



The Struggles of Maui County

Findings from a survey of
2,097 residents of Maui County and
1,105 fire-impacted individuals

JUNE 2024

Mahalo to those who made this research possible

Research Lead



Funders



Sponsors



Maui United Way



Online focus groups among health care professionals on Maui, Molokai, and Lānaʻi.

- ✓ Grove Insight conducted four online focus groups among the following medical professionals: Lānaʻi primary and behavioral health providers (2/15/2024); Molokai primary and behavioral health providers (2/22); behavioral health providers on Maui (2/20); and primary health providers (2/21). The evening groups were 75-90 minutes in length.
- ✓ Participants were recruited using established networks and provider lists the Hawaii State Rural Health Association (HSRHA) has cultivated on these islands.

In-person focus groups with fire survivors and lead volunteers.

- ✓ Grove Insight conducted four in-person groups among the fire-impacted community. This included three groups among the directly impacted and one with on-site leads working in disaster relief as well as private hub leaders.
- ✓ The lead volunteers' group was held on the morning of 3/12/2024 in Kahului; and the groups among fire survivors were held at the Lahaina Comprehensive Health Center on the evenings of 3/12, 3/13, and 3/14.
- ✓ Participants were recruited via the coconut wireless and select to postings including from a number of organizations in West Maui. Chain, or network sampling methods were also used to recruit acquaintances of qualified participants. We thank Fran Lucky Odoshi Waite for all did to make the focus groups run smoothly.

Methodology – quantitative research

Community Survey

- ✓ Grove Insight conducted a survey of 2,097 residents of Maui County and 1,105 fire-impacted individuals in the County from May 20 to June 6, 2024. The survey was translated into Spanish, Tagalog and Ilocano.
- ✓ Interviews were conducted online. Respondents were recruited for the survey via SMS-to-web, online panels and email addresses. Postcards were sent to random households countywide, with a heavy concentration on Lānaʻi and Molokai. The postcards contained a QR code and an ask to participate in English, Tagalog, and Ilocano. The sample was weighted to ensure it was proportionately representative of the true demographics of Maui County.
- ✓ The bulk of the fire-impacted respondents came from a list provided by Maui United Way of qualified applicants for their Emergency Financial Assistance program. The remainder were the result of direct questioning in the survey.
- ✓ The margin of error for is $\pm 2.1\%$ for the countywide sample and is $\pm 2.9\%$ for the fire-impacted sample. It is higher among subgroups and questions that were split or not asked of all respondents.

Note: “Fire survivors” and “Fire-impacted” refers to those who were directly affected by the August fires.

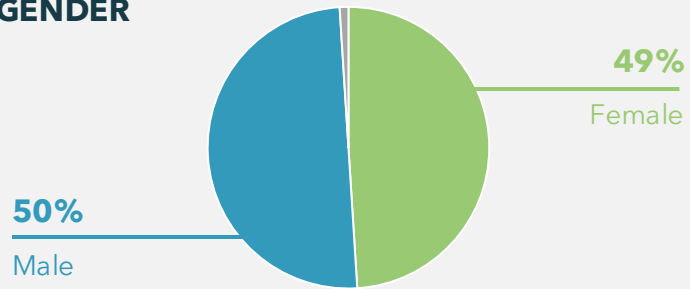
Health Professionals’ Survey

- ✓ Grove Insight designed the survey instrument, programmed, and analyzed an online survey of 57 health care professionals in Maui County. The Hawaii State Rural Health Association was responsible for outreach to would-be respondents, relying heavily on their Project ECHO list of providers. Physicians and registered nurses represent the bulk of the sample.
- ✓ The survey was conducted June 12-19, 2024. There is no margin of error for this survey because not every health care professional had an equal chance of participating in the survey based on its distribution.

Note: Verbatim responses from the focus groups and responses to the open-ended questions are used throughout. They have been lightly edited for readability. The vast majority of comments are from the June survey.

Demographics of the Countywide sample

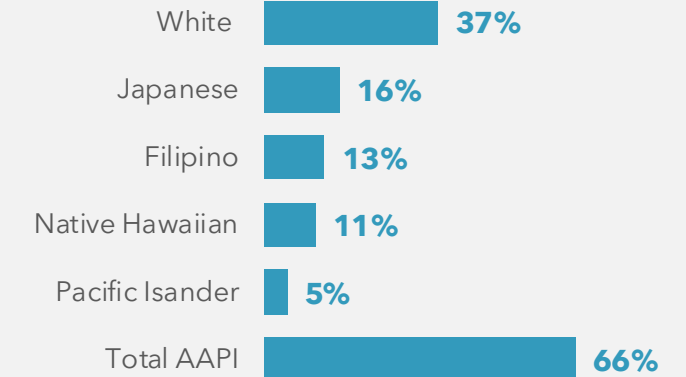
GENDER



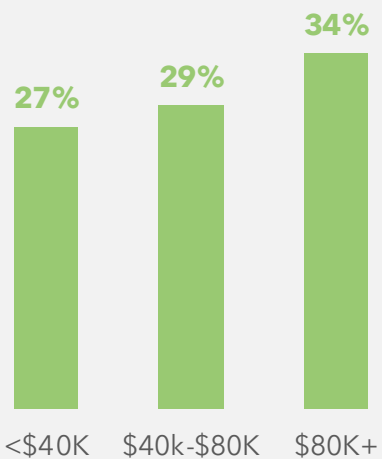
AGE



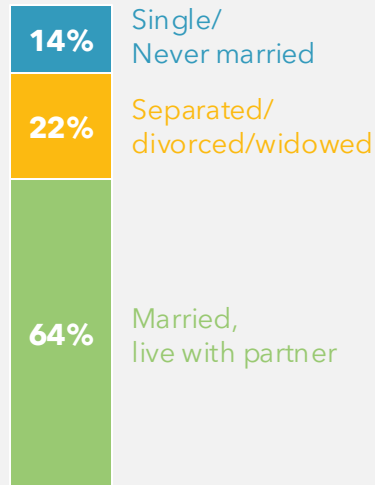
RACE



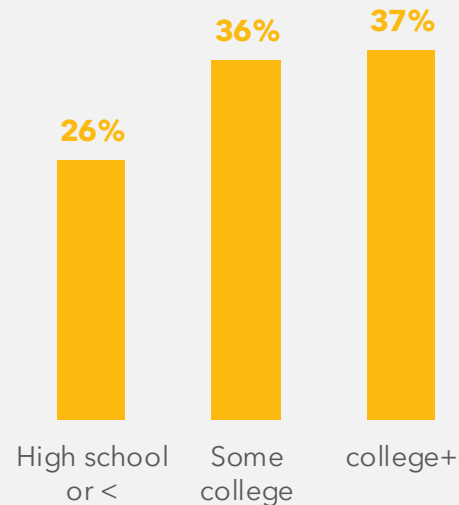
INCOME



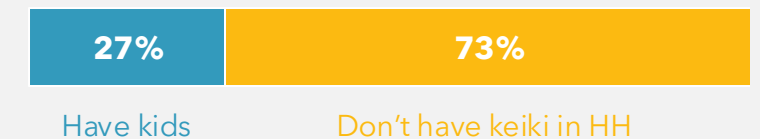
MARITAL STATUS



EDUCATION



KEIKI IN THE HOUSEHOLD



Key differences between fire survivors and the countywide sample

They are younger, lower-income, and more diverse. Importantly, slightly more than half are currently living on the West Side.

Younger (53% under 50) and **more likely to have keiki** in the household (36%)

Less Caucasian, more Hispanic, and much more likely to speak a language other than English at home (43%), especially Spanish

More likely to be **under- or unemployed** (35%) – and **more interested in health care career training** (17%)

Much more likely to have a high school diploma or less (39%); **less likely to have college degrees** (25%)

Much **more likely to earn less than \$40,000 a year** (39%); much fewer high-end individuals

Roughly half (53%) currently live in West Maui, the rest are spread across the island (20% in Central, 14% in south, and 15% in Upcountry).



We offer a huge mahalo to the focus group participants. You shared your mana'o, lived experiences, and expertise. Without you, we would have missed something important.

On behalf of all respondents, we hope we have faithfully reported your views, concerns, and priorities. We hope your opinions will be heard and acted upon.

Lisa Grove & Max Becker



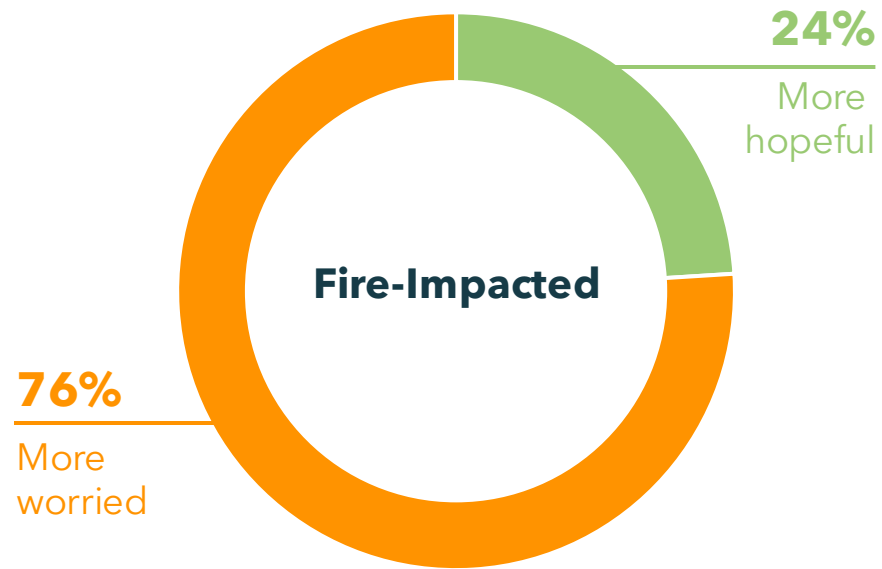
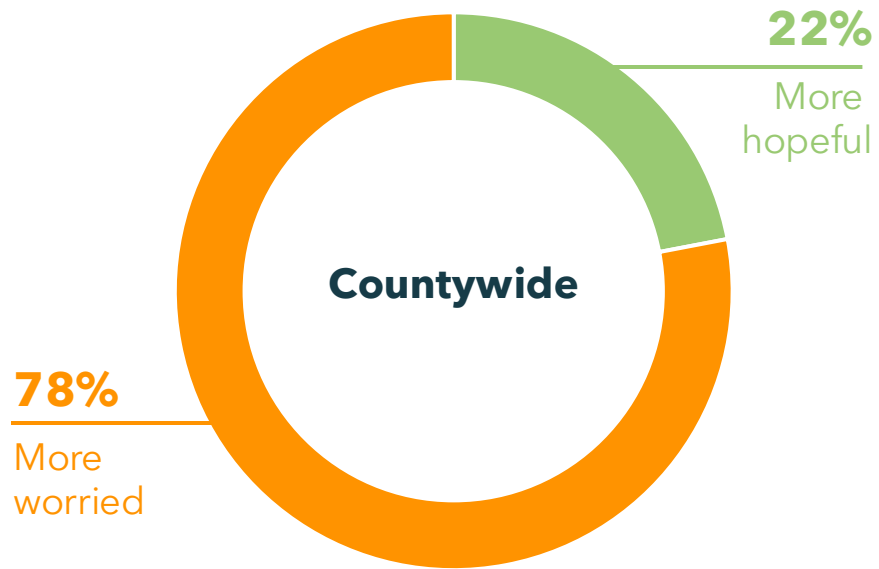
General Mood: ECONOMIC WOES DOMINATE



There is more worry than hope across Maui County as residents ponder their future

Health care professionals are more worried than the community.

