



Opioid Abuse among Rural Adults



AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION®

October 2022

 MORNING CONSULT



METHODOLOGY

In **2017**, Morning Consult conducted a survey on behalf of the American Farm Bureau Federation to explore the impact of the opioid abuse epidemic among the rural adult community. This poll was conducted between October 26-29, 2017 among a sample of 2,201 rural adults. The interviews for this survey were conducted online and the data weighted to gender, age, race and education.

In **2022**, Morning Consult conducted a similar survey on behalf of the American Farm Bureau Federation to track and explore the impact of the opioid abuse epidemic among the rural adult community. This poll was conducted between October 6-13, 2022 among a sample of 2,010 rural adults. The interviews for this survey were conducted online and the data weighted to gender, age, race, ethnicity, census region and education.

Results from the full surveys have a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points.

Where applicable, data is tracked between the two surveys to understand shifts since 2017.

Key Findings

- 1. Access to mental health care has improved since 2017.** Thinking about their local community, rural adults say it is easier in 2022 than in 2017 to access mental health treatment (+6) and primary care treatment (+11). If they or a family member wanted to seek care from a mental health professional, rural adults in 2022 are more confident than rural adults in 2017 that they'd be able to find treatment that was affordable (+13), convenient to access (+13), covered by their insurance (+14) and effective (+12).
- 2. Opioid use in rural America remains high.** Two-in-five (42%) rural adults say they know someone who is or has been addicted to opioids or prescription painkillers.
- 3. Attitudes towards opioid abuse have softened since 2017, but some stigma persists.** Compared to 2017, rural adults in 2022 are more likely to say someone can accidentally or unintentionally get addicted to opioids. Rural adults in 2022 are more likely (+11) than rural adults in 2017 to say that addiction to opioids is a disease. However, nearly half of rural adults (57%) say there is stigma or shame associated with opioid abuse in their local community.
- 4. When it comes to the opioid crisis, rural adults see the pharmaceutical industry (45%) more as part of the problem and treatment centers/social workers (53%) as part of the solution.** Of the factors tested, rural adults think counterfeiters, illegal black-market sellers and 'pill mills' (65%, +7) and 'doctor shopping' (61%, +1) contribute most to the opioid crisis. Thinking about their local community, of the options tested, rural adults are most likely to say increasing access to addiction treatment programs and mental health care (73%) would be effective in helping to solve the opioid crisis.
- 5. Rural adults acknowledge the value in reducing stigma around opioid abuse.** Compared to 2017, rural adults are more likely to say reducing shame or stigma around opioid addiction (+5) and government limits on drug production (+5) would be effective in helping solve the opioid crisis. Consistent with 2017, rural adults say the messages that people can recover from opioid abuse (74%) and that families need to be able to openly discuss addiction in order to get help (75%) would be effective in decreasing shame or stigma associated with opioid abuse.

AGENDA

ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PROXIMITY TO OPIOID ABUSE

PERCEPTIONS OF OPIOID ABUSE

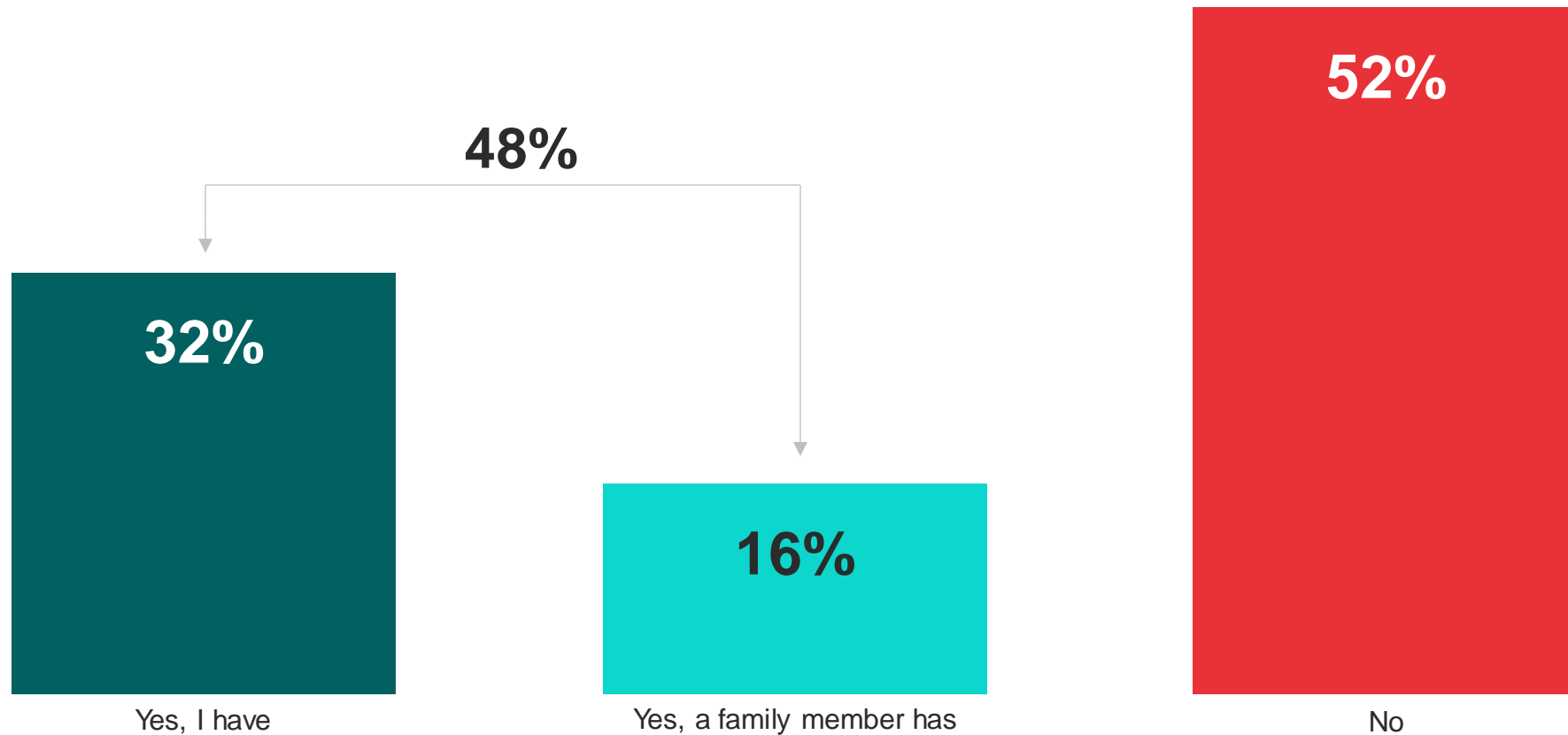
PERCEIVED SOLUTIONS TO THE OPIOID
CRISIS



ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

Half (48%) of rural adults in 2022 say they, or a family member, have sought care from a mental health professional, including 32% who say they themselves have.

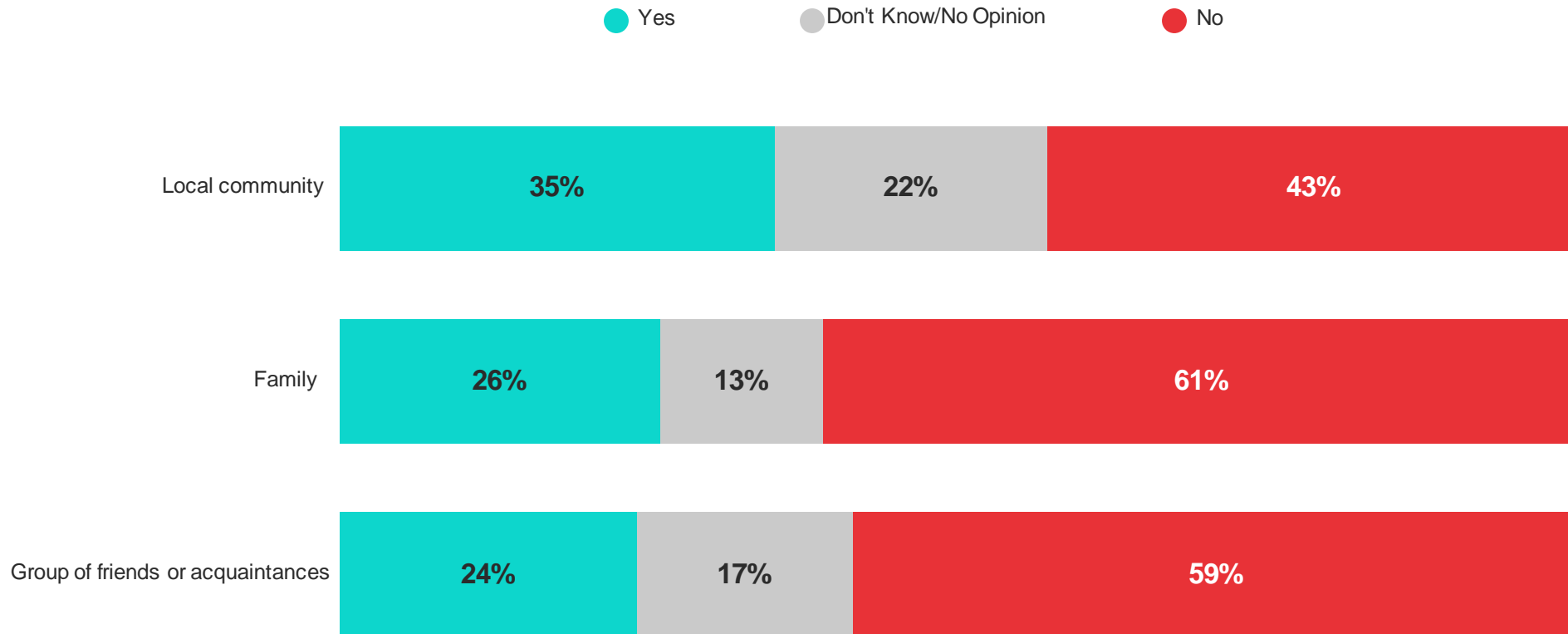
Have you or a family member ever sought care from a mental health professional of any kind?



ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

About a third (35%) of rural adults say there is stigma or shame associated with seeking care from a mental health professional in their local community.

