

SURVEY FINDINGS

Aging in Place of Choice with Connected Health Technologies

*Perspectives from older adults and care partners on technology,
health priorities, and support for living safely in the place of choice*

Digital Medicine Society (DiMe) | 2026



Connected Health
Collaborative Community
by DiMe



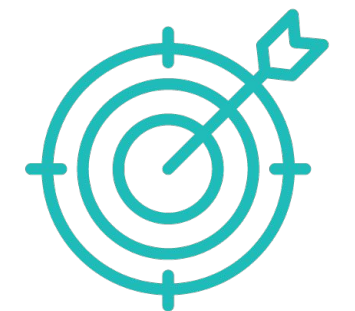
Context & Methodology

Research goals, objectives, and methods

DiMe AIPOC resources were informed by evidence: *Interviews and surveys with older adults and care partners*

Study Goal

To identify real-world needs, preferences, barriers, and decision drivers that influence whether older adults and care partners adopt, sustain, or abandon technologies intended to support aging in place of choice.



Mixed Methods Study Objectives



Understand variation by context & access (urban/rural, access to technology, health status, living arrangement, caregiver involvement, payer type).



Identify non-obvious barriers beyond usability (trust, cost, burden of tech in daily life, stigma, fear of loss of independence).



Generate insights that directly inform:

- AgeTech product design
- Healthcare provider implementation strategies
- Policy and reimbursement alignment

The survey findings are part of a mixed methods study conducted among older adults and care partners

Study Design & Sample

- **Mixed-methods approach:** Paired quantitative surveys with qualitative semi-structured interviews.
- **Survey sample (n = 104):** Completed by 50 older adults and 54 care partners.
 - a. These findings are supported by semi-structured interviews with 7 older adults and 9 care partners.
- **IRB oversight:** Approved under an Advarra IRB minimal-risk protocol (Pro00093086).

Eligibility & Sampling Strategy

- **Participant criteria:** Older adults age 60+ (and care partners supporting them) living in private residences with one or more self-reported functional, health, or safety concern.
- **Recruitment channels:** Recruited via DiMe's network with partners such as Evidation, community-based organizations, healthcare networks, and aging service providers.
- **Purposive sampling:** Maximum variation approach targeting diversity in age, region, urban/rural location, race/ethnicity, and dual Medicare/Medicaid eligibility.

The Sample

Needs, technology experiences, priorities, and health plan preferences

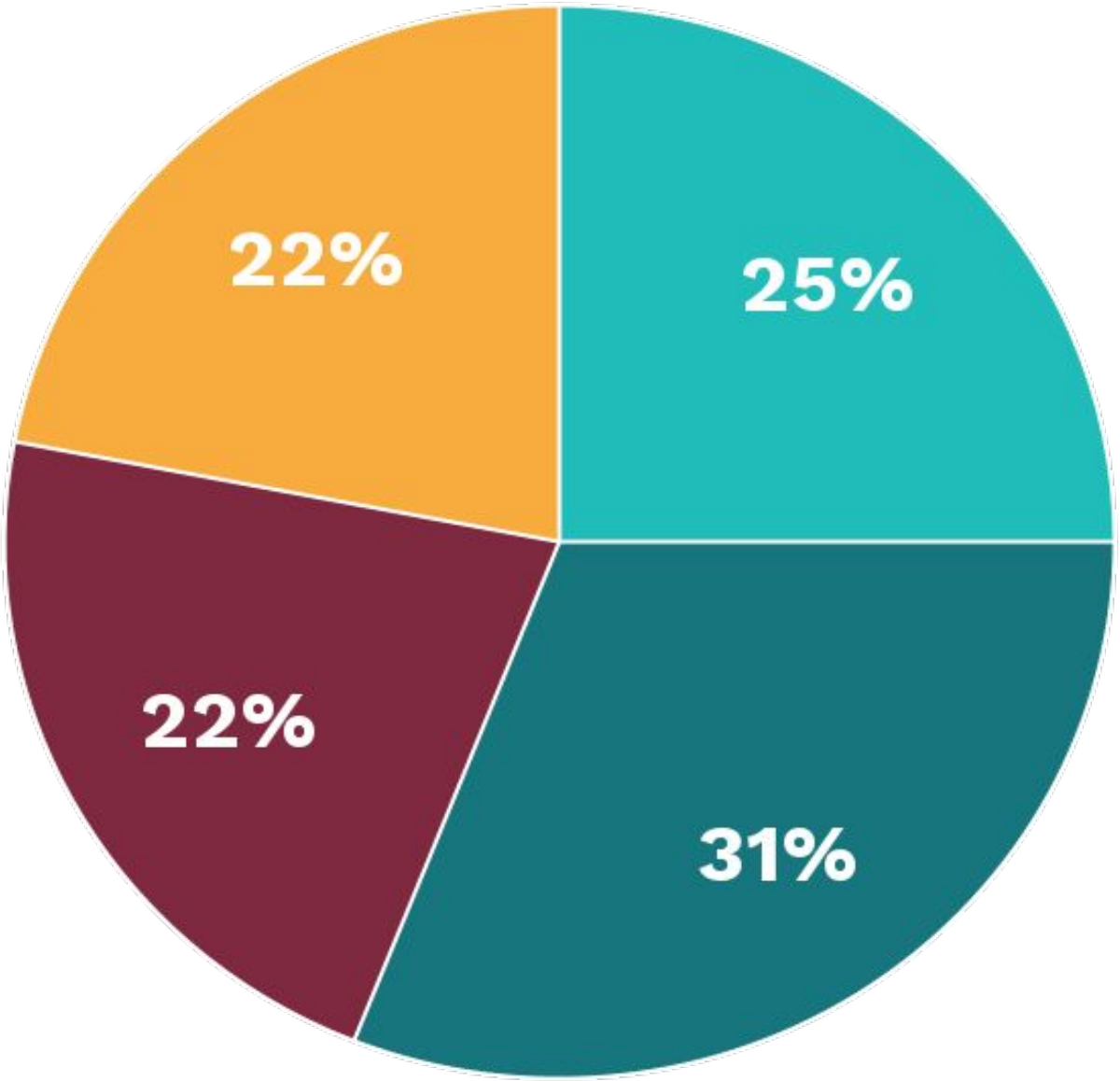
Survey respondents came from across the United States

Older adults (n = 50)

Average age: 71 years

COMMUNITY TYPE

- Rural area
- Small town
- Suburban
- Large city



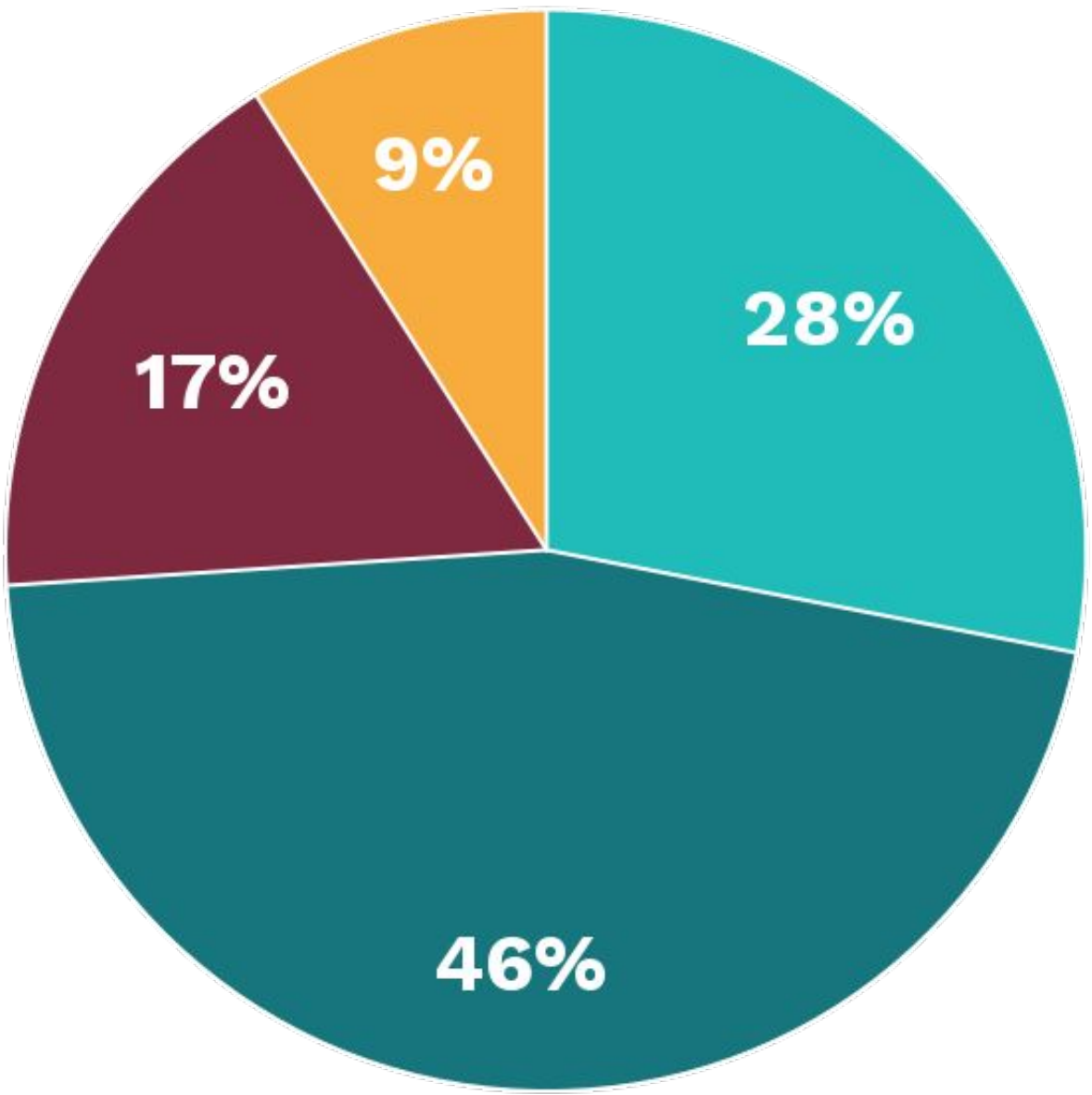
Race & ethnicity: 76% White, 10% Black, 6% Asian, 6% Mixed race, 2% MENA

Care partners (n = 54)

Average age of older adult cared for: 74 years

COMMUNITY TYPE

- Rural area
- Small town
- Suburban
- Large city



Race & ethnicity: 66% White, 15% Black, 9% Asian, 6% Hispanic/Latino, 2% Mixed race, 2% MENA

*Survey findings reflect this sample and should not be interpreted as nationally representative.

