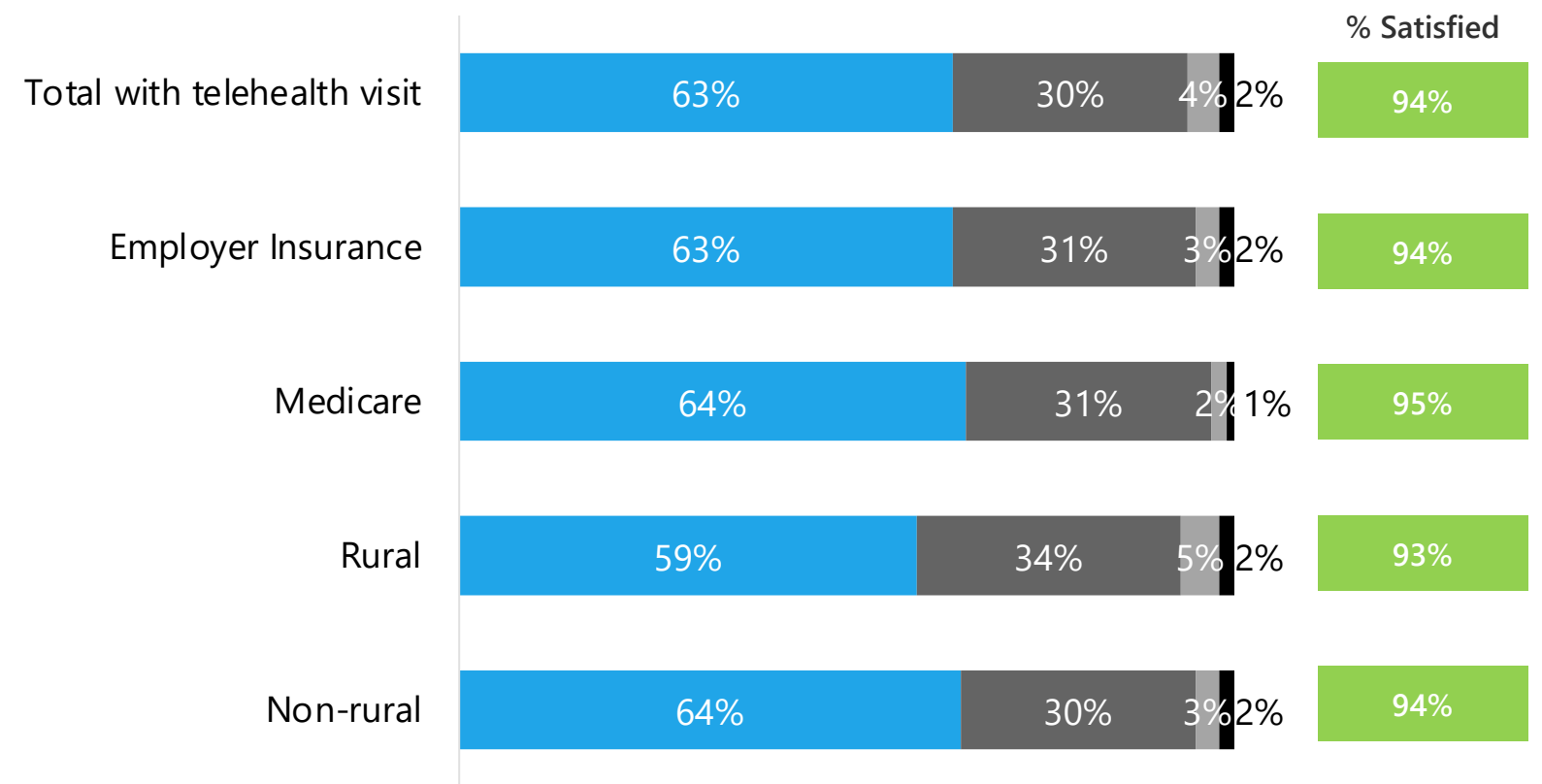
\*includes illness and injury, surgical consult, mental health, and other visits with insufficient sample sizes to report individually



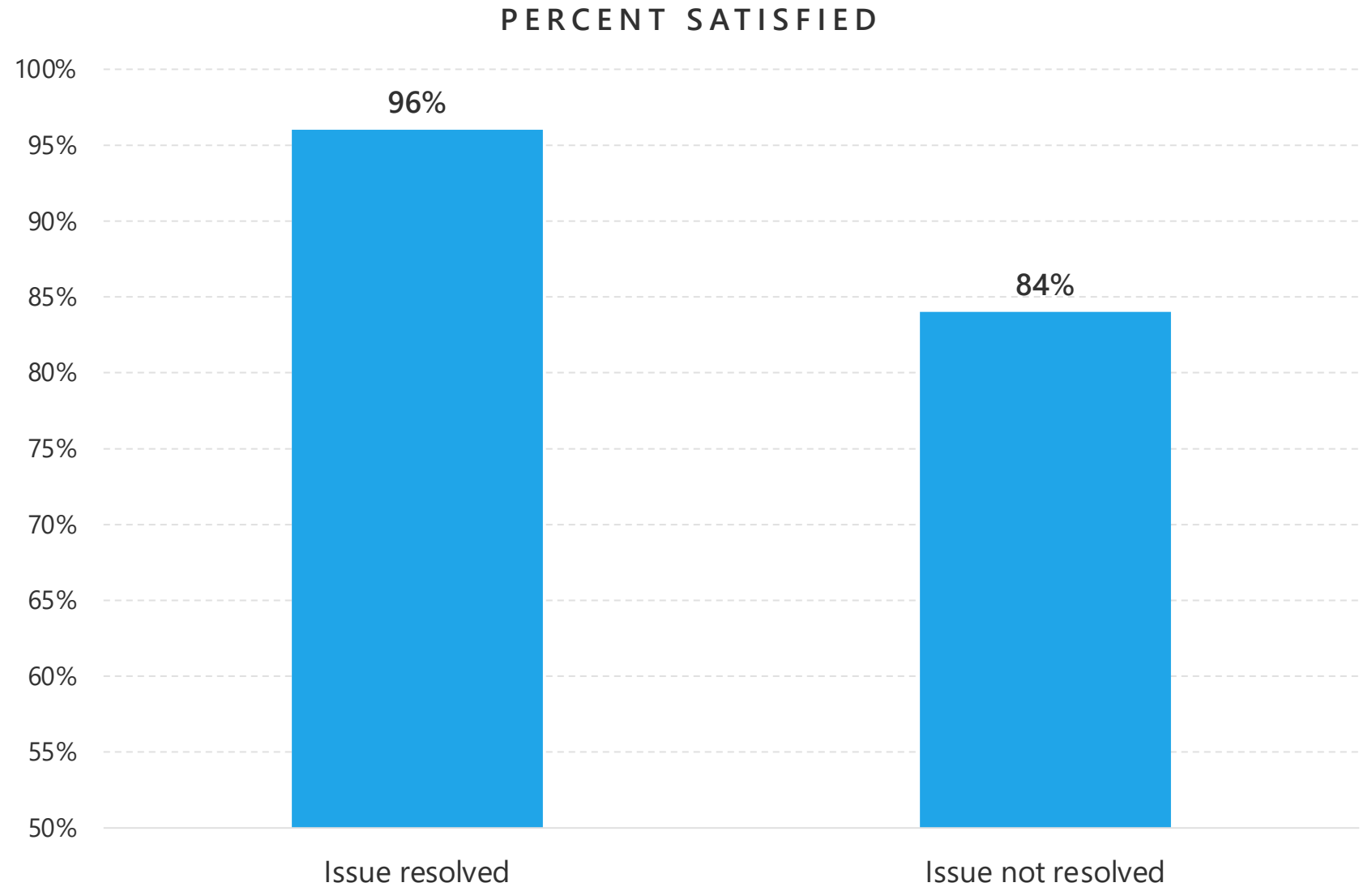
Nearly All are Satisfied With the Quality of Care in Their Telehealth Visit

THINKING OF YOU OR YOUR DEPENDENT'S MOST RECENT TELEHEALTH VISIT, HOW SATISFIED WERE YOU WITH THE QUALITY OF CARE YOU RECEIVED?