Generally speaking, do you feel more hopeful or more worried about your future here in Hawaii?



Health care pros: 21% hopeful, 79% worried

Most likely to be worried:

- Under 55, especially women, and younger AJA (Americans of Japanese Ancestry)
- Women who are Filipino, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Younger, non-college
- High income earners
- Have keiki in the HH (household)
- Unemployed
- Self/HH in need of counseling
- Are considering leaving

Respondents chose words to describe their lives that focused on stress, challenges, and hardships with a little gratitude thrown in

What word or phrase would you use to describe life for you right now?

Countywide

Struggle

Uncertain

Stressful

Surviving

Miserable

Overwhelming

Fire Survivors

Concerned

Struggling

Stressful

Transitioning

Turmoil

Frustrated

Molokai

Difficult

Chaotic

Content

Expensive

Surviving

Grateful

Lānaʻi

Stressed

Lonely

Concerned

Struggling

Grateful

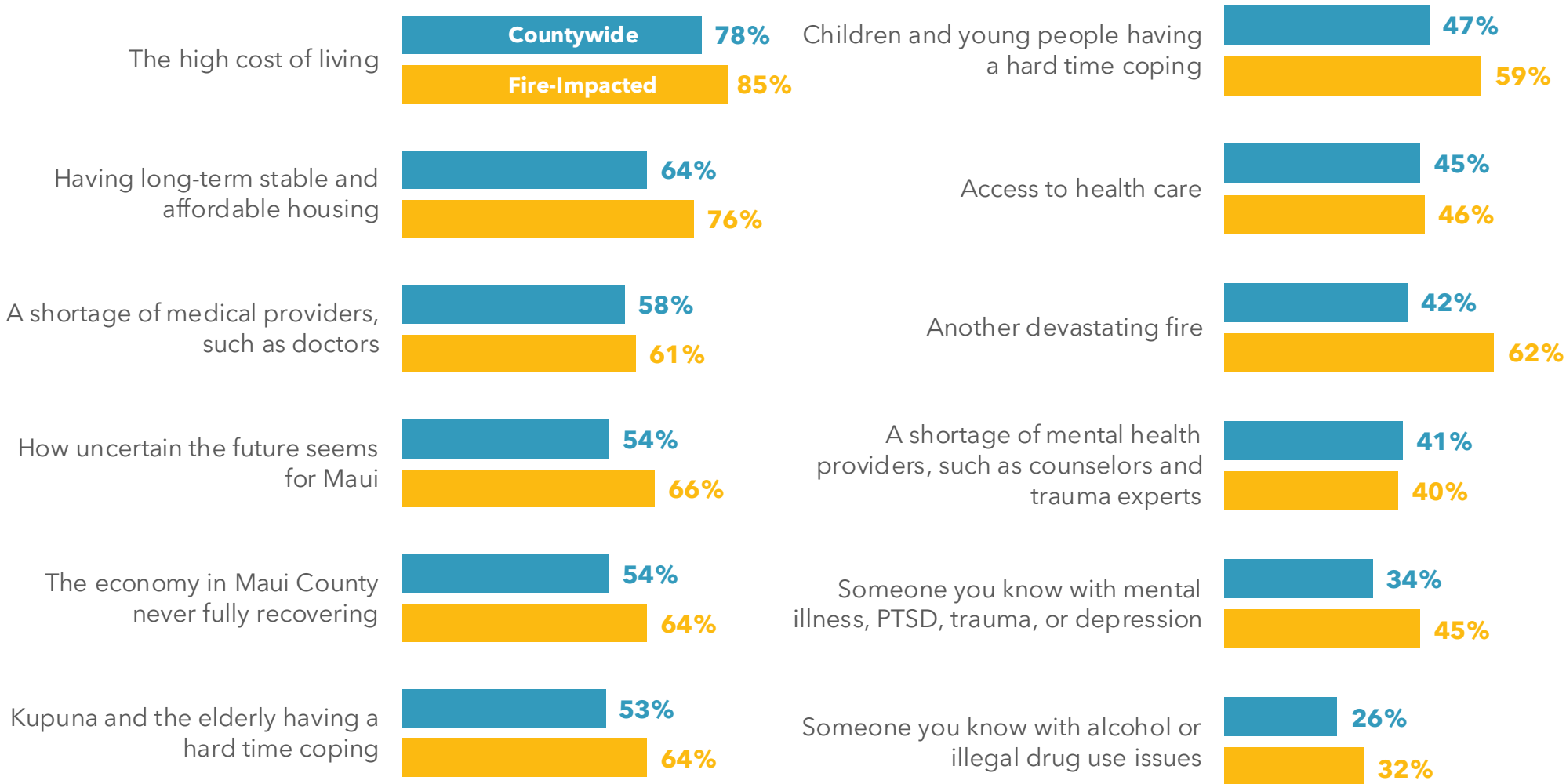
Expensive

Living costs, housing availability, lack of providers, uncertainty, including about the economy are the greatest sources of worry

Fire-impacted residents also fret more about another fire along with the ability of kūpuna and keiki to cope. The list is similar for health care professionals though they are equally concerned about a shortage of doctors and mental health experts.



How much do you personally worry about each of the following? *Showing % a great deal*



“Scared of more fires due to poor water management and ecosystem management causing bare ground which causes droughts that lead to deadly fires. I’m also disabled and have a newborn and live with 2 elderly people over 70. So, we’d all probably die in a fire.”



Economic-related Social Determinants of Health - ability to save, housing, and, to a lesser extent, good jobs and affordable groceries are the most elusive

For fire-impacted residents, programs for keiki and young adults are also seen as lacking.



Next, you will see a list of different things that can be important to one's health. Rate how easily you can access each one.

At least "somewhat" available

"Not too" or "not very" available

Social determinants of health: availability (Ranked by least available)	Countywide		Fire-Impacted	
Being able to save money	45%	55%	36%	62%
Having long-term stable and affordable housing	48%	52%	37%	63%
Having a good-paying job	65%	35%	62%	38%
Healthy, affordable food	65%	35%	64%	34%
Help from the government, nonprofits or disaster relief groups (<i>fire-impacted only</i>)			64%	36%
Afterschool programs, activities for keiki and young adults (<i>keiki in HH only</i>)	66%	34%	59%	41%
Affordable health insurance	69%	31%	66%	34%
Access to community activities	84%	16%	76%	24%
Access to community groups (hobby, youth, faith-based)	85%	15%	76%	24%
Reliable transportation	87%	13%	81%	19%

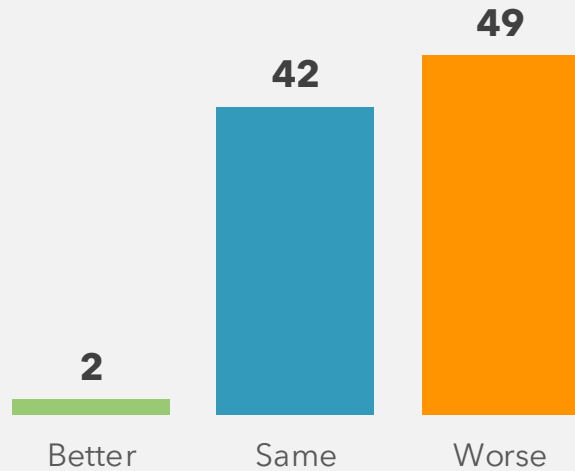


Most respondents are worse off financially than they were before the fires, and many are worse off mentally as well

Fire-impacted respondents are significantly worse off on all metrics, especially financial status and mental health. Compared to 2020, financial health is much worse across the county, physical health is better and mental health is unchanged. Health care providers also report being financially worse off since the fires.

Is your ___ now better than it was before the fires on Maui, about the same, or worse than it was before the August fires? (Countywide)