Older Adults

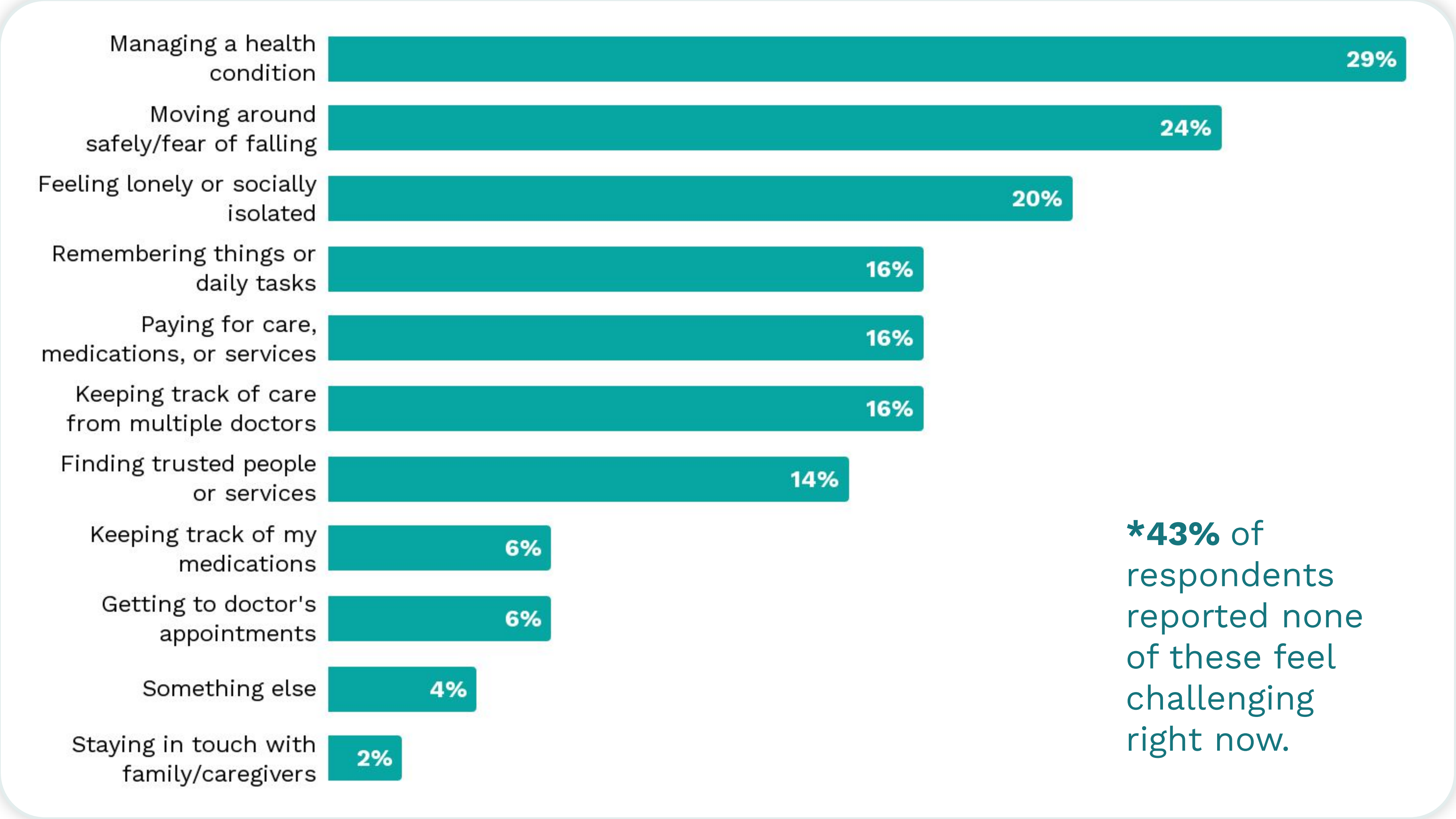
Needs, technology experiences, priorities, and health plan preferences

Managing health conditions was the most common day-to-day challenge*

SURVEY QUESTION



Which of these feel challenging for you right now?



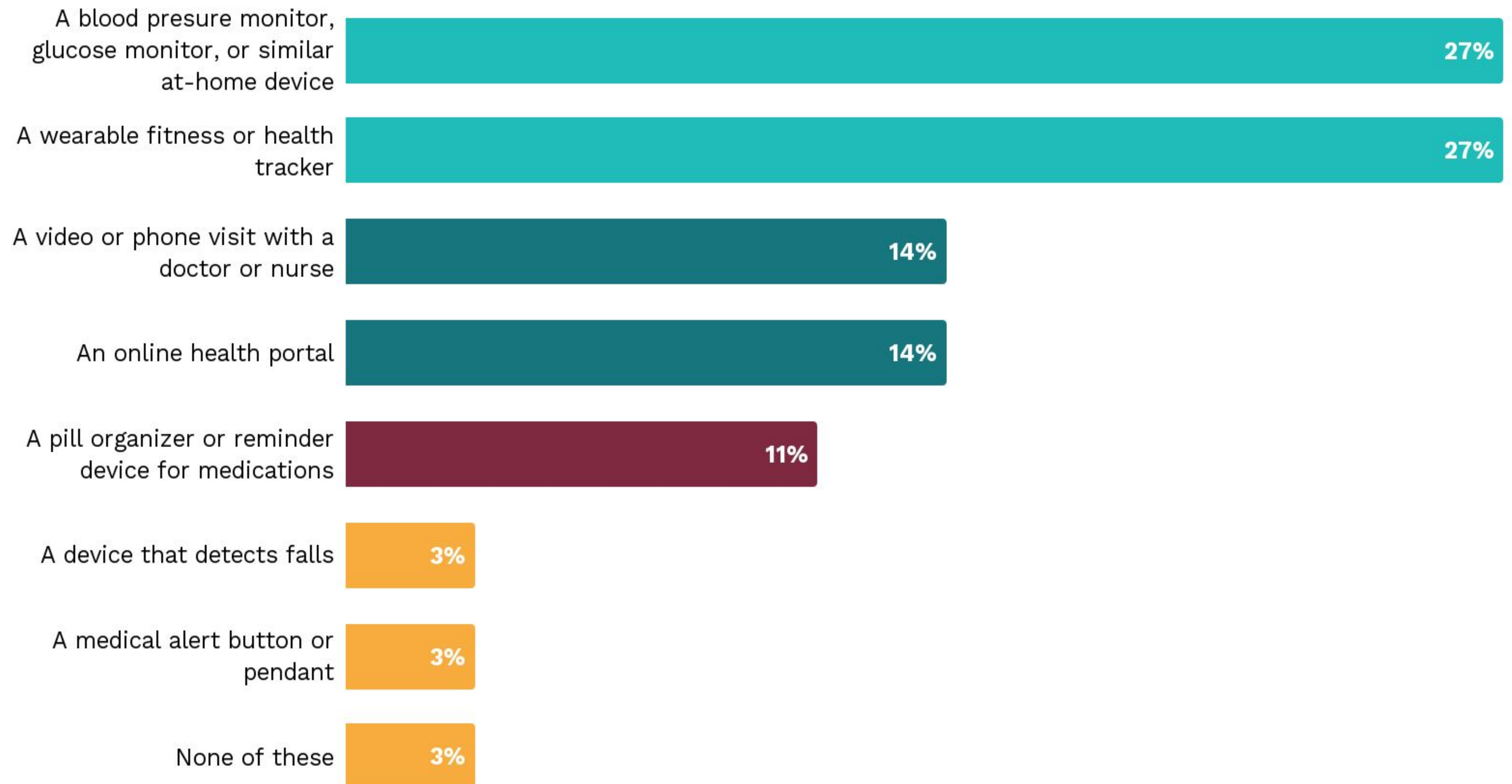
***43%** of respondents reported none of these feel challenging right now.

Smartphones and video calls were the most commonly used technologies

SURVEY QUESTION



Which of these technologies have you ever used?