Generally, would you say there is a stigma or shame associated with seeking care from a mental health professional in your...

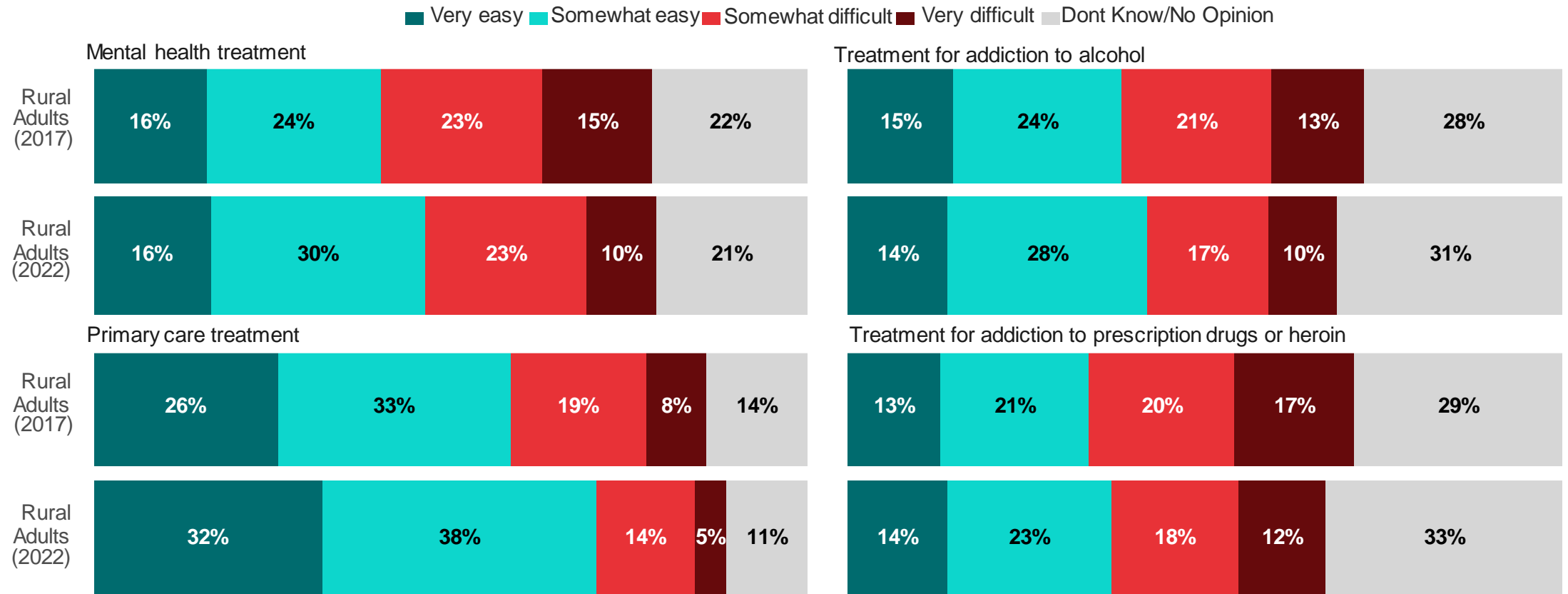


*In 2017, rural adults were asked *how much* stigma or shame is associated with seeking mental health care in their local communities, families and groups of friends and acquaintances. Due to the change in question text, a direct comparison cannot be drawn and the data is trended directionally.

ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

Thinking about their local community, rural adults say it is easier in 2022 than in 2017 to access mental health treatment (+6) and primary care treatment (+11).

Thinking about your local community, how easy or difficult is it to access...

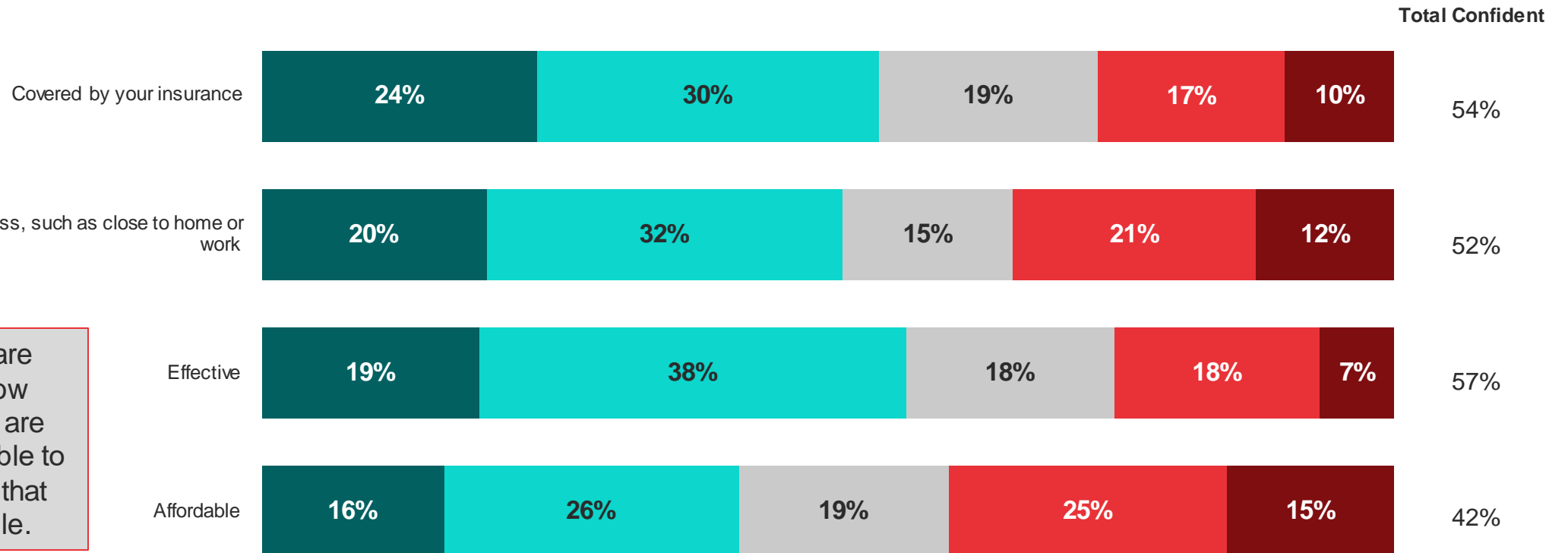


ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

If they or a family member wanted to seek care from a mental health professional, half or more of rural adults are confident that they would be able to find treatment that was covered by their insurance (54%), convenient to access (52%), and effective (57%).

If you or a family member wanted to seek care from a mental health professional, how confident are you that you'd be able to find treatment that was...

● Very confident
 ● Somewhat confident
 ● Don't Know/No Opinion
 ● Not too confident
 ● Not confident at all



Rural adults are divided on how confident they are that they'd be able to find treatment that was affordable.

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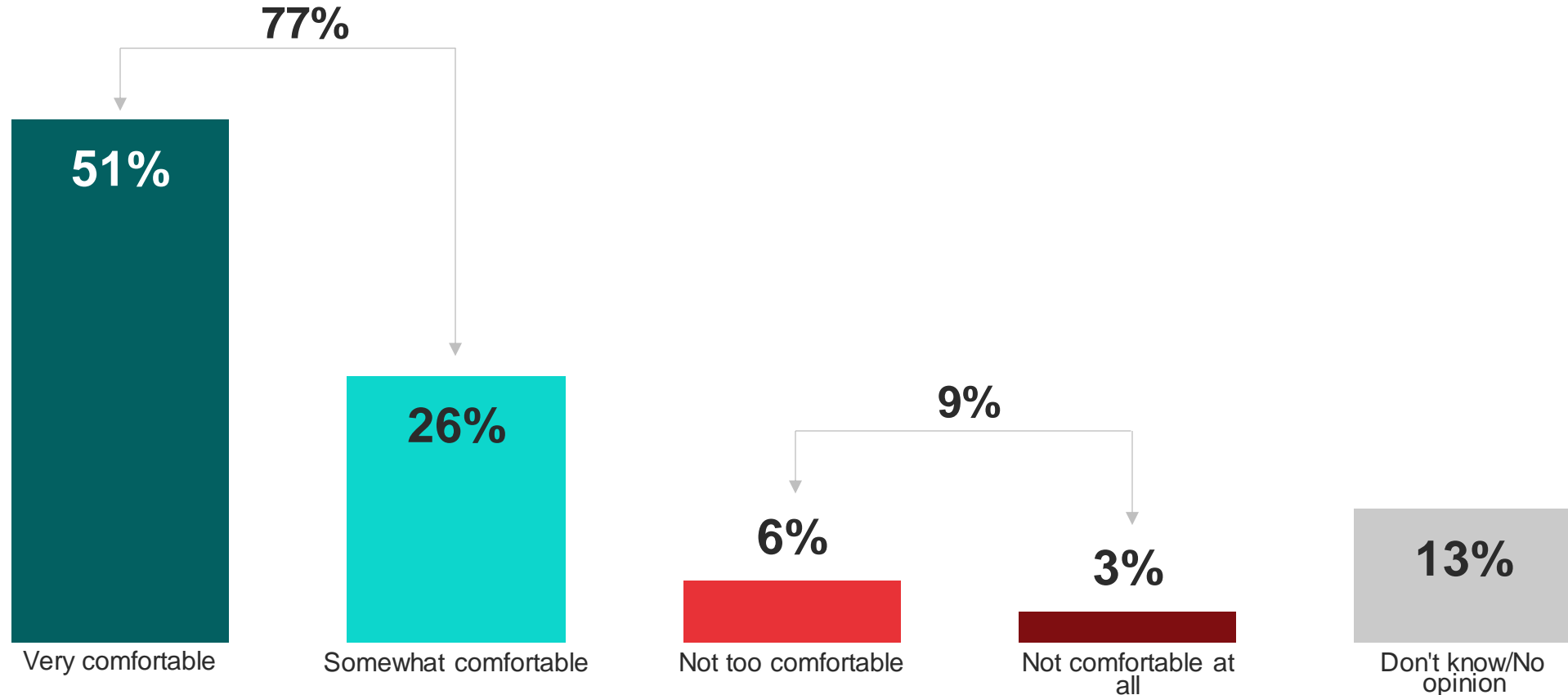
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PROXIMITY TO OPIOID ABUSE

A majority of rural adults (77%) say they are comfortable having a conversation about opioid abuse.

