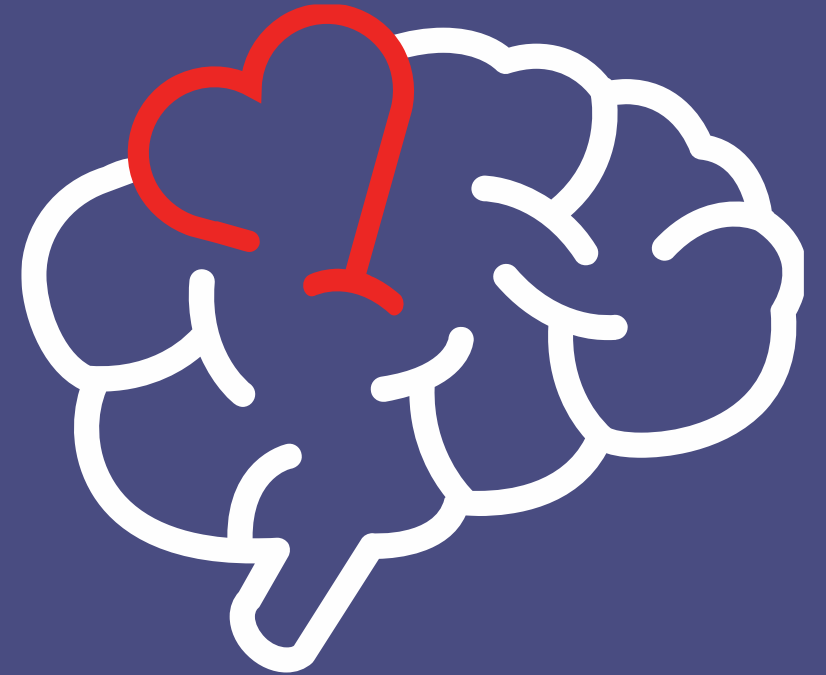
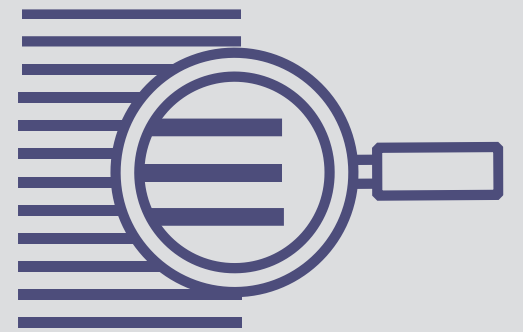


A Statewide Survey of Community Clinic Workers

September-October 2025

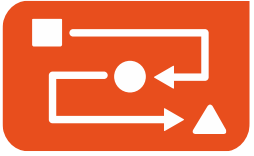


Background



Background

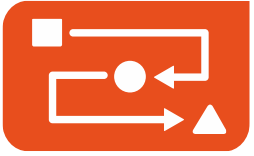
Background/Purpose



- With funding from the California Workforce Development Board through its High Road Training Partnership program, Goodwin Simon Strategic Research conducted an independent statewide survey of employees working in Federally Qualified Healthcare Centers (FQHCs)—community-based clinics that provide health services to the most vulnerable populations regardless of ability to pay.
- A key principle of the California’s High Road initiative is including “worker voice” to inform what is needed in an industry and evaluate what is most effective from workers’ perspectives. This survey was undertaken to ascertain worker’s views, concerns, and potential solutions for challenges facing the community clinic healthcare sector in California. It is a component of the [H RTP Resilient Workforce](#) grant awarded to the Shirley Ware Education Center and addresses, in particular, the ability of FQHCs to sustain High Road wages and benefits.
- The survey was conducted in September/October 2025 and findings are based on responses from 303 employees who work in non-profit, community-based health centers across the state, including unionized and non-unionized health centers, representing a range of healthcare occupations, demographic diversity, and tenure in workers’ jobs.

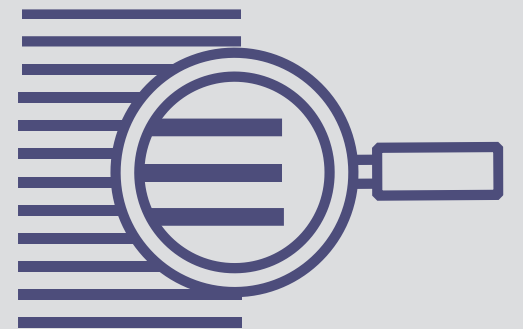
Areas Explored

Background/Purpose

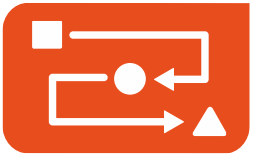


- Quality of Care
- Cuts in Funding to Medi-Cal & Eligibility
- Earnings / Inability to Cover Basic Living Expenses
 - Within their jobs
 - Compared to others in health care
- Leaving Their Community Clinic Job/Health Care Altogether
- Career Training Opportunities

Key Findings



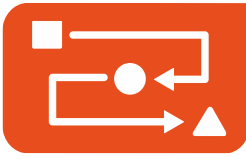
Key Findings (1 of 3)



The following summarizes key findings, with more detailed findings included in the full report.

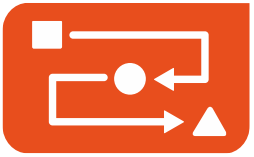
- **CARE PROVIDED:** In general, community clinic workers feel positively about the culturally competent care they provide to their patients, even though many feel their clinics are short-staffed and under-resourced, with limited funding and low reimbursement rates from government sources. Behavioral health workers statewide and clinic staff in the Bay Area are most likely to report their clinics do not have enough resources to provide quality care.
- **CUTS IN FUNDING:** The vast majority are very concerned about the impact of recently passed federal and state funding cuts to Medi-Cal and eligibility coverage for patients they serve, especially the impact on their clinic's ability to:
 - care for immigrants and other vulnerable populations;
 - maintain adequate staffing levels;
 - provide quality care; and
 - keep their clinic in business.

Key Findings (2 of 3)



- **EARNINGS:** The majority earn less than \$30/hour and feel they earn less than their peers in hospitals and private practice clinics. Most feel they don't earn enough - or just barely enough - to keep up with the cost of living, and many report receiving public benefits for themselves or their families. This is particularly true for Black and Hispanic workers.
- **STAYING / LEAVING:** The majority have worked at their current employer for less than five years, with more than a third saying they see themselves staying at their current employer for less than three more years. Over half say they've considered leaving their clinic in the last year, with low pay and burn-out the major drivers.
- **IMPACT:** Community clinic workers who have considered leaving their current workplace the most in the past year are those who speak Spanish at work, work in Behavioral Health, and those who work in the Bay Area and the Central Valley. The majority of those who speak Spanish at work and those who work in the Bay Area have considered leaving health care altogether, with low pay the top reason.

Key Findings (3 of 3)

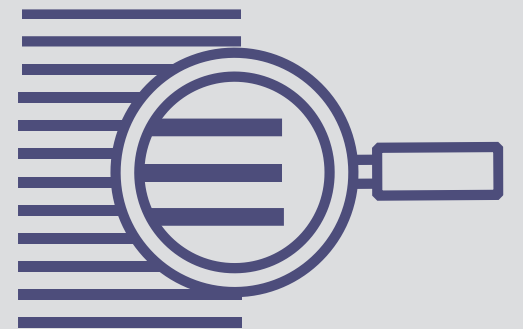


CAREER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES: A slight majority of workers say they are satisfied with career training opportunities at work, with satisfaction decreasing based on workers' tenure at a clinic. Satisfaction with career opportunities is lower among workers in the Central Valley and Bay Area, and among behavioral health and administrative staff, while medical assistants are most likely to name career growth opportunities as a main reason to stay with their employer.

SOLUTIONS: When provided a slate of options to address the challenges facing their clinics, workers across the board overwhelmingly find each of the following helpful to address challenges facing their clinic:

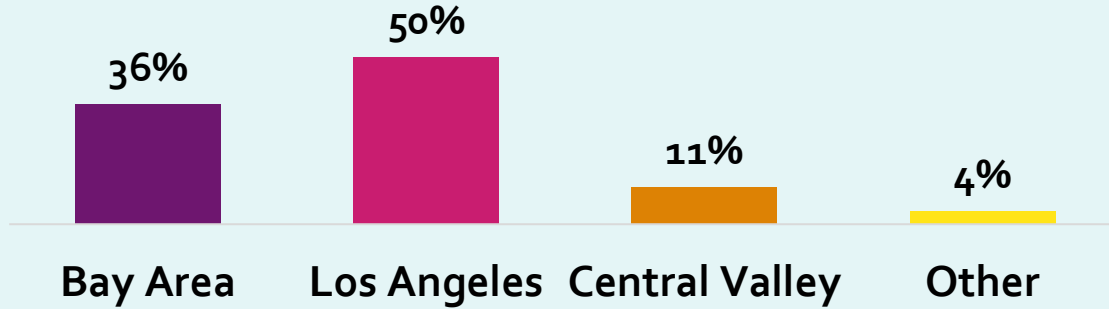
- encouraging health centers and unions to work together to advocate for more resources
- directing more government funding to workers' needs
- directing more government funding to patient care
- increasing reimbursements from Medicaid.

Demographics of Respondents

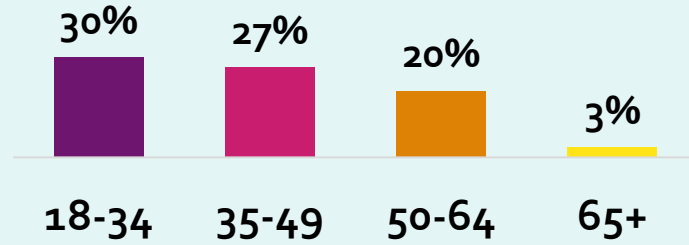


General Demographics

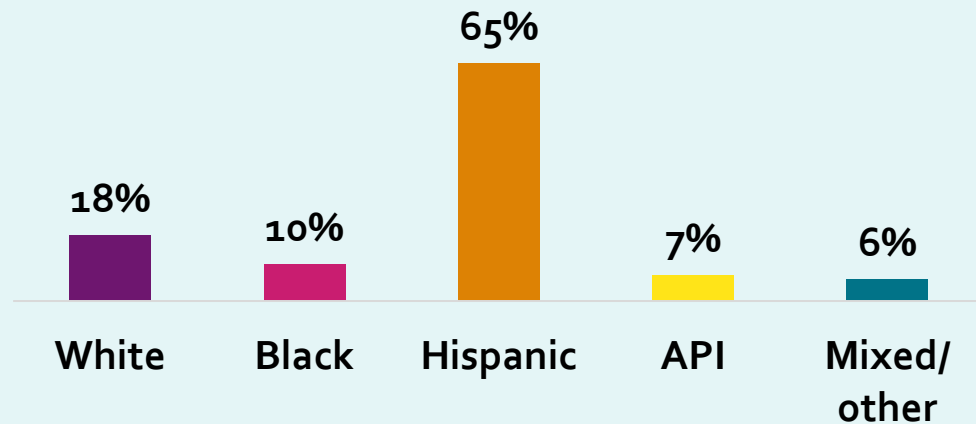
Region



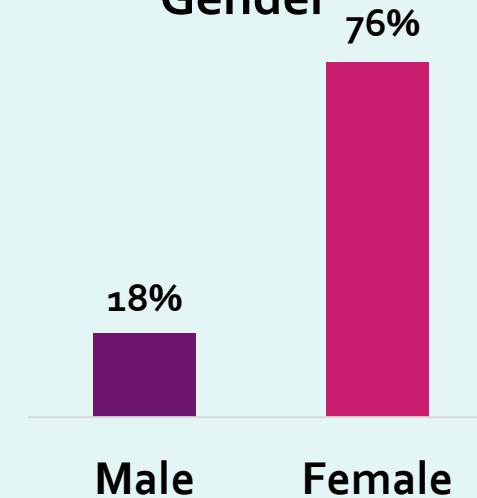
Age



Race/Ethnicity

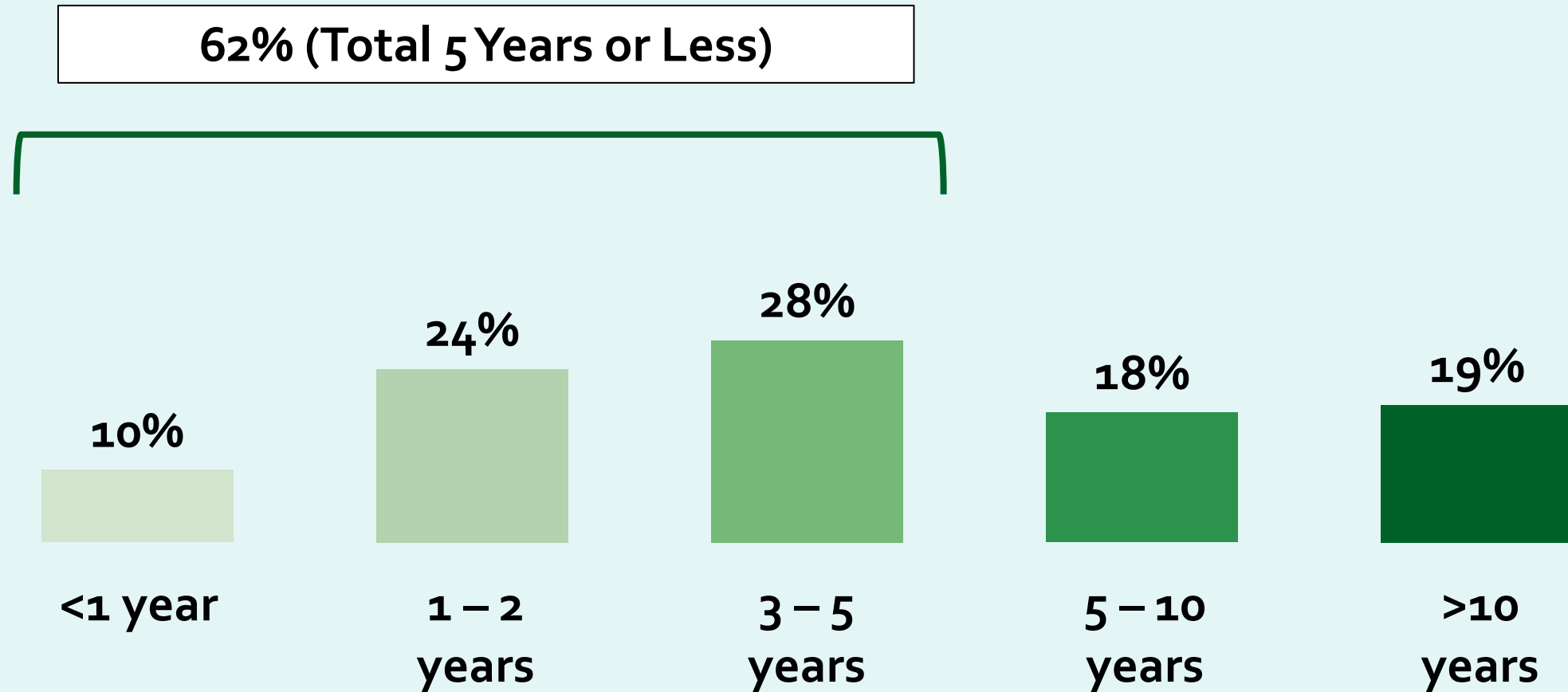


Gender



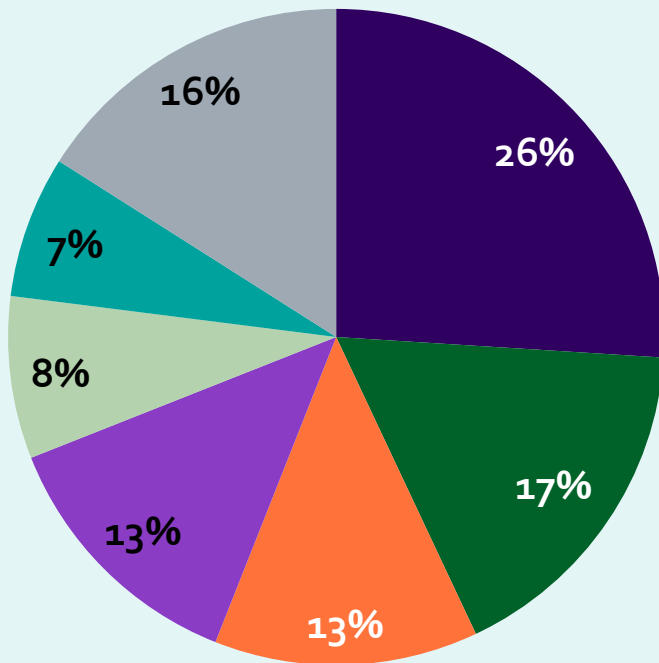
Length of Time Worked at Current Workplace

How long have you worked... at your current workplace?