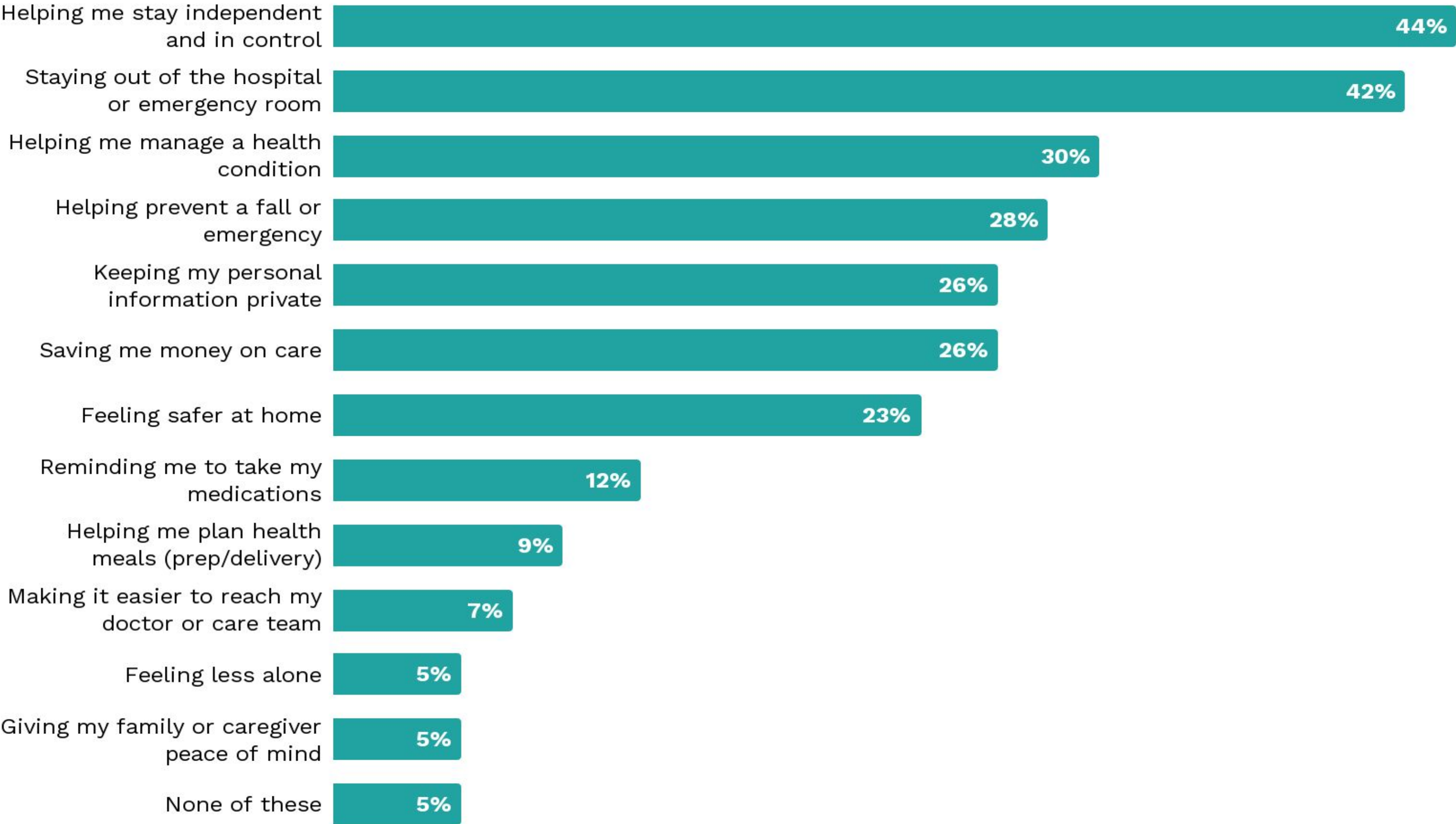


Supporting independence and avoiding hospital visits made technology worthwhile

SURVEY QUESTION



What would make a technology feel worth using to you?

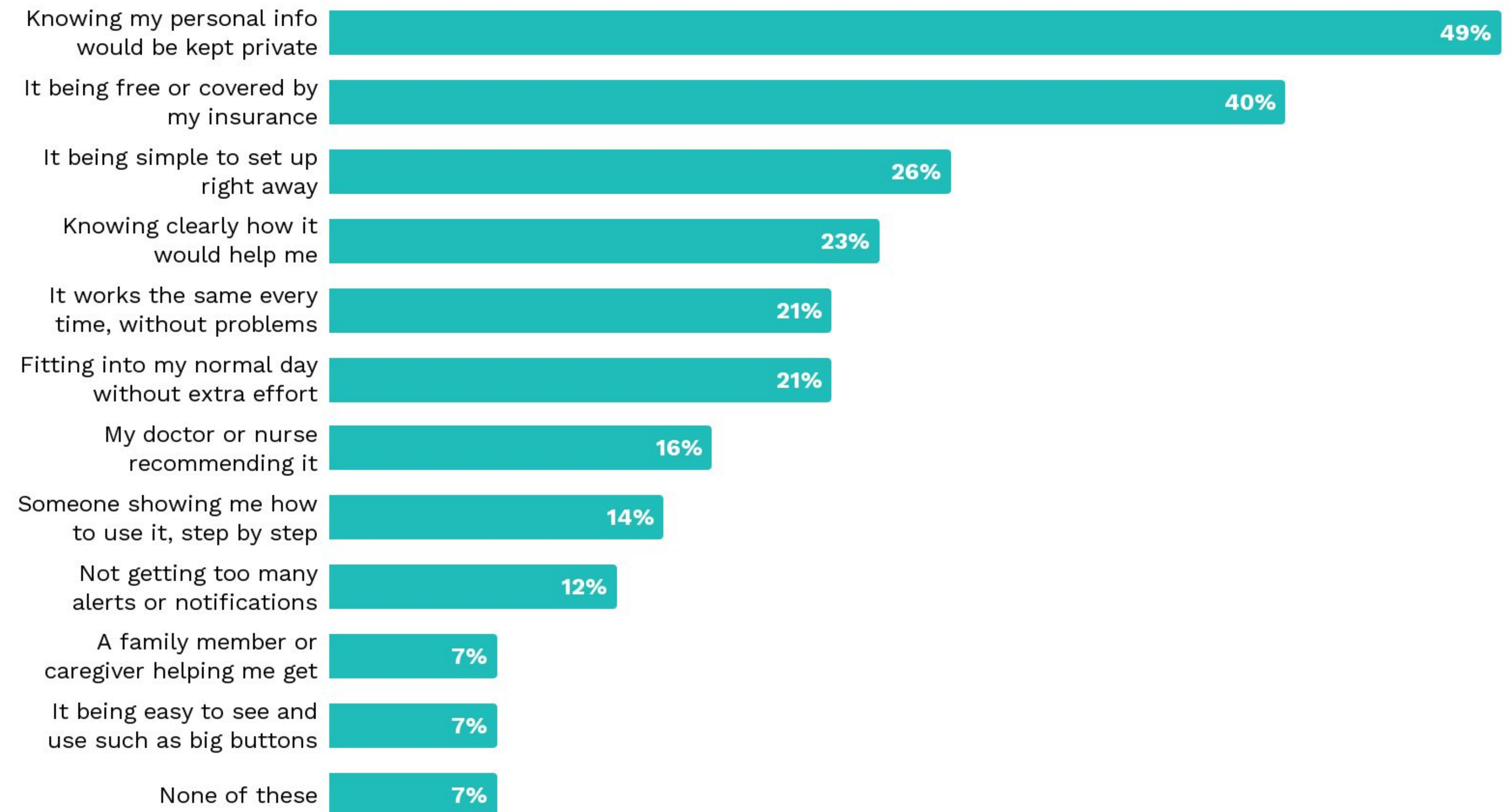


Privacy and insurance coverage would make older adults more willing to try technology at home

SURVEY QUESTION



What would help you feel ready to try technology at home?

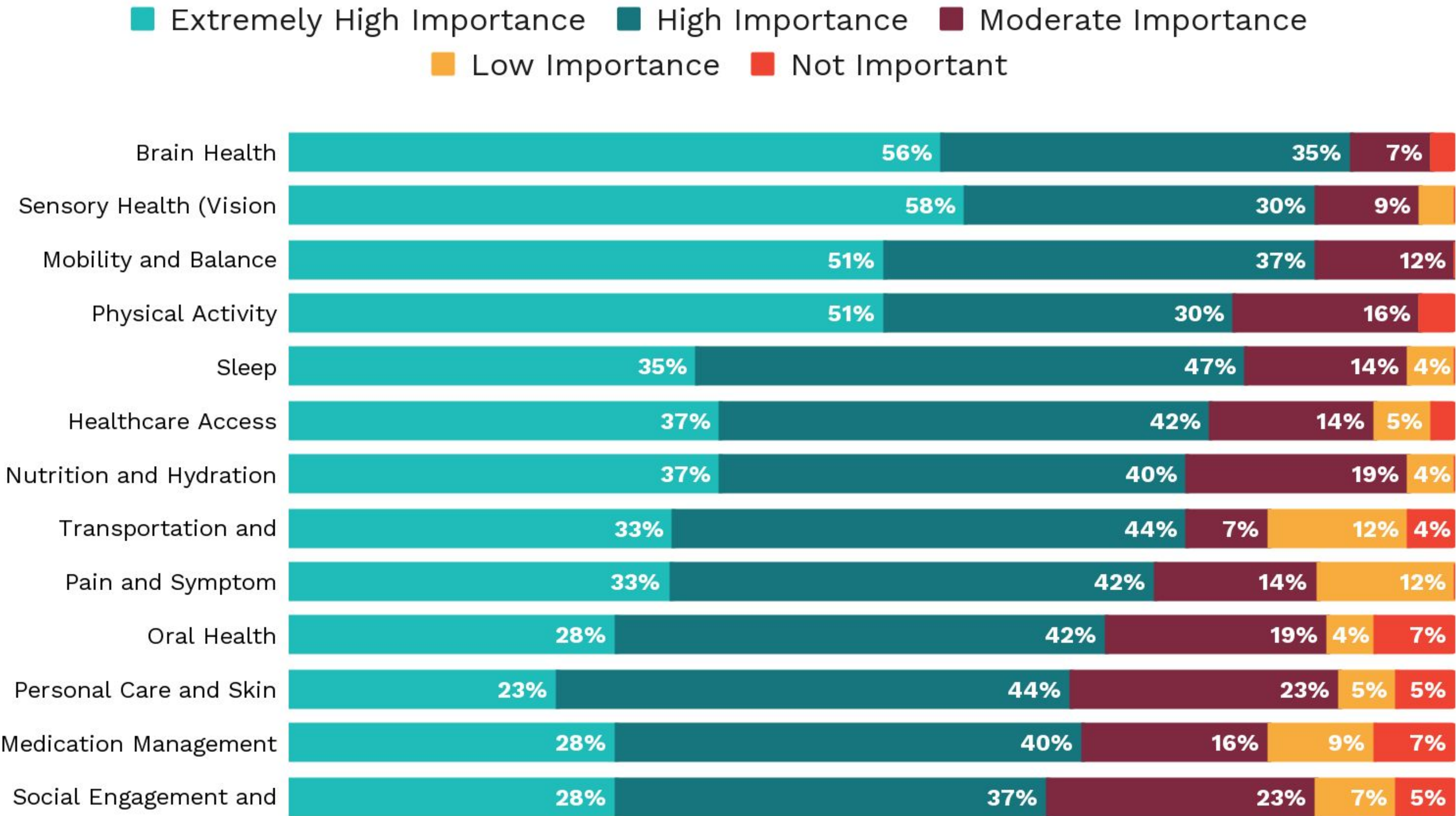


Brain health, sensory health, and mobility rank as top priorities

SURVEY QUESTION



Thinking about the next five years, how important is each of the following to you personally?