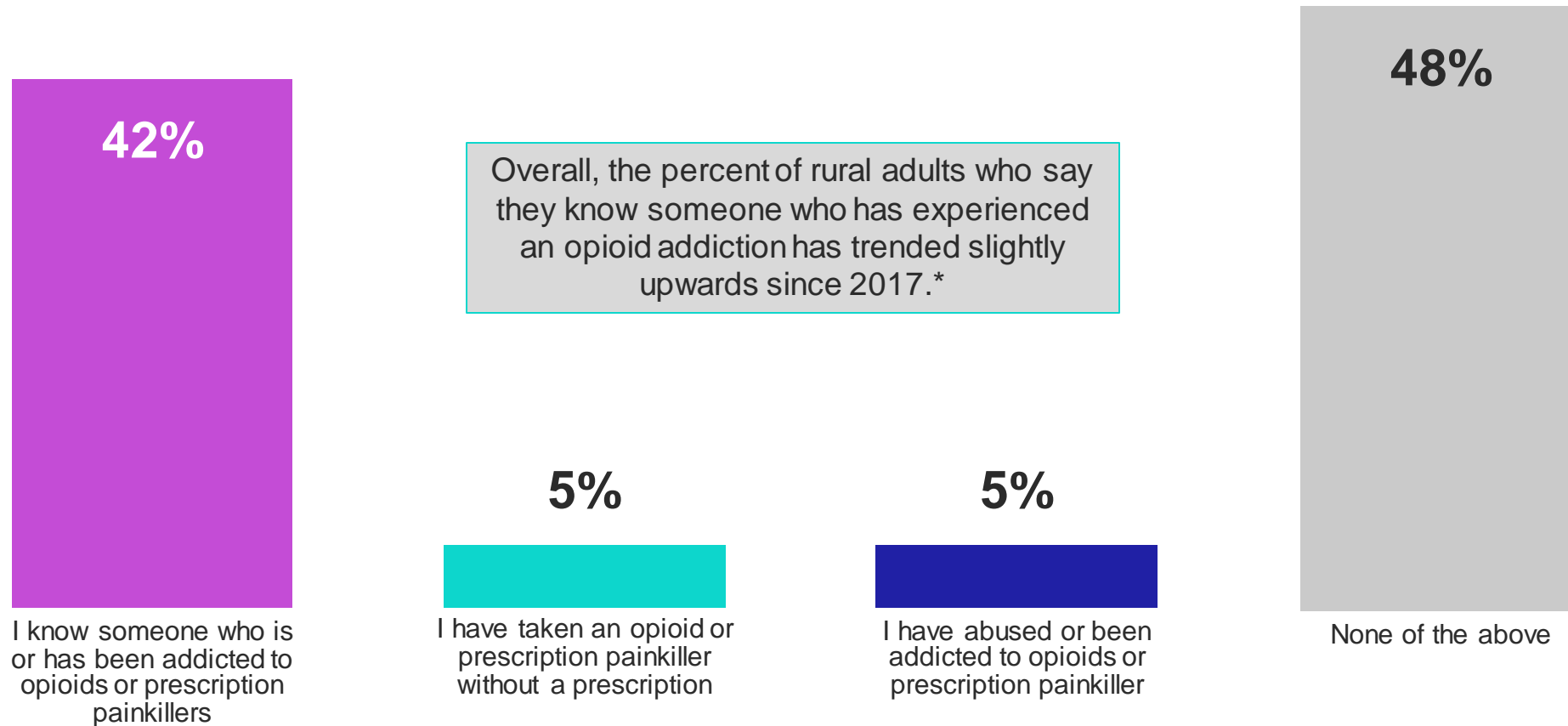
As you may know, opioid abuse refers to the misuse of powerful pain-killing drugs, including prescription opioids (such as fentanyl, oxycodone (OxyContin), hydrocodone (Vicodin), morphine, and methadone), and non-prescription opioids such as heroin. How comfortable are you having a conversation about opioid abuse?



PROXIMITY TO OPIOID ABUSE

Two-in-five (42%) rural adults say they know someone who is or has been addicted to opioids or prescription painkillers.

Which of the following best applies to you?



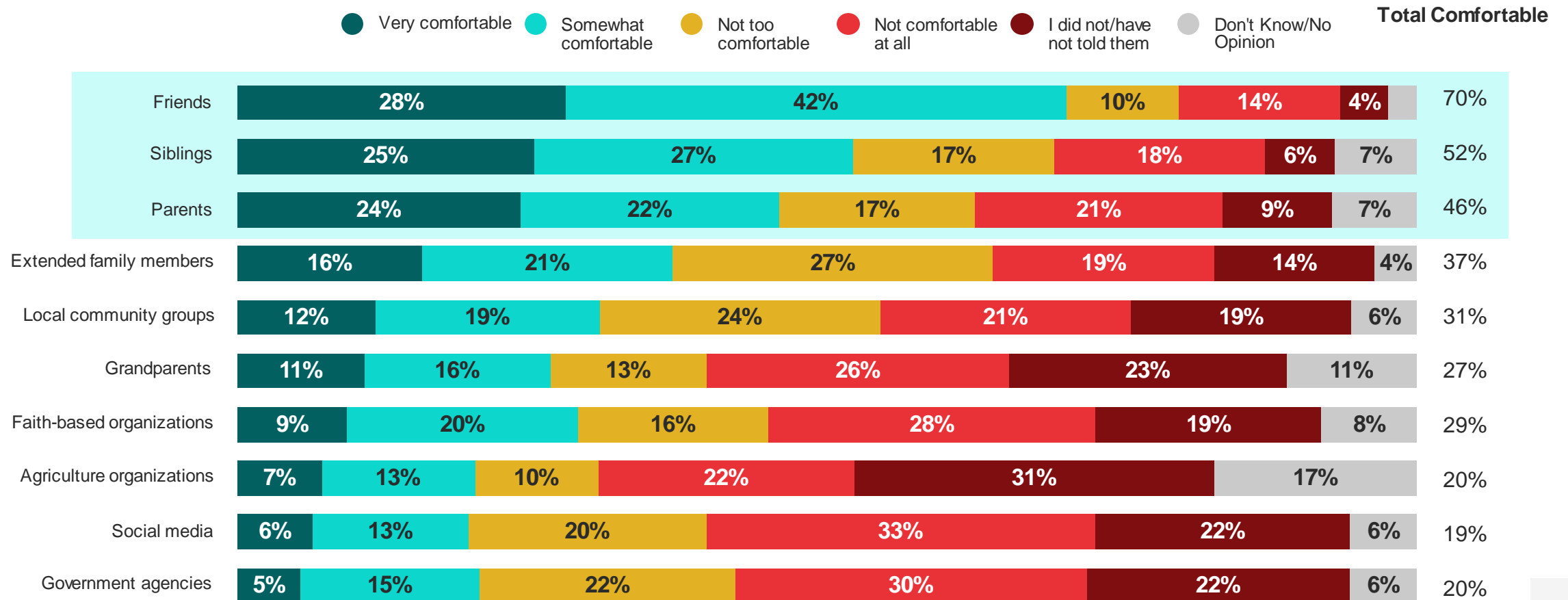
*In 2017, rural adults were also given the response option "I have a family member who is or has been addicted to opioids or prescription painkillers." This response option was eliminated in 2022.

PROXIMITY TO OPIOID ABUSE

In dealing with their addiction to opioids, half or more of rural adults who have experienced opioid addiction are comfortable talking to friends (70%), siblings (52%) and parents (46%) about their addiction.

In dealing with your addiction to opioids, how comfortable were you in talking about your addiction with each of the following?

AMONG RURAL ADULTS WHO HAVE ABUSED OR BEEN ADDICTED TO OPIOIDS OR PRESCRIPTION PAINKILLERS, n= 110

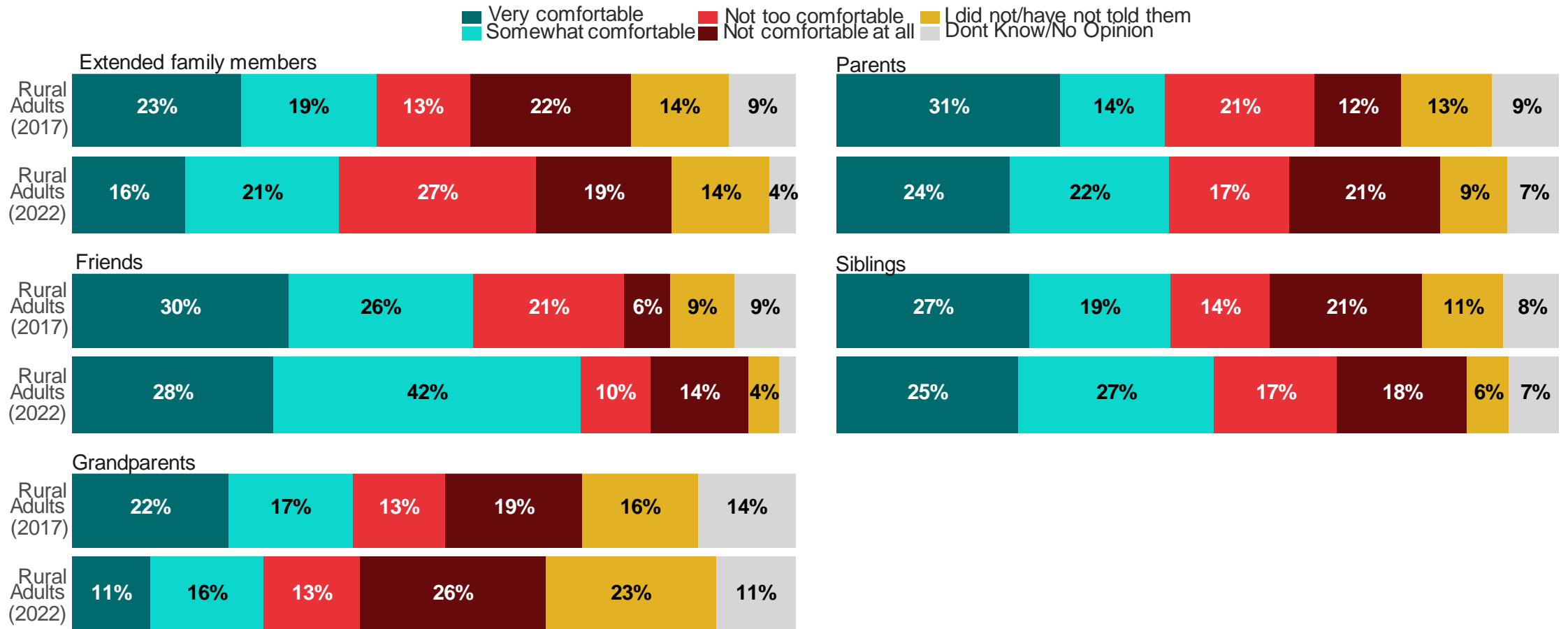


PROXIMITY TO OPIOID ABUSE

Compared to 2017, rural adults in 2022 who have experienced opioid addiction are more comfortable talking about their addiction with friends (+14) but less comfortable talking about their addiction with grandparents (-12).