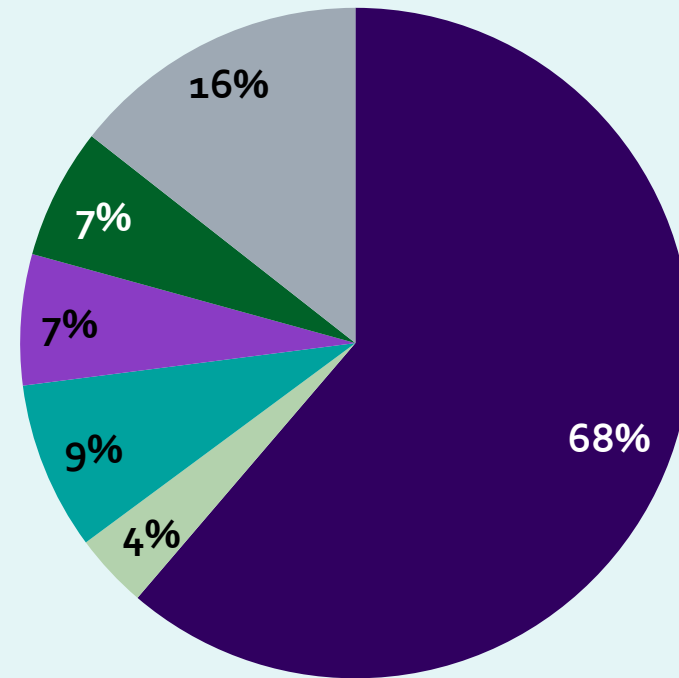
Type of Job Held

- Medical assistant (MA)
- Admin/Clerical
- Nursing/medical care
- Behavioral health
- Enabling services
- Dental care
- Other/Unsure

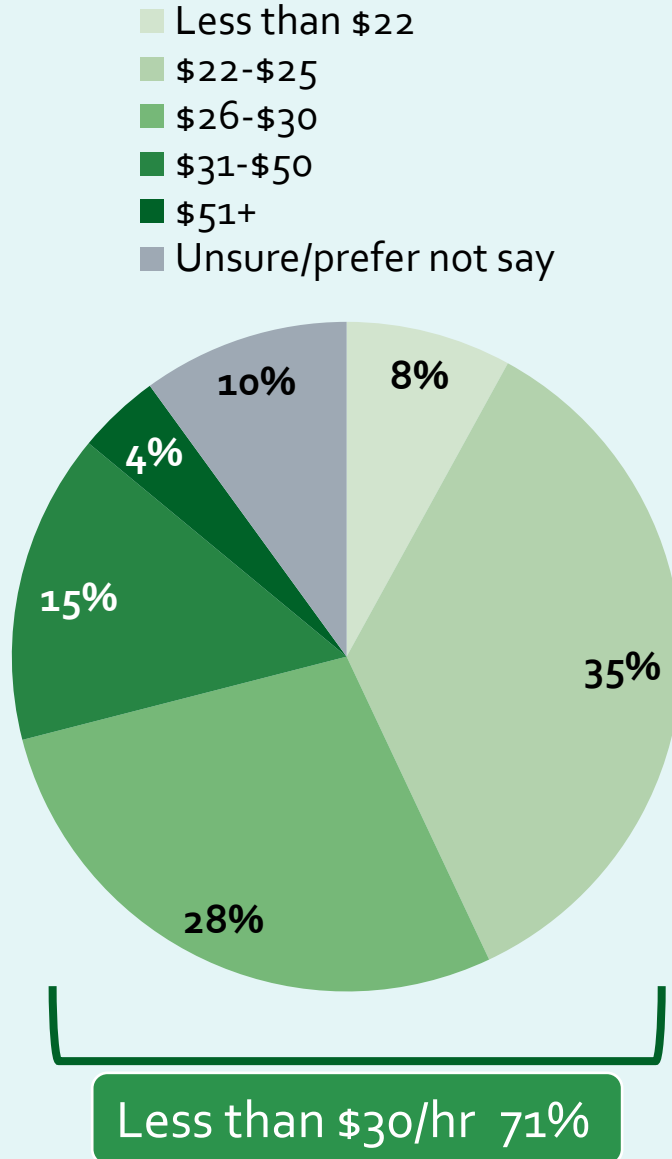


Types of Clinic Setting

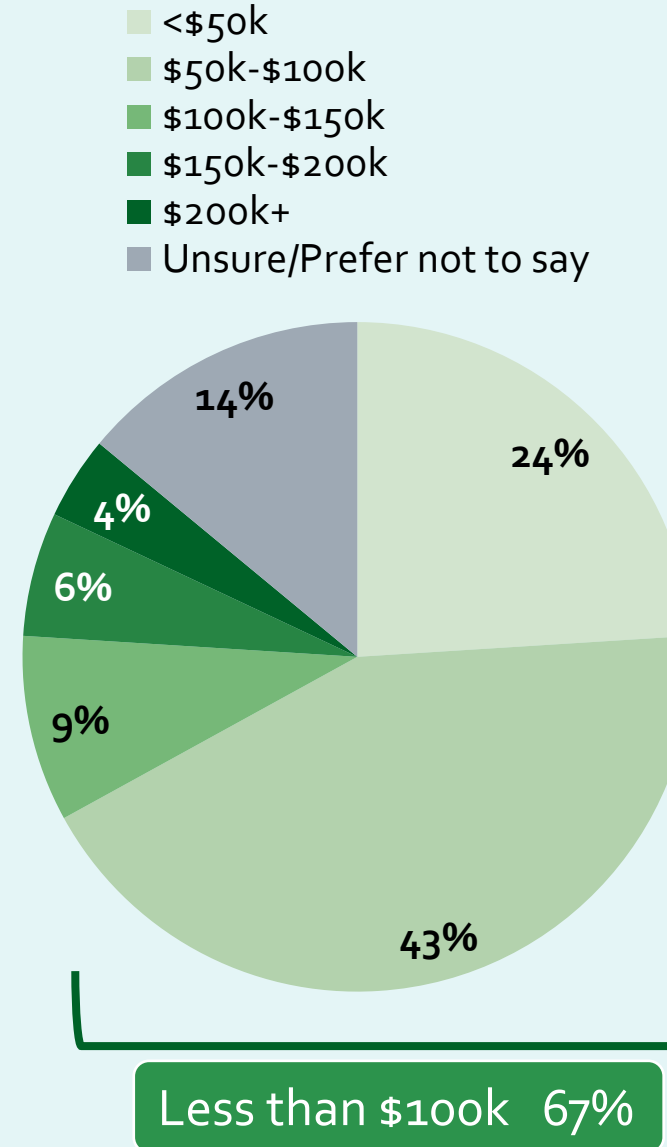
- Traditional clinic
- Mobile
- School based
- PACE
- Dental
- Other/Unsure



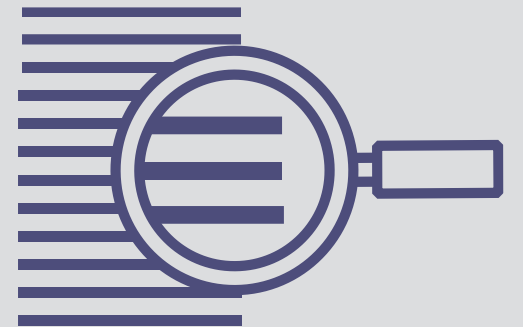
Personal Hourly Wage



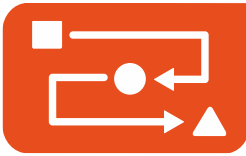
Annual Household Income



Detailed Findings



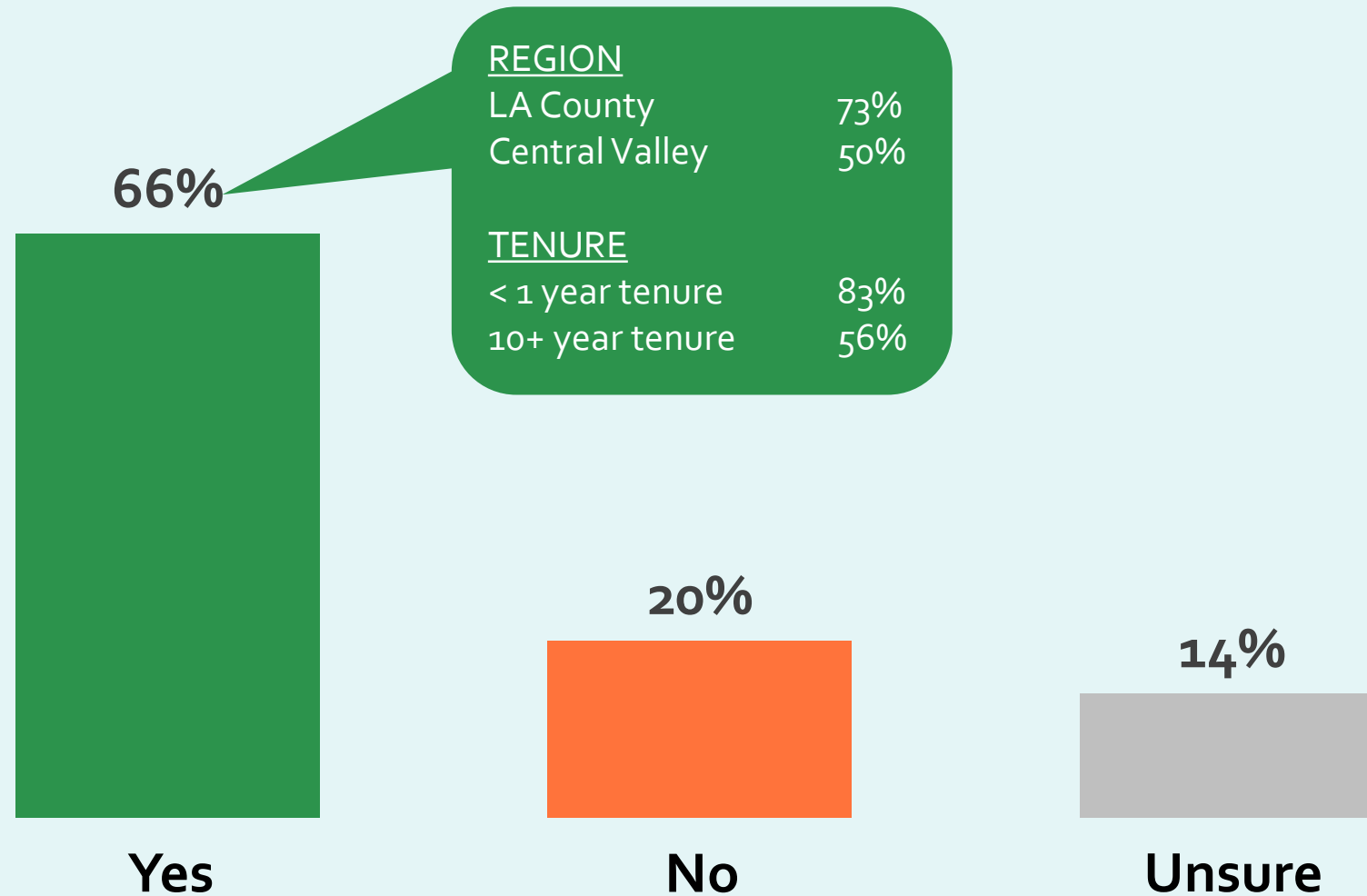
Quality of Care Provided



-  Nearly two thirds (66%) would recommend their clinics to new patients, especially respondents who live in LA County (73%) and those relatively new in their tenure (83%).
-  The vast majority (89%) also believe the patients they serve receive culturally competent care, such as in the patient's preferred language or from a provider from the same cultural community. This is especially true for those in Medical Assistant jobs (63%) and less true for those in Behavioral Health roles (46%).
-  Most (67%) feel their clinic is short staffed. This is particularly felt by workers in the Bay Area and Central Valley, where only 13% and 16% respectively felt their clinics were not short-staffed, and where more than half identified shortages in Primary Care staff roles as the most short-staffed. The vast majority of respondents (85%) say they work more than 40 hours in a typical week.

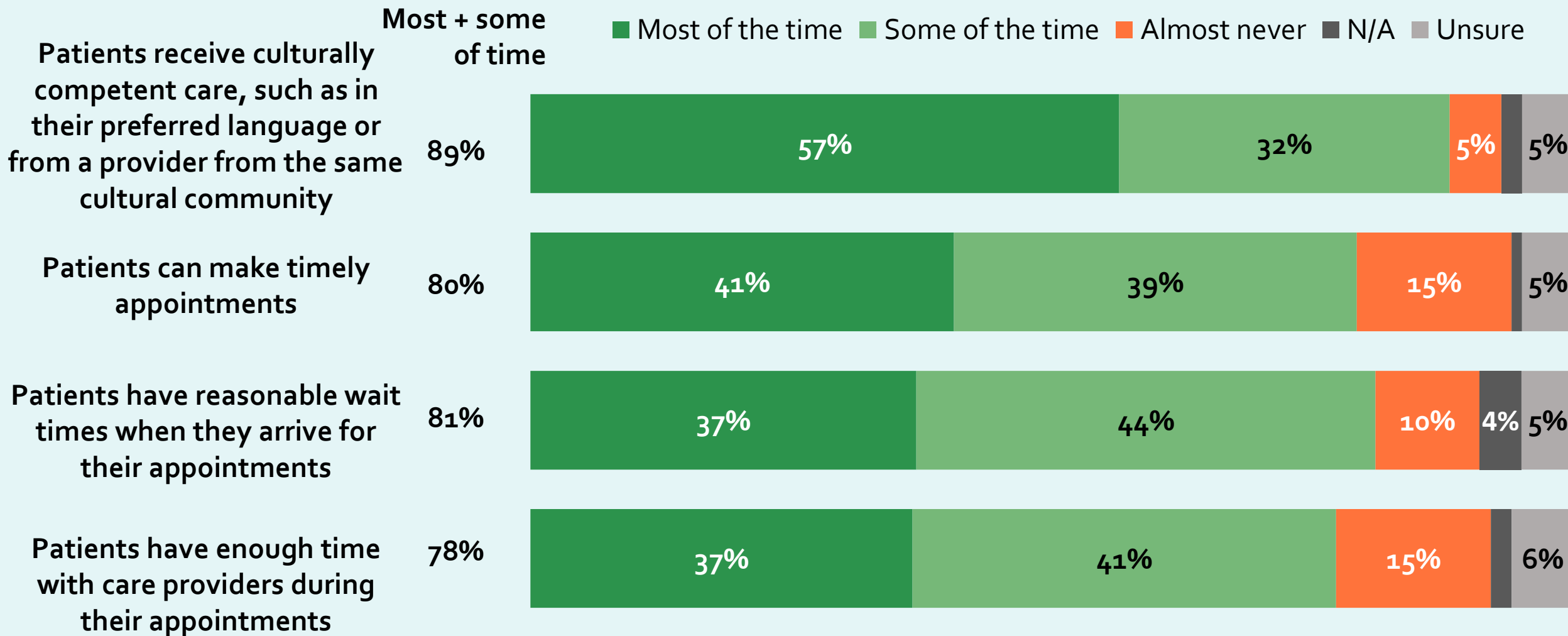
Two-Thirds of Workers Would Recommend Their Clinics

Would you personally recommend your health center to new patients?