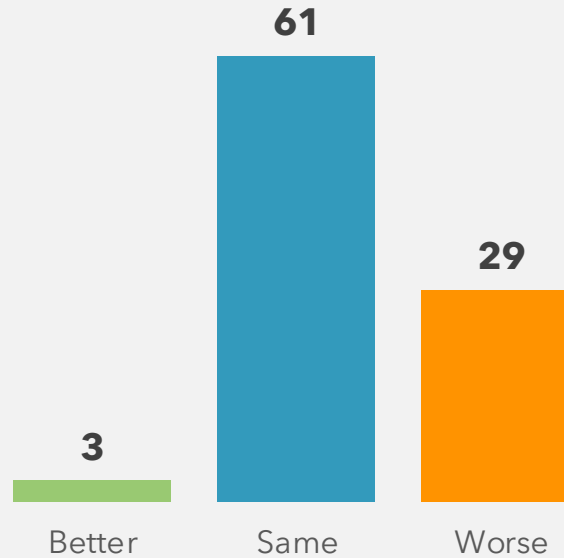
Financial situation



Among fire impacted: **69%** say worse

From 2022: **31%** say worse

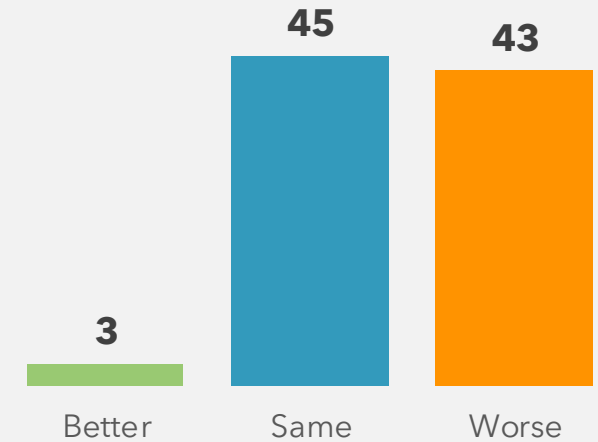
Physical health



Among fire impacted: **52%** say worse

From 2022: **37%** say worse

Mental health



Among fire impacted: **64%** say worse

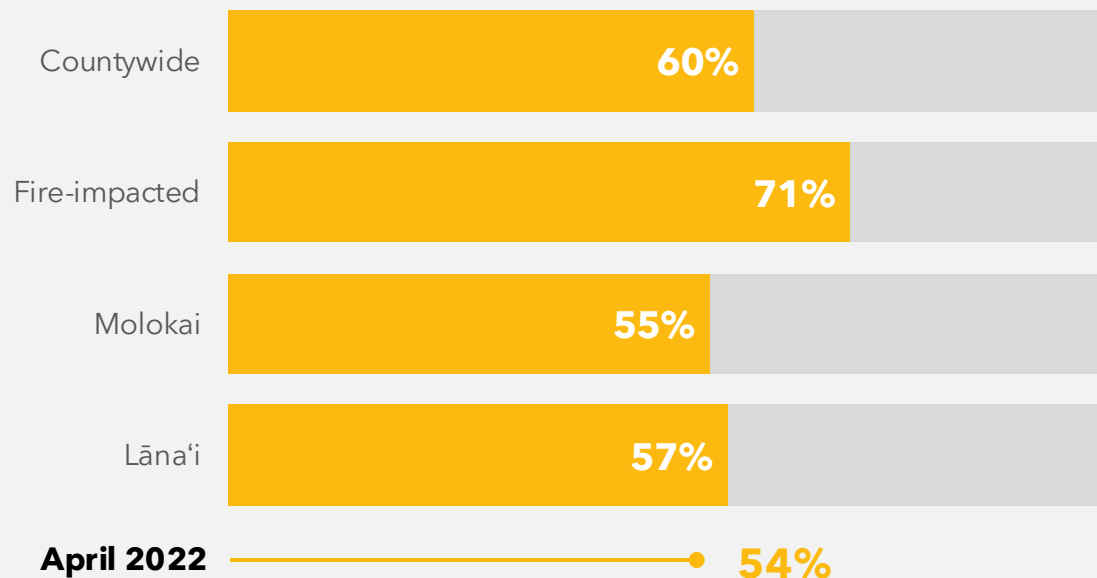
From 2022: **44%** say worse

Six in 10 Countywide and 71% report cutting back on groceries since the fires

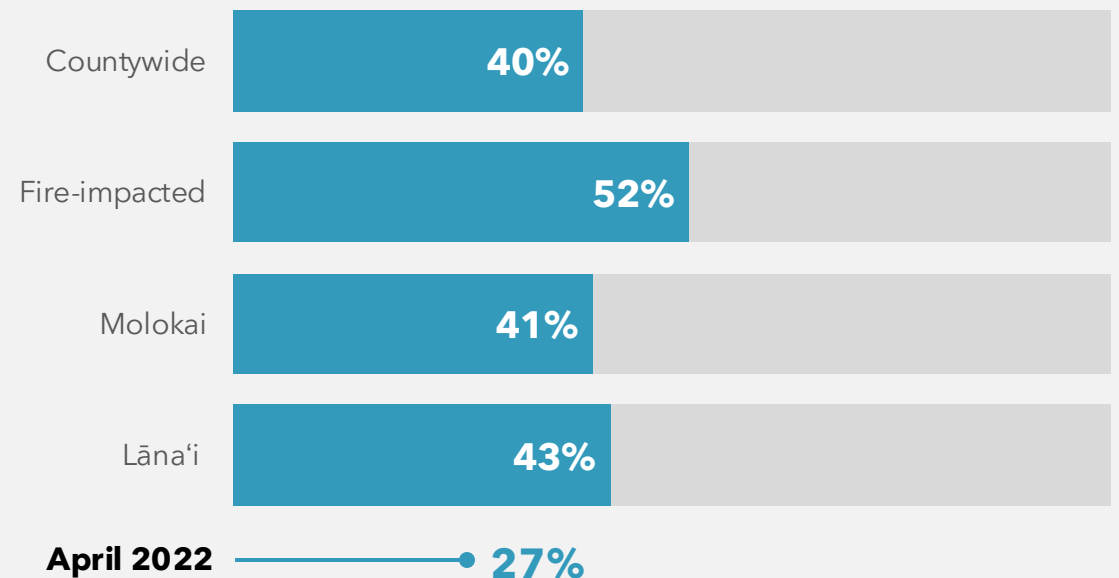
This represents an increase in those going without over the past two years.

In the past year, have you had to... [Percent saying "yes"]

Cut back on **food and groceries** for personal financial reasons, short on money



Cut back on **medical care or medicine** for personal financial reasons, short on money



As we found two years ago, mental health needs are higher among those in financial straits - 74% of those who are cutting back on groceries countywide say their mental health is worse (76% among fire impacted); and are much more likely to say they or a household member need counseling.

A deeper look at some of our most vulnerable citizens: coping with economic security and poor health

Most worrisome: younger, low-income, Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders and certain women.



	Had to cut back on food for financial reasons	Finances worse	Mental health worse	HH in need of counseling	Physical health worse	Delays with medical help
Total countywide sample	60%	49%	43%	24%	29%	68%
Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	75%	55%	44%	26%	35%	59%
Med-QUEST patients	91%	62%	50%	31%	30%	62%
High school diploma or less education	72%	58%	40%	20%	31%	61%
Single head of HH	82%	48%	45%	36%	29%	68%
< \$40k a year in HH income	85%	58%	48%	28%	37%	65%
35-44 years	73%	60%	61%	33%	34%	74%
Considering leaving	75%	64%	59%	30%	40%	77%
Total Fire-impacted sample	71%	69%	64%	30%	52%	65%
Younger, non-college	80%	74%	64%	31%	54%	63%
Women under 55	82%	74%	67%	31%	57%	69%
Single head of HH	90%	70%	62%	34%	55%	56%
< \$40k a year in HH income	81%	67%	66%	33%	53%	61%
Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	84%	65%	63%	27%	58%	59%
Med-QUEST patients	88%	77%	66%	45%	52%	61%
Considering leaving	80%	77%	74%	36%	60%	73%

Comments about economic stress and cost of living were dominant themes among fire survivors and the Maui County population at large

“

“Finances are a tremendous struggle. My husband is currently fighting cancer and kidney failure. We have accumulated approximately \$60,000 in credit card debt along with other loans and expenses. The cost of food on Maui is higher than I ever remember it to be, and I’ve lived here for about 53 years. Gas prices are extremely expensive. Being retired and on a fixed income; **it’s difficult to survive.**”

“Challenging with the cost of living so high and wages low. People can’t afford to live here with the cost of living so high. They simply don’t make enough money for rent and groceries.”

“I’m still working at 71 to make ends meet.”

“It’s very hard to afford living here. **I have to work more hours just to barely make cost of living.**” Health Care Provider

“I have two full time jobs in order to sustain our living and able to pay all the mortgage and utilities expenses.”

“Nervous. I am about to have my first kid. I am born and raised on Maui, but it seems like we are at a weird tipping point where politicians will either make Maui a place locals can live and thrive, or they will sell out to Tourism too much again and **everyone will have to struggle to live here.**”

”



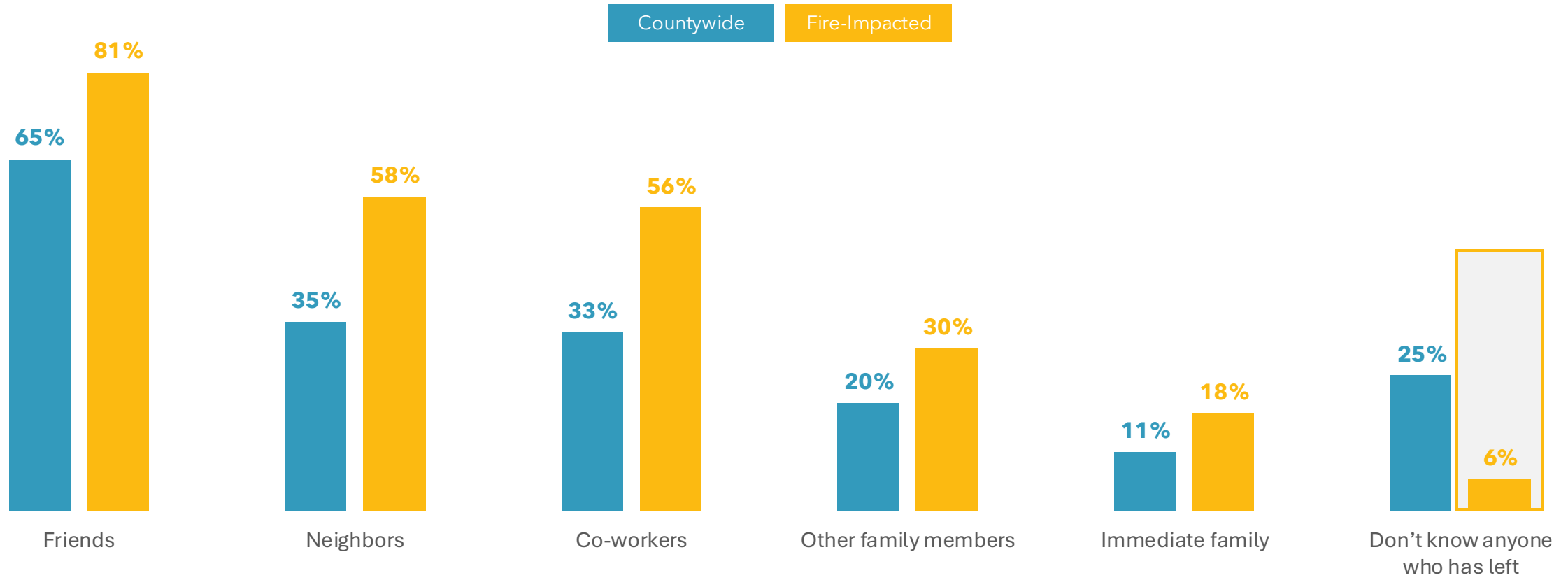
General Mood: WHEN LEAVING BECOMES AN OPTION



Residents across Maui County know people who have left the island, especially friends

This is even more profound among fire-impacted respondents.