In dealing with your addiction to opioids, how comfortable were you in talking about your addiction with each of the following?

AMONG RURAL ADULTS WHO HAVE ABUSED OR BEEN ADDICTED TO OPIOIDS OR PRESCRIPTION PAINKILLERS, n= 110



Data is tracked for all matrix options tested in 2017. Faith-based organizations, local community groups, government agencies, social media and agriculture organizations were added in 2022 and not tested in 2017.

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PERCEPTIONS OF OPIOID ABUSE

Compared to 2017, rural adults in 2022 are more likely (+7) to say someone can accidentally or unintentionally get addicted to opioids.

Based on what you know, are each of the following statements mostly true or mostly false?

	2017			2022		
	Mostly True	Mostly False	DK/NO	Mostly True	Mostly False	DK/NO
Opioid and heroin addiction can start with people using what they deem are safe painkillers, or opioids	75%	8%	17%	79%	4%	17%
As opioid and heroin addiction develops, the brain changes in a way that makes it hard to resist intense cravings	--	--	--	73%	5%	23%
Opioid reactors respond to opioids differently in each individual.	--	--	--	62%	6%	32%
Rural communities are impacted most by the opioid crisis	31%	28%	41%	32%	26%	42%
People can't recover from an opioid addiction	16%	65%	19%	12%	73%	15%
Someone can accidentally or unintentionally get addicted to opioids	71%	11%	18%	78%	7%	15%
Addiction is a chronic disease similar to diabetes, heart disease and arthritis	50%	28%	22%	52%	26%	23%
Opioid abuse is something to be ashamed of and embarrassed by	23%	53%	24%	14%	67%	19%

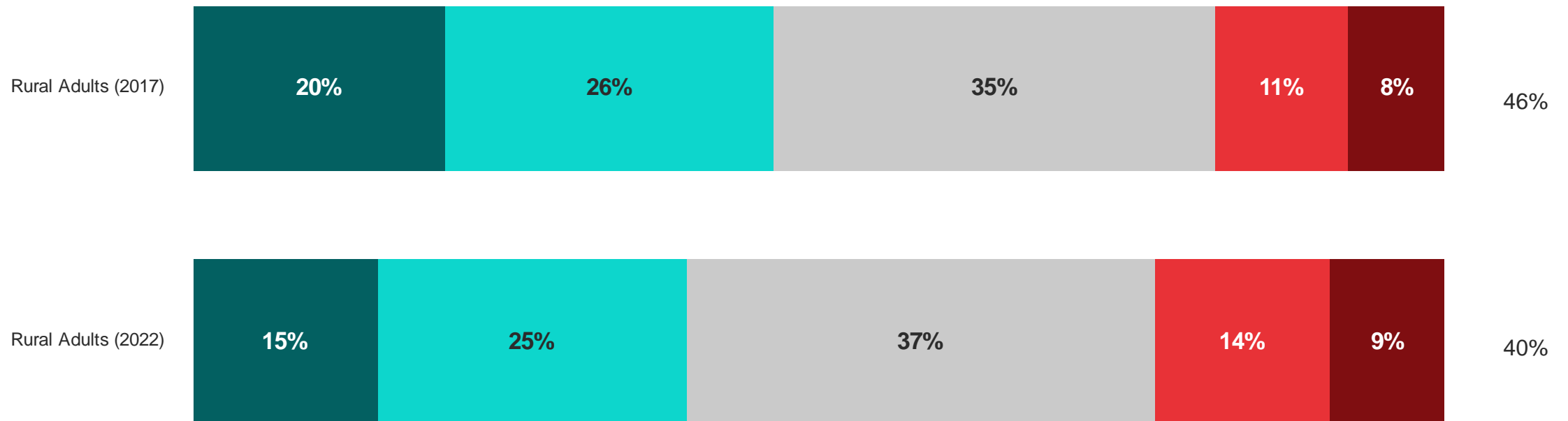
PERCEPTIONS OF OPIOID ABUSE

Two-in-five (40%) rural adults say it is easy for someone in their community to access a large amount of prescription opioids without needing them for a medical purpose, a 6-percentage point decrease from 2017.

As you may know, opioid abuse refers to the abuse of powerful pain-killing drugs, including prescription opioids and heroin. How easy would it be for someone in your community to access a large amount of prescription opioids or painkillers without needing them for a medical purpose?

● Very easy
 ● Somewhat easy
 ● Dont Know/No Opinion
 ● Not too easy
 ● Not easy at all

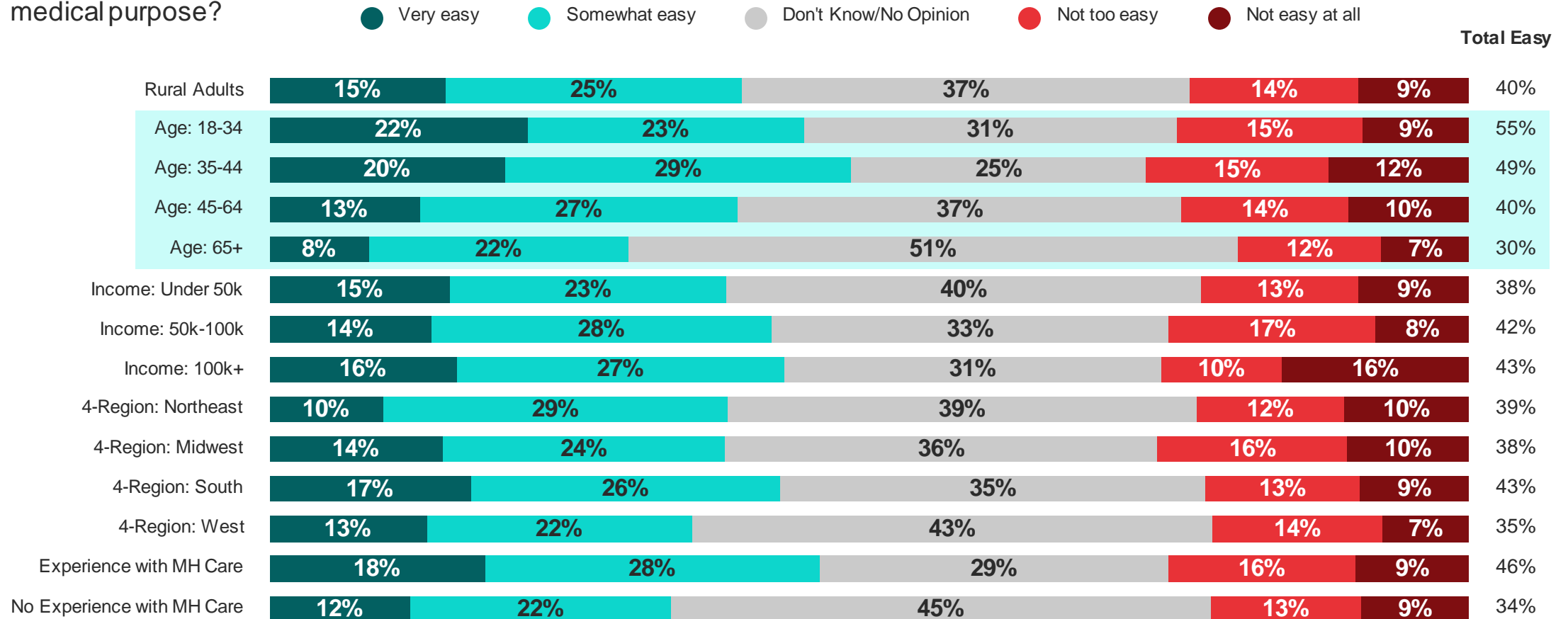
Total Easy



PERCEPTIONS OF OPIOID ABUSE

Younger rural adults are more likely than older rural adults to say it would be easy for someone in their community to access a large amount of prescription opioids without needing them for a medical purpose.