Most Workers Feel Patients Receive Culturally Competent Care

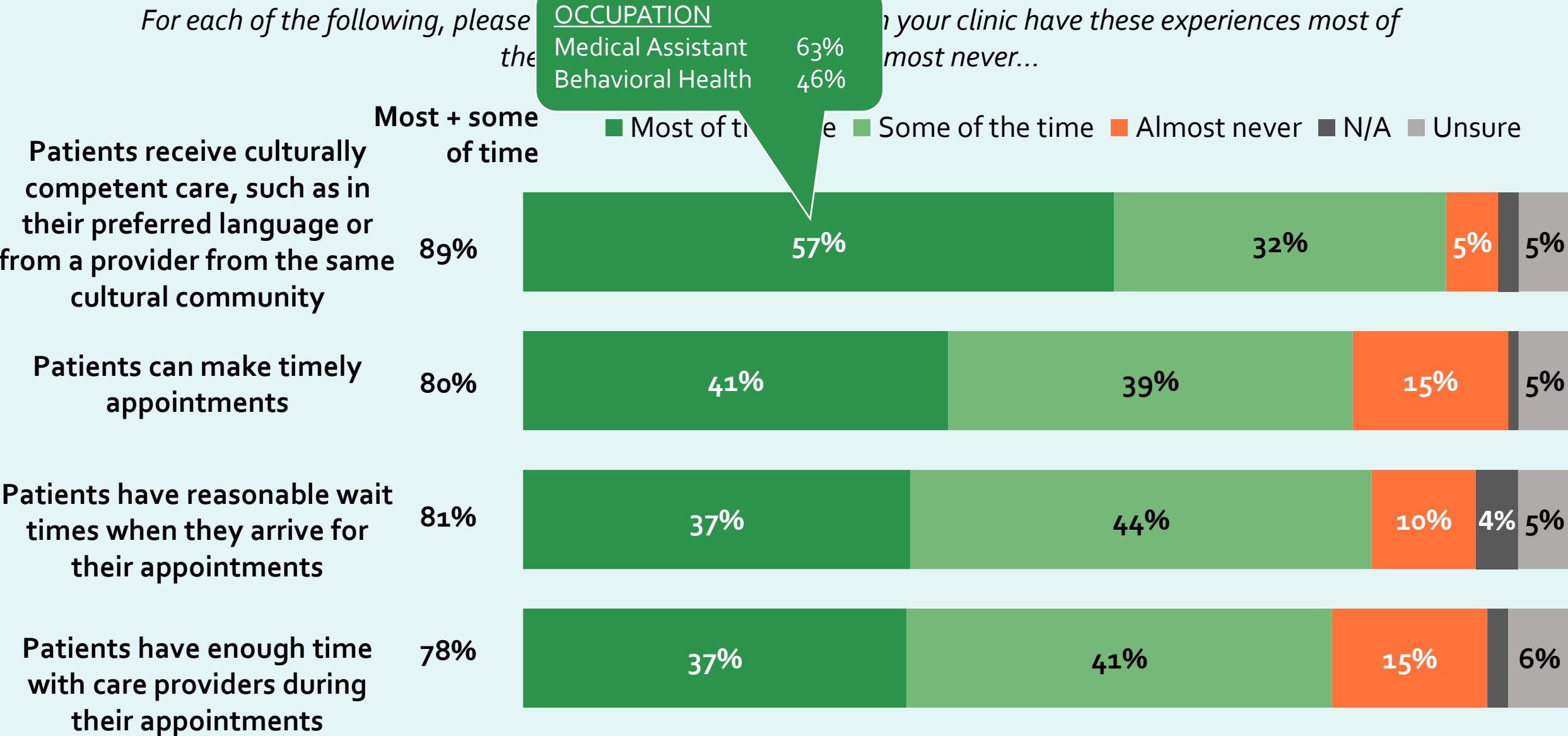
For each of the following, please indicate if you feel patients in your clinic have these experiences most of the time, some of the time, or almost never...



Ranked by Overall: "Most of the time"

Most Workers Feel Patients Receive Culturally Competent Care

For each of the following, please rank how often you have these experiences most of the time, some of the time, almost never, N/A, or unsure.

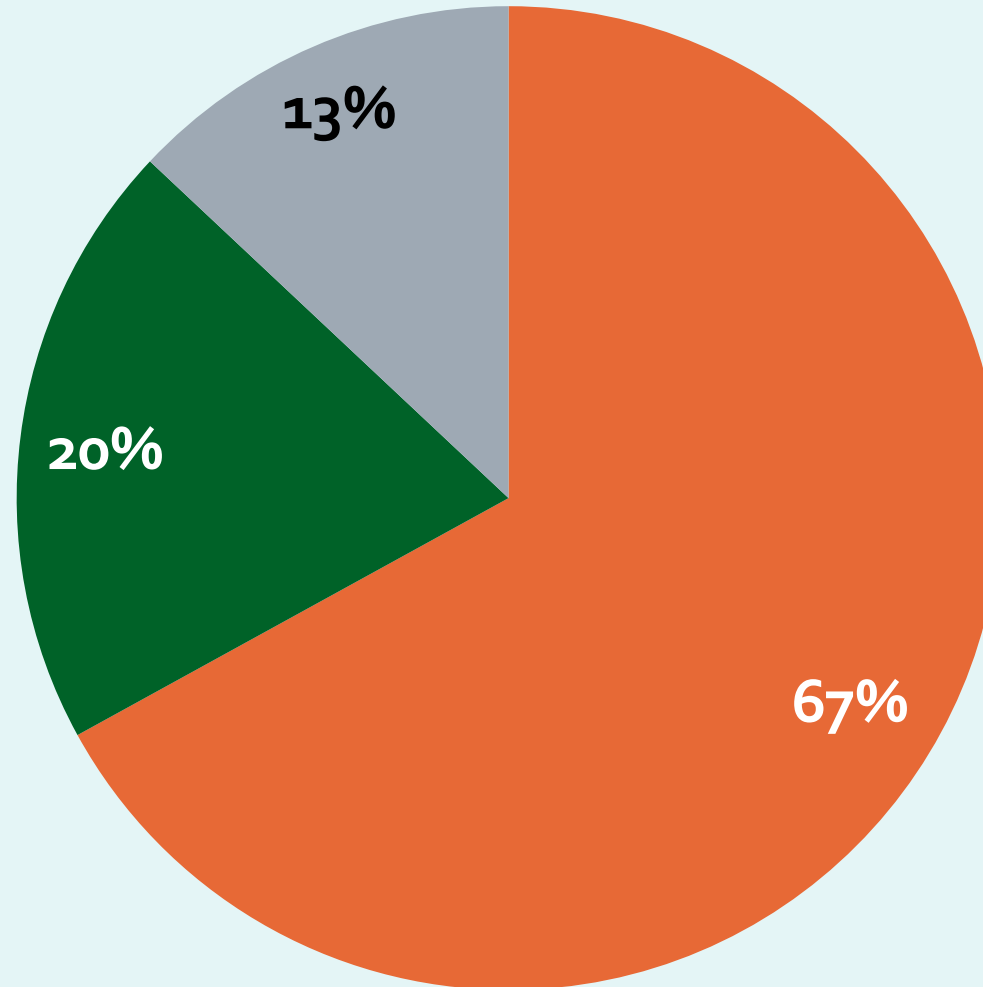


Ranked by Overall: "Most of the time"

Almost 7 in 10 Workers Feel Their Clinic Is Short-Staffed

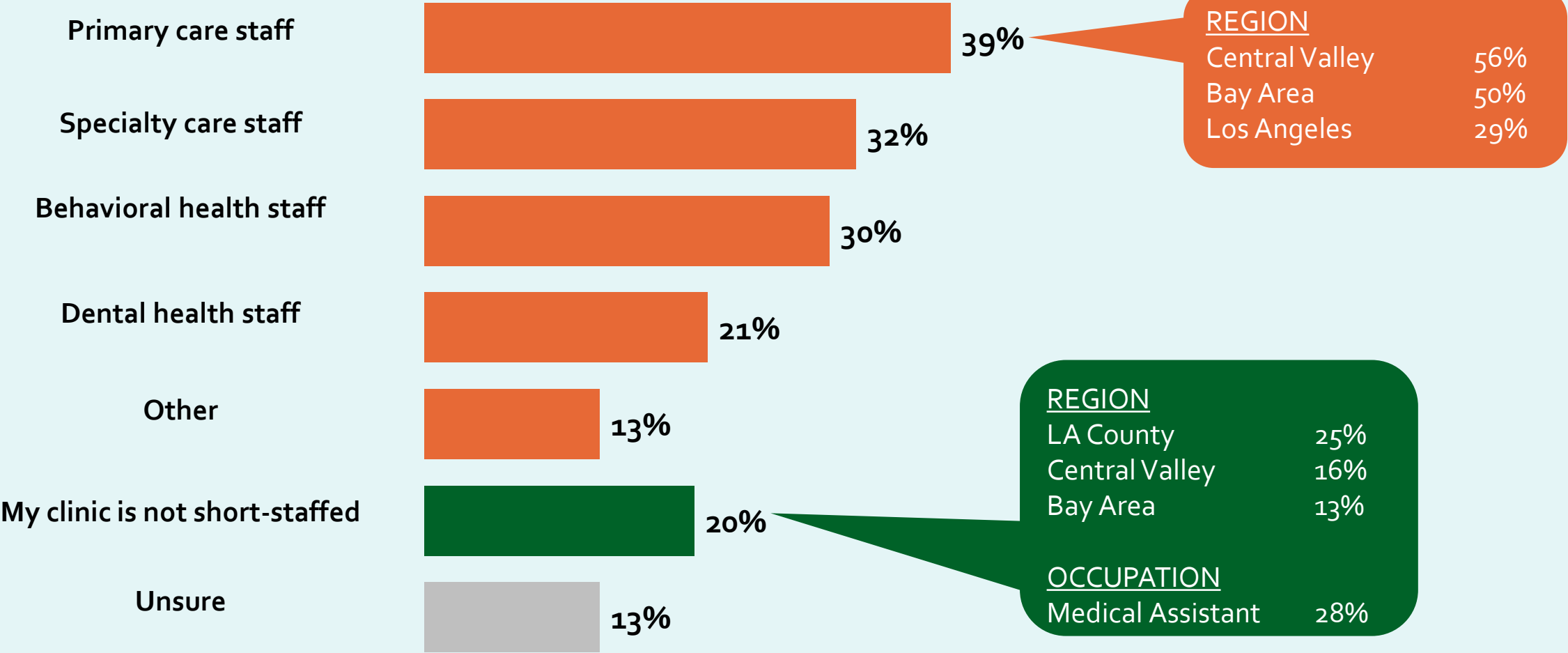
...do you feel [your] short-staffed at your clinic?

■ Short-Staffed ■ Not short-staffed ■ Unsure



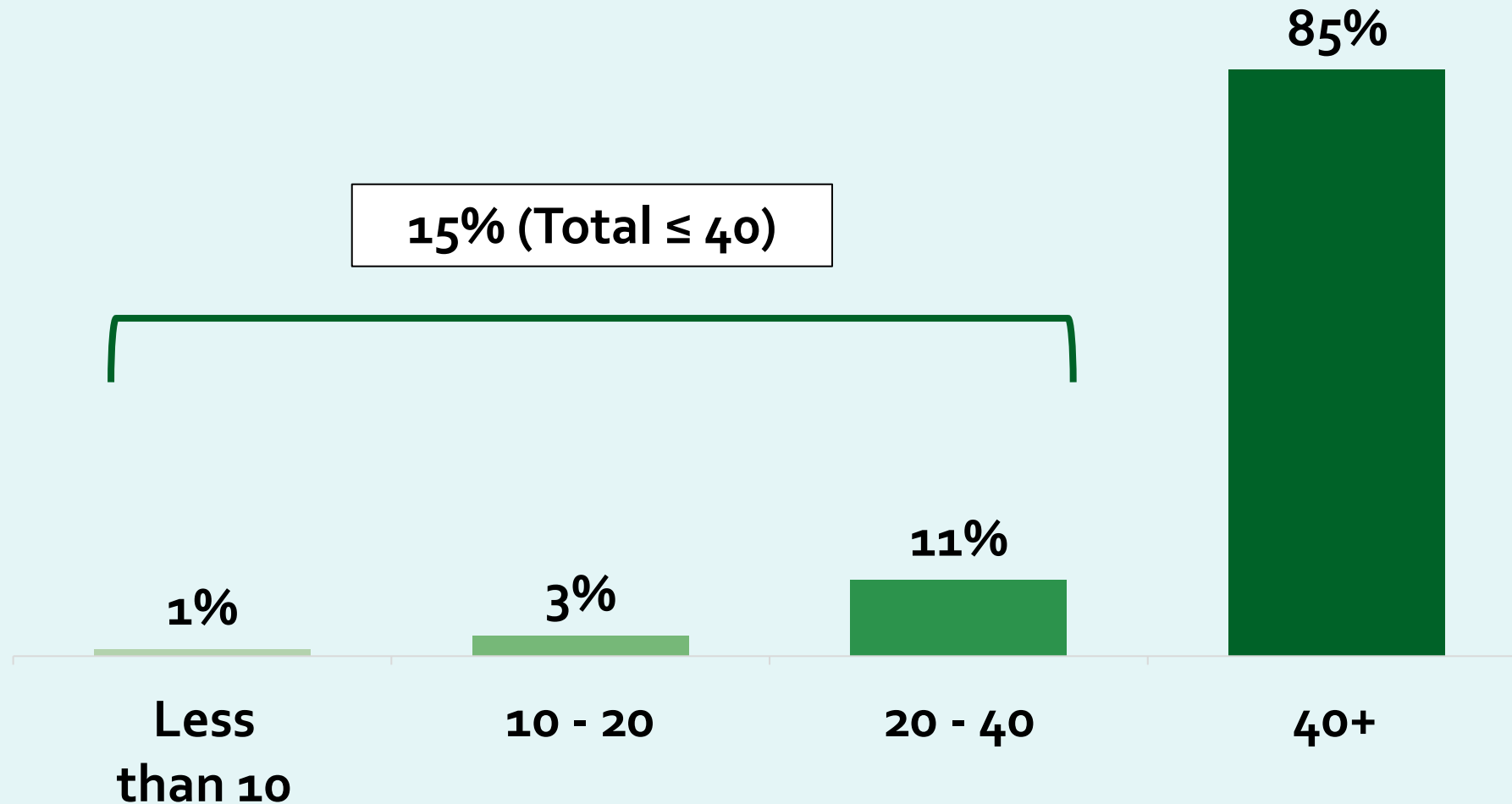
Primary Care Staff Most Likely To Be Cited as Short-Staffed

Which of the following classifications, if any, do you feel are short-staffed at your clinic? You can select all that apply. If you feel your clinic is not short-staffed, please select that option.