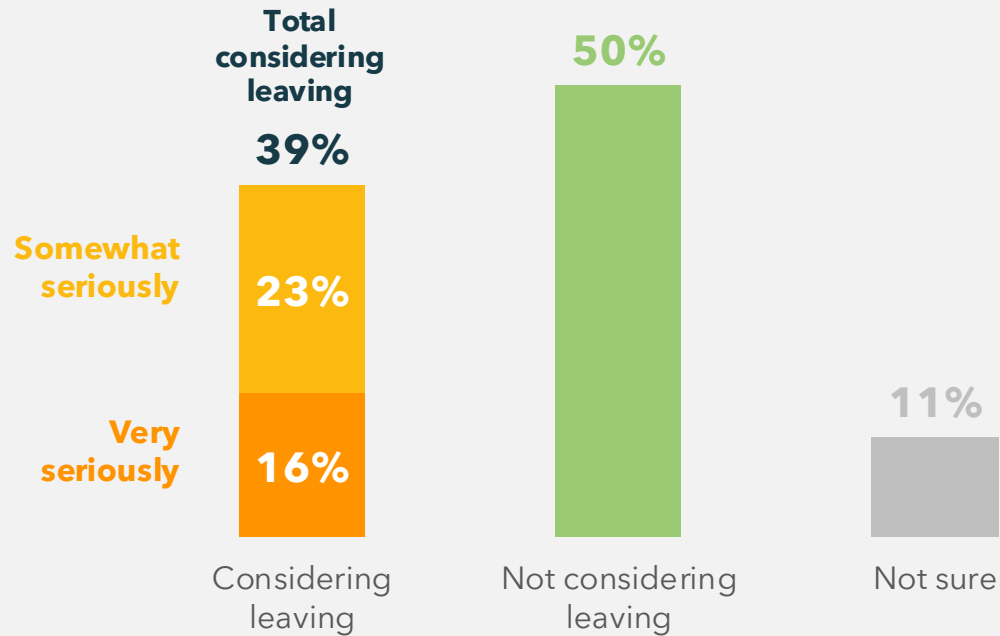
Do you know people who have left Maui since the fires? Mark all that apply.



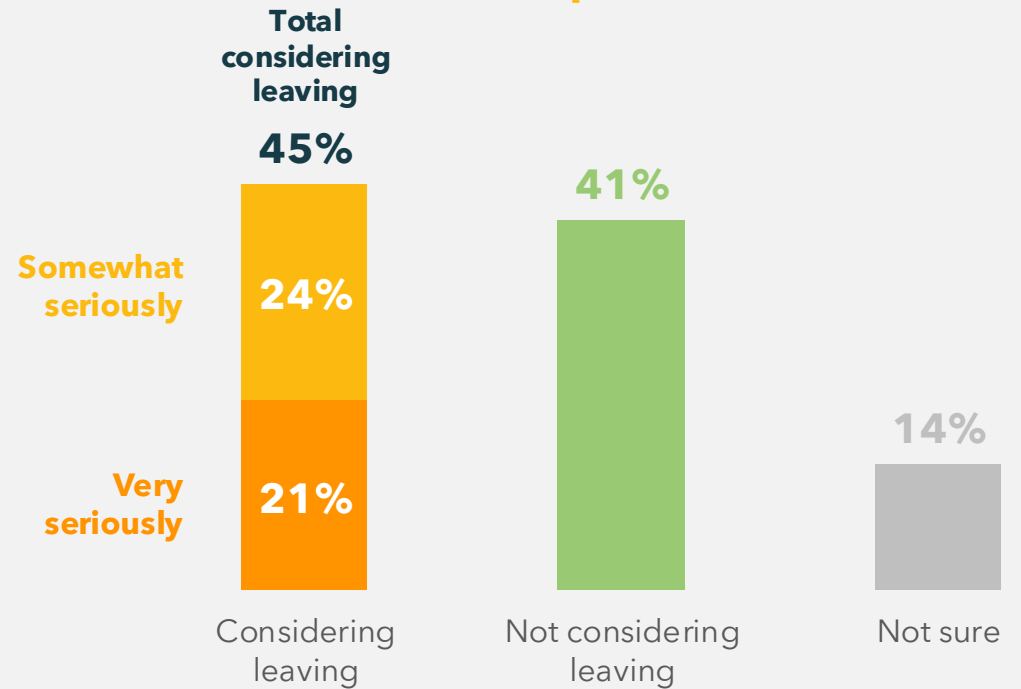
Roughly four in 10 are giving at least some consideration to leaving Maui County; the numbers are a bit higher among fire survivors

How seriously are you considering leaving the island where you live and moving somewhere else?

Countywide



Fire-impacted



Fire survivors who have left tend to be older, better off, White and relative newcomers

“

The fire destroyed my home. And I'm a boat captain and all the boats were destroyed. I had no choice. I'm in Kona now. But **I will come back to Maui when things come back.** I called Maui home for 18 years.

We were living in Lahaina Town. **The fires of August 8 forced us to come back to the mainland.**

I lived on front street, Lahaina. I was living in an apartment, and **the fire on Aug 8th took everything I owned.** I was lucky to get out of the apartment. **I can't afford to live in Maui anymore.** I had to move to the mainland where rent is affordable.”

”

Sadness & Survival mode – Still integrating evacuating from fires and leaving island with my daughter, it's been a hard transition, we grieve a lot, feel like a fish out of water and it **breaks my heart my daughter will no longer grow up in Hawai'i, being that she is kanaka maoli.**

We lost our home in the wildfire and couldn't afford to stay on island and couldn't find affordable housing with our family of 5 and 3 dogs.

Fire Survivors most likely to have moved:

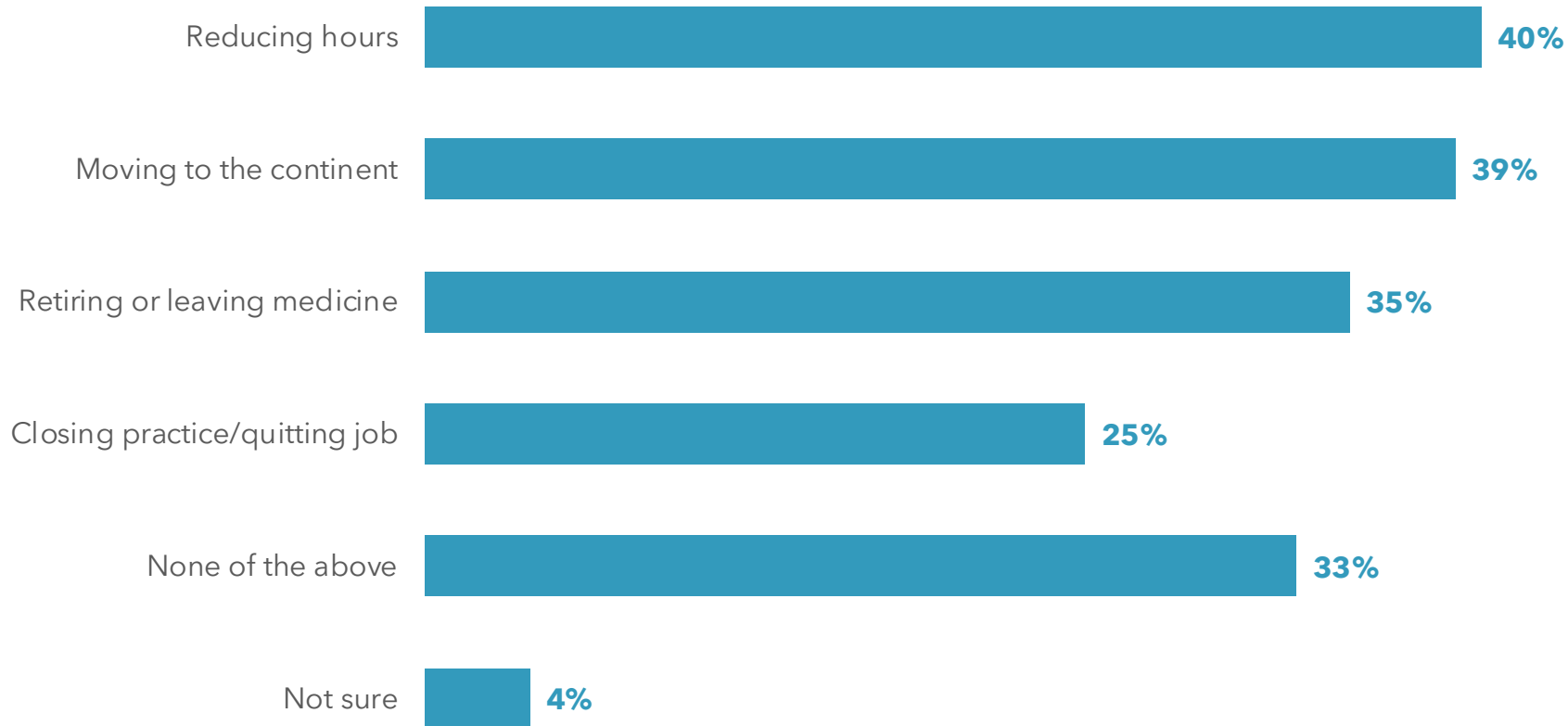
- Whites
- Earn \$80k-\$100k
- Older college graduates
- Older women
- Lived on Maui less than five years

Where they have gone:

- Oahu and Hawaii Island
- California
- Las Vegas area
- Washington
- Arizona
- Mexico and Guam
- Far-flung states like Kentucky, Ohio, New York, and North Carolina

Medical professionals are also contemplating leaving. Just one-third say they have not thought about a move, career change, or a reduction in hours

In the past year, have you considered: (Health care professionals)



"I like what I do, but I do too much for too little reimbursement. I have already cut back my hours. I am considering early retirement I am so burned out."



Life for fire-impacted residents: UNCERTAINTY AND UPHEAVAL



"We not only lost our past in the fire, we lost our future also."

- FIRE SURVIVOR



grove insight

Two Lahaina survivors' perspectives who said the trauma after the fire was worse than the fire itself

There is a profound loss of community.

“It did feel like this whole process, even with the reopening and stuff, was just **gaslighting us to feel like this was not that bad, but it was so bad**, and I feel like that's what needs to get across to everybody that this was, like, so bad, and that it's still really hard for everybody, and that it's not something that can be fixed, even. And even once the dust settles, and all of that, it's just gonna take a long time.”