Very satisfied Somewhat satisfied Somewhat unsatisfied Very unsatisfied

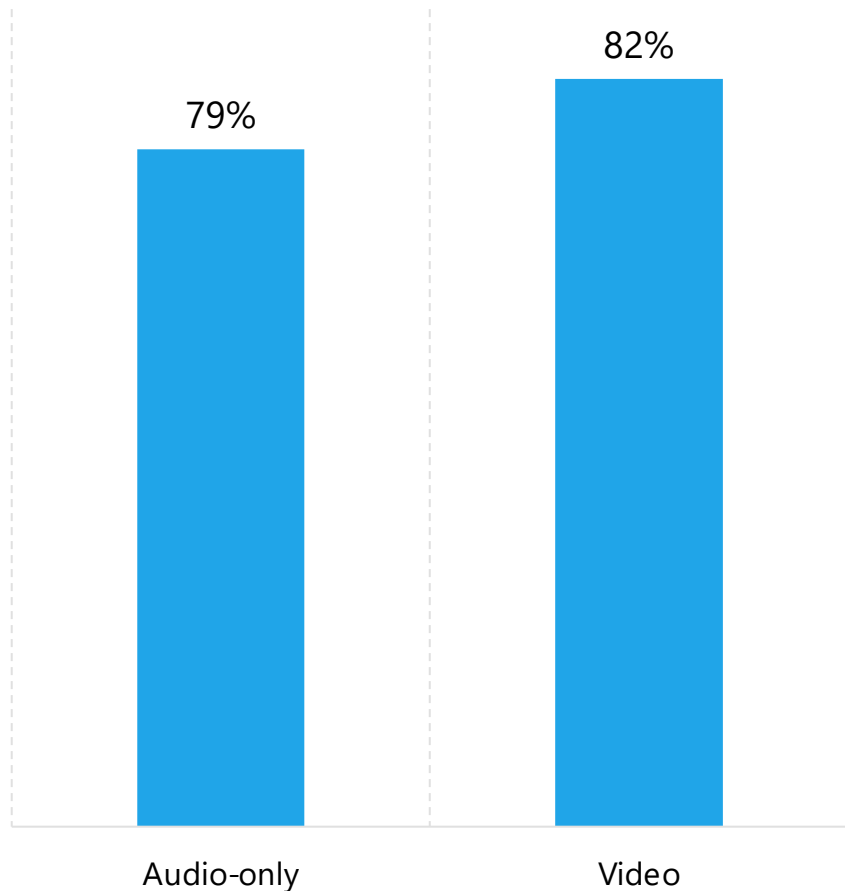


**Adults who had their issue resolved were more likely to say they were satisfied with the quality of care.**

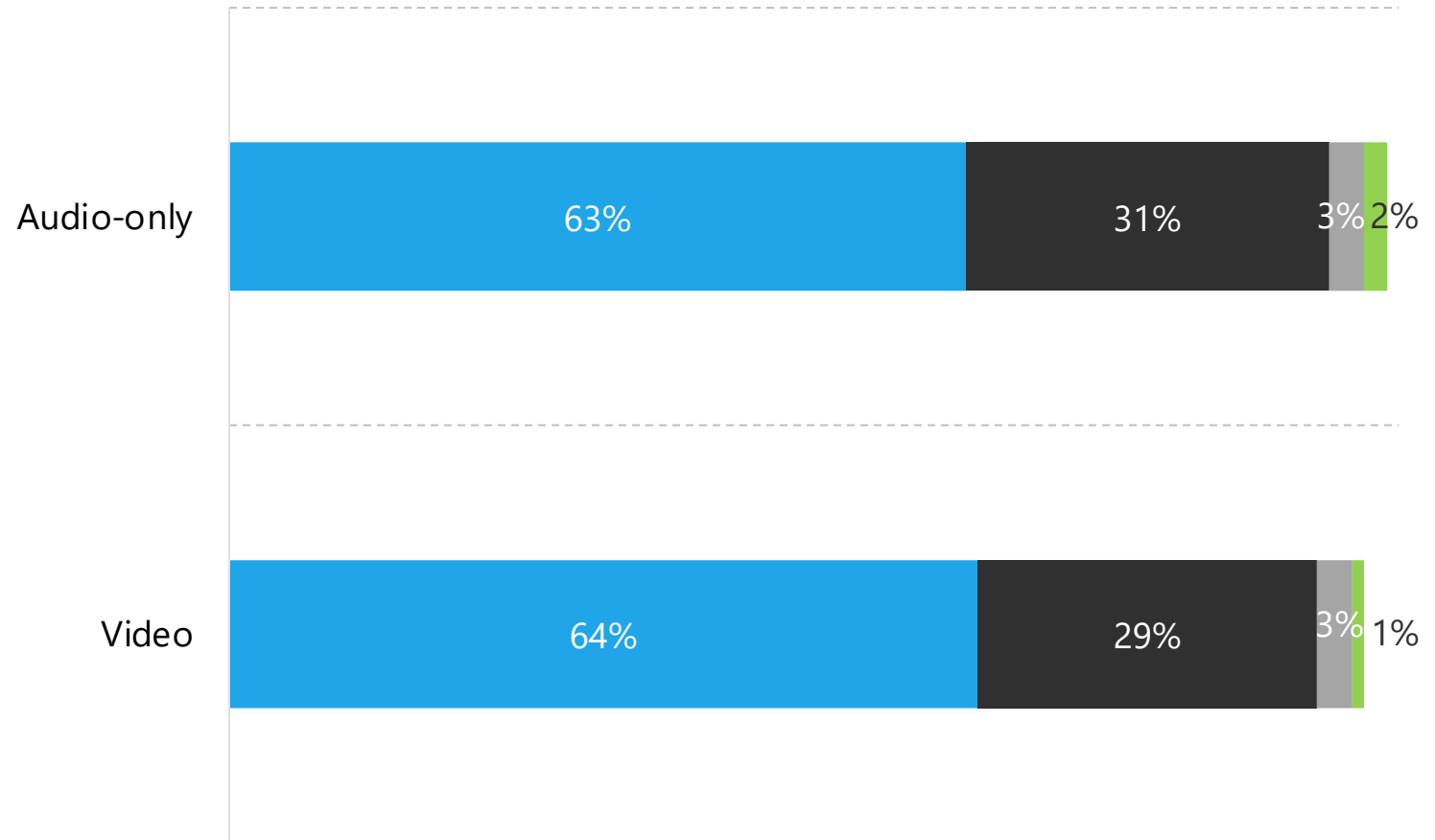


# Adults who had an audio-only visit have similar levels of satisfaction and issue resolution as those with a video visit.

## % WITH ISSUE RESOLVED



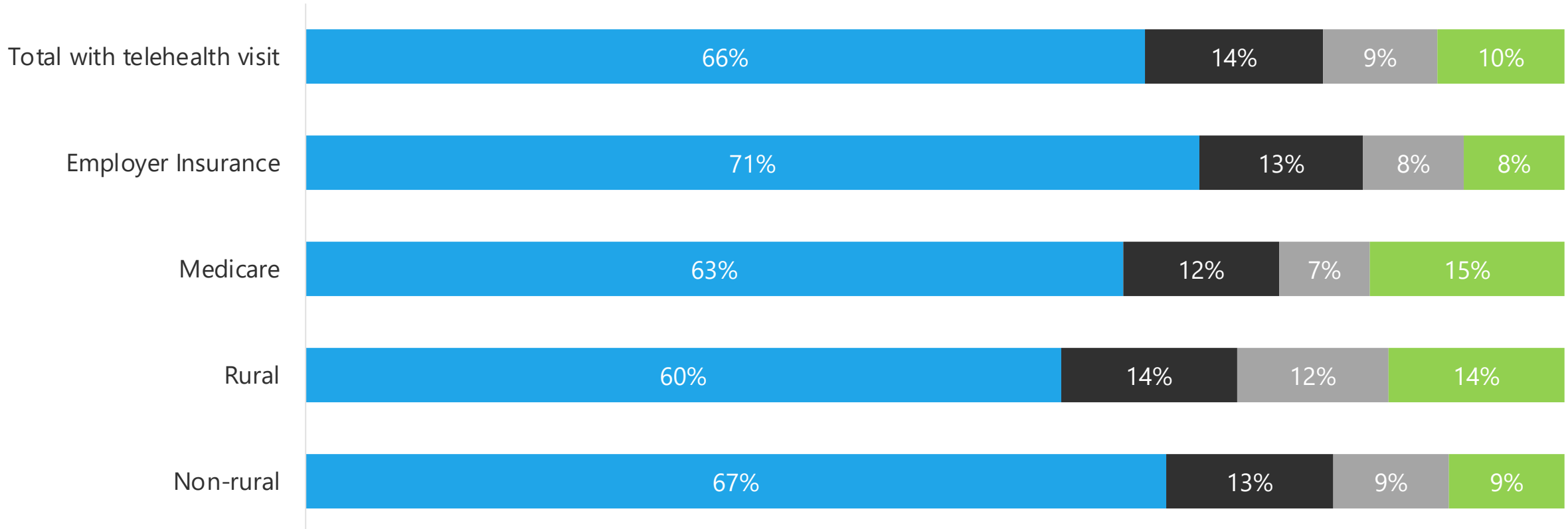
## Legend for Satisfaction Levels



# One in seven telehealth users would have sought care from an Emergency Department or Urgent Care if telehealth were unavailable.