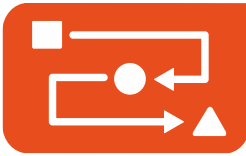


Vast Majority Work More Than 40 Hours in Typical Week

About how many hours do you work in a typical workweek? If you are unemployed, not working due to a permanent disability, or not working for some other reason, please indicate that.



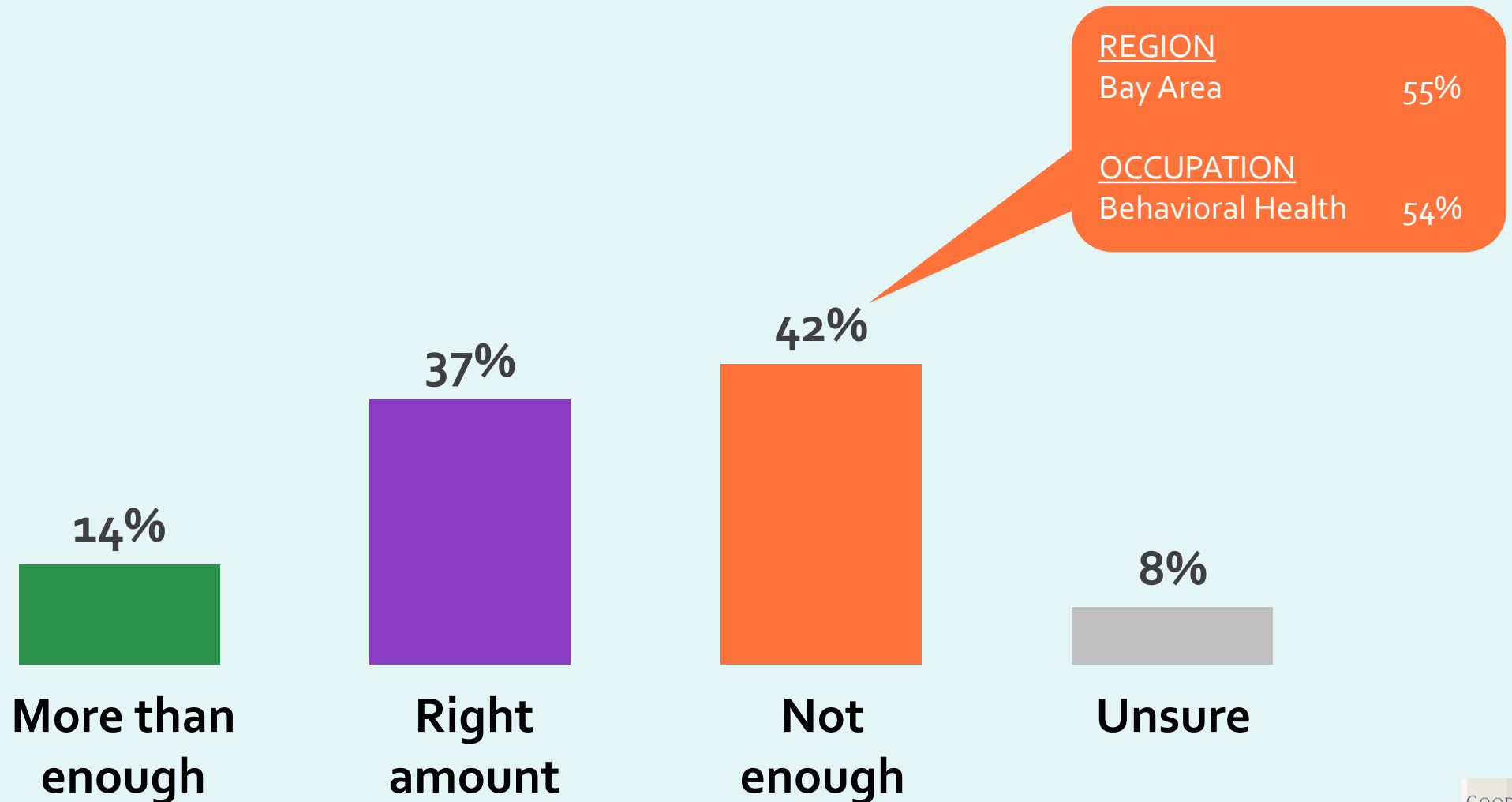
Resources To Provide Quality Care



- More than four in ten (42%) feel their clinic does not have enough resources to provide quality care. They identify limited funding and low reimbursement rates from government sources and high spending on non-patient care items as primary reasons.
- Bay Area workers are more likely (55%) to report that their clinics do not have enough resources, with 69% of Bay Area workers attributing their clinics' lack of resources to limited funding and low reimbursement rates from government sources.
- Behavioral Health workers report (55%) feeling their clinic does not have enough resources to provide quality care at higher rate than respondents as a whole (42%).

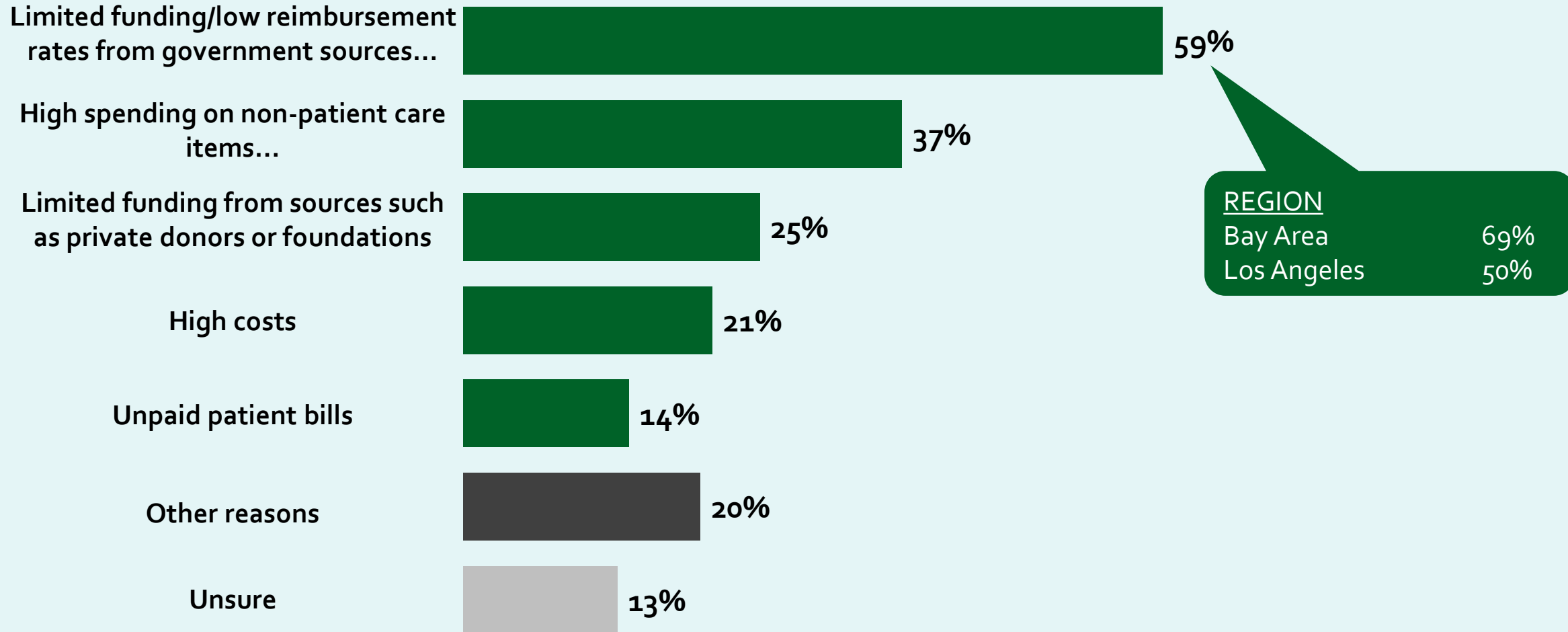
More than 4 in 10 Workers Feel Their Clinic Does Not Have Enough Resources to Provide Quality Care

Do you feel your clinic has more than enough resources (including funding or staff) to provide quality care to your patients, about the right amount, or not enough resources to provide quality care?

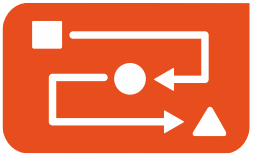


Limited Funding and High-Spending on Non-Patient Care Cited as Primary Reasons For Insufficient Resources

Which of the following are the main reasons you feel your clinic does not have enough resources to provide quality care to your patients? Please select all that apply.



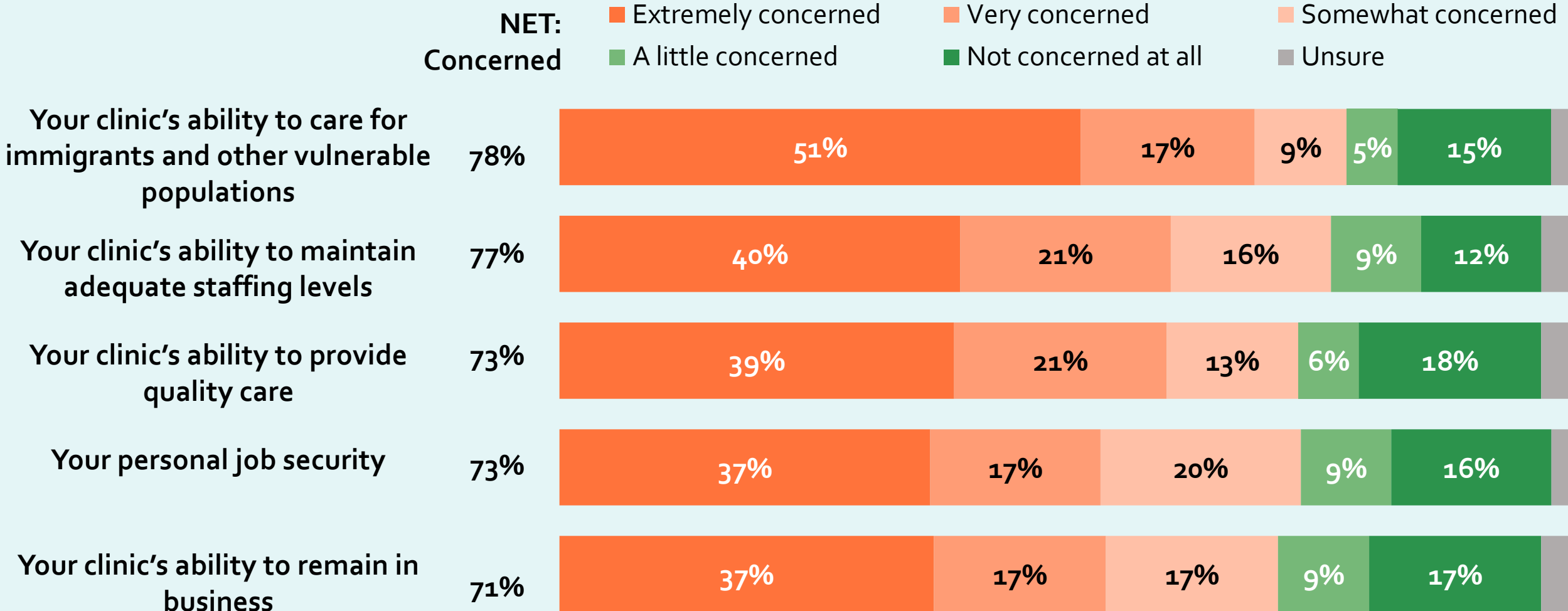
Asked of respondents who feel their clinic has not enough resources to provide quality care to patients (n=126); Ranked by Total



- A large majority of workers express concerns about funding to and eligibility cuts under Medi-Cal, with more than three-fourths especially concerned for the impact on their clinic's ability to care for immigrants and other vulnerable populations (78%), and to maintain adequate staffing levels (77%).
- Concerns about the impact of Medi-Cal cuts on their clinic's ability to care for immigrants and other vulnerable populations are particularly prevalent among workers in the Central Valley (56%), who are Hispanic (57%), or who were born outside the U.S. (59%).
- A large majority - more than 7 in 10 workers – also expressed concerns about the impact of funding cuts to their clinic's ability to provide quality care (73%), to their job security (73%) and to their clinic's ability to remain in business (71%).

Most Workers Extremely Concerned Medi-Cal Cuts Will Negatively Impact Immigrants and Other Vulnerable Populations

As you may know, politicians in Washington, D.C. and Sacramento recently passed funding and eligibility cuts to Medicaid—known in California as Medi-Cal. How concerned are you personally about those cuts negatively impacting each of the following?



Ranked by Overall: "Extremely concerned"

Extremely Concerned Medi-Cal Cuts Will Negatively Impact Immigrants and Other Vulnerable Populations

Washington, D.C. and Sacramento recently passed funding and eligibility cuts to Medicaid—how concerned are you personally about those cuts negatively impacting each of the following?