“**And the community, you know, is gone.** You know, we used to be able to do all the stuff we used to do. Walk, bike, go to the shops, go to the restaurants and everything. And that's just not there, and that's not coming back anytime soon. Then, I'm placed, FEMA placed me in an apartment up in Napili, where it's a lot different from mine. I can't complain, but it's like living in a hotel, you know. There's different people coming in all the time. **I feel like I'm on a cruise ship. I don't know anybody on this cruise ship.**”

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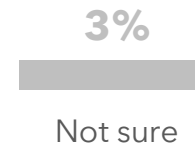
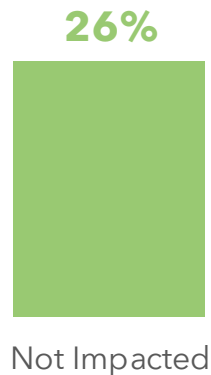
Most of Maui County reports being either directly or indirectly impacted by the fire

Have you been personally impacted, either directly (lost family member(s), pet(s), housing, job business, etc.) or indirectly by the Maui fires that happened last August, or haven't you been impacted by the fires?



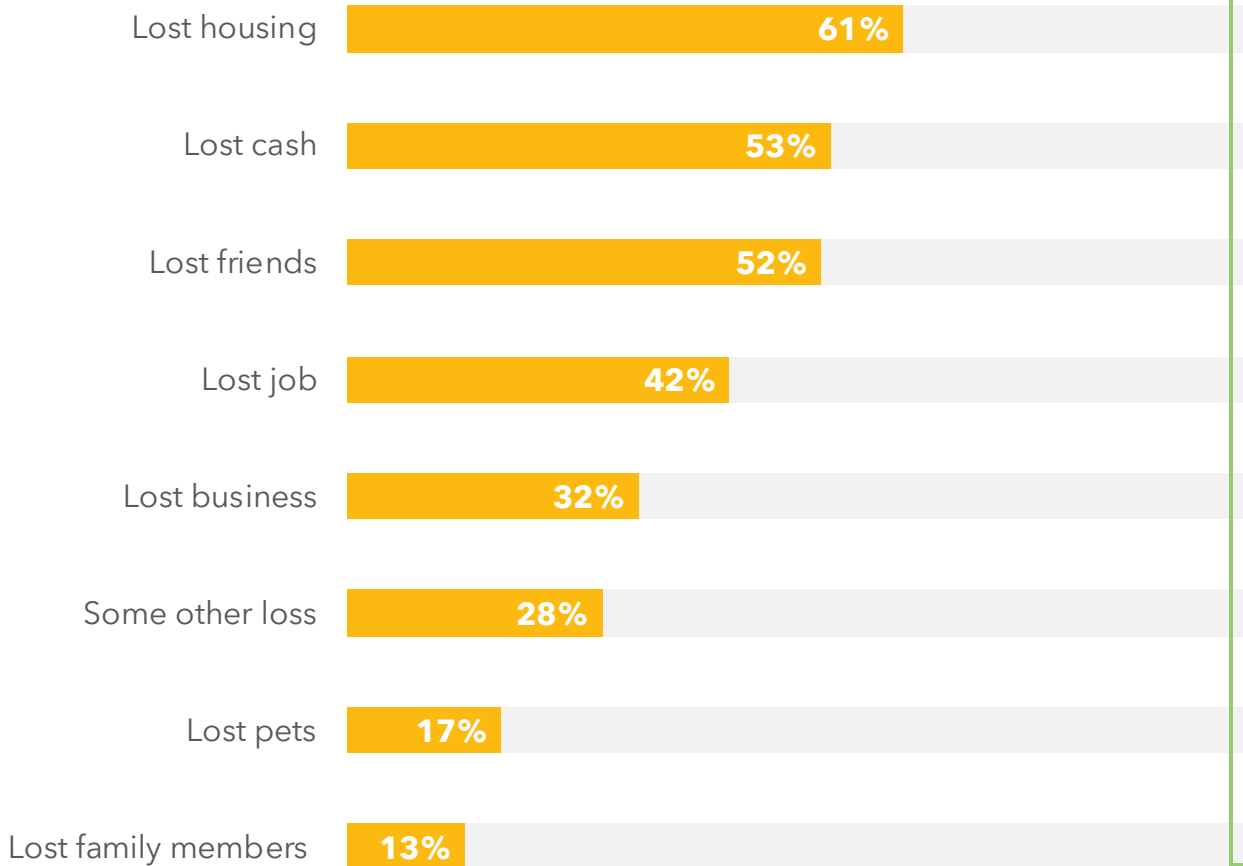
Most likely to say "indirectly impacted"

- Maui + Lānaʻi
- Pacific Islanders
- Single head of HH
- 35-54 years
- Women, especially under 55 or white



Housing, cash, friends, and employment are the losses experienced most by survivors

How have you been impacted by the fires? Mark all that apply.



“Surviving. As a Lahaina fire victim, we are displaced. Myself along with my son, fiancé, my parents and aunty are displaced all together. **Not all of us are back to work yet or are able to due to circumstances. We do not qualify for FEMA and are exhausting insurance money** that we need to hold on to for the rebuild ... We are not living... we are surviving.”

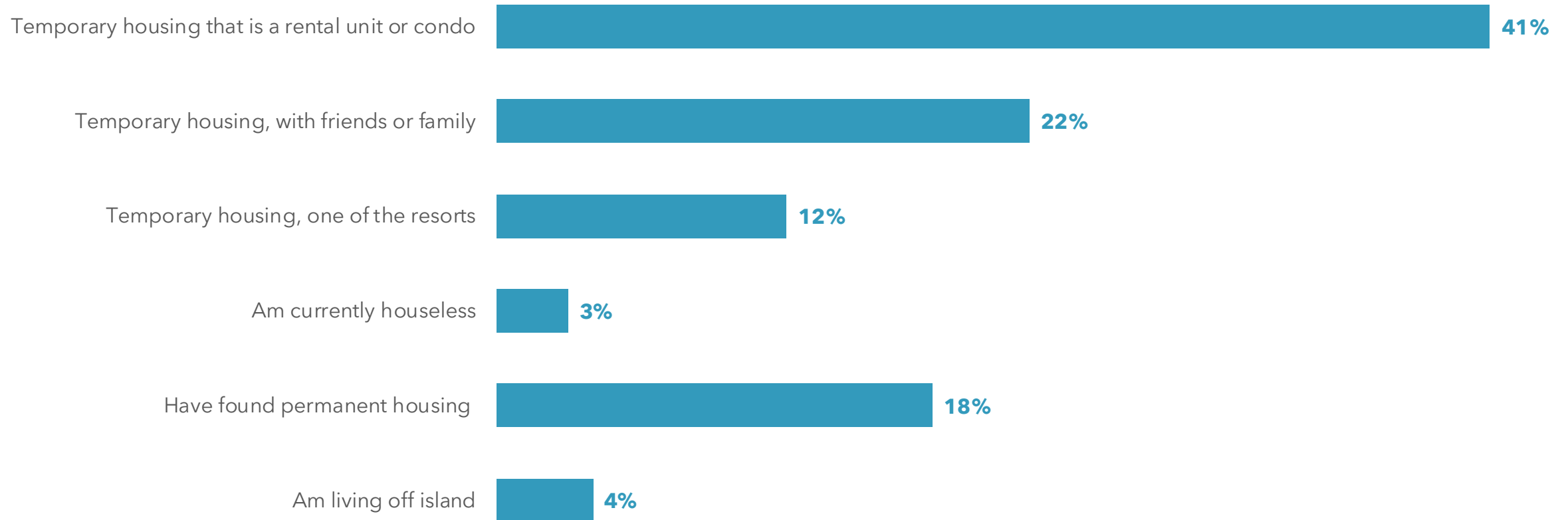
“I lost **everything.**”

“We lost our home and ohana in the fire.”

“**While running from the fire to the beach**, pushing a wagon laden with food, water & towels, being thrown around in the high wind gusts, branches, sand & debris blowing, **I fell & have had leg trouble since.** Copayments are exorbitantly high. Have had X-rays but cannot afford MRI. My 98-year-old mother has been rendered blind, can no longer walk & has some other issues since losing her house & its contents. **Her depression must be off the charts. Her whole life was her Lahaina home & garden**”

Most consider themselves to be currently living in “temporary” housing

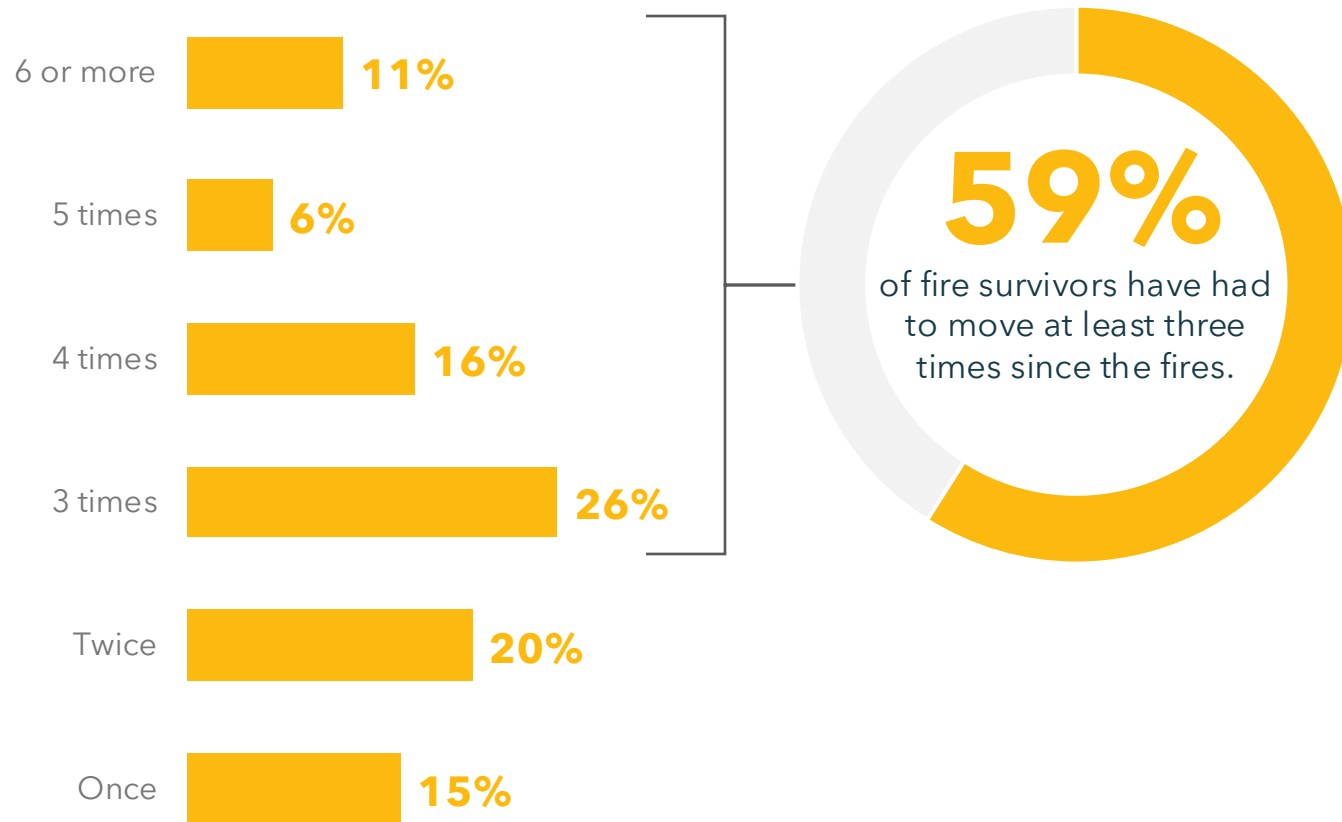
Where are you currently living?