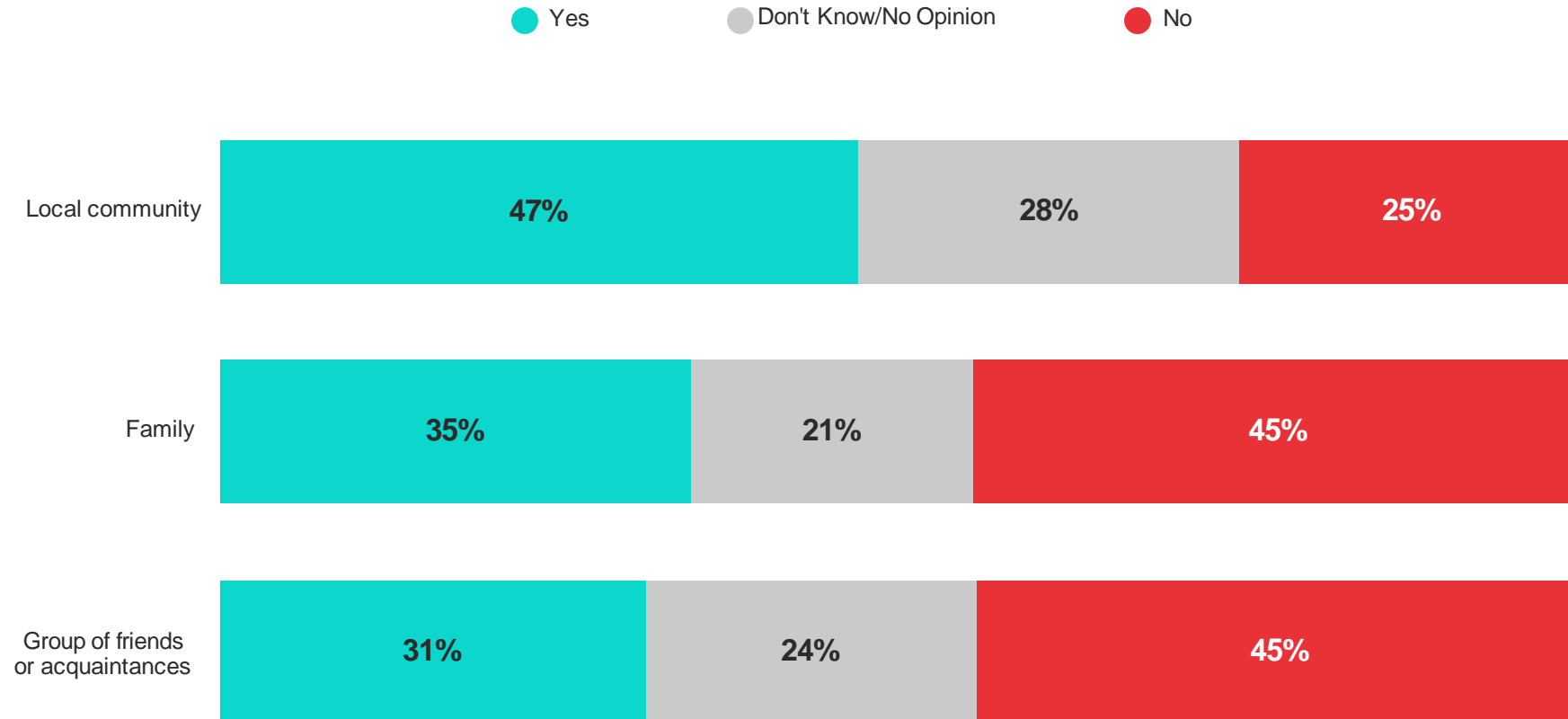
As you may know, opioid abuse refers to the abuse of powerful pain-killing drugs, including prescription opioids and heroin. How easy would it be for someone in your community to access a large amount of prescription opioids or painkillers without needing them for a medical purpose?



PERCEPTIONS OF OPIOID ABUSE

Nearly half of rural adults say there is stigma or shame associated with opioid abuse in their local community (47%). Fewer say there is stigma or shame in their family (35%) or group of friends or acquaintances (31%).

Would you say there is a stigma or shame associated with opioid abuse in your...



Overall, the percent of rural adults who say there is stigma or shame associated with opioid abuse in their local communities, families, and groups of friends or acquaintances has trended downwards since 2017.*

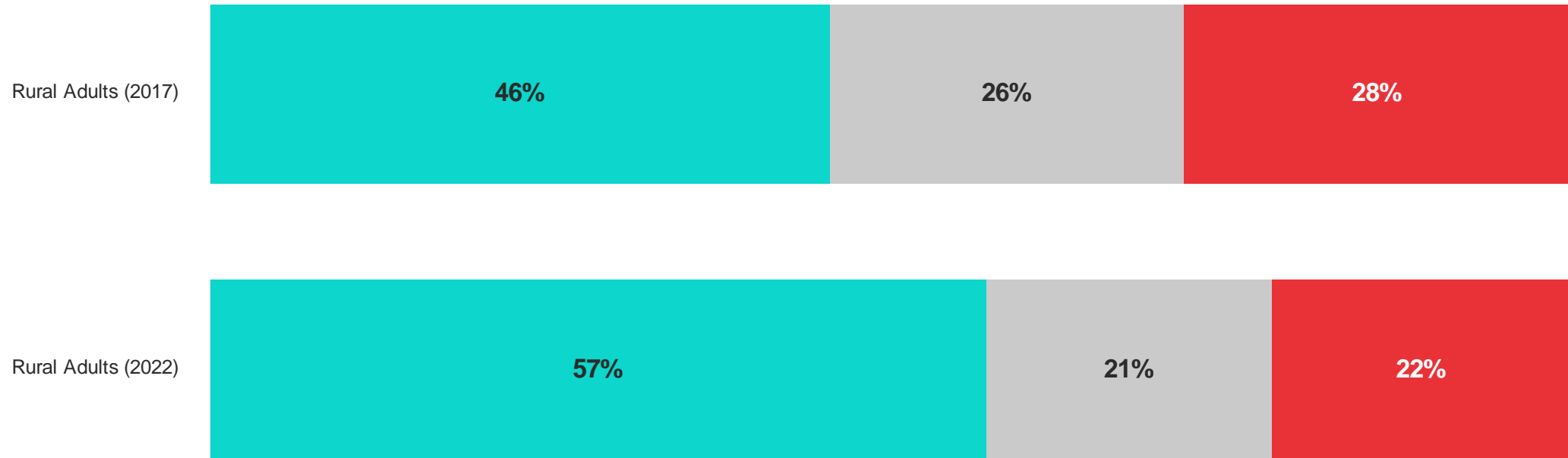
*In 2017, rural adults were asked *how much* stigma or shame is associated with opioid abuse in their local communities, families and groups of friends and acquaintances. Due to the change in question text, a direct comparison cannot be drawn and the data is trended directionally.

PERCEPTIONS OF OPIOID ABUSE

Rural adults in 2022 are more likely (+11) than rural adults in 2017 to say that addiction to opioids is a disease.

Which of the following comes closest to your view even if neither is exactly right?

● Addiction to opioids is a disease ● Dont Know/No Opinion ● Addiction to opioids to due to a lack of will-power or self-control

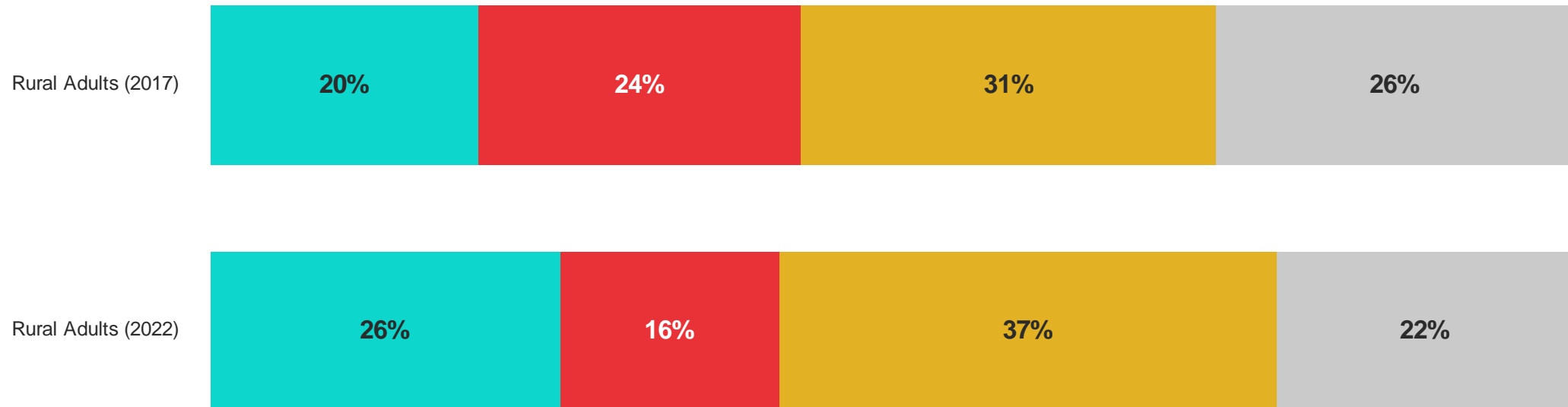


PERCEPTIONS OF OPIOID ABUSE

Rural adults in 2022 are more likely than in 2017 to say that compared to the rest of the country, there is more (+6) or about the same amount (+6) of opioid abuse in their community.

For the following questions, the term 'opioid crisis' will be used to describe both the larger issue of 'abuse of prescription painkillers containing opioids' (such as fentanyl, oxycodone (OxyContin), hydrocodone (Vicodin), morphine, and methadone) and 'heroin abuse.*' Compared to the rest of the country, would you say there is more opioid abuse in your community, less opioid abuse in your community, or about the same amount?

● More in my community
 ● Less in my community
 ● About the same amount
 ● Dont Know/No Opinion