Nearly nine in ten older adults reported Medicare as their primary coverage

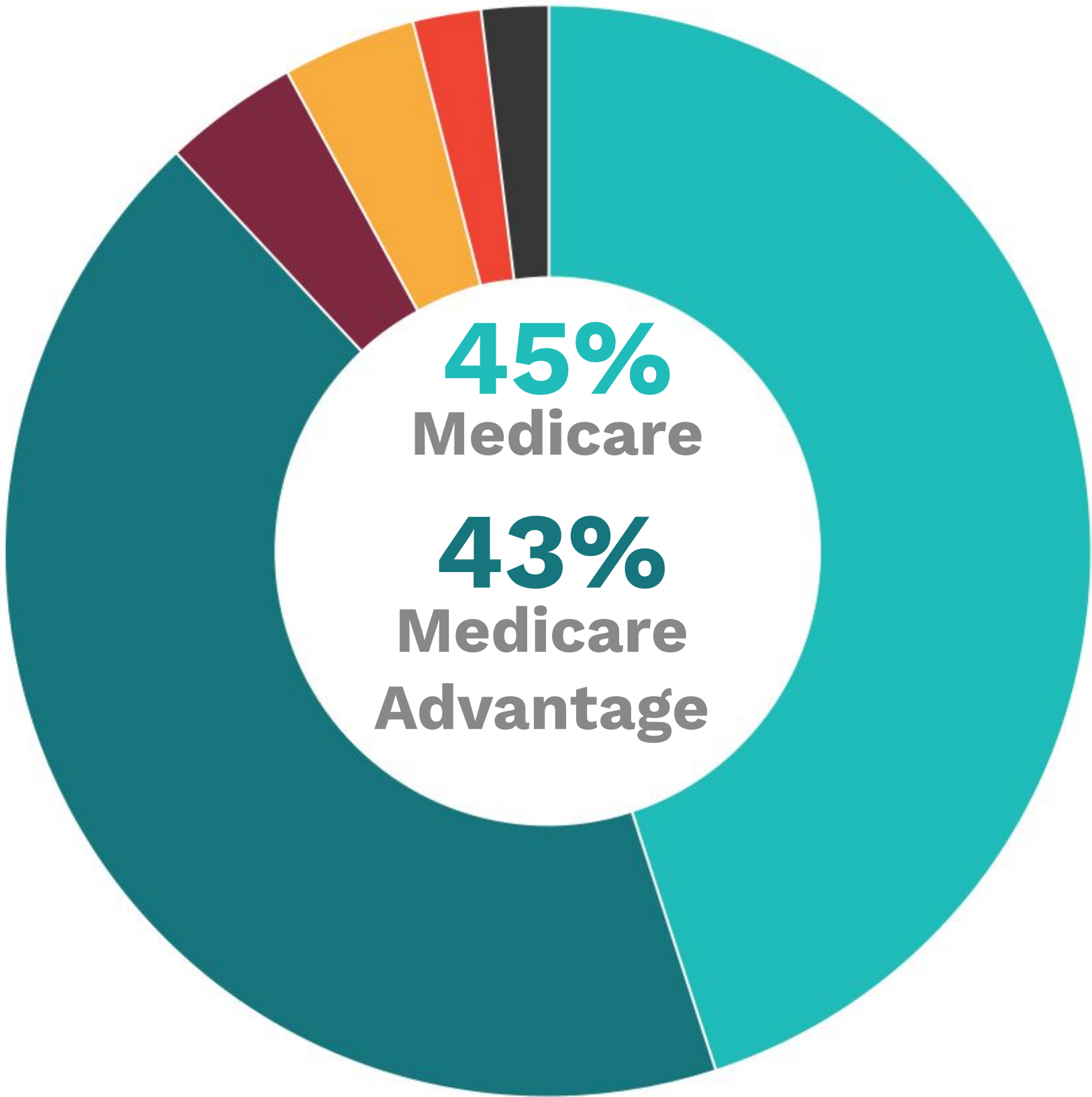
SURVEY QUESTION



What is your primary health insurance plan?

What secondary health insurance plans do you have, if applicable?

- Medicare (45%)
- Medicare Advantage (43%)
- Employer-sponsored insurance (4%)
- Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits (4%)
- Private insurance I purchased myself (2%)
- Medicaid (2%)



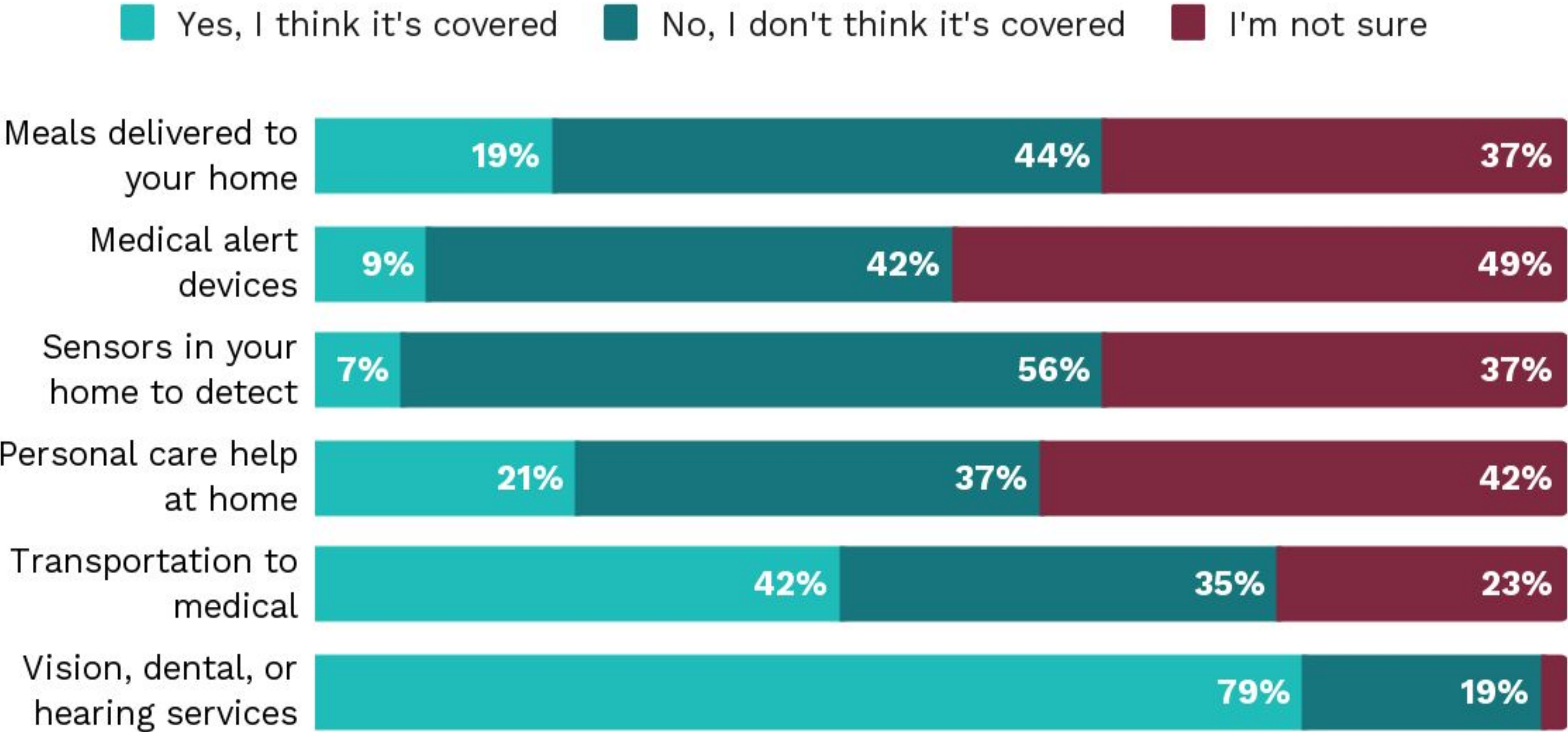
20%
reported
Medicaid as
their secondary
coverage*

***One in five respondents reported Medicaid as secondary coverage, indicating a meaningful dual-eligible subgroup within the sample.**

Older adults were least likely to report coverage for home sensors and medical alert devices

SURVEY QUESTION

Does your current health plan or insurance cover each of the following services or items?

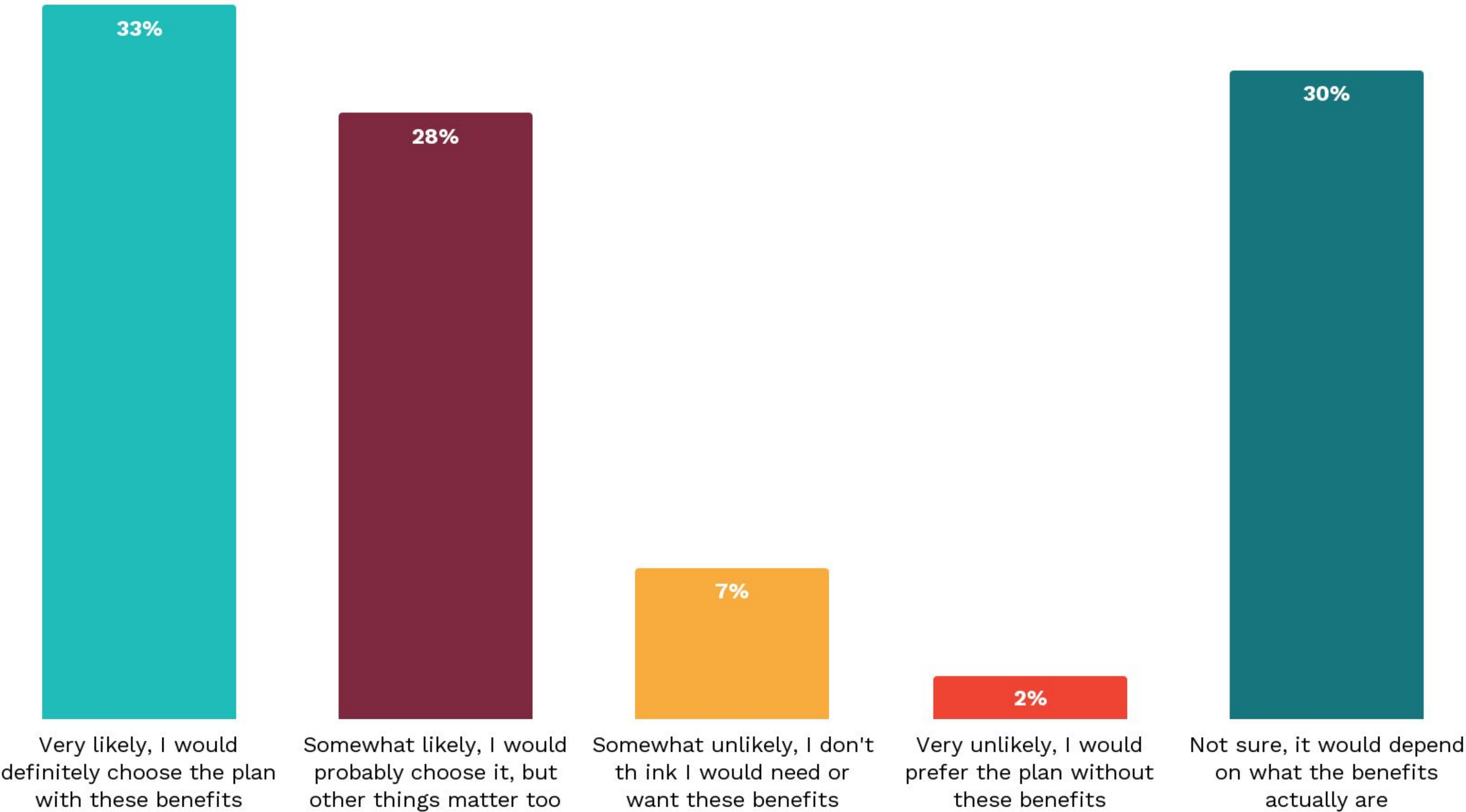


Three in five older adults would likely choose a plan with aging-at-home benefits

SURVEY QUESTION



If one health plan offered extra help to live safely at home longer, how likely would you be to choose that plan instead of a plan without these services?