Nearly six in 10 have had to move at least three times since the fires

Nearly one in five have moved five times or more

How many times have you had to move since the fires?



“Initially being **matched to a house with FEMA and then waiting 3 months to be told it was pulled from the program**, to being matched a second time, to waiting again almost 2 months to finally move into the direct lease unit. Almost 5 months of waiting for no reason, after doing everything they said.”

“I would also like to point out how owners of these units have been getting paid while they sit empty and **the victims of this tragedy are still being pushed to the side**. The response time to absolutely everything in this situation has sucked.”

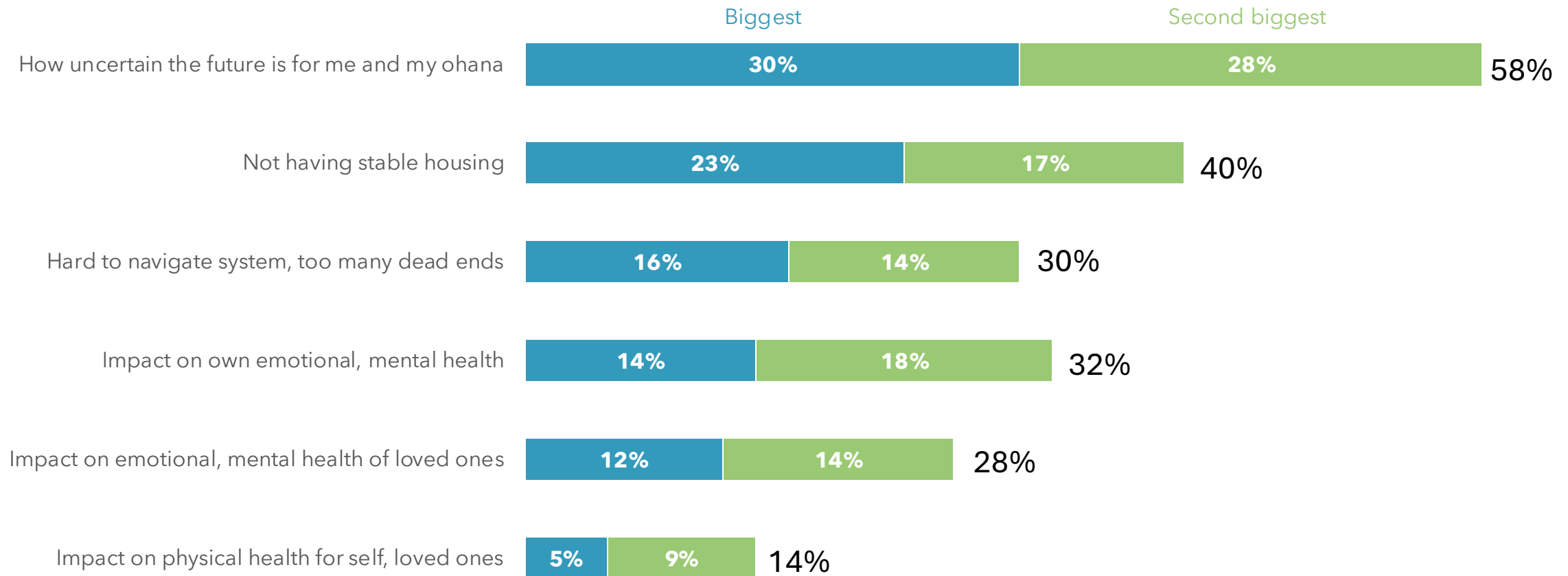
What has been difficult about temporary housing in the resorts

Challenges that were “traumatizing,” according to focus group participants and open-ended responses

- ✓ Mandatory check-ins every 24-72 hours.
- ✓ Constant worry about “getting evicted,” having to move.
- ✓ 24-hour “eviction letters” being slid under one’s door.
- ✓ Living among resort-goers (“It was the best of times and our worst of times”).
- ✓ Hard to travel off-island, including for important events (funerals, weddings, baby luau, medical appointments, etc.).
- ✓ Not having a kitchen, especially for those with dietary restrictions.
- ✓ Owning a pet.
- ✓ Loss of privacy due to “routine maintenance” which seemed like room checks in disguise to some.
- ✓ No real sense of community.
- ✓ Sense of uncertainty and constant upheaval.
- ✓ Treatment by intake representatives like the Red Cross; a perceived lack of compassion by a good number of respondents.

Uncertainty, followed by lack of stable housing, are among the hardest things for survivors since the fires

Which of the following would you say has been the hardest for you since the fires? (Ranked by first choice)



Long-time residents, Native Hawaiians, and kūpuna are among the most concerned about their uncertain future

“Uncertain. I'm working as a teacher at Makawao Elementary. **I'm not sure what would happen if I was forced to move out of my home.** Right now, my landlord made affordable rentals, but she is getting old. I'm not sure I could keep on living here if I had to pay 'normal' rent amounts. ...People with money can always make more, but a public school teacher like me, well, we depend on reasonable landlords, sharing reasonable rates. I'm never going to retire. That I accept. But if I am working full time, at a highly skilled position, **I should not run the risk of ending up homeless.** That is where I am now.”

“I want to feel like I have control in my life.”

“Uncertain. How long will it take to rebuild Lahaina and what will that look like?

“I want to feel like we get to like have some sort of voice at the table of what's happening with our future.”

“

Adjusting to this **constant stress**, and like these anxieties that you have no idea, **you don't have any answers.**”

“Financial. Rebuilding will cost significantly more than our insurance covers. Not sure where much of the fundraised money has been distributed to.

Uncertainty for friends, family, neighbors.”

Kanaka are leaving because they can't survive here due to the increased prices. Housing for fire victims are not being built. I've been on those projects, and they are all a joke. Charging these families over what they can afford. Other residents are kicking out tenants to house fire victims because FEMA is willing to pay them more money. **My kids will never be able to afford a piece of land or a house** for themselves with the way this is going. **There is no longer a certainty of life.** These elected officials are not here for the people now and are doing nothing for the kanaka generations to come. Shame

”

Most worried about uncertainty:

- Fire survivors not living in West Maui
- Native Hawaiians
- Lived on Maui 15+ years/entire lives
- 65-74 years (and Medicare patients)
- Men 55+, especially Native Hawaiian and White
- Those with keiki in the HH
- AJA women
- Younger Filipinos

Survey and focus group respondents shared stories of deteriorating mental health

“

“I don't think anyone's talked about how many suicides and how many things have happened post-fire, how much depression, how much PTSD. Everyone I know that was involved in it or escaping it, that is a friend of mine, is dealing with post-traumatic PTSD. Every time the wind blows harder, every time that ambulance goes by.”

“I have not slept a full eight hours in seven months.”

“I can't get help. Seven of them dropped me before I found this community center, and then I was on the waiting list.”

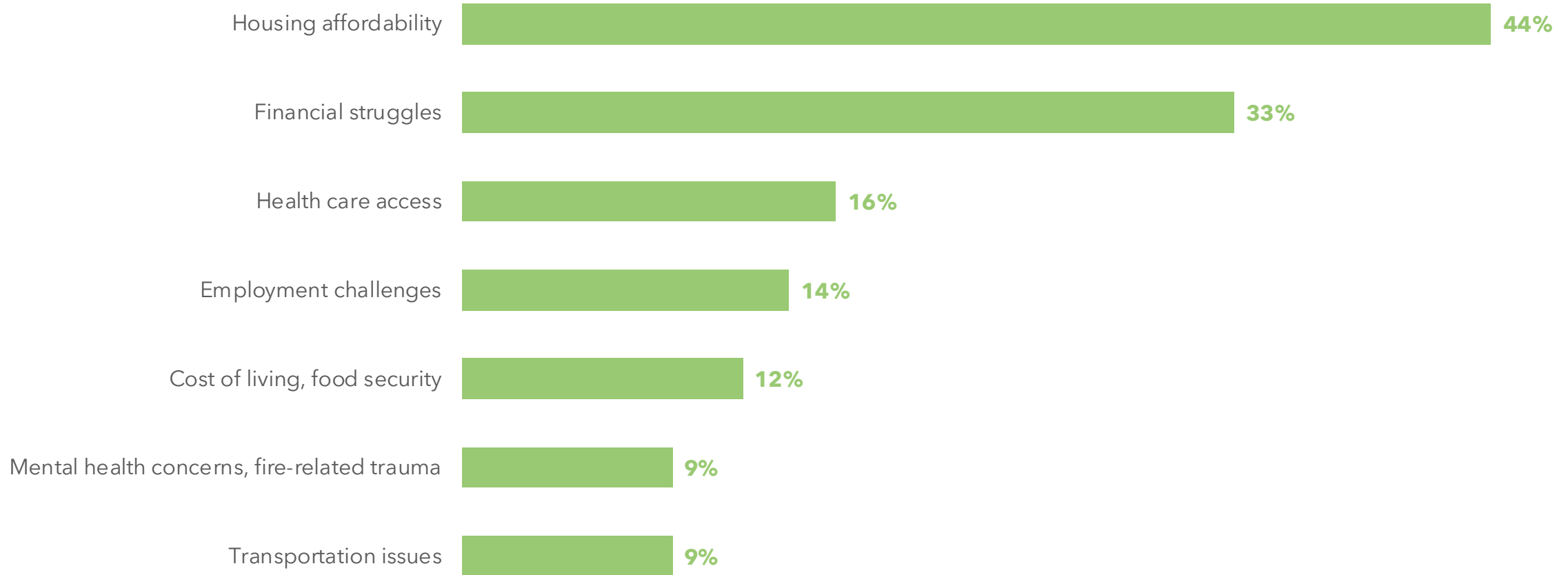
“Fatigue comes on a little bit quicker...After the fire definitely had a lot of mental fog. Hard to focus on work when you've got so much other stuff going on and definitely not feeling you're totally there.”