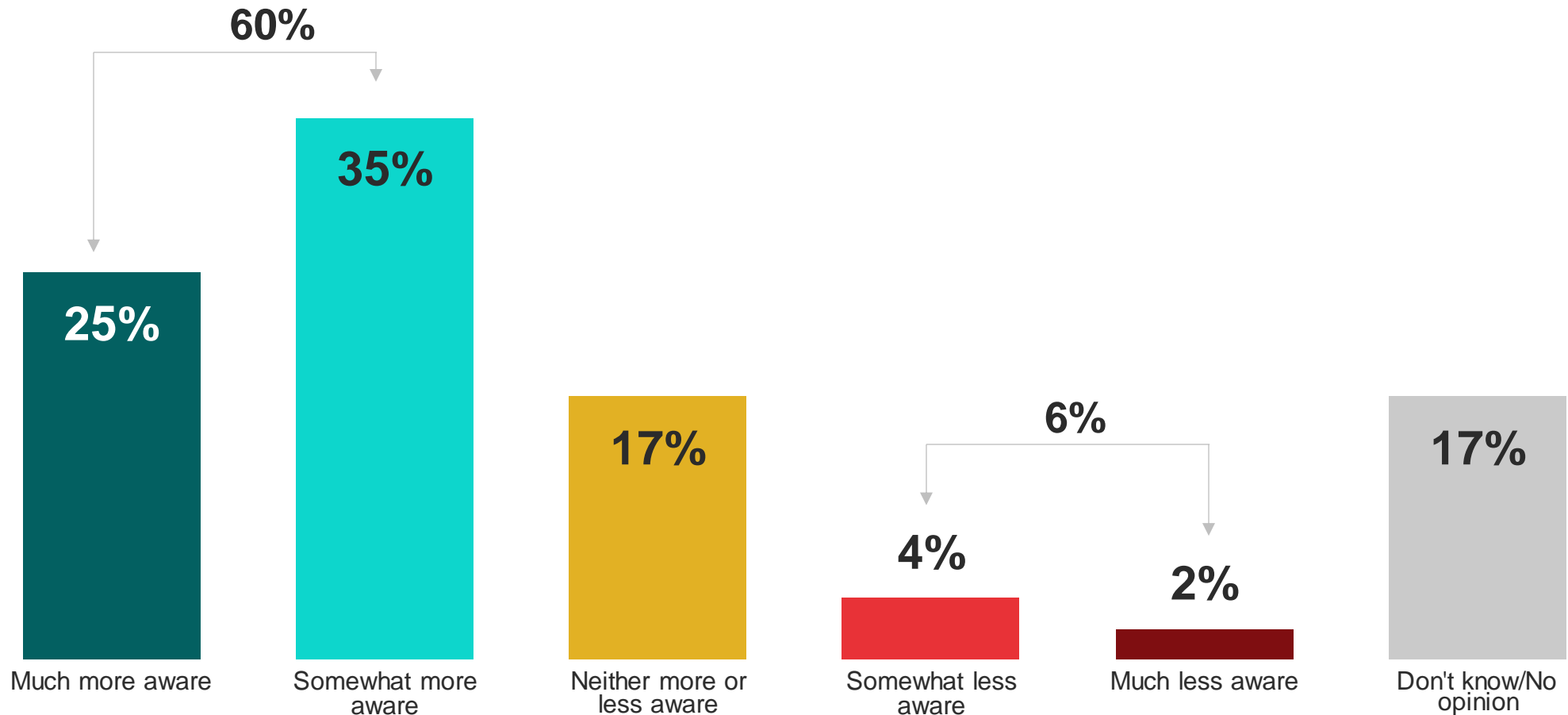


**in 2022 the question pre-text was modified to add specificity. In 2017, the question pre-text was: "For the following questions, the term "opioid crisis" will be used to describe both the larger issue of "abuse of prescription painkillers containing opioids" and "heroin abuse.""

PERCEPTIONS OF OPIOID ABUSE

Compared to 5 years ago, rural adults say adults in their community are more aware (60%) of the opioid crisis.

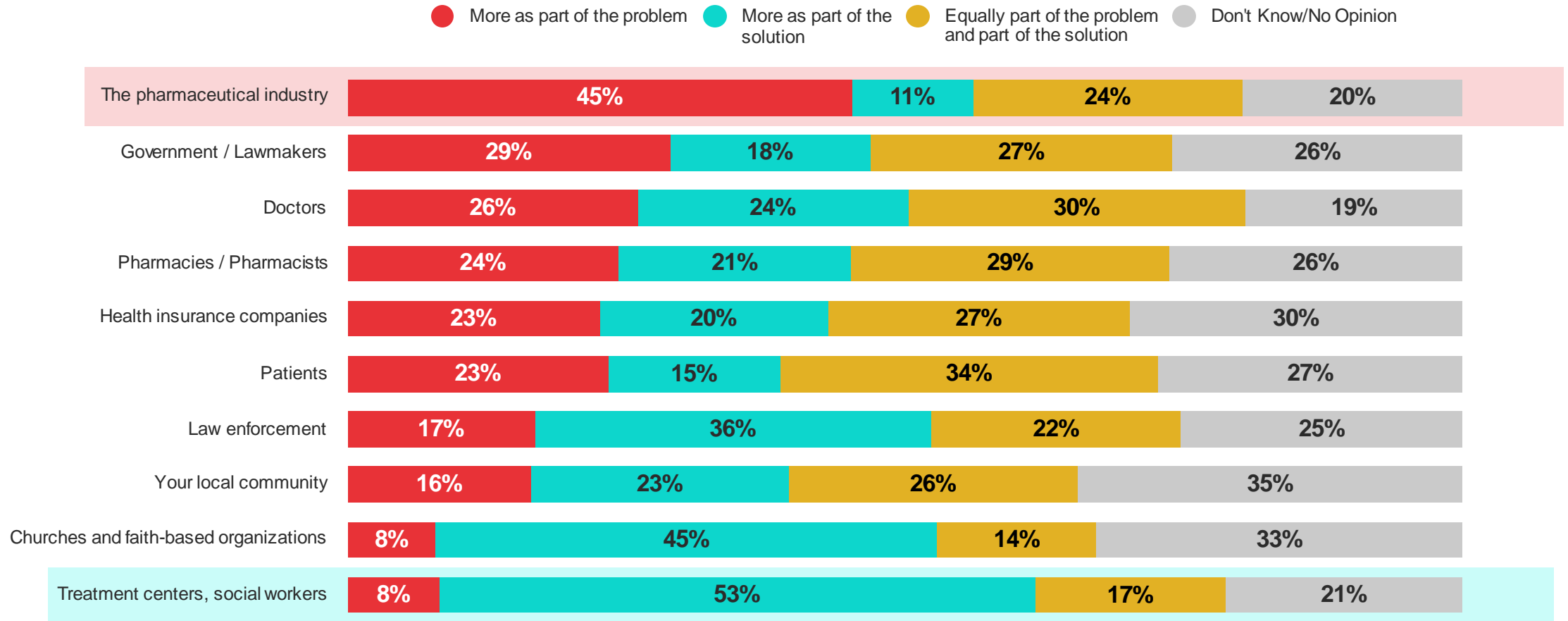
Compared to 5 years ago, would you say adults in your community are more or less aware of the opioid crisis, or neither?



PERCEPTIONS OF OPIOID ABUSE

When it comes to the opioid crisis, rural adults see the pharmaceutical industry (45%) more as part of the problem, and treatment centers/social workers more as part of the solution (53%).

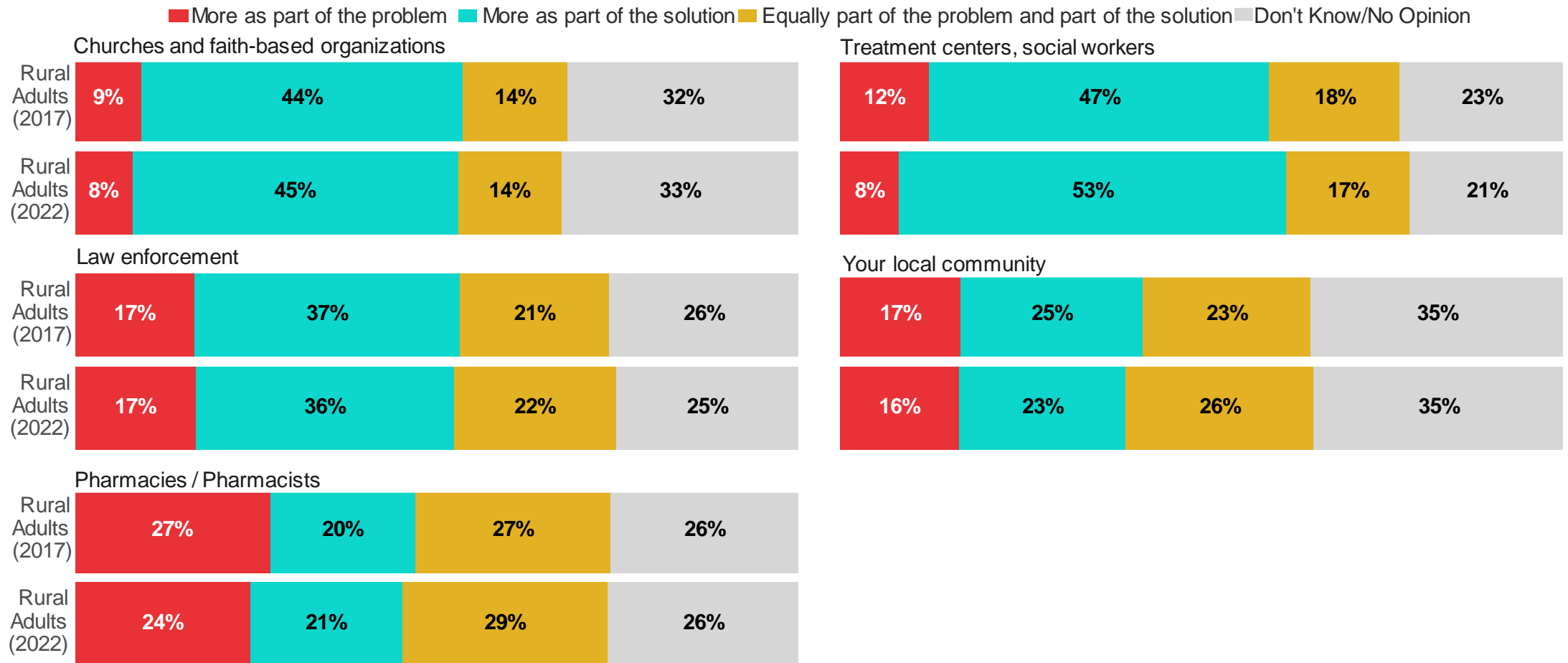
When it comes to the opioid crisis, at present, do you see each of the following more as part of the problem, more as part of the solution?



PERCEPTIONS OF OPIOID ABUSE

Rural adults are more likely in 2022 than in 2017 to see treatment centers/social workers as part of the solution (+6).