Care Partners

Caregiving experiences, technology needs, priorities,
and health plan preferences

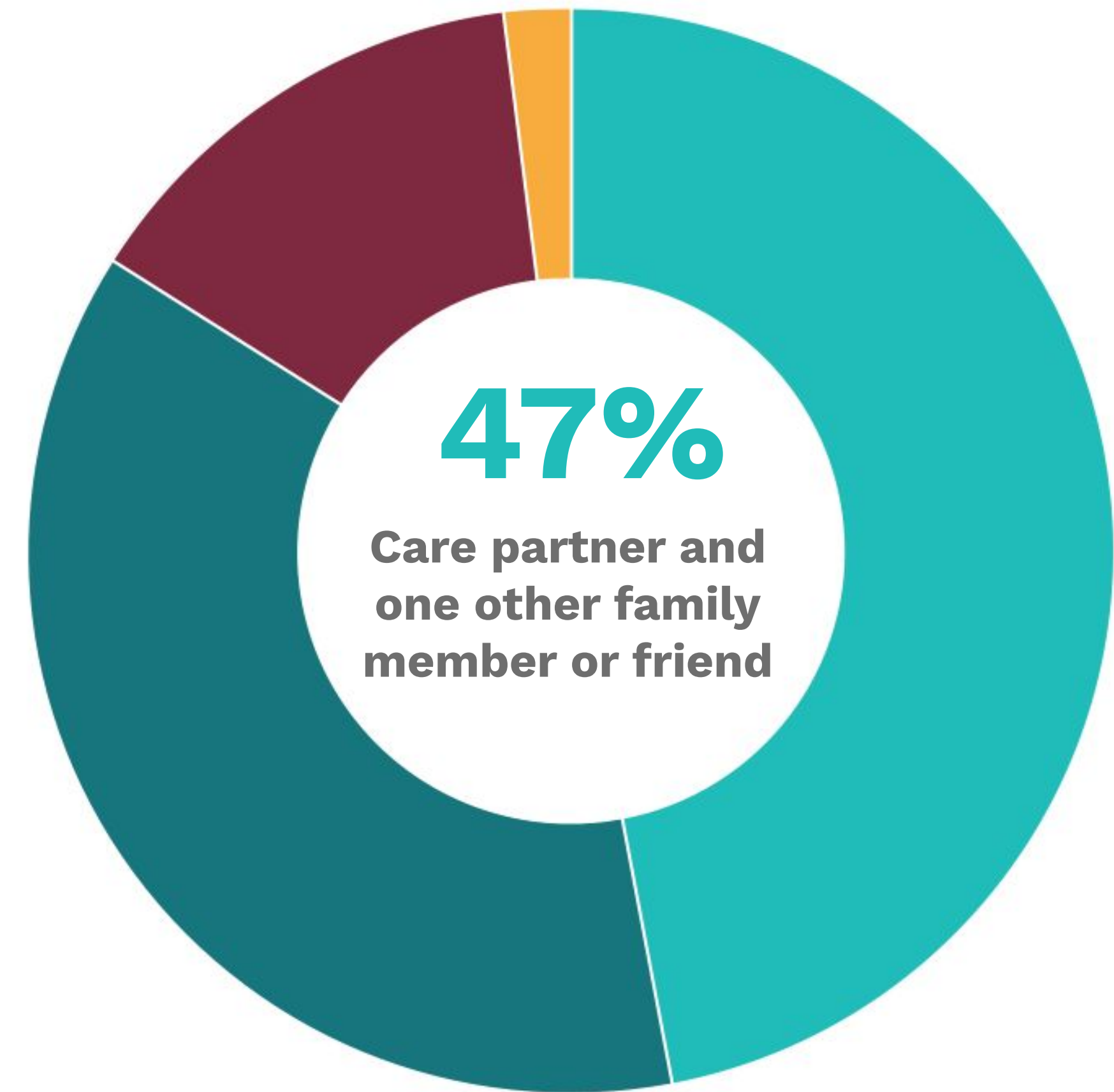
Most care partners make care decisions with at least one other person

SURVEY QUESTION



When it comes to decisions about the care of the person you support, who else is usually involved?

- Care partner and one other family member or friend (47%)
- Mostly just care partner (37%)
- Several family members or friends (14%)
- A paid caregiver or professional (2%)

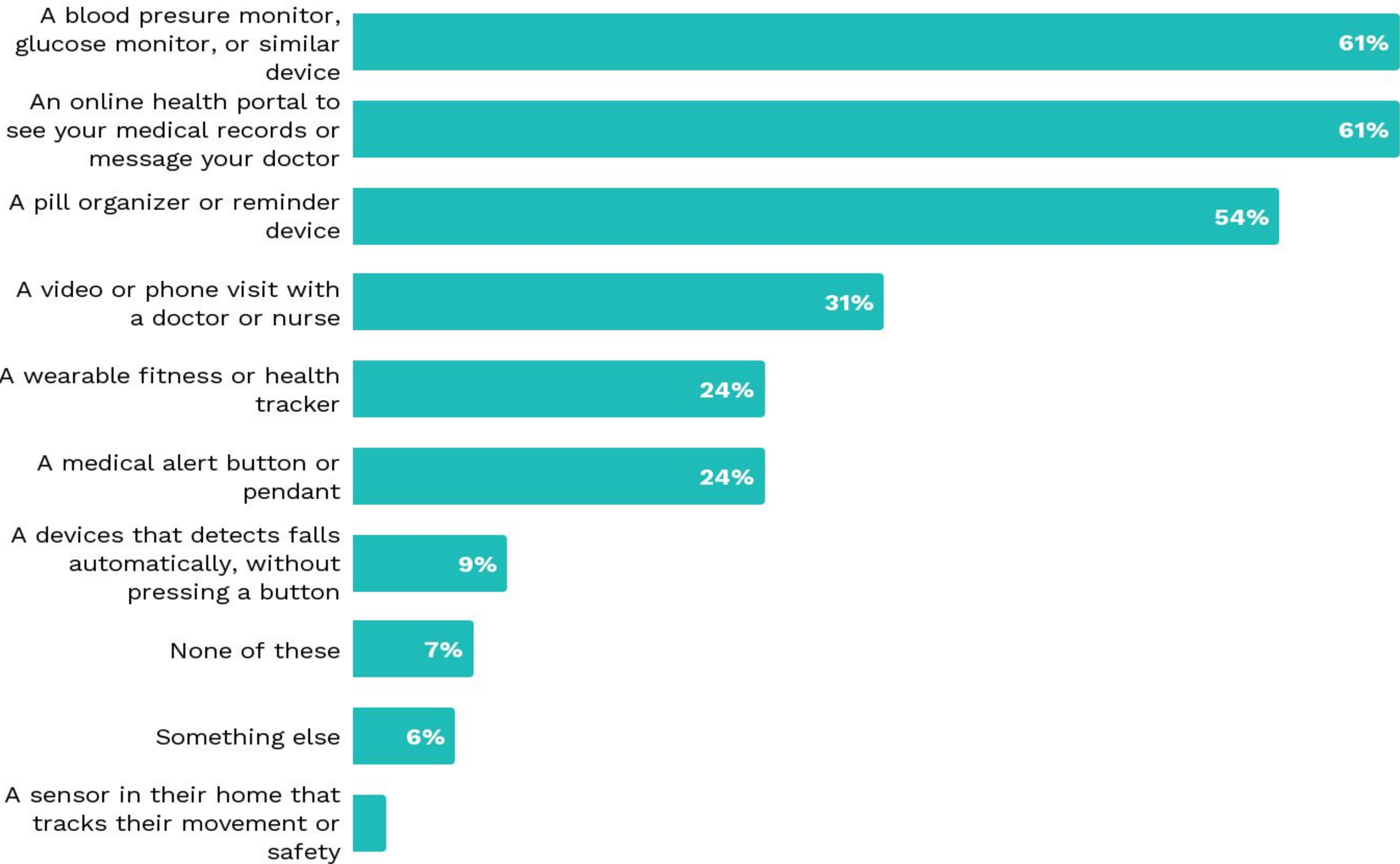


Home monitoring devices and patient portals were the most commonly used technologies

SURVEY QUESTION



To your best knowledge, which health or safety devices has the older adult you care for ever used?