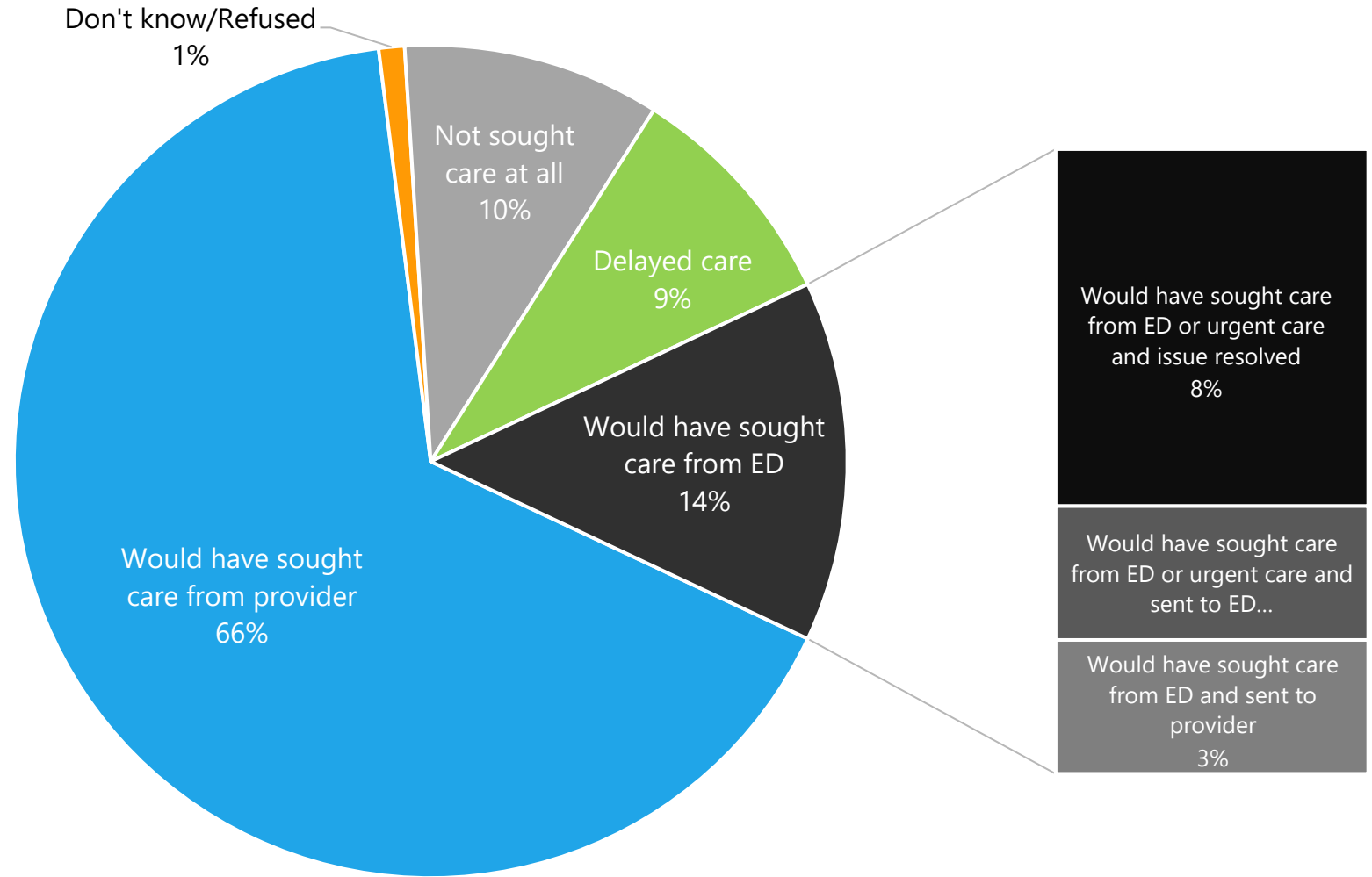
IF YOU DID NOT HAVE ACCESS TO TELEHEALTH FOR YOU OR YOUR DEPENDENT'S MOST RECENT TELEHEALTH VISIT, WOULD YOU HAVE:

■ Sought care in person with provider ■ Sought in person care at an Emergency Department or urgent care ■ Delayed seeking care ■ Not sought care at all



**8% of telehealth users say their primary issue was resolved but they would have sought care in an Emergency Department or Urgent care center.**

**AMONG TELEHEALTH USERS**



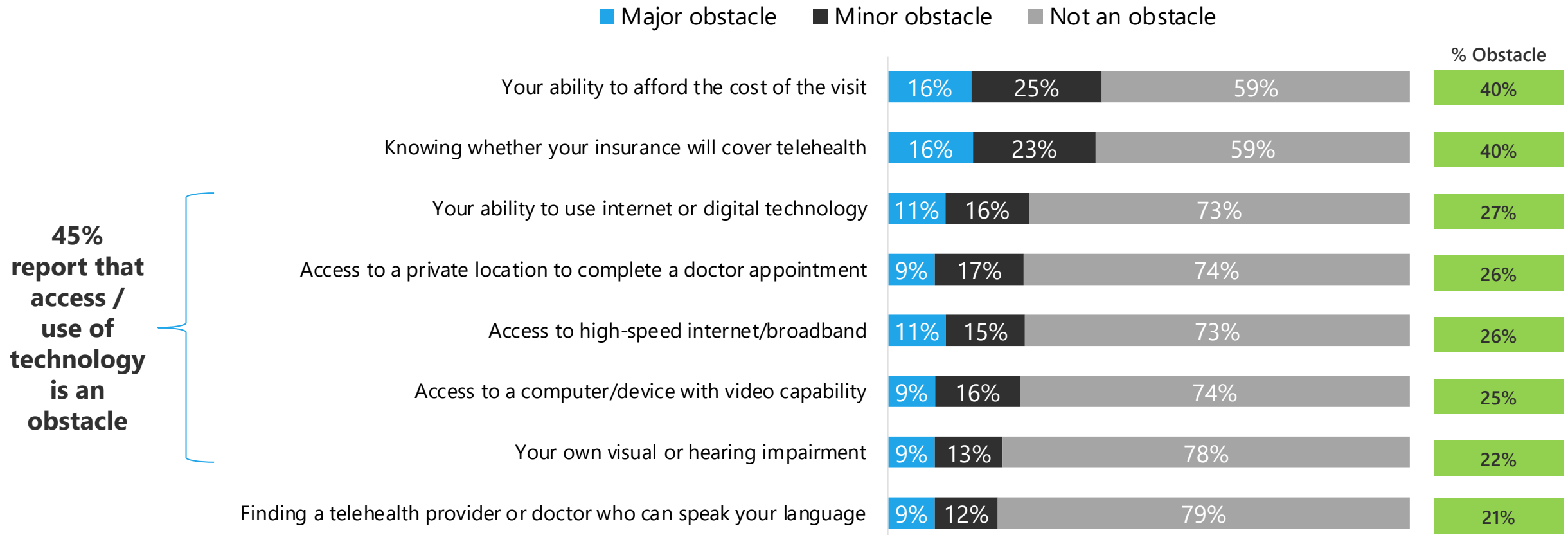


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# Obstacles to Telehealth Use