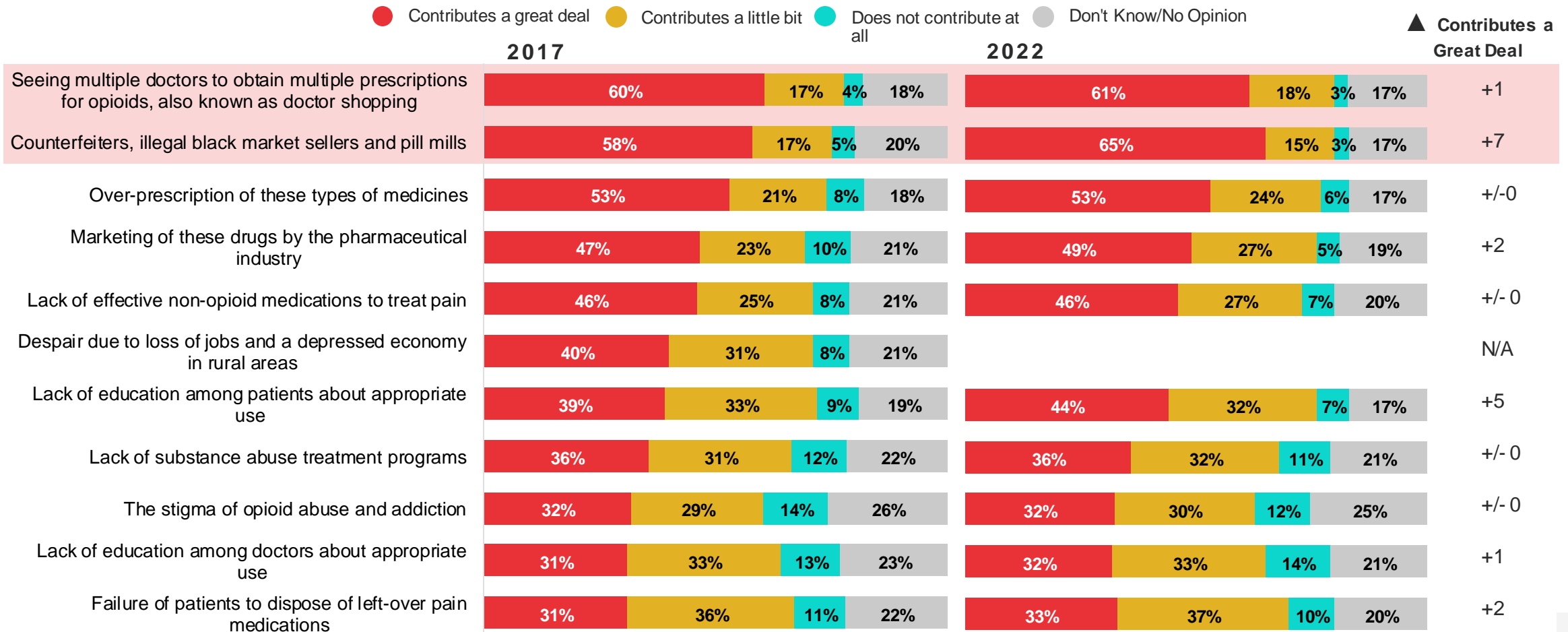
When it comes to the opioid crisis, at present, do you see each of the following more as part of the problem, more as part of the solution?



PERCEPTIONS OF OPIOID ABUSE

Of the factors tested, rural adults are most likely to think counterfeiters, illegal black-market sellers and ‘pill mills’ (65%, +7) and ‘doctor shopping’ (61%, +1) contribute a great deal to the opioid crisis.

How much do you think each of the following contributes to the opioid crisis?



Rural adults are more likely in 2022 than in 2017 to say lack of education among patients about appropriate use contributes a great deal (+5) to the opioid crisis.

AGENDA

ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

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PERCEPTIONS OF OPIOID ABUSE

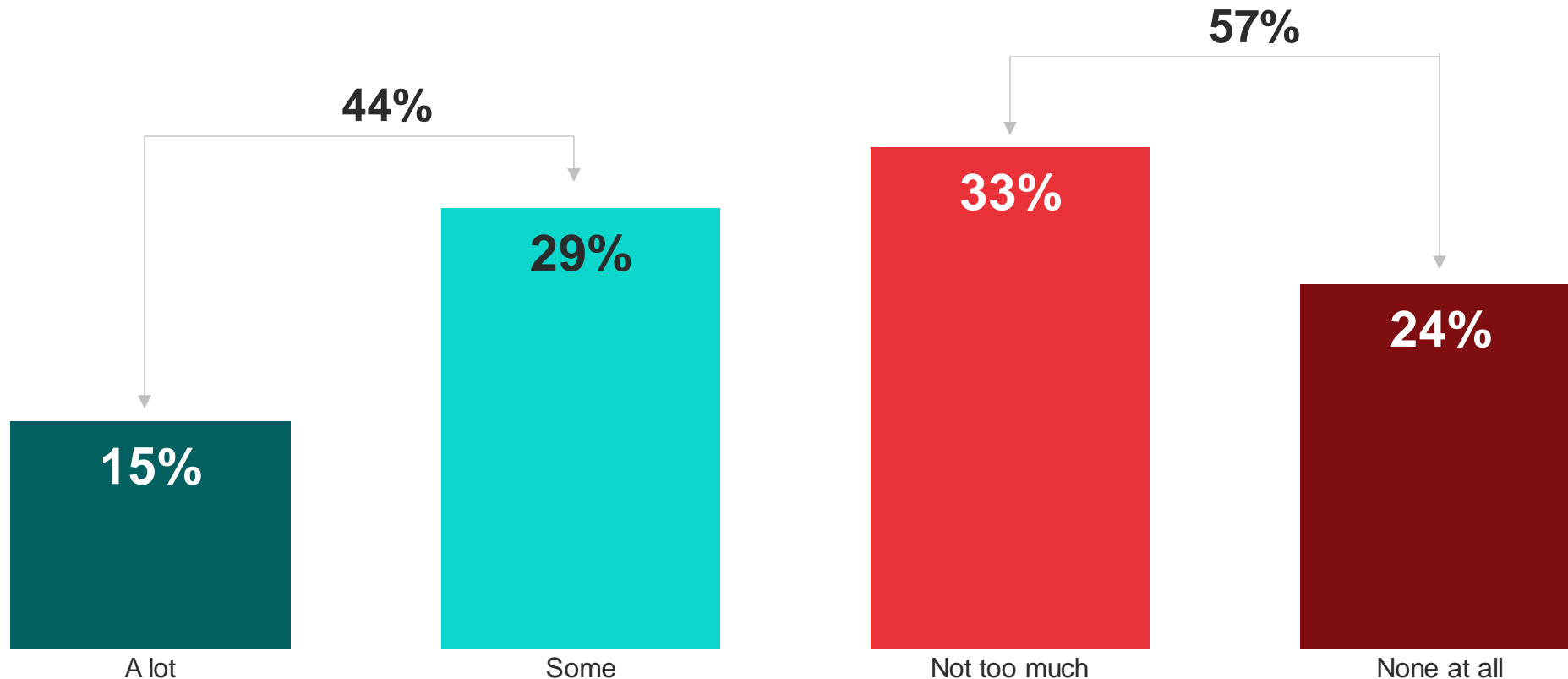
PERCEIVED SOLUTIONS TO THE OPIOID
CRISIS



PERCEIVED SOLUTIONS TO THE OPIOID CRISIS

Over half of rural adults (57%) say they have not seen, read, or heard much or anything about resources for dealing with opioid misuse in their local community.

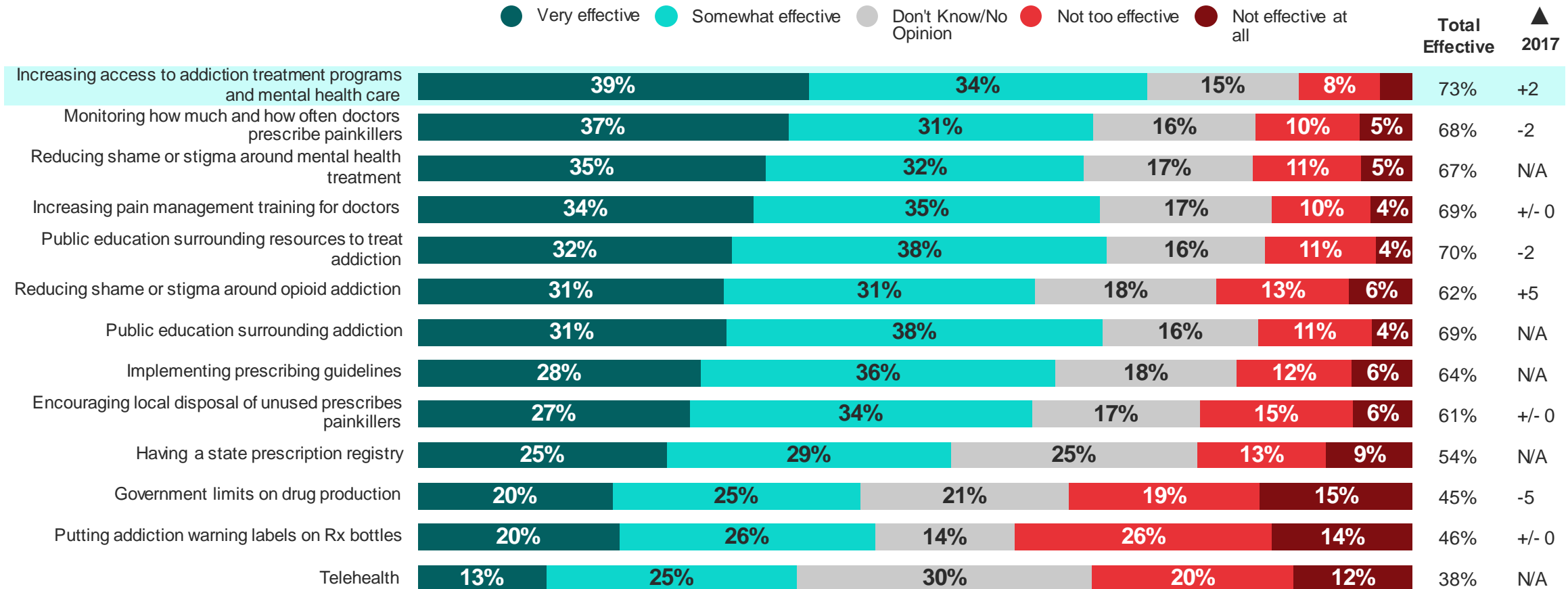
As you may know, opioid abuse refers to the abuse of powerful pain-killing drugs, including prescription opioids, and heroin. How much have you seen, read, or heard about resources for dealing with opioid misuse in your local community?