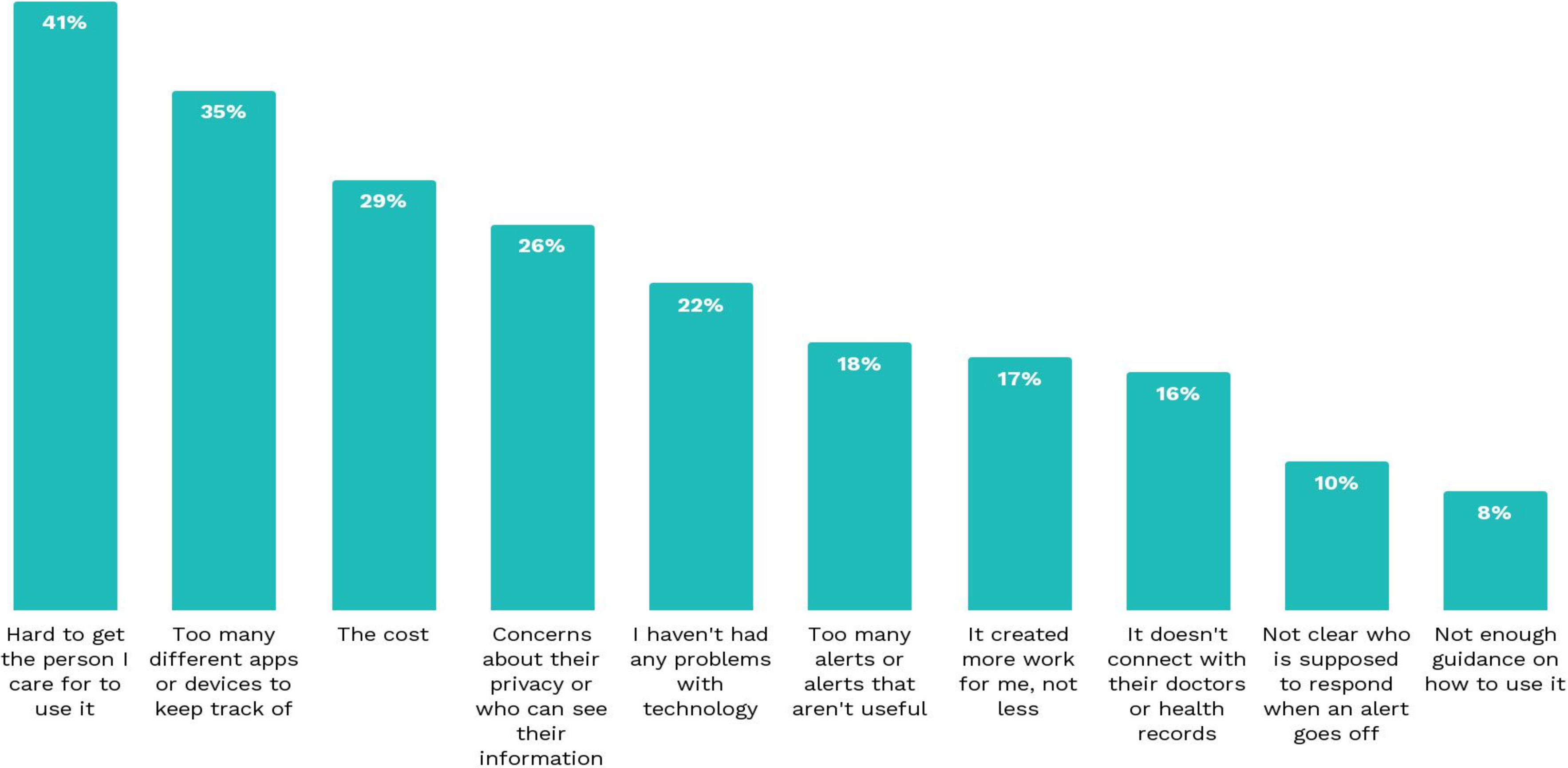


Getting the older adult to use technology was the most common caregiving challenge

SURVEY QUESTION



What has made technology harder to use in your caregiving role?

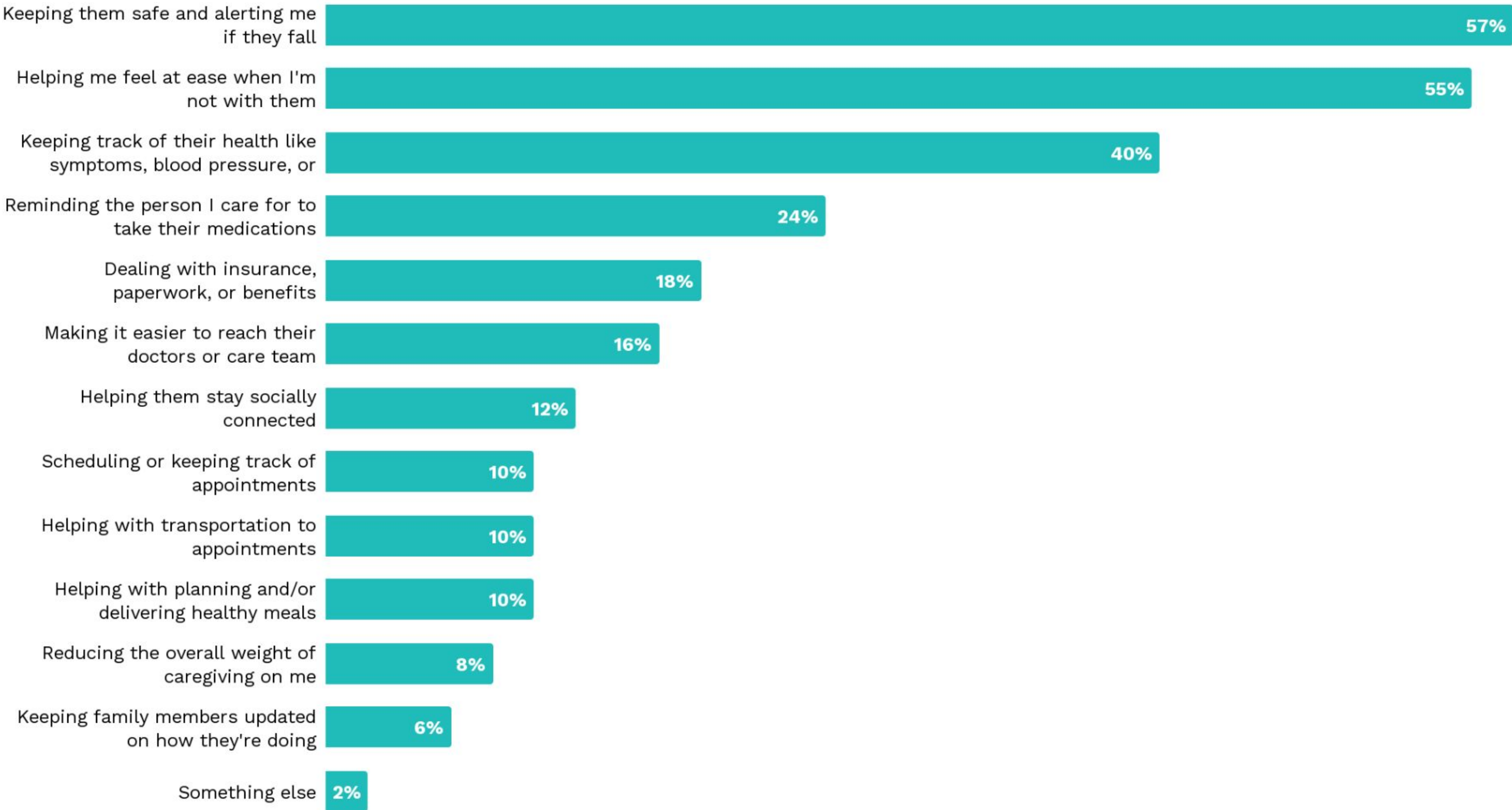


Safety alerts and peace of mind were care partners' top priorities for technology

SURVEY QUESTION



What would you most want technology to help you with as a caregiver?

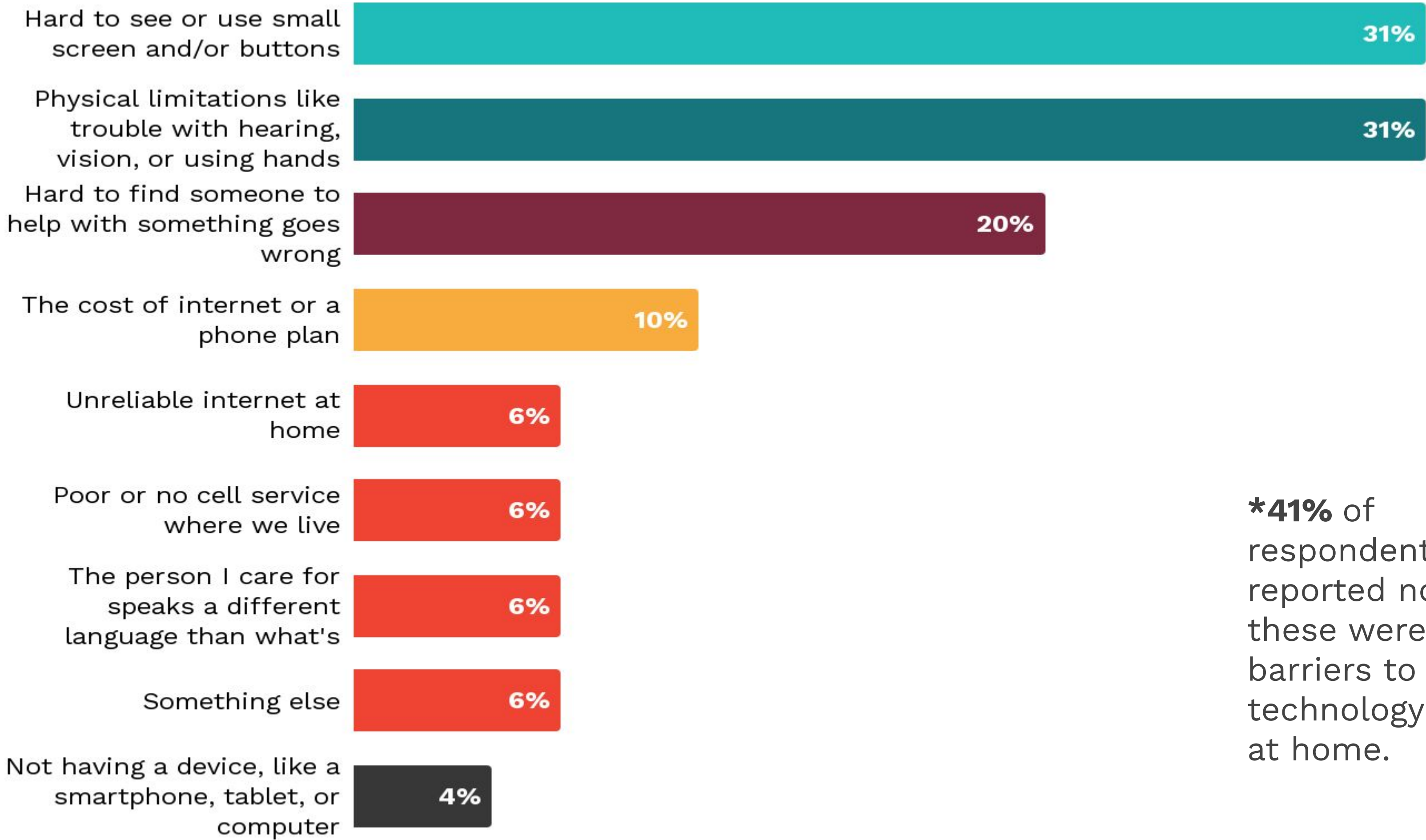


Screen usability and physical limitations were the most common barriers to technology use at home*

SURVEY QUESTION



What gets in the way of using technology at home?