# Among all adults, nearly half reported technology-related barriers to accessing telehealth

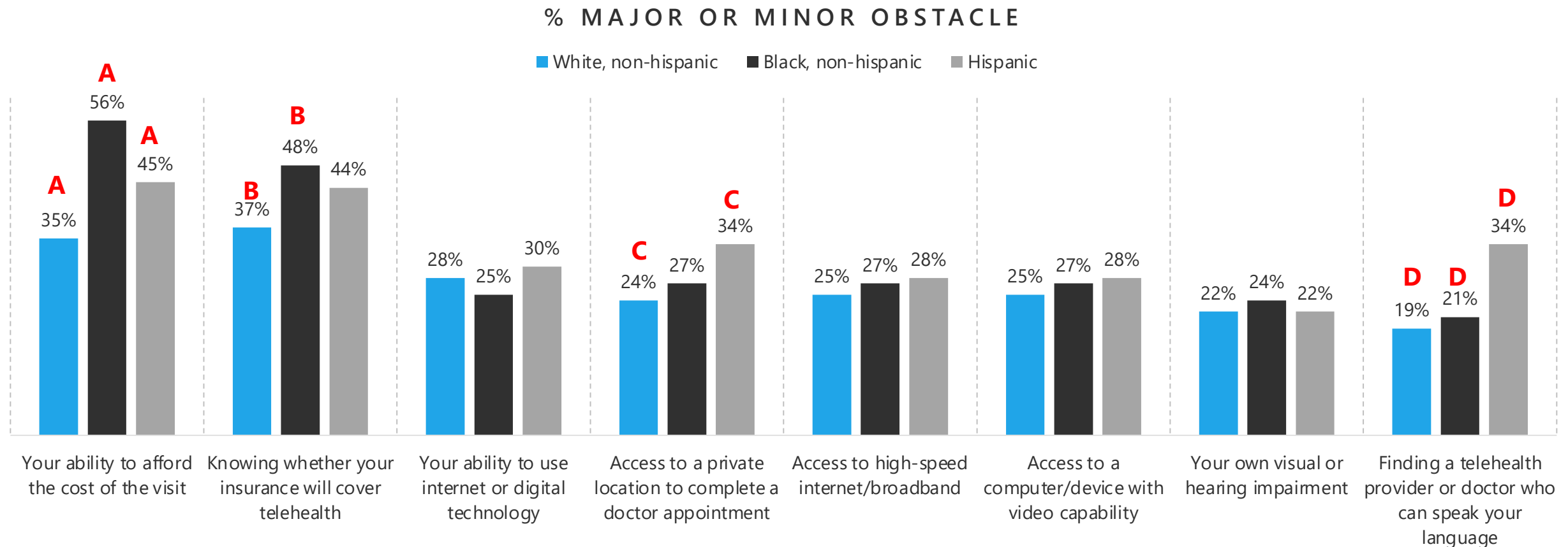
FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING, WOULD YOU SAY THEY ARE A MAJOR OBSTACLE, A MINOR OBSTACLE, OR NOT AN OBSTACLE FOR YOU TO USE TELEHEALTH FOR DOCTOR VISITS?



\*Among total adults

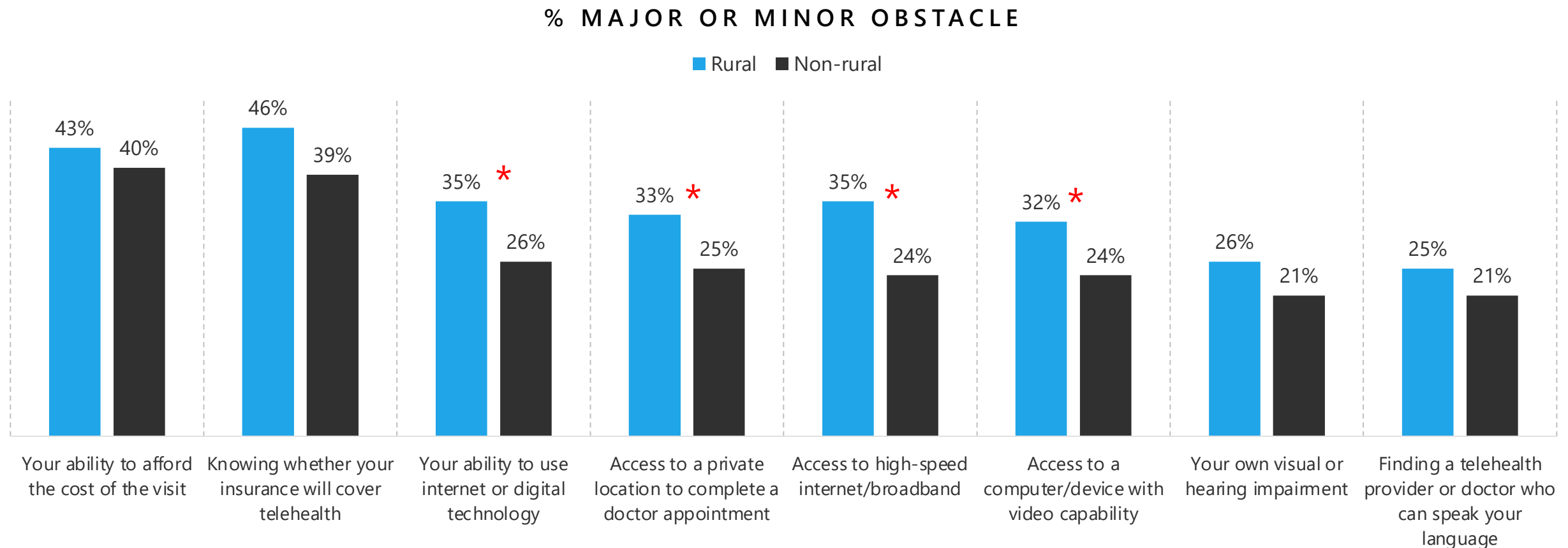
# Black adults are more likely to report cost as an obstacle; language and access to a private location are an obstacle for Hispanic adults.

FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING, WOULD YOU SAY THEY ARE A MAJOR OBSTACLE, A MINOR OBSTACLE, OR NOT AN OBSTACLE FOR YOU TO USE TELEHEALTH FOR DOCTOR VISITS?



# Rural residents face many more obstacles than non-rural residents, especially around access to technology.

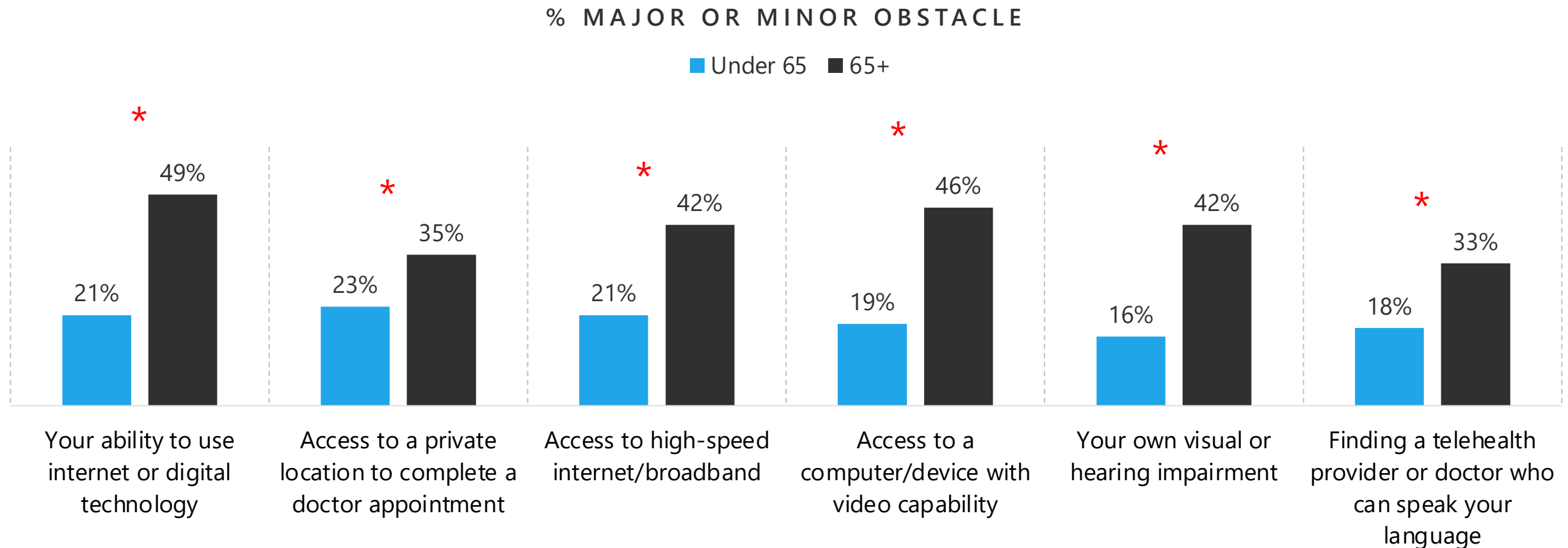
FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING, WOULD YOU SAY THEY ARE A MAJOR OBSTACLE, A MINOR OBSTACLE, OR NOT AN OBSTACLE FOR YOU TO USE TELEHEALTH FOR DOCTOR VISITS?