“I do feel like mental health is like a huge issue now, and that should be a focus for a lot of people in recovery efforts, and now that people have a place that they can stay for a little bit, and they can have time to think, and maybe they're not working with insurance people every day, I feel like now people are realizing like, ‘Oh my gosh, this fire really affected me.’”

”

Fire-impacted families say their biggest unmet need is financial – being able to afford housing, groceries, and generally making ends meet

What, if any, immediate needs are you having a hard time meeting right now? (open-end)

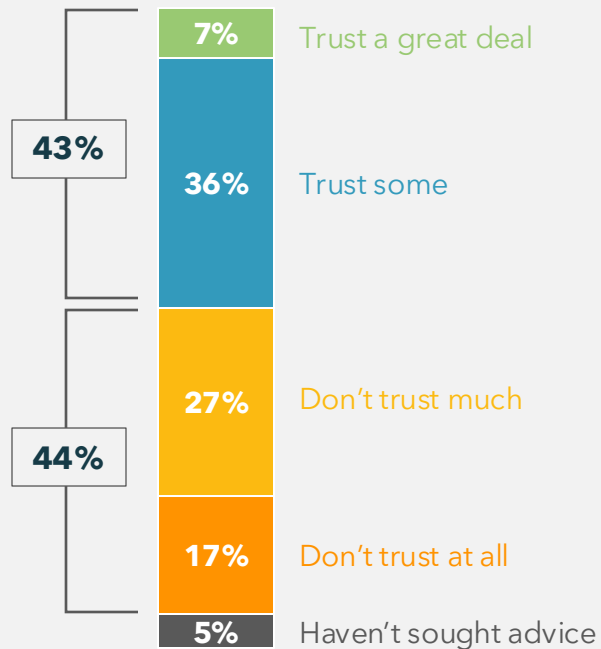


Trust in disaster resources is mixed. Satisfaction with assistance received is even lower

Half are “not too” or “not at all” satisfied with the help they received.

Trust of Disaster Resources

Generally speaking, how much do you trust the advice and information you receive from the government, nonprofits, and disaster relief organizations since the August fires?



Most trust:

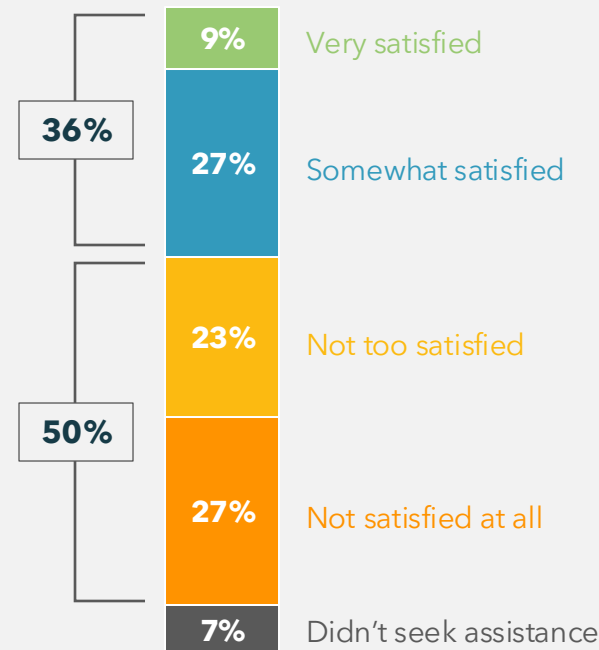
- Current residents of West Maui
- \$25-40k

Least trust:

- Current residents of Upcountry or South Maui
- College grads younger than 55
- Native Hawaiians and Caucasians, especially men
- Higher income earners under 55
- Those who are separated, divorced, or widowed
- 45-54 years

Satisfaction with Disaster Relief

How satisfied are you with the help and assistance from the government and relief organizations since the fires?



Most satisfied:

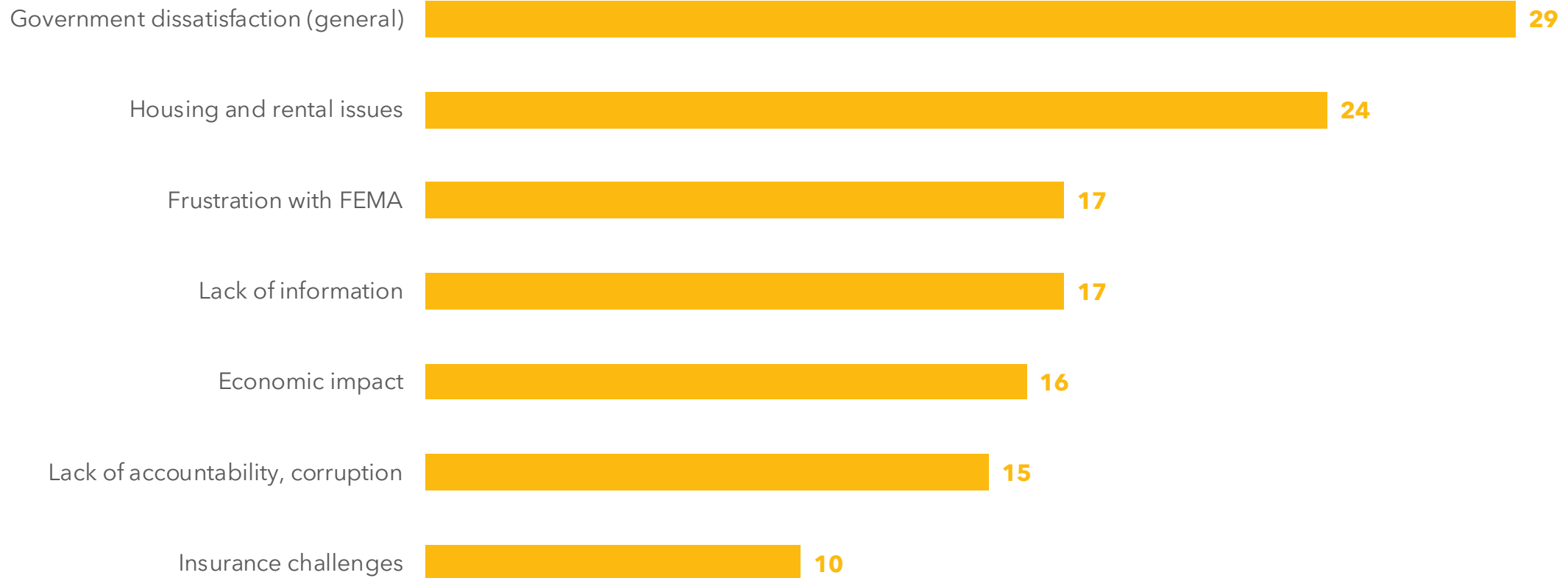
- Current West Maui residents
- Filipinos, especially women and younger
- Those with a high school diploma or less
- Earning under \$40k
- Med-QUEST patients
- Single, never married

Least satisfied:

- Current residents of Upcountry or South Maui
- College graduates, especially under 55
- Men under 55
- Native Hawaiian, AJA and Whites
- 35-44 years.

When asked in an open-ended question, fire survivors say they are most frustrated and let down by the government, including FEMA, along with rental housing and insurance issues

In what ways, if any, have you felt let down, frustrated, or ignored? (open-end)



Out of 160 times FEMA was mentioned in the answer to one question in the survey, 142 of them were negative; and, out of the 48 times Red Cross was mentioned, 40 of them were negative

Frustrations with FEMA and treatment by Red Cross representatives were common

Respondents also mention being let down and lied to by state and county leaders.

“There was really no help and we had to move to Idaho to survive!!! Red Cross is the only people who helped house us at the Hyatt after the fires. Federal government is a joke and local people are suffering and no monies being paid out...**We are Kupuna and have been physically and mentally sick since fires!!** What will ever be done to make this right. We lost 34 friends!!!”

“FEMA and national Red Cross people **are clueless about the needs of this vulnerable community**. They use plans and models from the mainland, ridiculous for island culture.”

“Rough. We have been burned out of our residence and life is not going well. Am thankful for Red Cross and FEMA but there is much frustration with trying to find housing. Between the tragedy, trauma and everything else from seeming to keep jumping through hoops to try and get things done. Over and over the same thing and always getting the same result. **Feel we are living the definition of crazy. Doing the same thing and expecting different results.**”

“It's like they're already sick of helping us, like they're annoyed. And it really sucks because everybody's still in the same position, not knowing what they're gonna do, not knowing where they're gonna go. And now the rent is just skyrocketed. Cause FEMA came in and just boosted the rent. By giving all these landlords, max amounts. Unreal and ridiculous, thank you FEMA.”

“The way FEMA refuses to help so **you have to reapply over & over**, then they give so much money to property management companies and landlords now that it's driven rents through the roof-so most disaster money is going to people not affected by the fire. Meanwhile fire victims get no help with mortgages.”

“The differences of how FEMA is financially subsidizing individuals. How some get a straight 18 months payout for housing yet others of us have to reapply or request continuation EVERY 3 months. How homeowners and short-term rental owners are being paid THOUSANDS of dollars for their units monthly YET THE HOMES SIT EMPTY FOR MONTHS WHILE THE OWNERS STILL COLLECT PAYMENTS!!!! How RED CROSS actually told me how hard it was going to be to find me housing due to having dogs and asked if i was going to get RID OF THEM. ”

These stories echo what we heard often in the focus groups and open-ended responses

“My experiences from the beginning were that the people who came from the mainland...Red Cross, FEMA had their own agendas. They were there not to help but to drive you insane. None of them I had could give any straight answers to my questions.

I think a lot of them came to vacation on Maui. So unempathetic to people’s situation. So cavalier in their answers. Heartless at times.

It added to my decline in my mental and emotional health. Living in constant fear of being kicked out of the system in place was absolutely a horrible way of living! Hearing horror stories of families’ plights bouncing from one place to another with little warning and having my own daughter’s family (my grandchildren) who moved 15 times in 9 months with very little warning or no warning at all was heartbreaking.

It’s an awful place mentally to be grateful on the one hand and angry at this crazy system that we were placed into because of a disaster. It really fucks with your mind along with the trauma of going through this kind of disaster.

You could never really connect with any Red Cross agent or FEMA agent because they were constantly changing and moving around, and they all had different answers and ideas about what I needed to do. Talk about navigating in utter confusion!