REGION

Central Valley 56%

ETHNICITY

Hispanic 57%

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Born Outside U.S. 59%

NET:

Extremely concerned

Very concerned

Somewhat concerned

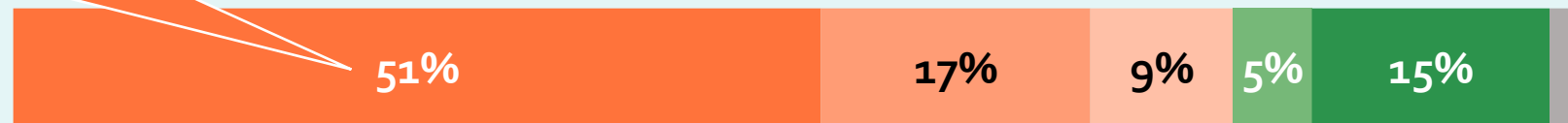
A little concerned

Not concerned at all

Unsure

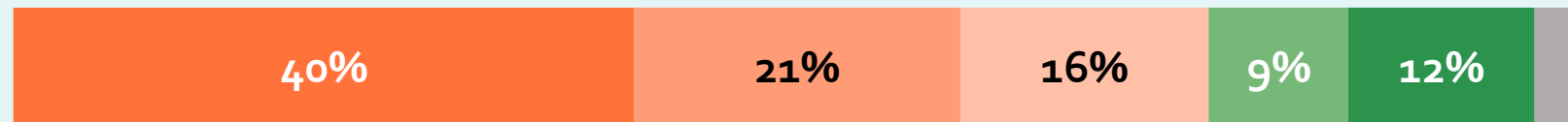
Your clinic's ability to care for immigrants and other vulnerable populations

78%



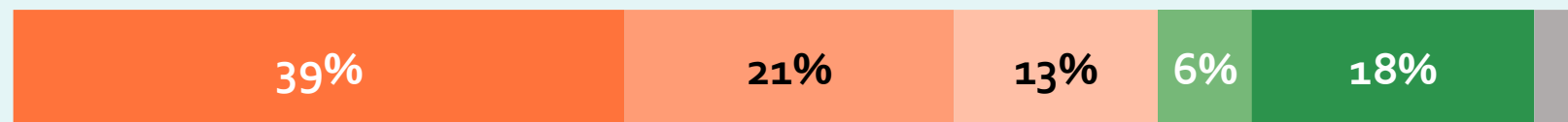
Your clinic's ability to maintain adequate staffing levels

77%



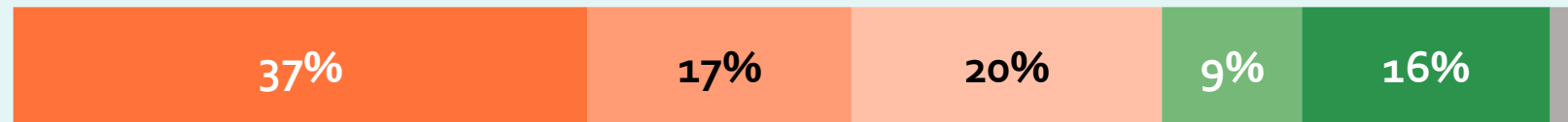
Your clinic's ability to provide quality care

73%



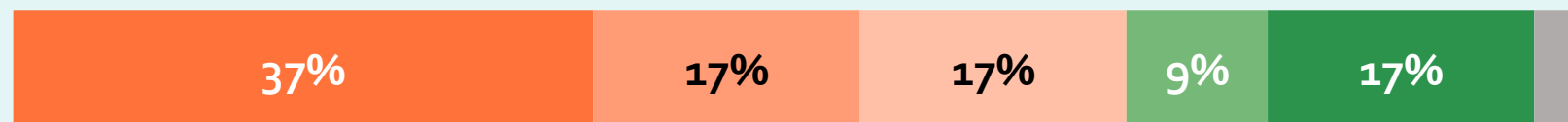
Your personal job security

73%

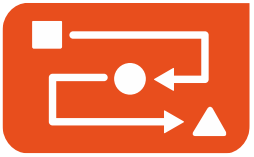


Your clinic's ability to remain in business

71%



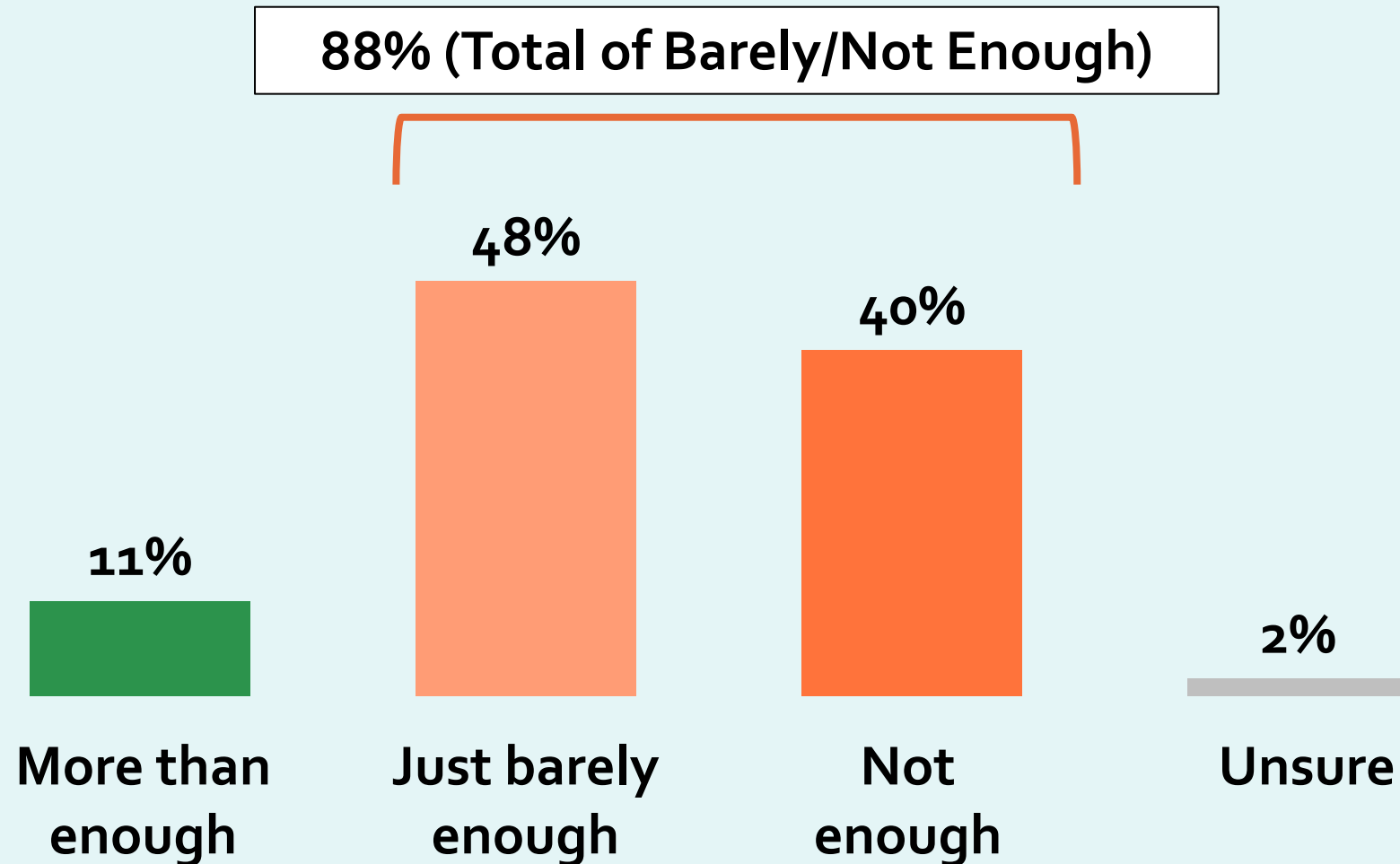
Ranked by Overall: "Extremely concerned"



- The vast majority of clinic workers – 88% in total - say they earn just barely enough or not enough to cover their basic living expenses. This response was consistent across the Central Valley, Bay Area and LA region. Medical Assistants reported this at the highest rate (96% in total), followed by Administrative staff (88% in total), while two-thirds of Nursing occupations (67% in total) felt they earned not enough or just barely to cover basic living expenses.
- Only a small minority (15%) of clinic workers say their wages increase regularly to keep up with the cost of living, with the vast majority feeling their wages do not. This was particularly true for those with longer tenure; more than 7 in 10 workers with more than 10 years at their clinic (73%) feel their wages do not keep up with cost of living.
- Nearly four in ten say they rely upon government assistance, like Medi-Cal to cover their family members healthcare, CalFresh, local food banks and other safety-net programs. This is particularly true of Black (50%) and Hispanic (41%) clinic workers, and those in Administrative (54%) and Medical Assistant (42%) occupations.

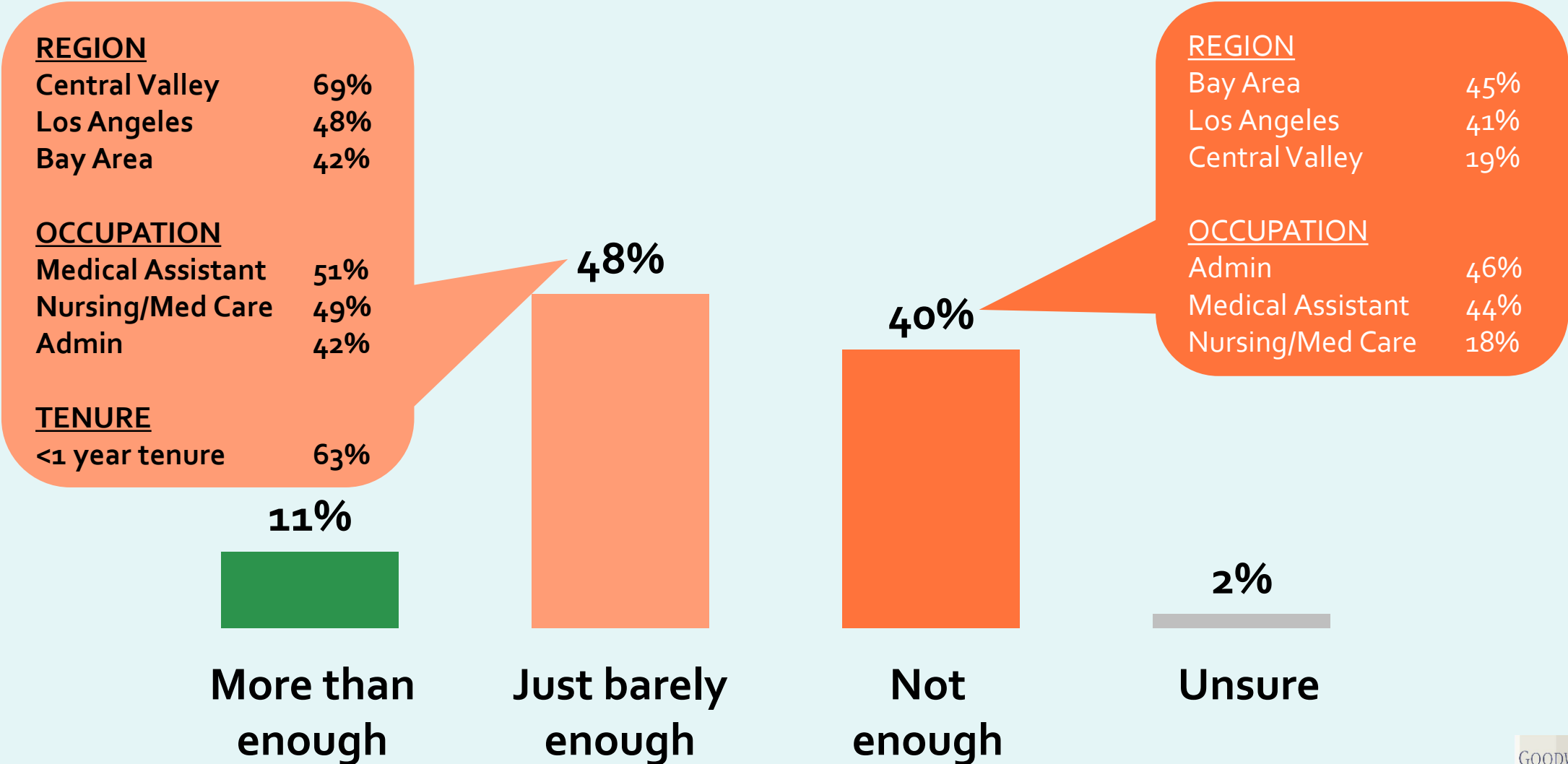
Four in Ten Workers Say They Do Not Earn Enough To Cover Basics

Do you feel you currently earn MORE than enough to cover your basic living expenses, just BARELY ENOUGH to cover your basic living expenses, or NOT enough to cover your basic living expenses?



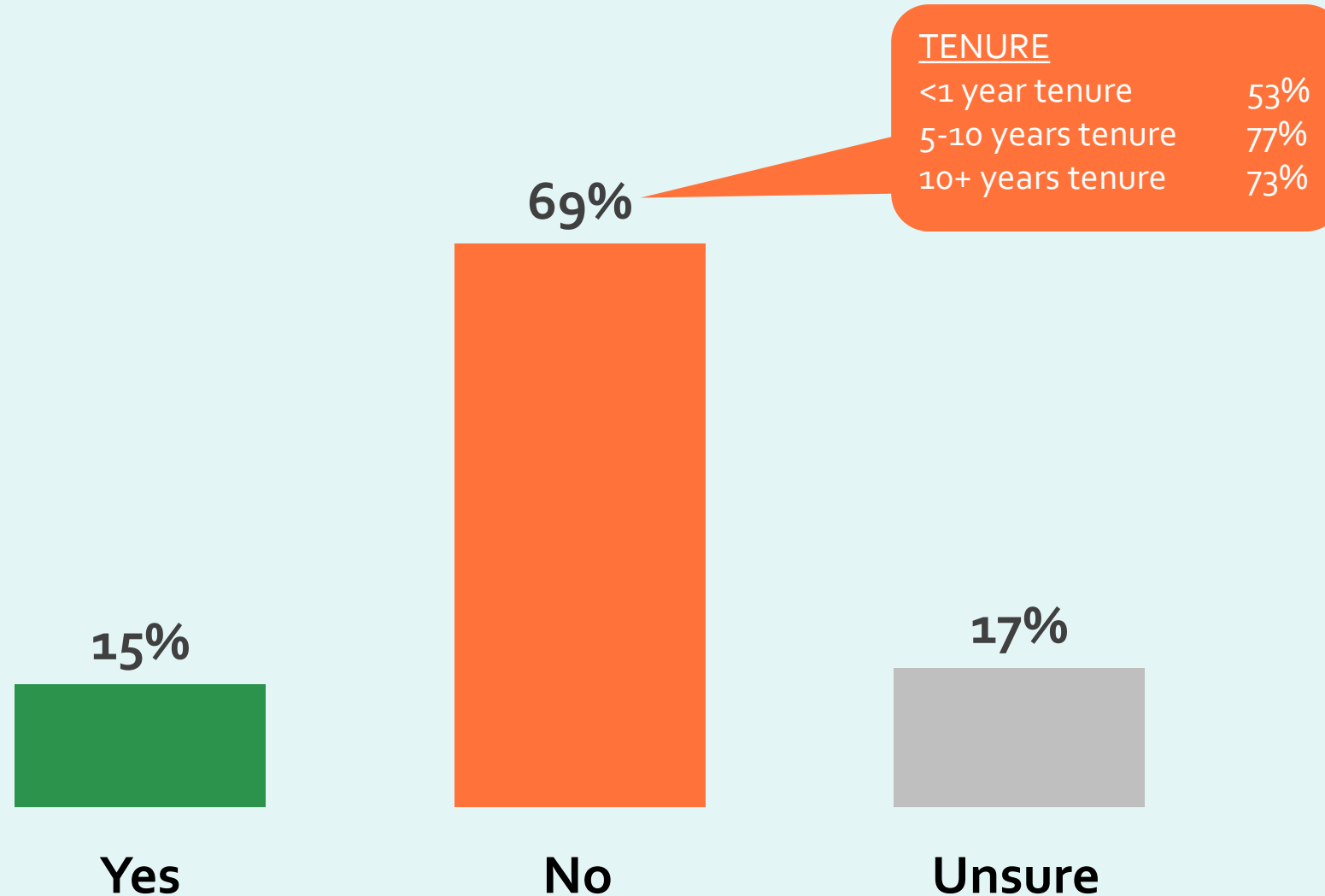
Four in Ten Workers Say They Do Not Earn Enough To Cover Basics

Do you feel you currently earn MORE than enough to cover your basic living expenses, just BARELY ENOUGH to cover your basic living expenses, or NOT enough to cover your basic living expenses?