\*indicates statistically significant difference

# Access to computers, high-speed internet, and ability to use the internet are more likely to be obstacles for older adults.

FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING, WOULD YOU SAY THEY ARE A MAJOR OBSTACLE, A MINOR OBSTACLE, OR NOT AN OBSTACLE FOR YOU TO USE TELEHEALTH FOR DOCTOR VISITS?



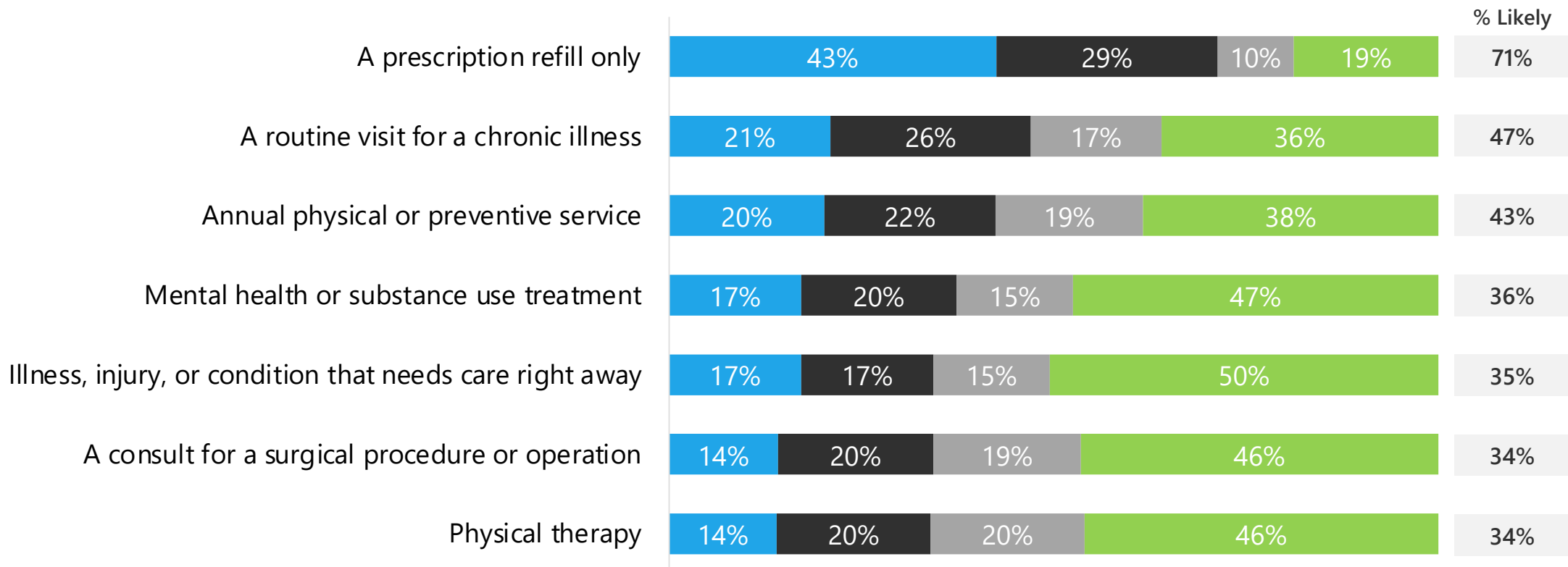


# The Future of Telehealth

# Eight in ten adults are likely to use telehealth in the future for some type of visit with a health care provider.

IF YOUR DOCTOR OR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER OFFERS TELEHEALTH IN THE FUTURE, HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO USE TELEHEALTH VISITS FOR...