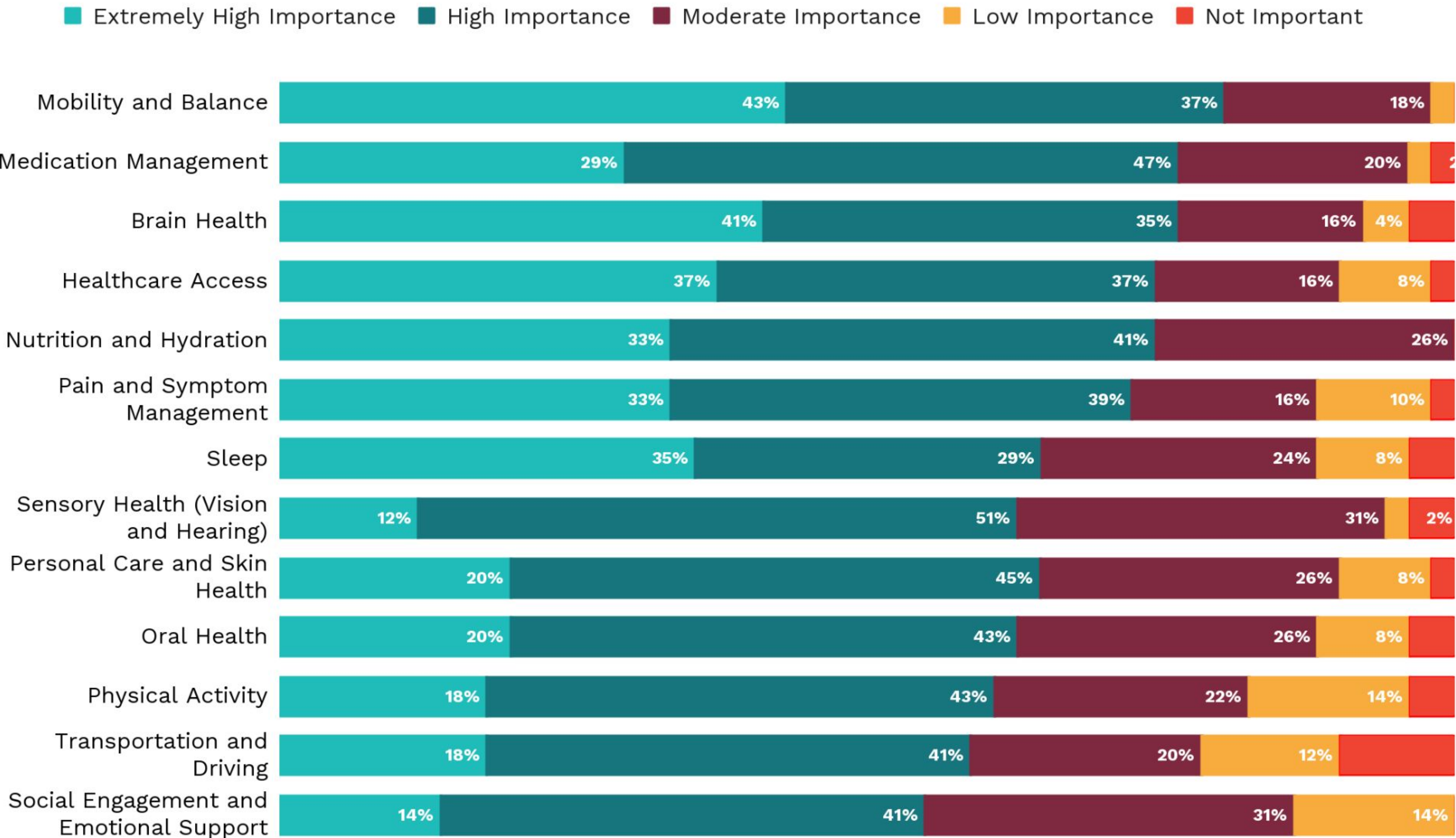
***41%** of respondents reported none of these were barriers to technology use at home.

Mobility received the highest priority rating from care partners

SURVEY QUESTION



Thinking about your role as a caregiver in the next five years, how important is each item for the older adult you care for?



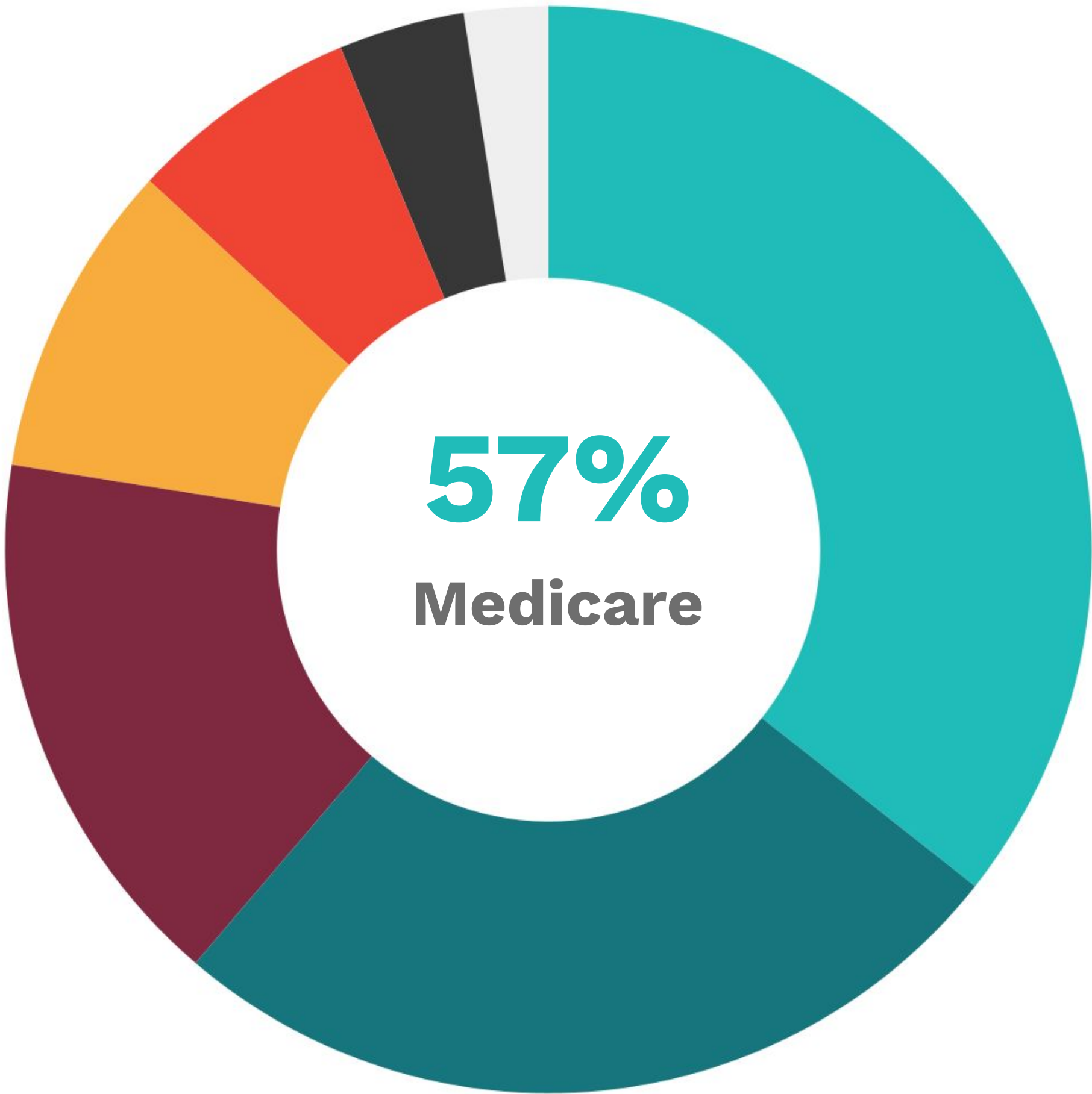
Medicare and Medicaid were the most commonly reported coverage types

SURVEY QUESTION



To the best of your knowledge, what health insurance does the person you care for have?