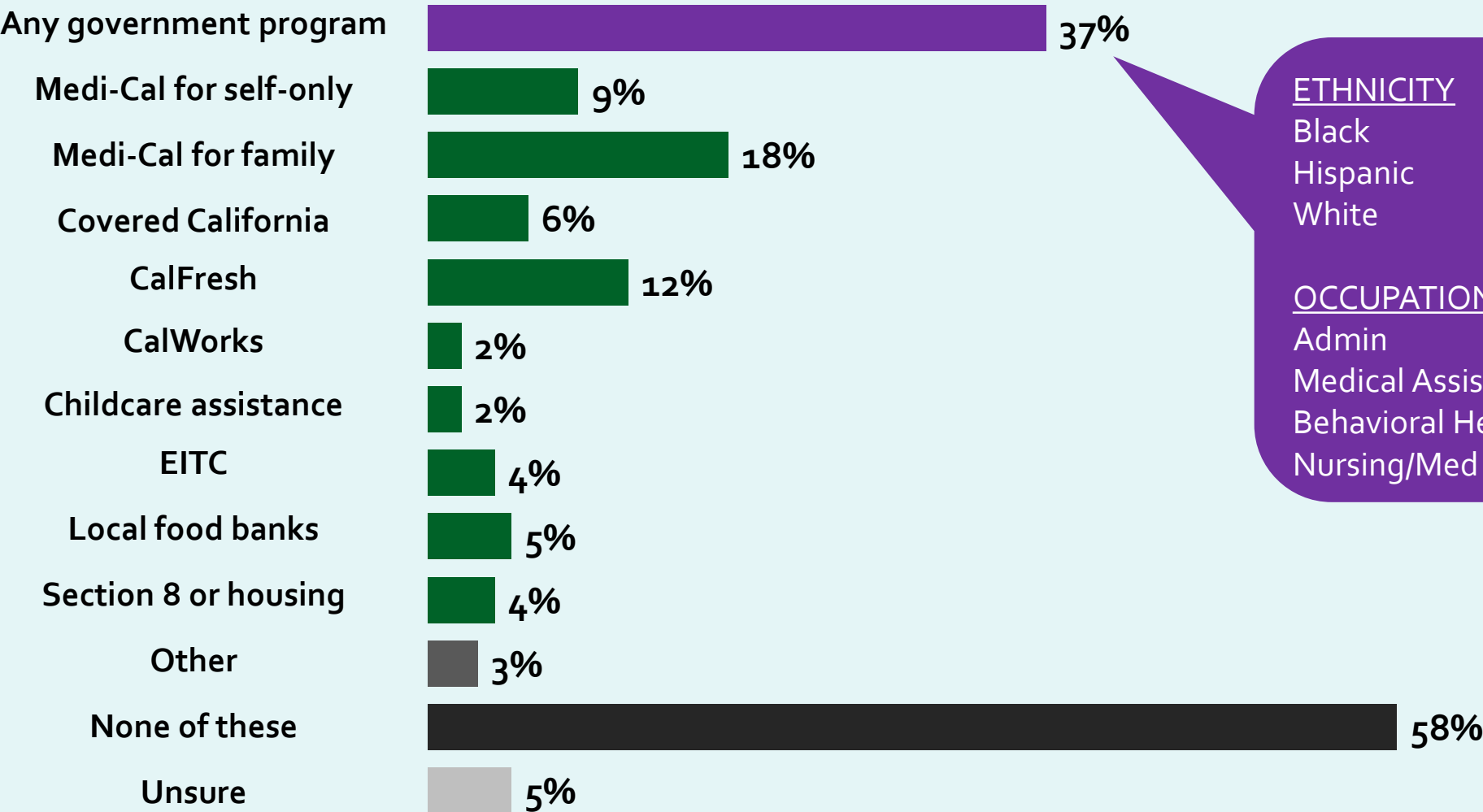
Nearly Seven in Ten Workers Do Not Believe Wage Increases Keep Up With Cost of Living

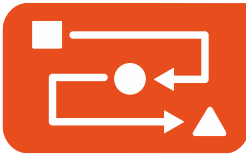
Do your wages increase regularly to keep up with the cost of living?



Nearly Four in Ten Workers Rely on Government Assistance

*Which of the following government or community programs do you or your family use—if any?
You may select all that apply.*

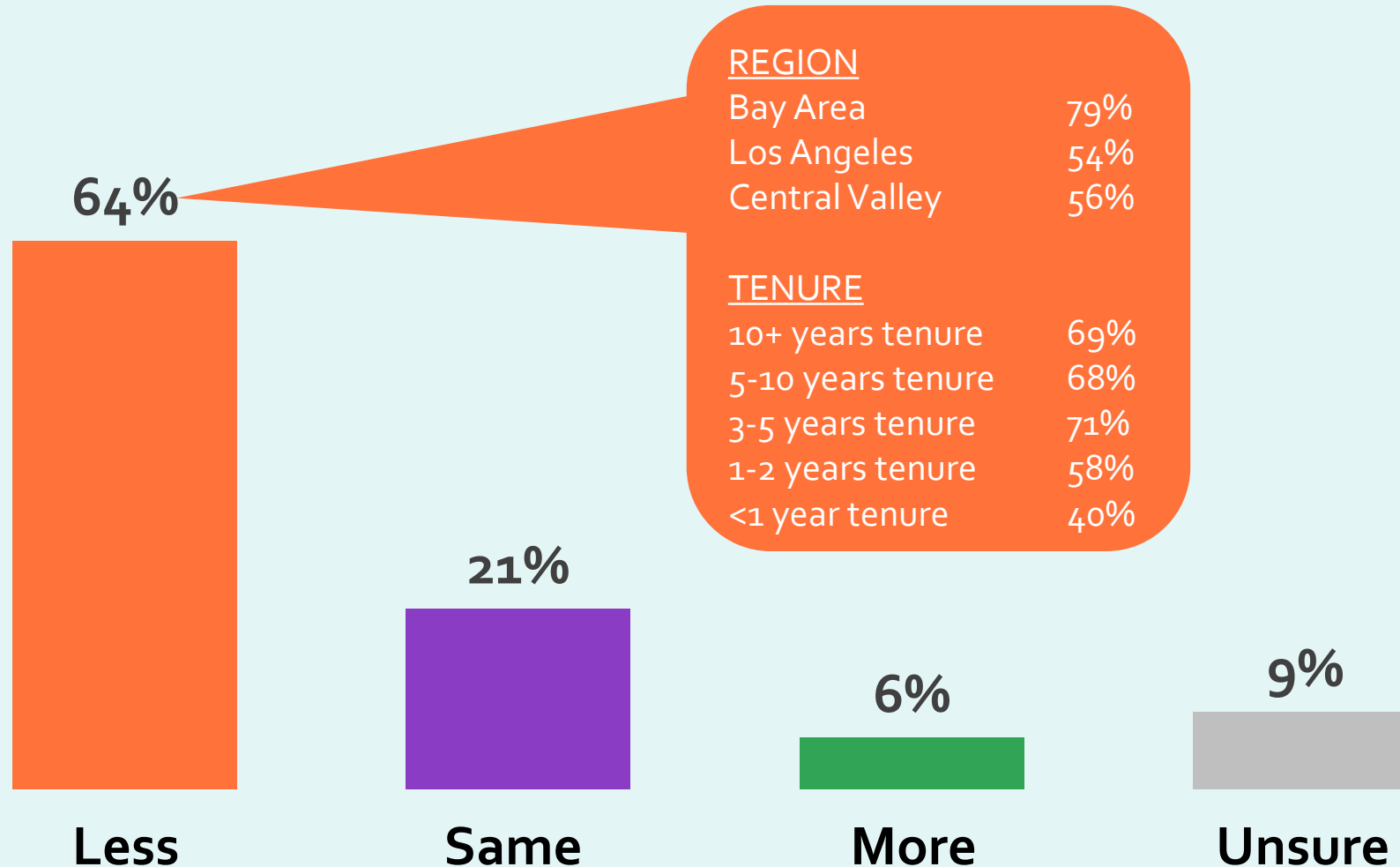


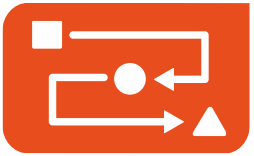


-  The vast majority (64%) of community clinic workers feel they make less than health care workers at hospitals or private practices with their same job and skillset.
-  This was particularly felt by those working in the Bay Area, where nearly 8 in 10 workers (79%) felt they make less than health care workers in other settings, and less so in the Los Angeles region, where the majority (54%) of community clinic workers still felt they earned less than similar counterparts working in hospitals or private practices.
-  The sense that their counterparts at other healthcare settings earned more than they did was greatest for those with longer tenure (3 – 10+years) working in community clinics.

Nearly Two-Thirds Believe They Earn Less Than Similarly Skilled Workers in Hospitals and Private Practices

When you think about healthcare workers at hospitals or private practices with your same job and skillset, do you feel like you probably make more than them, less than them, or about the same as them? I probably make...

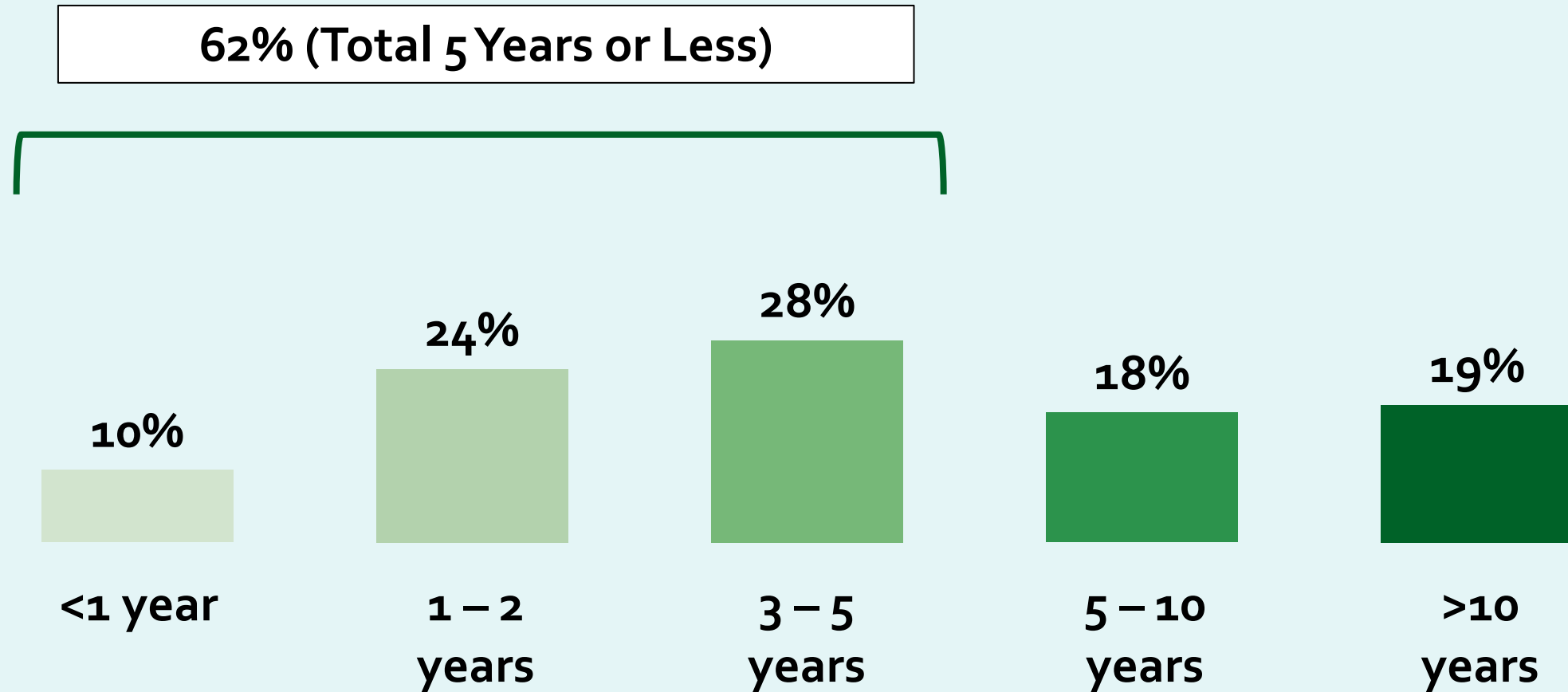




- The majority have worked at their current clinic employer for less than five years, with more than a third saying they see themselves staying at their current employer for less than three more years.
- Over half say they've considered leaving their health center or clinic in the last year, while 40% say they've considering leaving health care altogether, with low pay and burnout/not having enough help as the leading drivers.
- Community clinic workers who have considered leaving their current workplace the most in the past year are those who speak Spanish (73%) at work, work in Behavioral Health (62%), and those who work in the Bay Area (59%) and the Central Valley (50%).
- The majority of those who speak Spanish at work (56%), and those who work in the Bay Area (50%) have considered leaving health care altogether, with low pay the top reason.

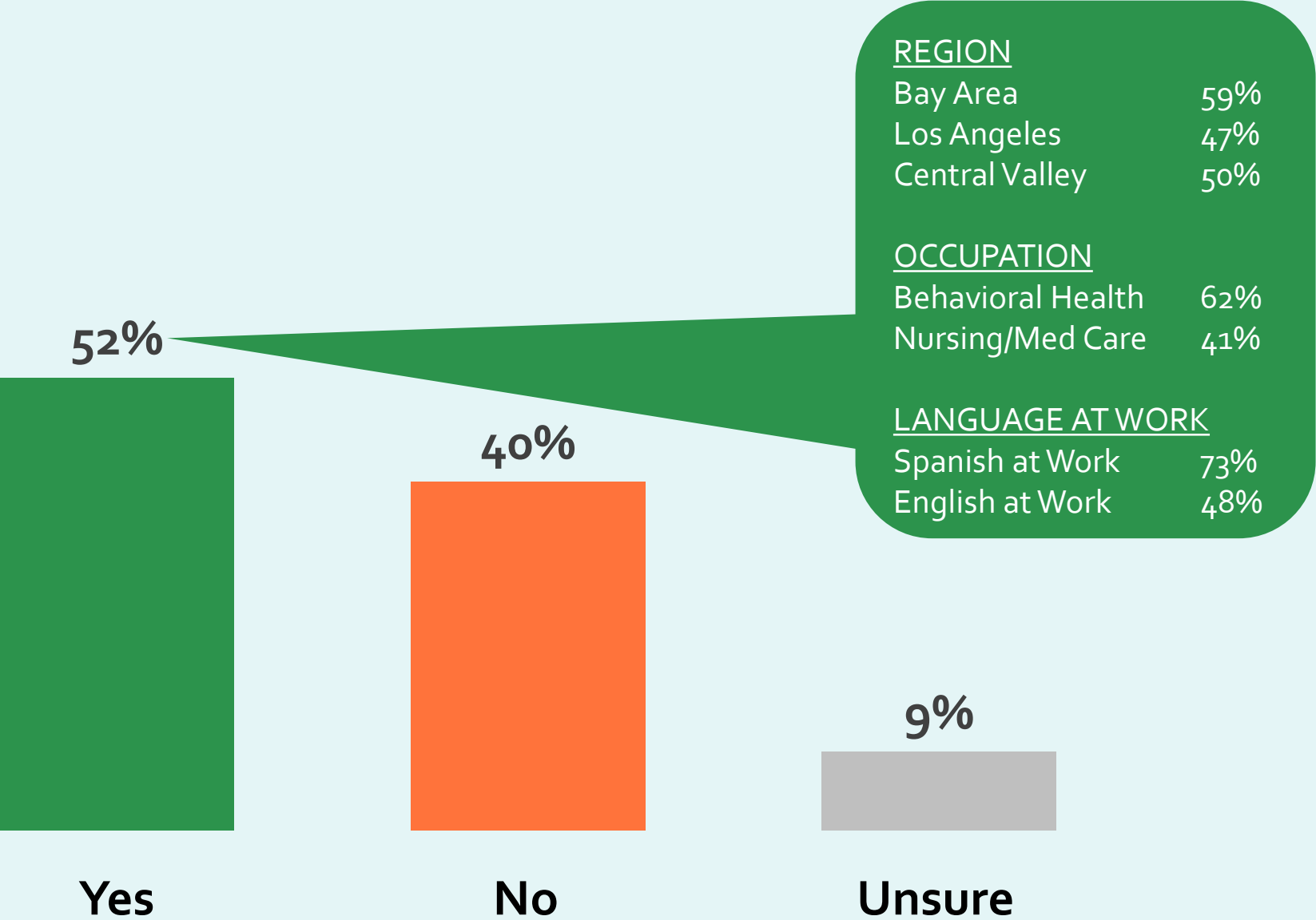
Length of Time Worked at Current Workplace

How long have you worked... at your current workplace?