■ Very likely   
 ■ Somewhat likely   
 ■ Somewhat unlikely   
 ■ Very unlikely



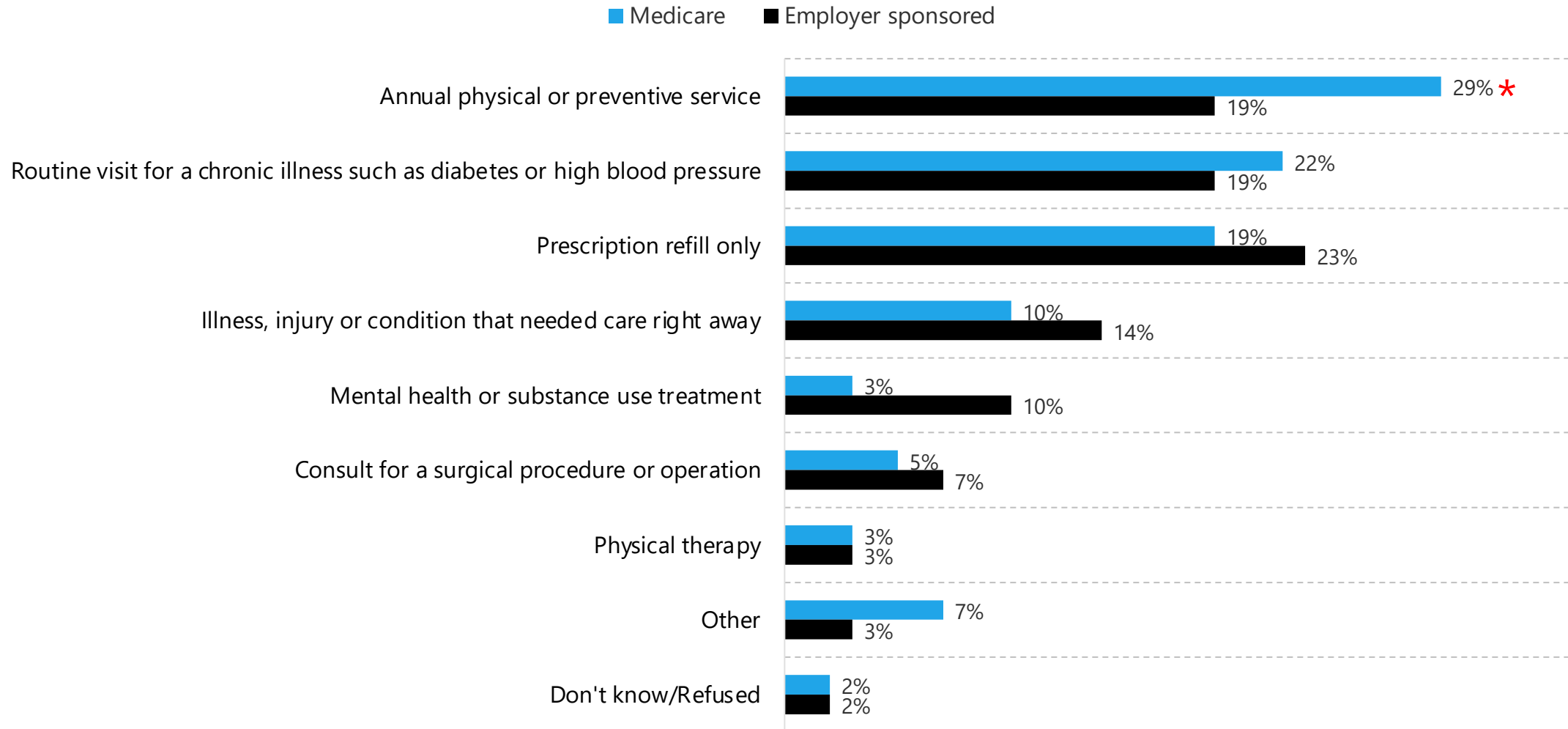
\*Among total adults

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# Appendix



# Type of Telehealth Visit Among Medicare v. Employee Sponsored Insurance

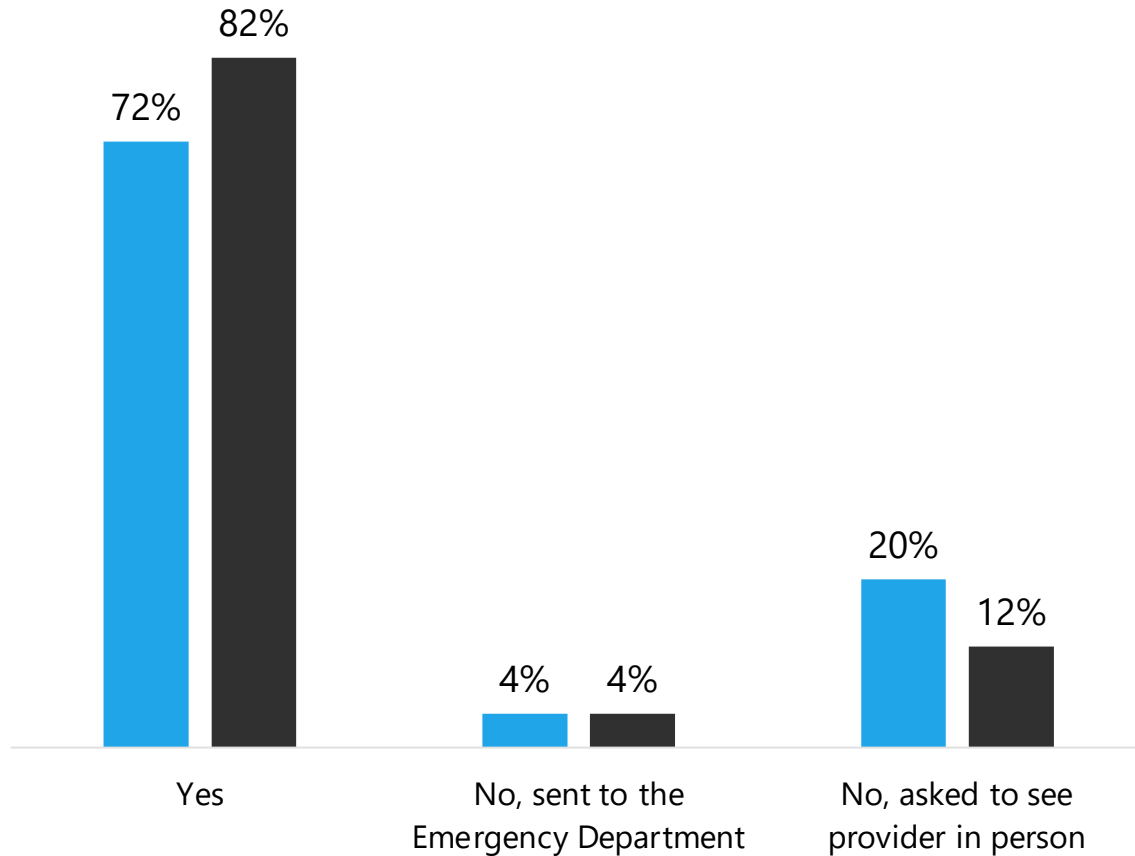


\*indicates statistically significant difference

# Issue Resolved for Rural/Non-rural and Medicare/Employer Sponsored

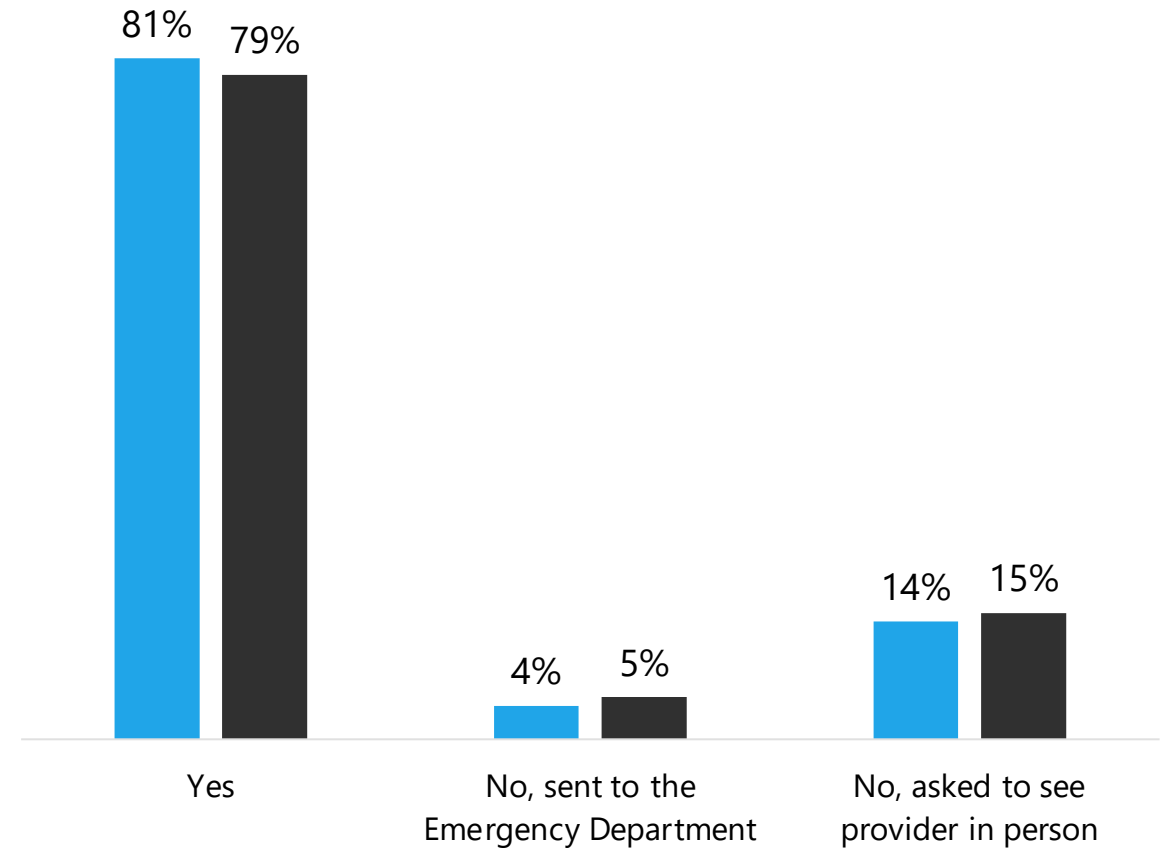
## RURAL V. NON-RURAL

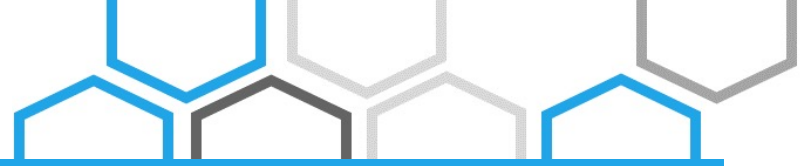
■ Rural ■ Non-rural



## MEDICARE V. EMPLOYER SPONSORED

■ Medicare ■ Employer sponsored





Those who have had a routine visit are slightly more likely to report being satisfied than other types of visits.