PERCEIVED SOLUTIONS TO THE OPIOID CRISIS

Thinking about their local community, of the options tested, rural adults are most likely to say increasing access to addiction treatment programs and mental health care (73%) would be effective in helping to solve the opioid crisis.

Thinking about your local community, how effective would each of the following be in helping to solve the opioid crisis?



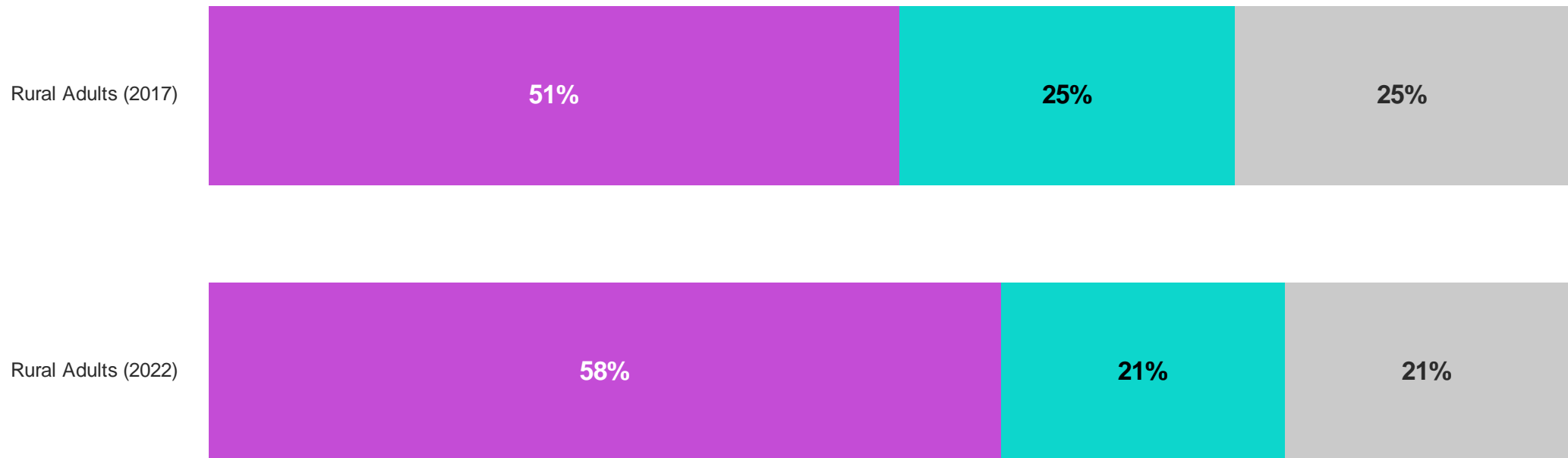
Compared to 2017, rural adults are more likely to say reducing shame or stigma around opioid addiction (+5) would be effective in helping solve the opioid crisis, and more likely to say government limits on drug production (-5) would be effective.

PERCEIVED SOLUTIONS TO THE OPIOID CRISIS

Rural adults in 2022 are more likely than in 2017 to say improving access to treatment (58%, +7) would be more effective in helping solve the opioid crisis than imposing stricter punishments and enforcement (21%, -4).

Generally, which of the following would be more effective in helping solve the opioid crisis?

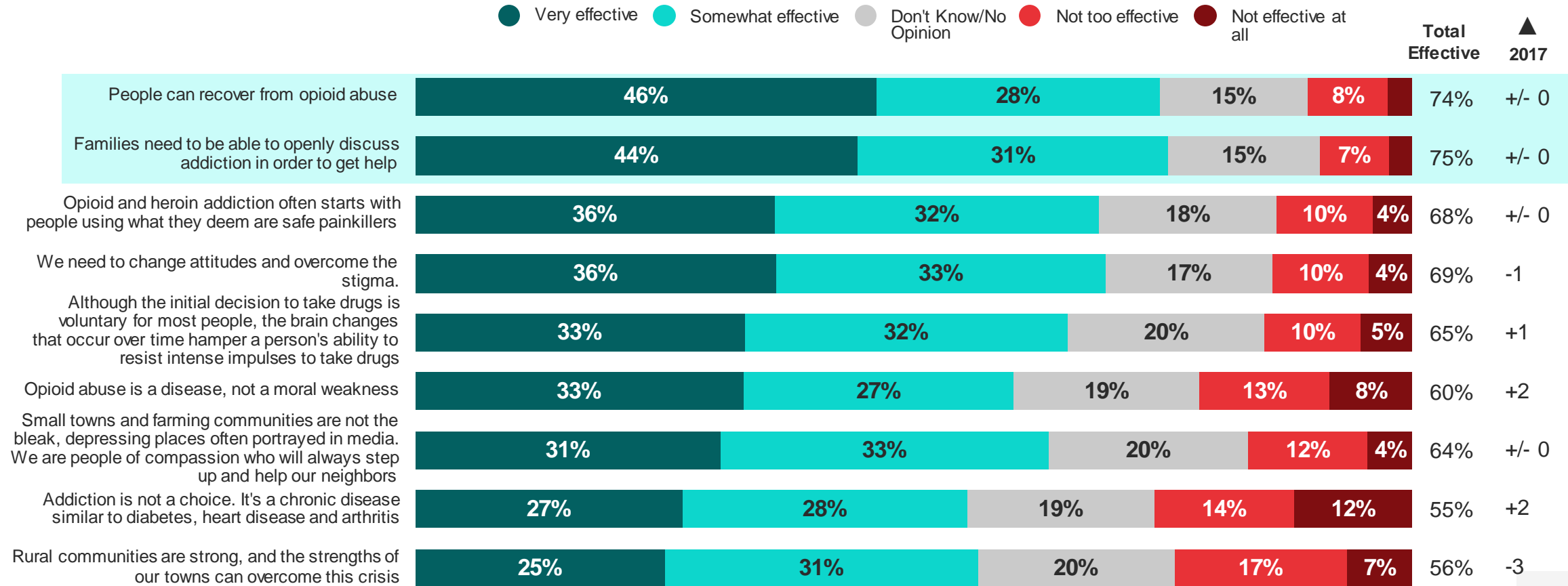
● Improving access to treatment ● Imposing stricter punishments and enforcement ● Dont Know/No Opinion



PERCEIVED SOLUTIONS TO THE OPIOID CRISIS

Consistent with 2017, rural adults say the messages that people can recover from opioid abuse (74%) and that families need to be able to openly discuss addiction in order to get help (75%) would be effective in decreasing shame or stigma associated with opioid abuse.

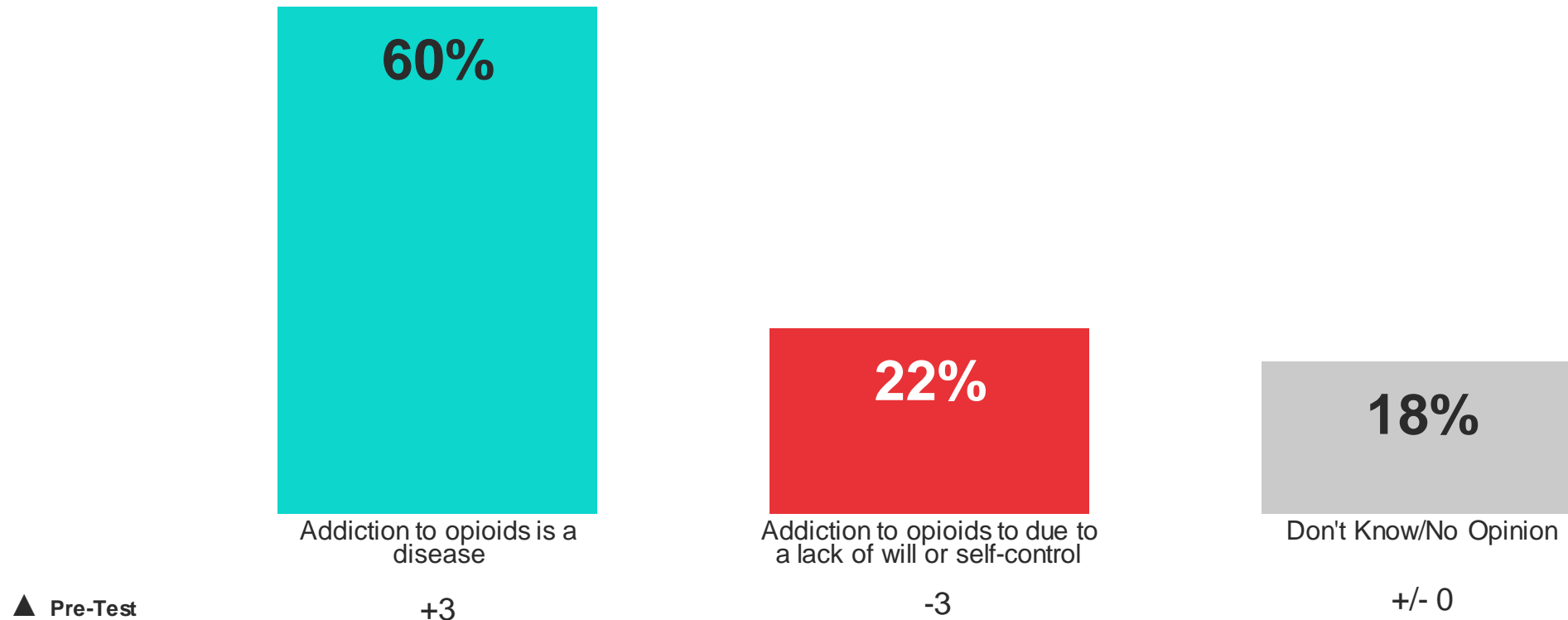
As you may know, some are trying to decrease the shame or stigma associated with opioid abuse. Based on what you know, how effective would each of the following messages be in decreasing the shame or stigma associated with opioid abuse?



PERCEIVED SOLUTIONS TO THE OPIOID CRISIS

After learning more about opioid addiction in the U.S, rural adults are more likely (+3) to say that addiction to opioids is a disease, compared to when asked earlier in the survey.

Sometimes during a survey like this, people change their minds. Having thought about it more, which of the following comes closest to your view even if neither is exactly right?





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