- Medicare (57%)
- Medicaid (41%)
- Medicare Advantage (26%)
- Private insurance (15%)
- Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits (11%)
- Employer-sponsored insurance (6%)
- I don't know (4%)

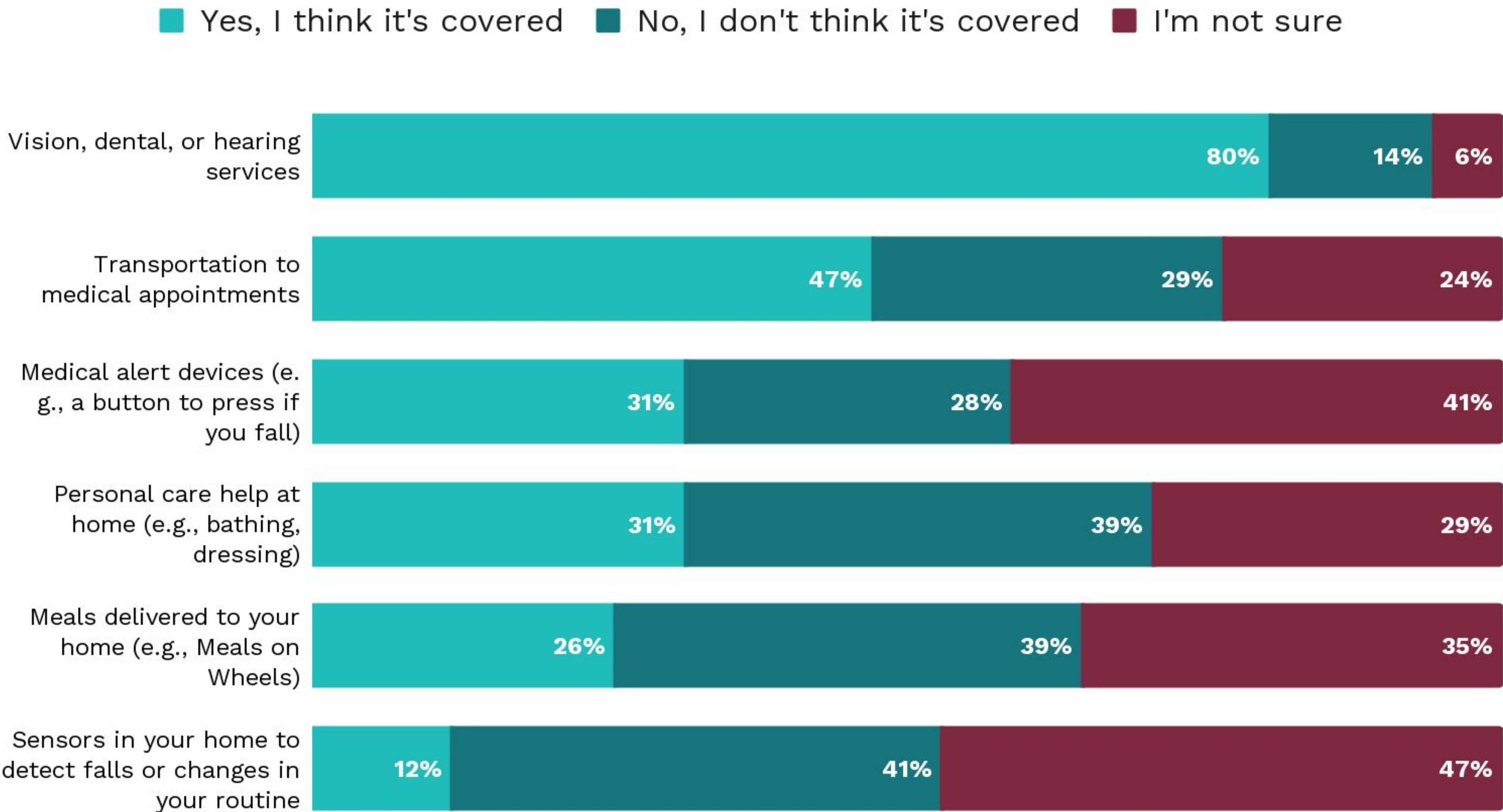


Care partners were least likely to report coverage for home sensors

SURVEY QUESTION



Does the current health plan or insurance of the older adult you care for cover each of the following services or items?

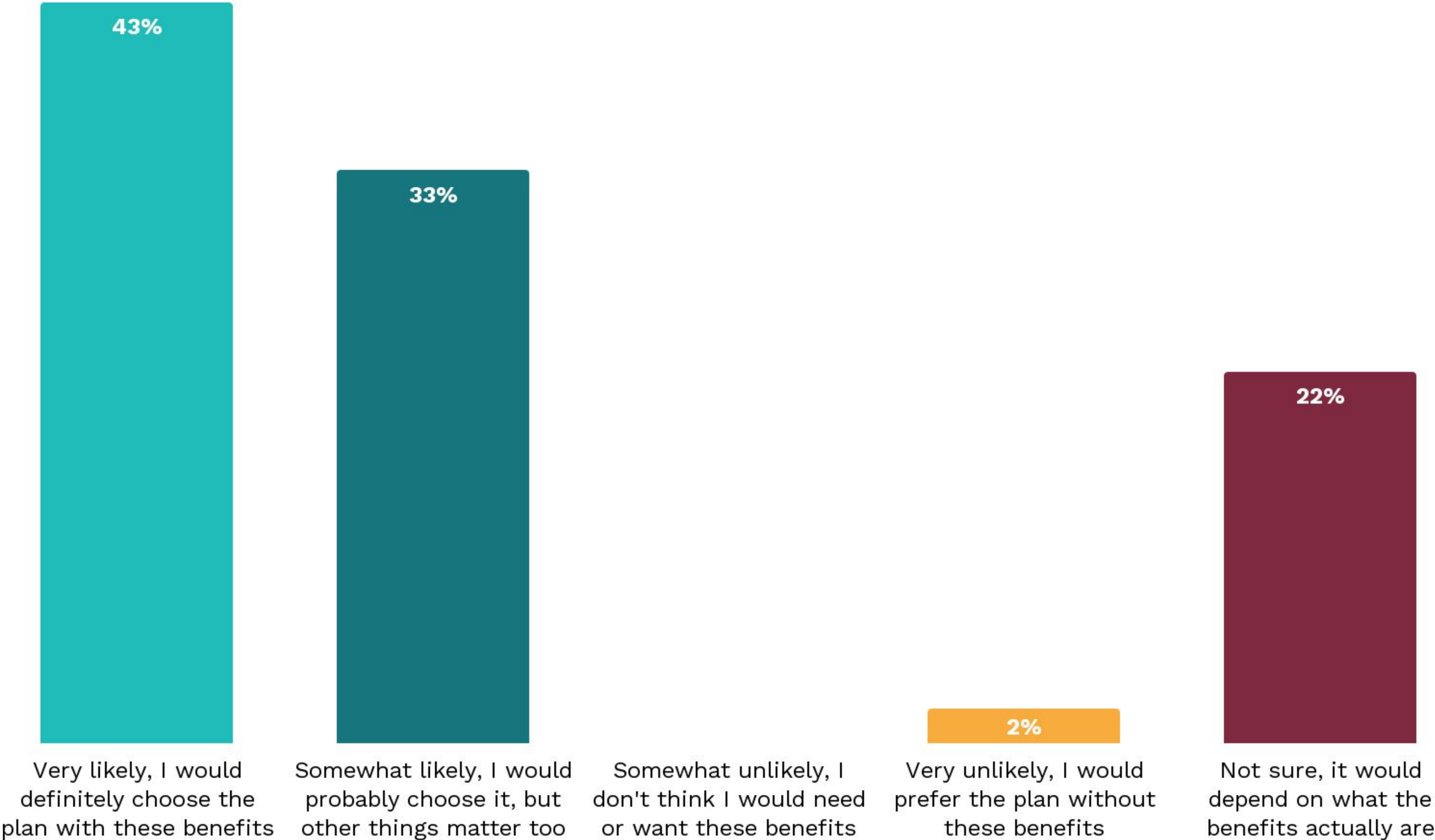


Three in four care partners would recommend a plan with aging-at-home benefits

SURVEY QUESTION



If one health plan offered extra help for the older adult you care for to stay safe and live at home longer, how likely would you be to recommend that plan instead of a plan without these services?



Key Takeaways

Closing the gaps between technology, care needs, and real-world adoption

Adoption depends on designing for real-world needs, from usability and privacy to safety and independence

Usability, sensory limitations, and privacy as essential enablers

- **Triggers for technology readiness:** Older adults state that privacy guarantees (49%) and insurance coverage/no cost (40%) are the primary factors that would make them ready to try home technology.
- **Physical usability barriers:** Care partners cite small screen/button sizes (31%) and physical/sensory limitations (31% with vision, hearing, or dexterity challenges) as the main barriers to technology use at home.

→ ***Standards for older adult-friendly universal design (e.g., voice navigation, large text, low maintenance) and robust data privacy protections are non-negotiable prerequisites for equitable adoption.***

Adoption depends on designing for real-world needs, from usability and privacy to safety and independence

Divergent priorities: functional safety vs. holistic health

- **Older adult priorities:** Older adults rank sensory health (58% extremely high importance), brain health (56%), mobility and balance (51%), and physical activity (51%) as their top five-year priorities.
- **Care partner focus:** Care partners rank mobility and balance as their single highest priority for the older adult care recipient (80% extremely high or high importance), followed by medication management (76%) and brain health (76%).
- **Low adoption of safety tech:** Despite fall risk and mobility being top concerns, self-reported regular use of automated fall detection devices (3%) and medical alert buttons (3%) among older adults is strikingly low.

→ *Despite strong interest in maintaining health and independence, there is a clear gap between the priorities of older adults and care partners and the adoption of technologies designed to address them, particularly for mobility and fall prevention.*

Technology must reduce caregiver burden and make aging-in-place support more accessible and affordable

Caregiver strain: decision burden, fragmentation, and increased workload

- **Shared decision-making:** 47% of care partners navigate care decisions alongside at least one other family member or friend.
- **Primary caregiving friction points:** Care partners report that the biggest hurdles to technology adoption are getting the older adult to use the technology (41%), device/app overload (35%), out-of-pocket costs (29%), and privacy concerns (26%).
- **Operational unintended consequences:** 17% of care partners report that introducing technology created *more* work for them rather than less, while 10% note confusion over who is responsible for responding when an alert triggers.
- **Top caregiver tech demands:** Care partners primarily want technology to deliver fall alerts (57%), provide peace of mind when apart (55%), and assist with health tracking (40%).

→ ***Digital interventions must support "caregiver-centric" technology integration that reduces administrative burden and establishes clear escalation protocols.***

Technology must reduce caregiver burden and make aging-in-place support more accessible and affordable

Strong demand for aging-in-place benefits vs. low coverage awareness

- **Unmet market demand:** Six in ten older adults (61%) report they would likely choose a health plan that offers extra aging-at-home benefits, while three in four care partners (76%) would recommend such a plan.
- **Large coverage uncertainty:** Over 90% of older adults either believe home routine/fall sensors are not covered by insurance (56%) or are unsure if they are covered (37%). Similarly, 91% view medical alert devices as non-covered (42%) or are uncertain of coverage (49%).

→ *While there is strong interest in health plans that support aging in place, access remains limited by both the availability of coverage for AgeTech and awareness of existing benefits. Addressing these gaps could improve access to and affordability of technologies that support aging in place.*

Thank you.



Check out the rest of DiMe's Aging in Place of Choice resources:

<https://dimesociety.org/supporting-aging-in-place-of-choice-with-connected-health-technologies-and-digitally-enabled-care-delivery/>



Connected Health
Collaborative Community
by DiMe