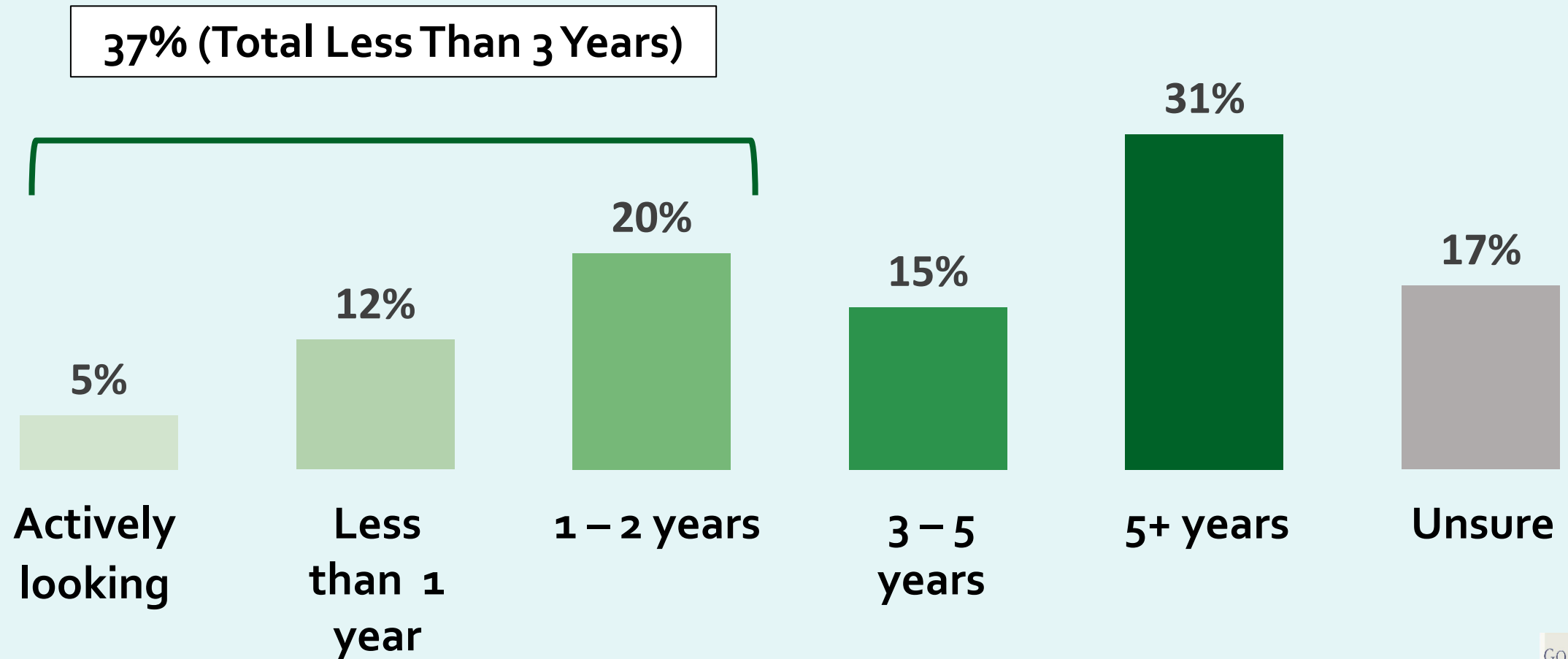
More Than Half of Workers Have Considered Leaving Their Clinic

In the past year, have you considered leaving your clinic, but staying in health care



More Than a Third Are Considering Leaving Their Current Employer in Less than 3 Years

How long do you see yourself staying at your current employer?



Four in Ten Workers Have Considered Leaving Healthcare Altogether

In the past year, have you considered leaving healthcare altogether

REGION

Bay Area 50%

Central Valley 41%

Los Angeles 32%

OCCUPATION

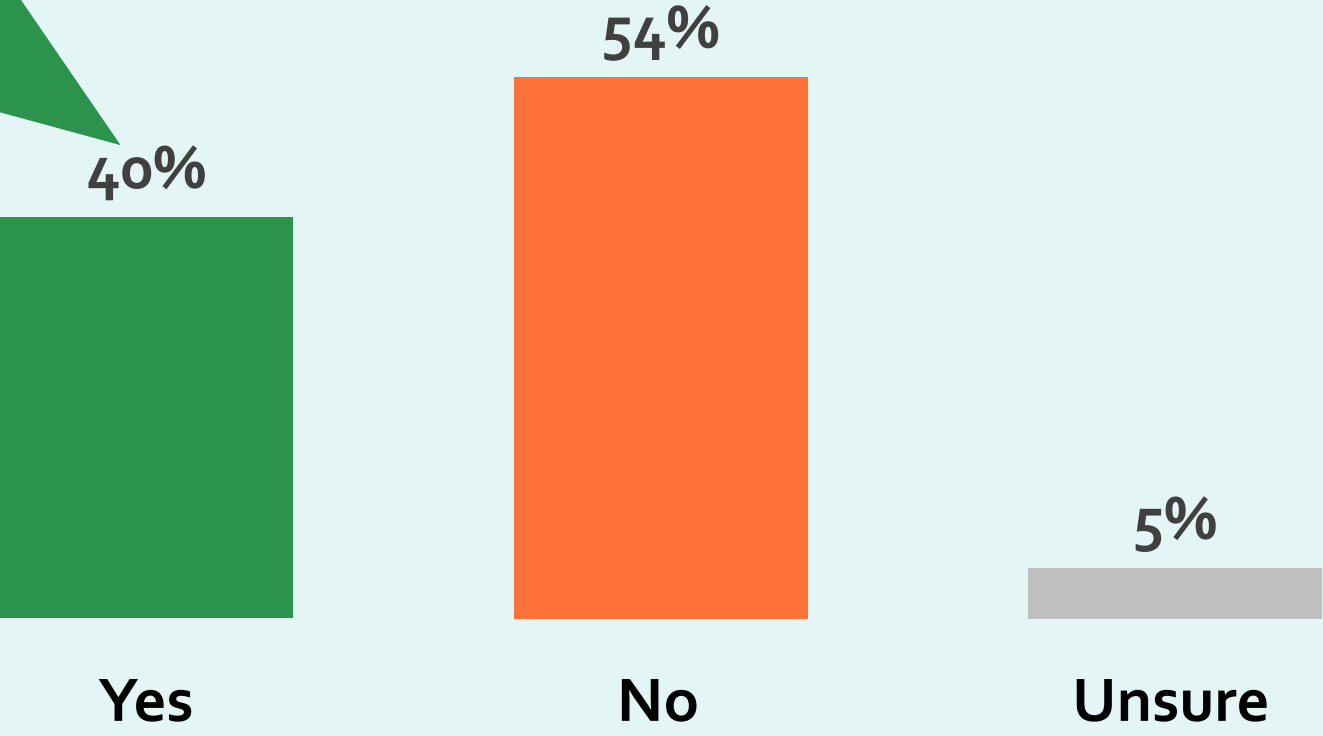
Admin 48%

Nursing/Med Care 23%

LANGUAGE AT WORK

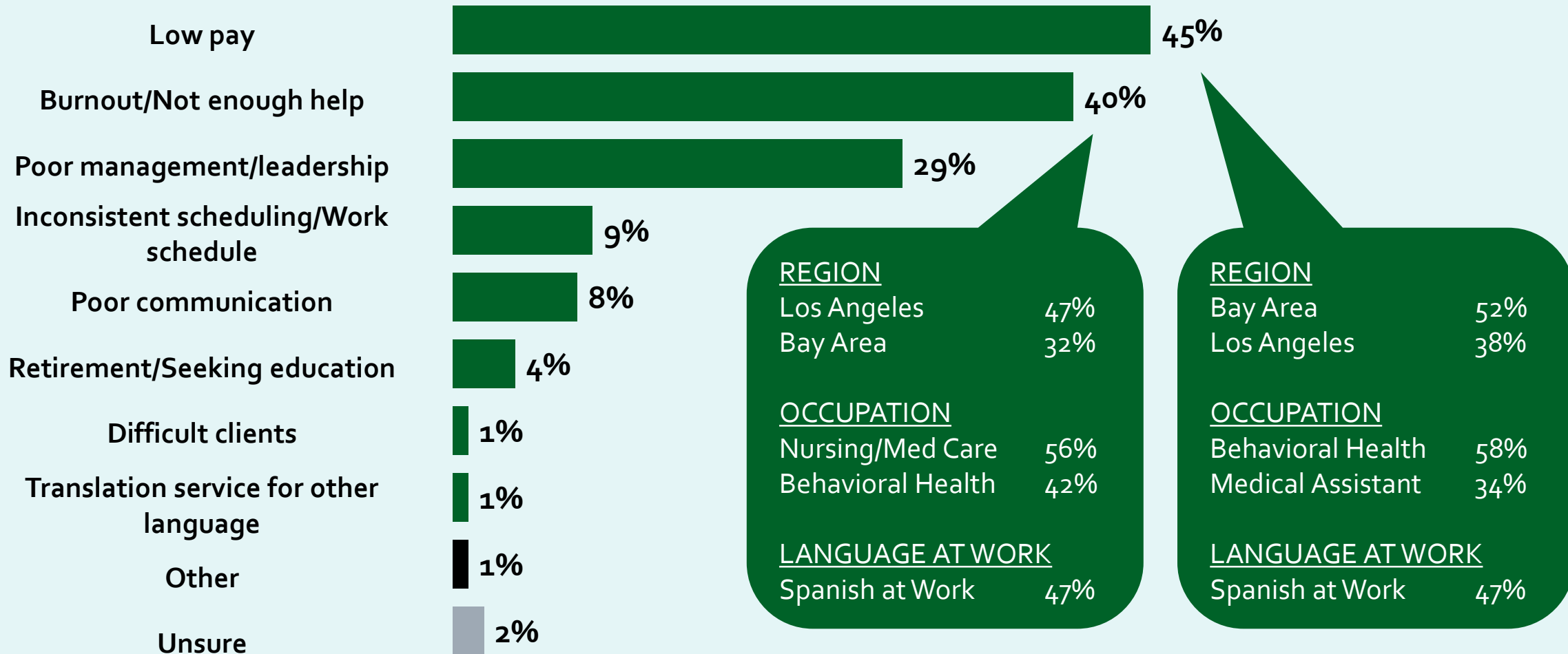
Spanish at Work 56%

English at Work 38%



Low Pay and Burnout Main Reason for Leaving Their Clinic...

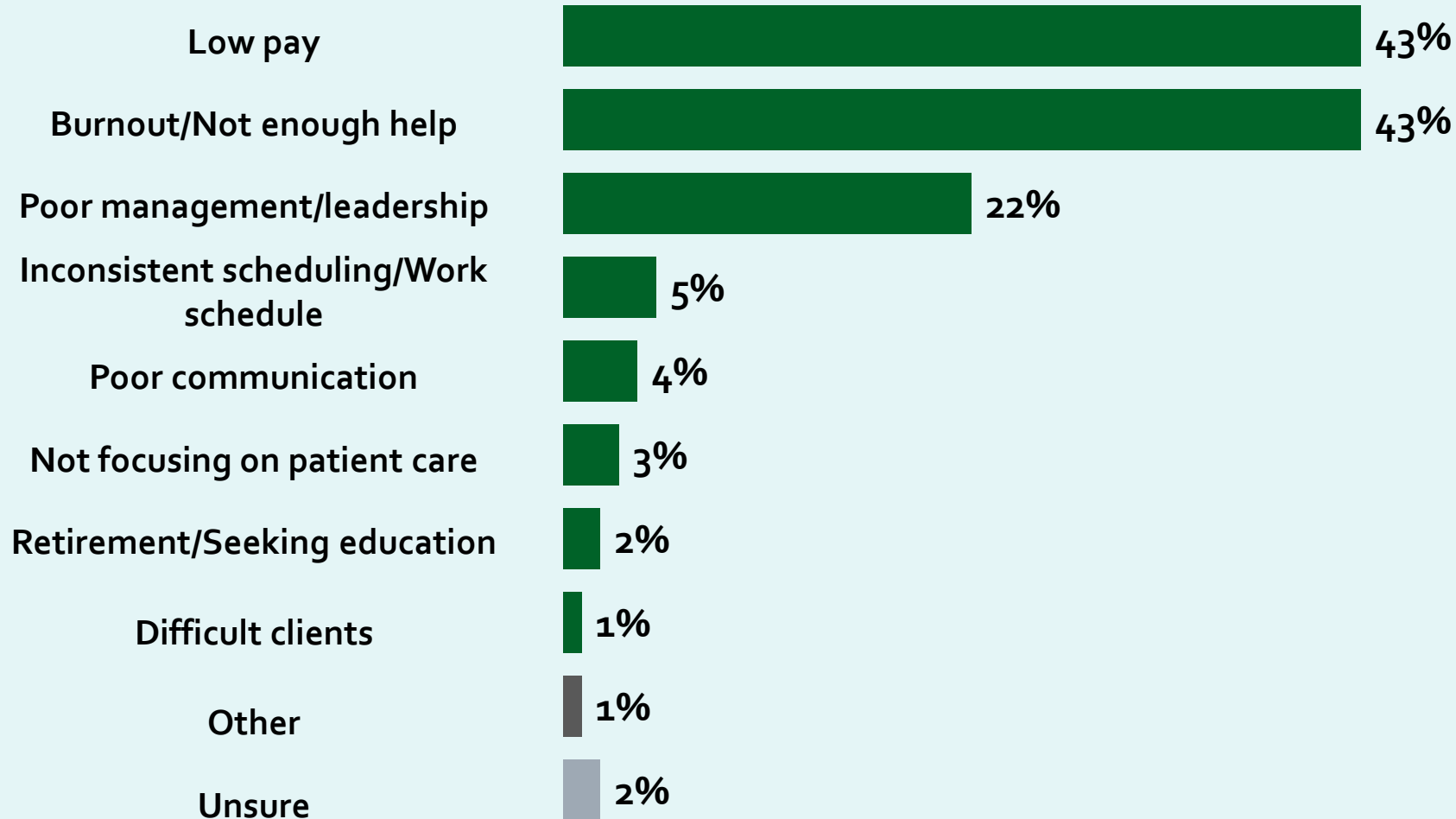
What are the main reasons you've considered leaving your health center or clinic?



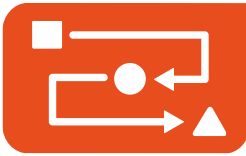
Asked of respondents who consider leaving their health center or clinic (n=173)

...and for Leaving Healthcare Altogether

What are the main reasons you've considered leaving healthcare altogether?