Routine visit for a chronic illness such as diabetes or high blood pressure



Prescription refill only



Annual physical or preventive service

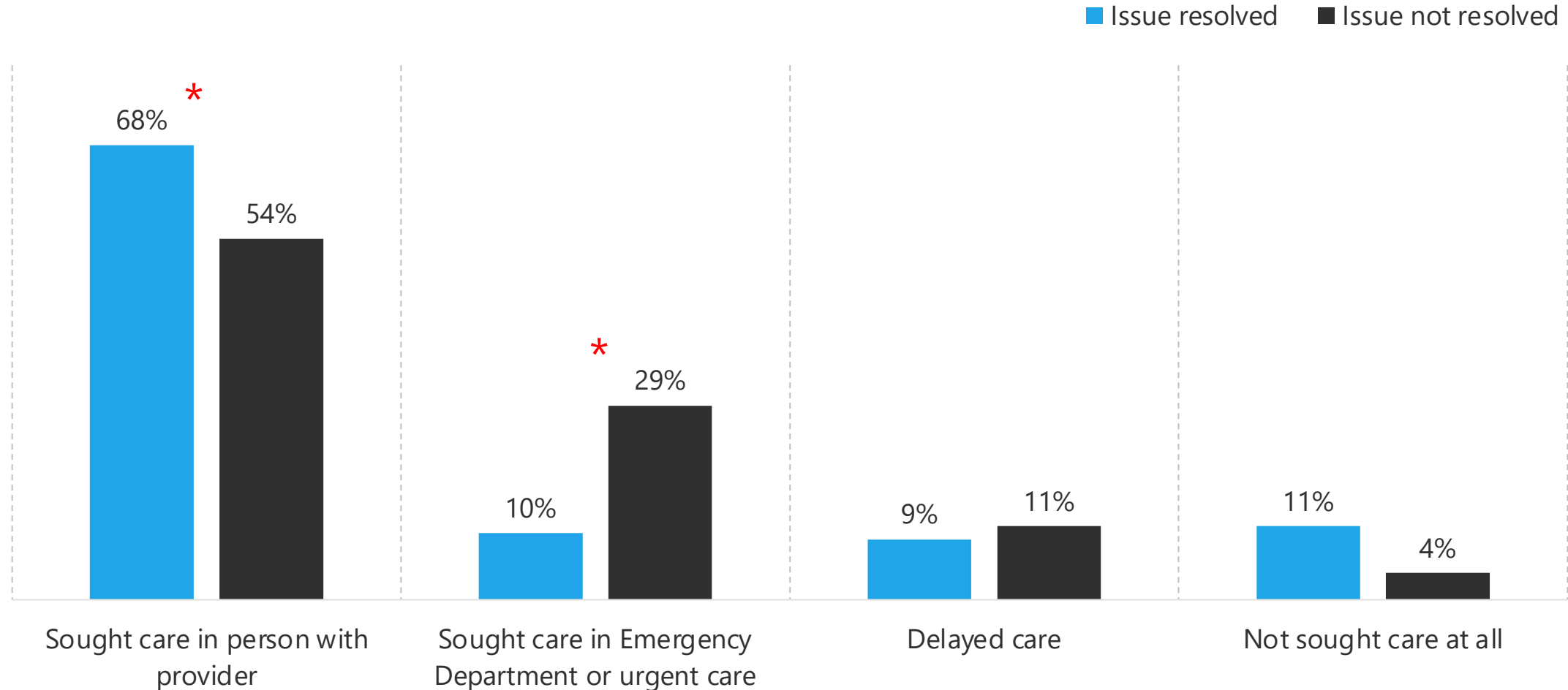


Other



Bars with the same letter are significantly different from one another

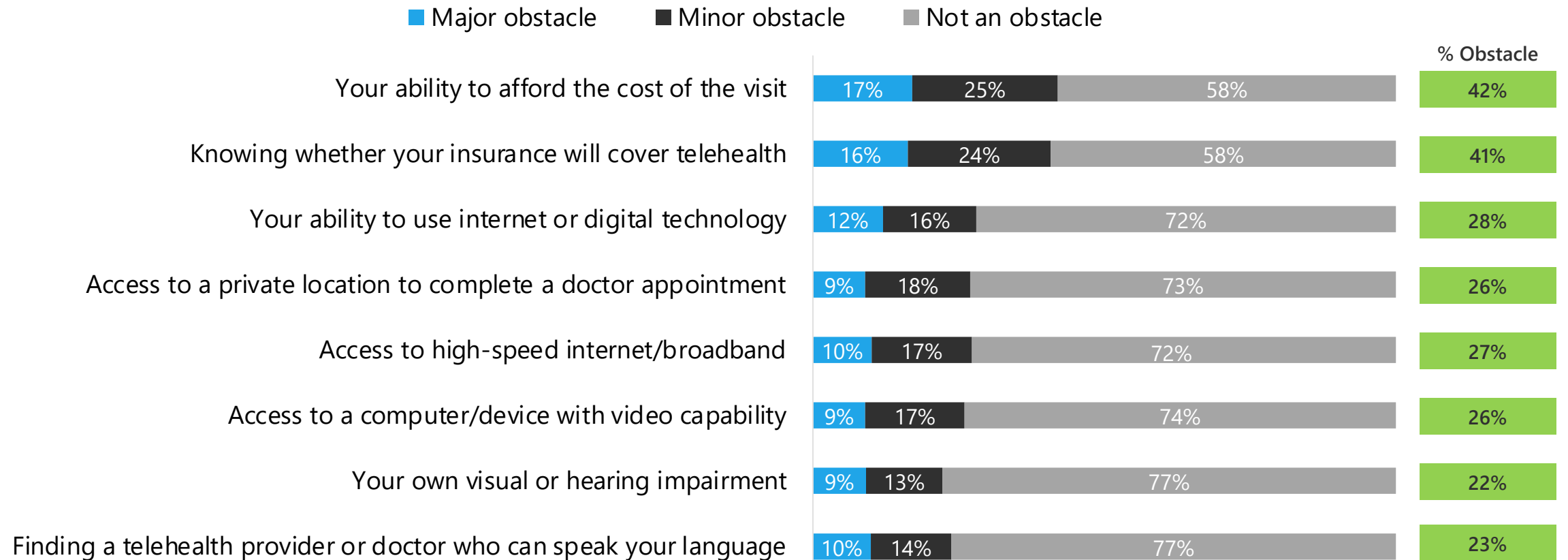
**Those who did not have their issue resolved were more likely to have sought care in an emergency department or urgent care had they not had access to telehealth.**



*\*indicates statistically significant difference*

# The obstacles for those who have not had a telehealth visit in the past year are similar.

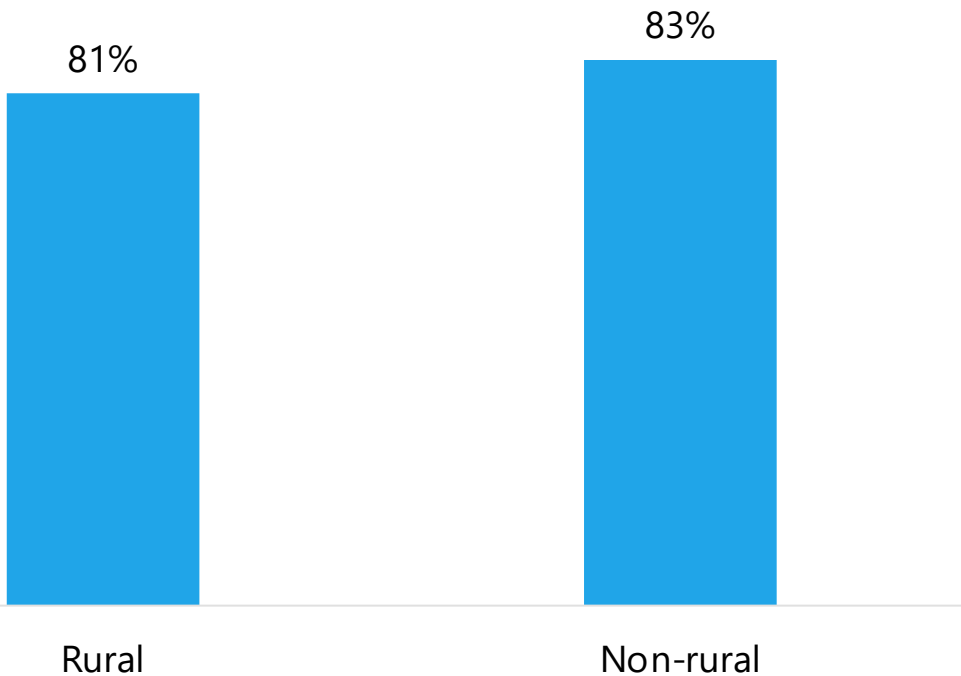
FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING, WOULD YOU SAY THEY ARE A MAJOR OBSTACLE, A MINOR OBSTACLE, OR NOT AN OBSTACLE FOR YOU TO USE TELEHEALTH FOR DOCTOR VISITS?



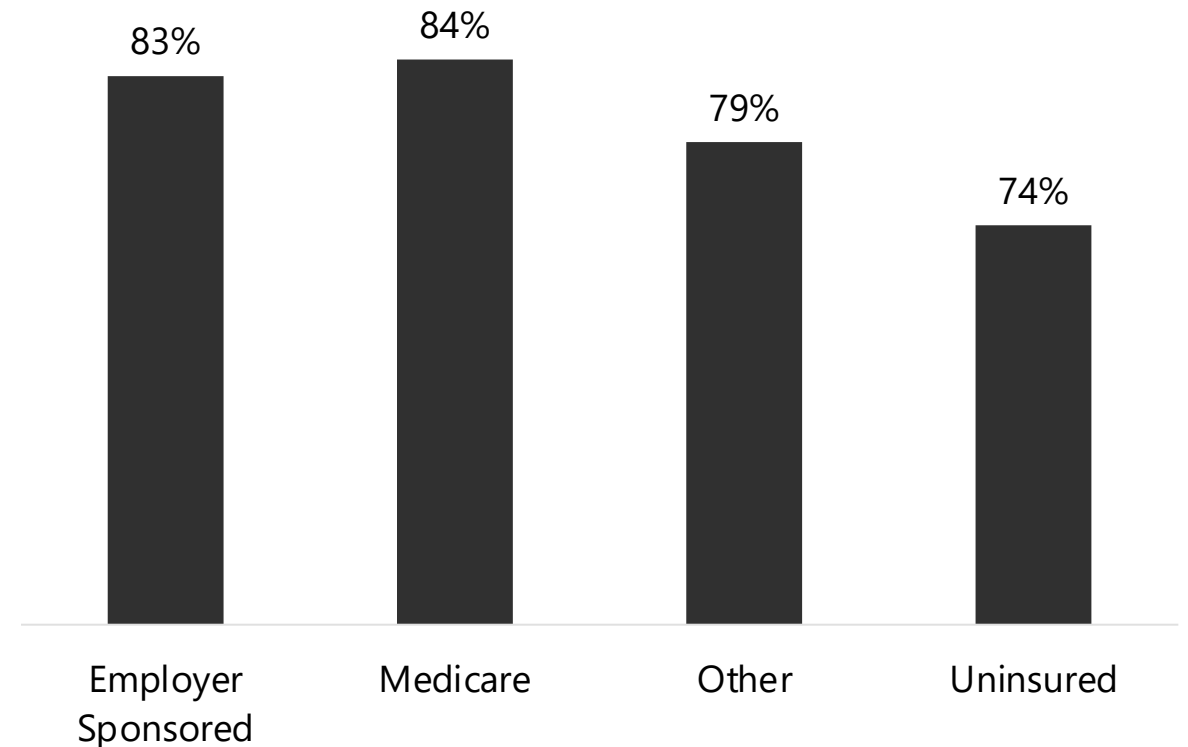
# Similar amounts of adults in rural and non-rural areas are likely to use telehealth in the future.