Asked of respondents who consider leaving healthcare altogether (n=122)



- A majority of workers surveyed (54%) say they are very or somewhat satisfied with career training opportunities at work, with satisfaction decreasing based on tenure. The vast majority (73%) with less than one year and those with 1 – 2 years (62%) on the job are satisfied, with lowest satisfaction among those working longer than 10 years (44%).
- Citing career growth opportunities as a main reason to stay with an employer also decreases as a worker's tenure increases. Those with less than a year (36%) of tenure are the most likely to rate career growth opportunities as a main reason to stay with their current employer, while only 5% of those with 10+ years say it is a main reason to stay.
- Satisfaction with career opportunities is higher among medical assistants (68%) and nursing staff (59%), but lower among behavioral health (49%) and administrative (42%) staff. Medical assistants (25%) are most likely to name career growth opportunities as a main reason to stay with their employer, while nursing staff (10%) are least likely to.
- Satisfaction with career training opportunities is highest among workers in Los Angeles (60%), but lower in the Bay Area (50%) and the Central Valley (38%).

A Slim Majority of Workers Satisfied With Career Training Opportunities

How satisfied are you with career training opportunities at your health center?

■ Very satisfied ■ Somewhat satisfied ■ Not at all satisfied ■ A little satisfied ■ Unsure

REGION

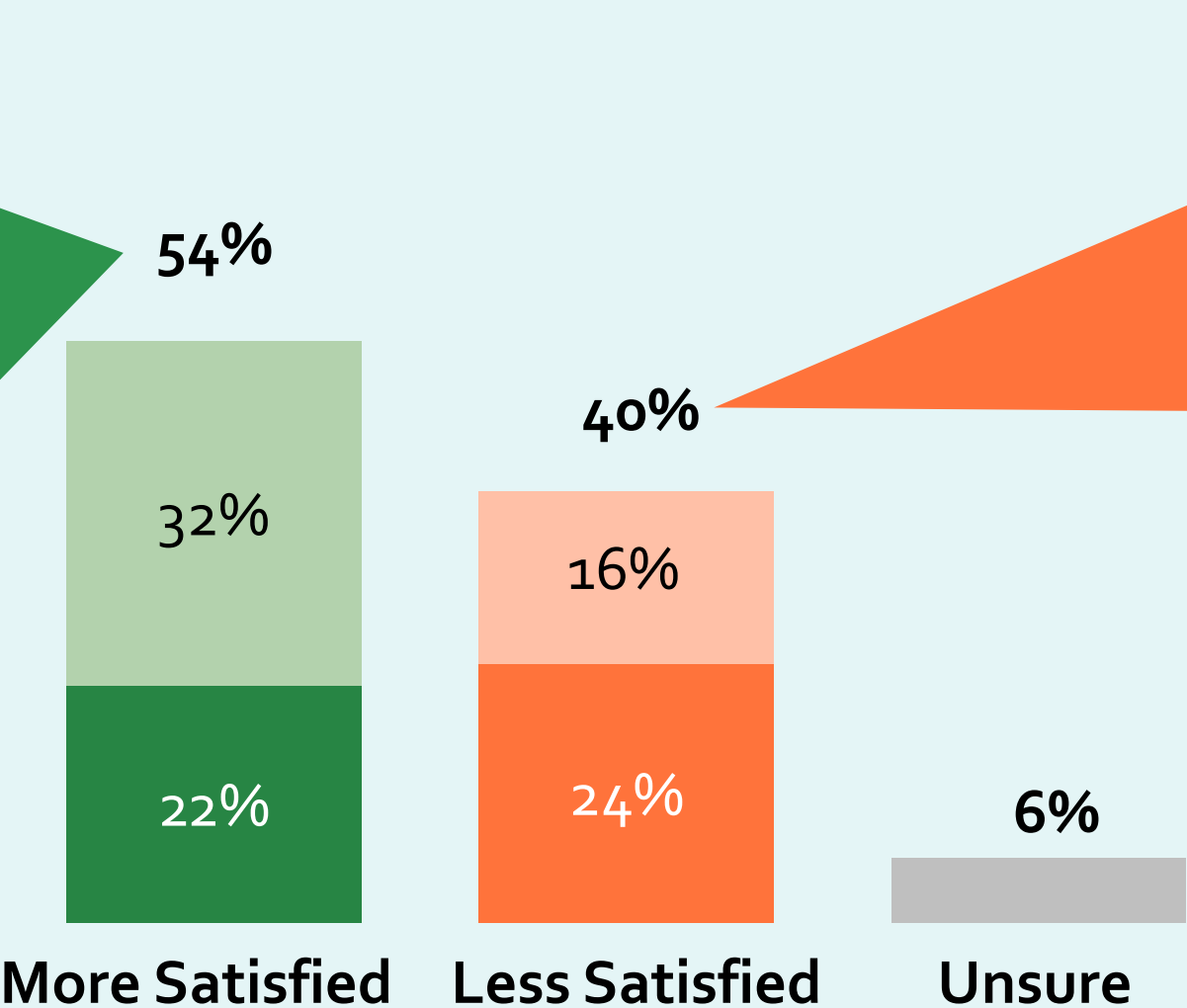
Los Angeles	60%
Bay Area	50%
Central Valley	38%

TENURE

<1 year tenure	73%
1-2 years tenure	62%
3-5 years tenure	52%
5-10 years tenure	48%
10+ years tenure	44%

OCCUPATION

Medical Assistant	68%
Nursing/Med Care	59%
Behavioral Health	49%
Admin	42%



REGION

Central Valley	47%
Bay Area	45%
Los Angeles	35%

TENURE

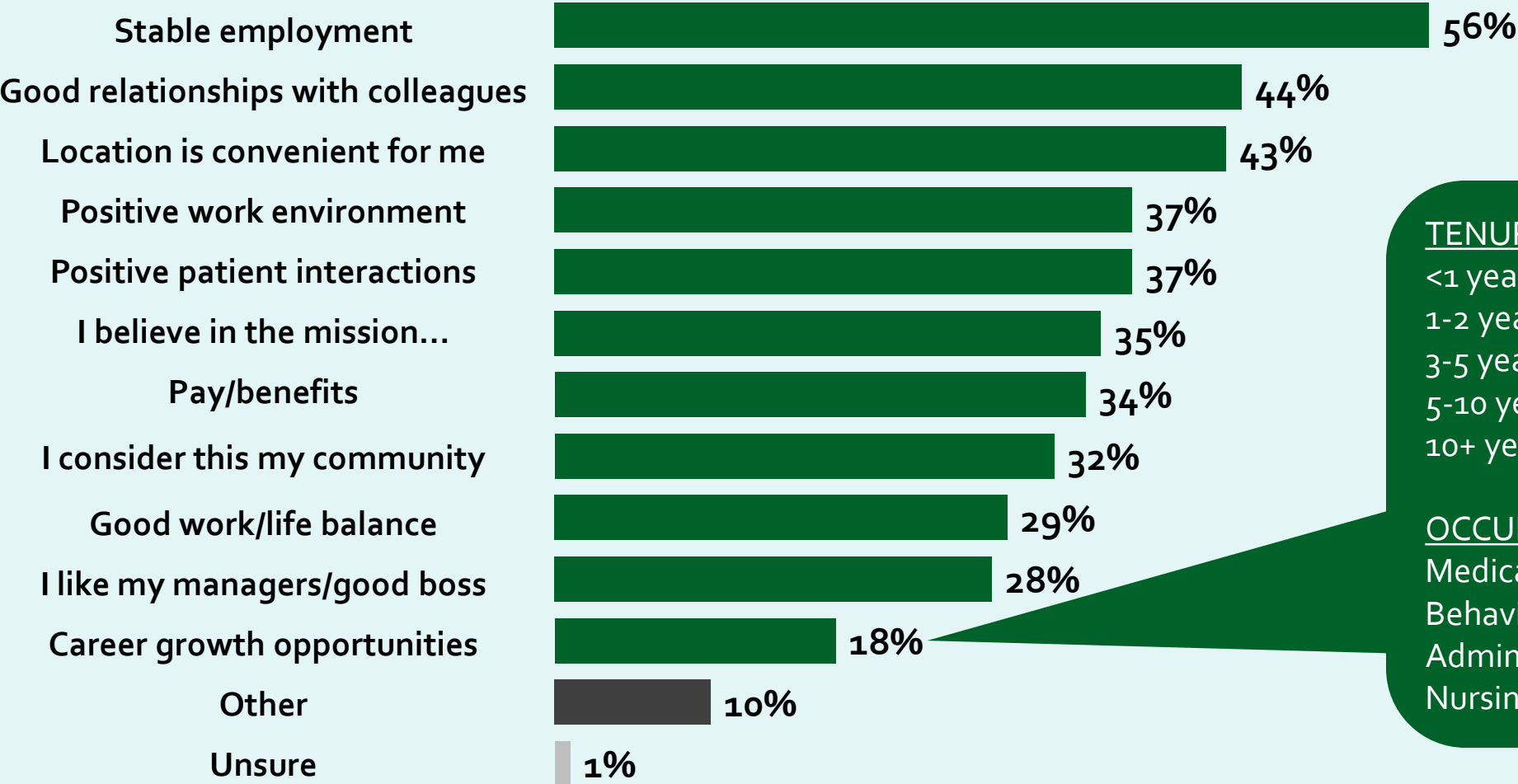
10+ years tenure	47%
5-10 years tenure	50%
3-5 years tenure	43%
1-2 years tenure	31%
<1 year tenure	20%

OCCUPATION

Admin	52%
Behavioral Health	46%
Nursing/Med Care	38%
Medical Assistant	27%

Workers Cite Stable Employment as Primary Reason for Staying

What are the main reasons you are staying at your current clinic?



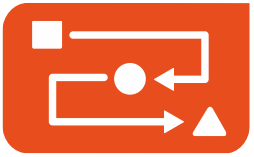
TENURE

<1 year tenure	36%
1-2 years tenure	24%
3-5 years tenure	20%
5-10 years tenure	8%
10+ years tenure	5%

OCCUPATION

Medical Assistant	25%
Behavioral Health	19%
Admin	18%
Nursing/Med Care	10%

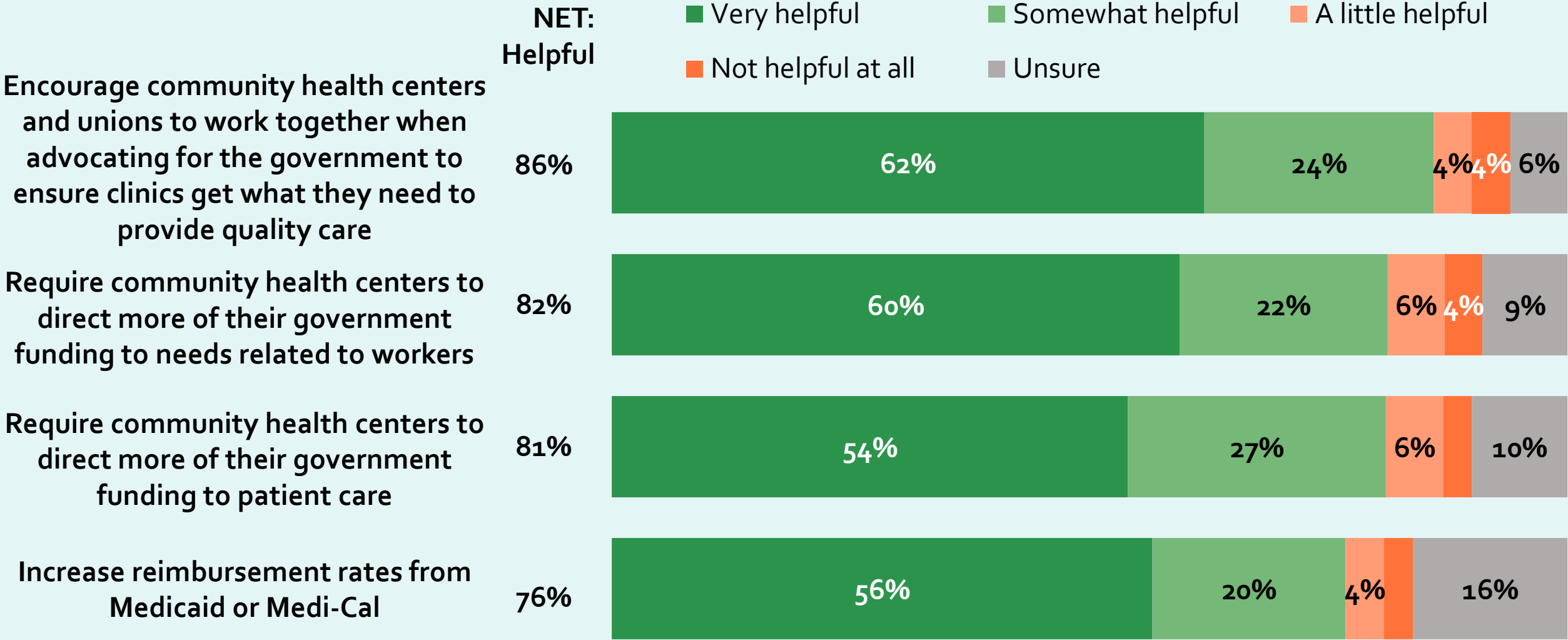
Asked of respondents who see themselves staying at current employer for 1+ more years (n=199)



- When provided a list of possible solutions that might be helpful to address the challenges their clinics face, the overwhelming majority (86%) of clinic workers ranked encouraging community health centers and unions to work together when advocating for the government to ensure clinics get what they need to provide quality care as the highest solution of those offered.
- This strong support for health center and union collaboration exists across the board, among white and Hispanic workers, those who earned less than \$50,000 per year as well as those who earned more than \$150,000 per year, among those who are represented by a union and those who are not and is especially high among women.
- Also supported by the vast majority of workers as helpful solutions were:
 - Directing more of government funding to workers' needs (82%)
 - Requiring community health centers to direct more of their government funding to patient care (81%)
 - Increasing reimbursement rates from Medicaid (76%).

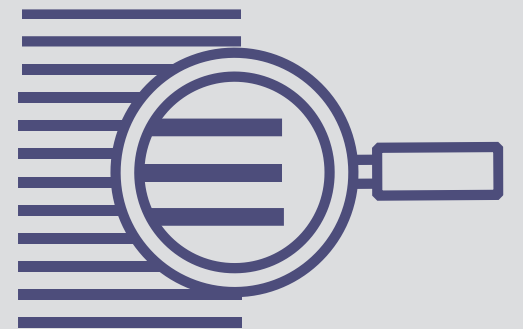
A Majority Finds All Solutions Very Helpful, Though Encouraging Unions and Clinics to Work Together Is Most Cited As Helpful

How helpful do you think each of the following would be to address challenges facing your clinic? ...



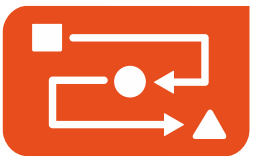
Ranked by Overall: "NET: helpful"

Methodology



Research Methodology

Methodology



- Goodwin Simon Strategic Research conducted this hybrid online/phone survey among 303 healthcare workers at 45 Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) employers from September 15th to October 6th, 2025. Most respondents took the survey online (213) with the remaining 90 respondents taking the survey over the telephone. Respondents took the survey in English.
- Community clinic employee contact data was obtained from a proprietary database of over 15,000 self-reported community clinic workers employed by over 135 nonprofit FQHC employers located across the state of California. No public clinics were included. These included employees who worked in union and non-unionized settings. Survey participants were verified as community clinic workers through a series of screening questions.
- *For more information about the California Workforce Development Board's High Road Initiative, its definition of what constitutes "High Road" employment and essential elements of working in partnership to advance High Road practices, see: <https://cwdb.ca.gov/initiatives/high-road-training-partnerships/>*



thank you!

For more information,
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