IF YOUR DOCTOR OR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER OFFERS TELEHEALTH IN THE FUTURE,  
HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO USE TELEHEALTH VISITS FOR...

% VERY OR SOMEWHAT LIKELY



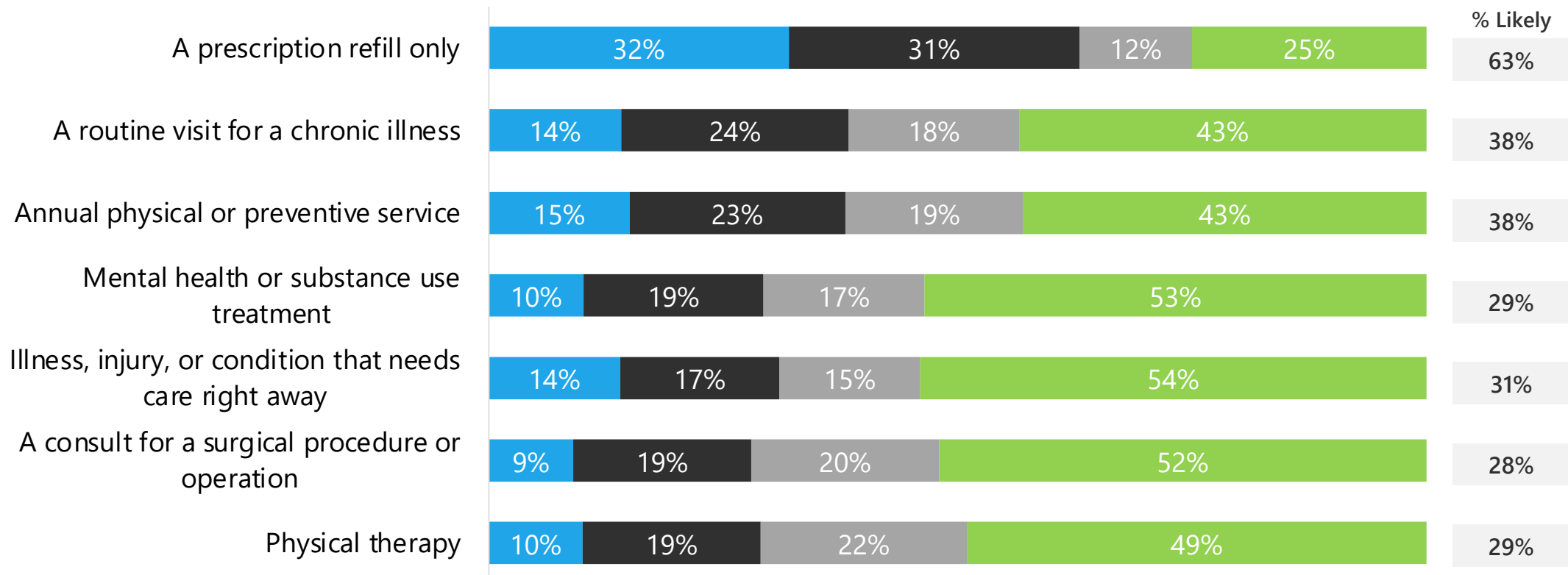
% VERY OR SOMEWHAT LIKELY



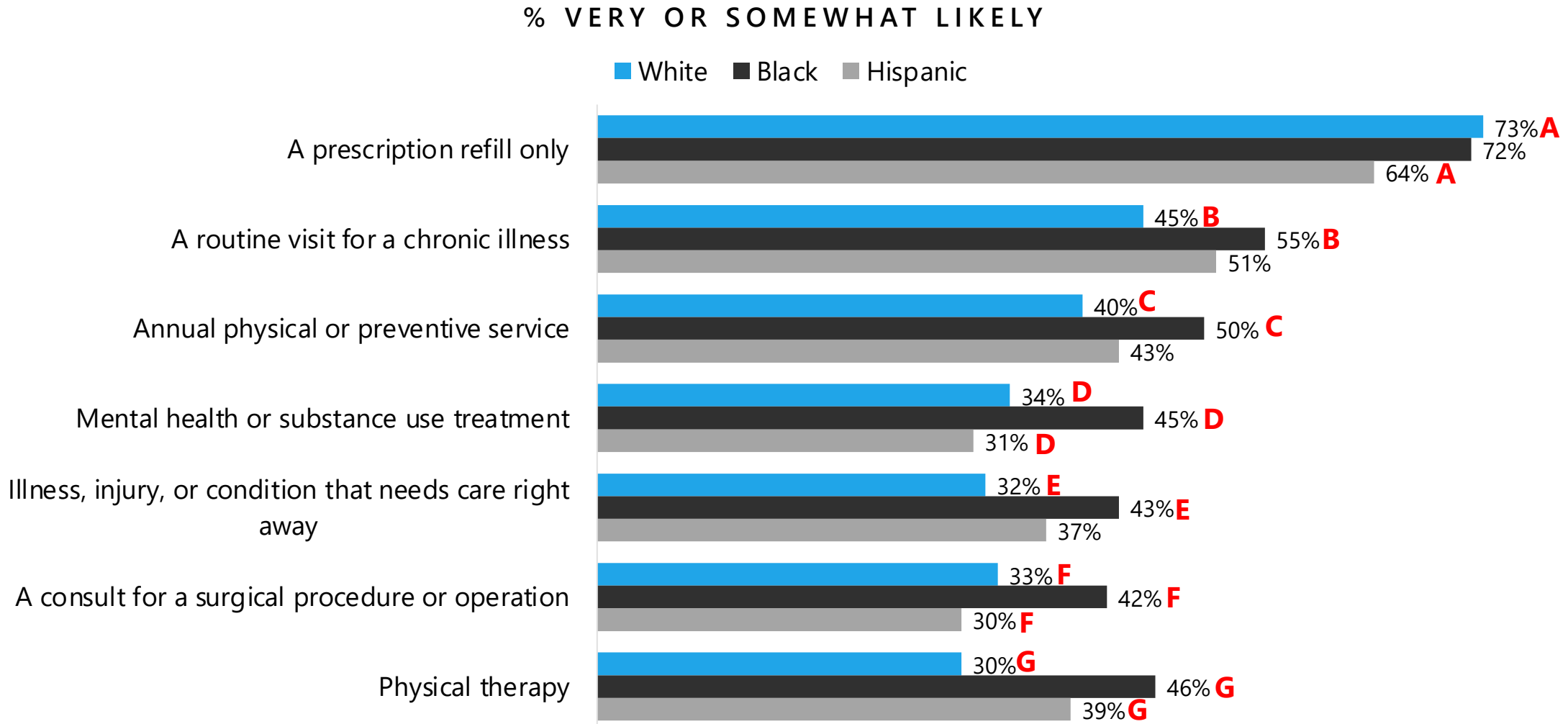
# Three-quarters of those who have not used telehealth in past year say they are likely to use it in the future.

IF YOUR DOCTOR OR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER OFFERS TELEHEALTH IN THE FUTURE, HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO USE TELEHEALTH VISITS FOR...

Very likely    Somewhat likely    Somewhat unlikely    Very unlikely



# Black adults are more likely to use telehealth in the future for routine visits for chronic illness and preventive care.



Bars with the same letter are significantly different from one another