That’s been my life for nine months. No wonder towards the end I felt insane, panicked, exhausted, exasperated, in fear, literally depressed and sometimes just wishing I was dead so all of this would end.

The last Red Cross agent...he was on his own agenda...didn’t even listen to what I had to say as I was explaining to him what was happening. Then, he says, ‘Ma’am I’m just here to help you.’ Basically, to cut me off. What an asshole. He was definitely not helping me. The lead Red Cross lady had to intervene.

Thank you GOD that I am out of the system now! No Red Cross or FEMA check ins! The insanity has stopped for me. God bless the people who are still in the system or who have had better experiences than I have had. Traumatized for life. PTSD ... for sure!!!!”



The State of Health Care in Maui County

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

“What health care? If you need health care, don’t come.”

- MOLOKAI HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL

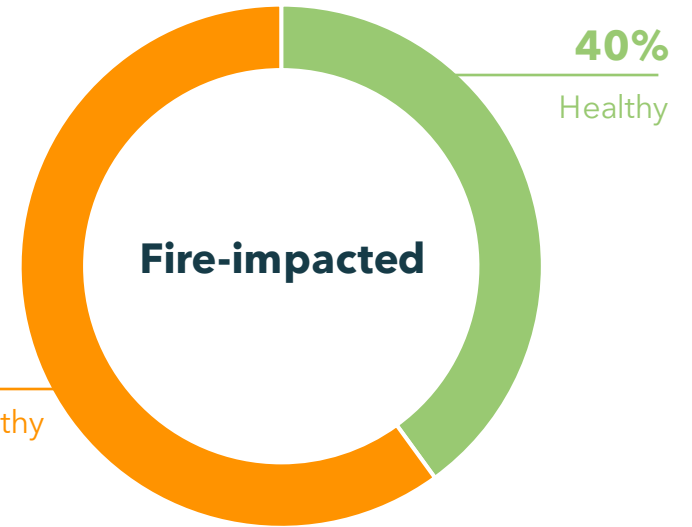
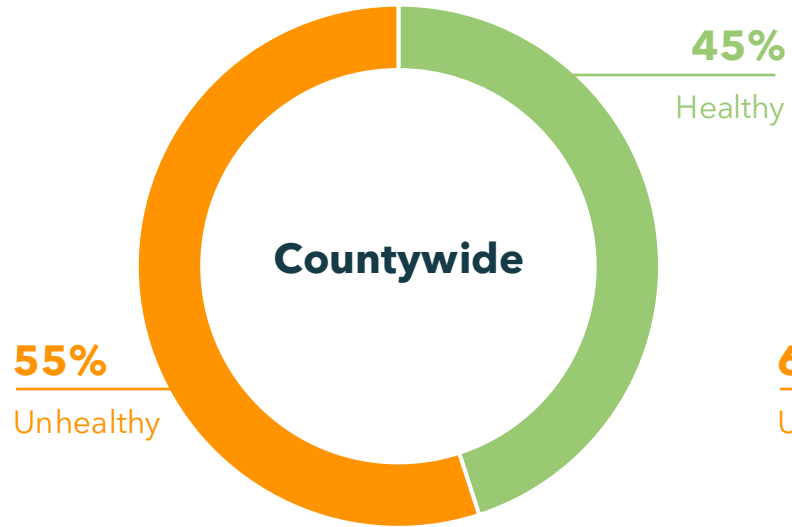
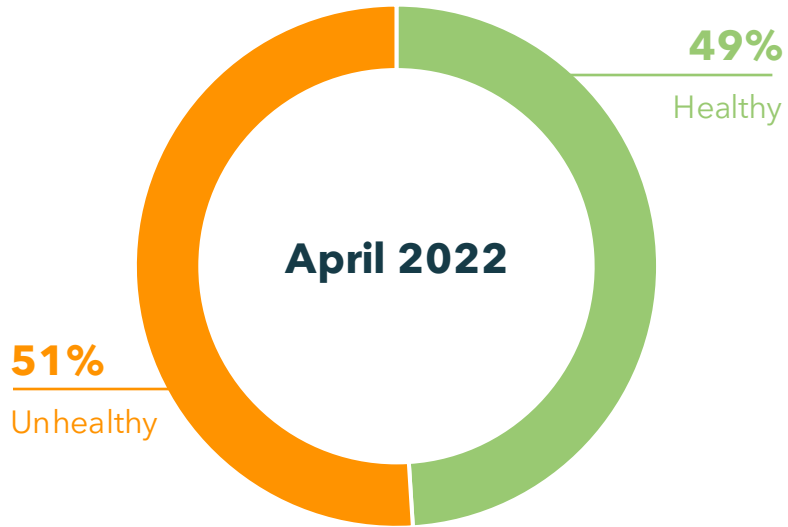


grove insight

Majorities of both samples believe their community is “unhealthy,” similar to 2022

Lānaʻi, Molokai and health care professionals are much more inclined to report their community is in poor health. Also, slightly higher “unhealthy” numbers among fire survivors.

In general, how would you rate the overall health of your community?



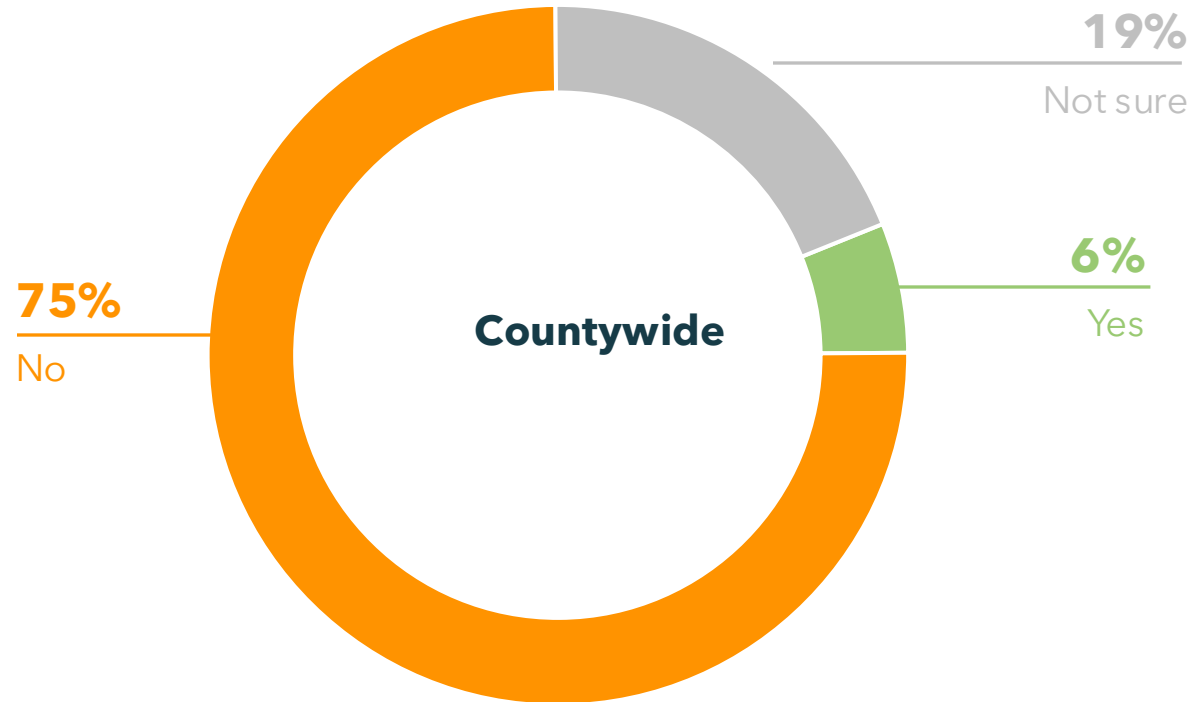
% Unhealthy:	
Lānaʻi	67%
Molokai	69%
Providers	72%

Three-quarters feel there is a physician shortage on their island - the numbers on Maui and Lānaʻi are similar

Do you feel there are enough physicians on your island?

Percent saying there are not enough physicians:

Maui	73%
Lānaʻi	76%

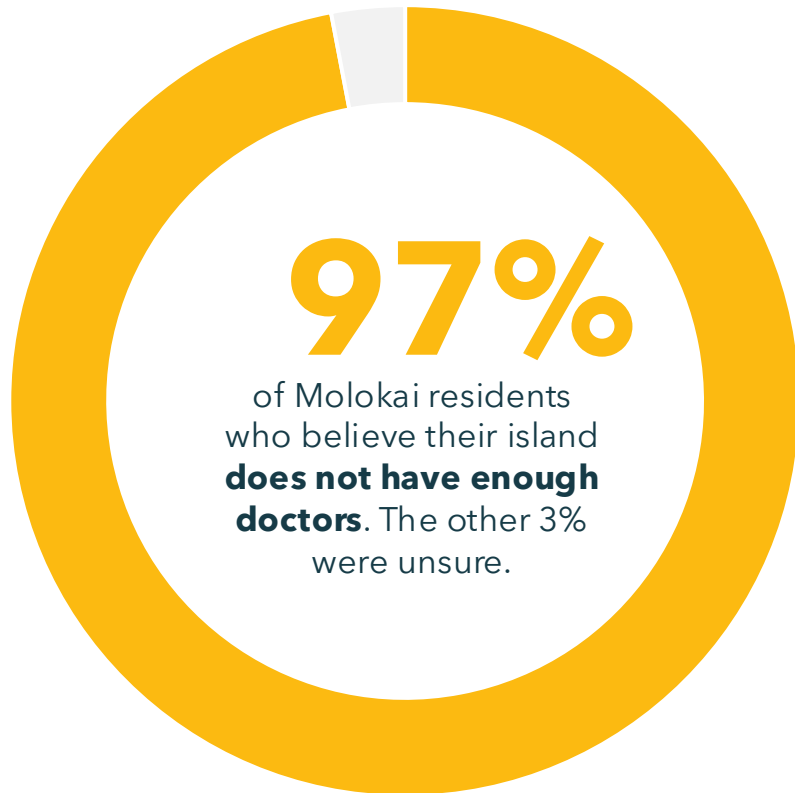


FROM PROVIDERS

"We need to establish more young competent professionals"
"There are not enough workers for the needs of this community."
"There are not enough physicians; thus, patients receive hurried care. Or patients receive no care because there are no physicians with that knowledge."

Nearly every Molokai resident surveyed believes there is a doctor shortage on their island

Do you feel there are enough physicians on your island?



“Availability is limited for all health needs.”

“What health care? If you need health care, don’t come [to Molokai].”

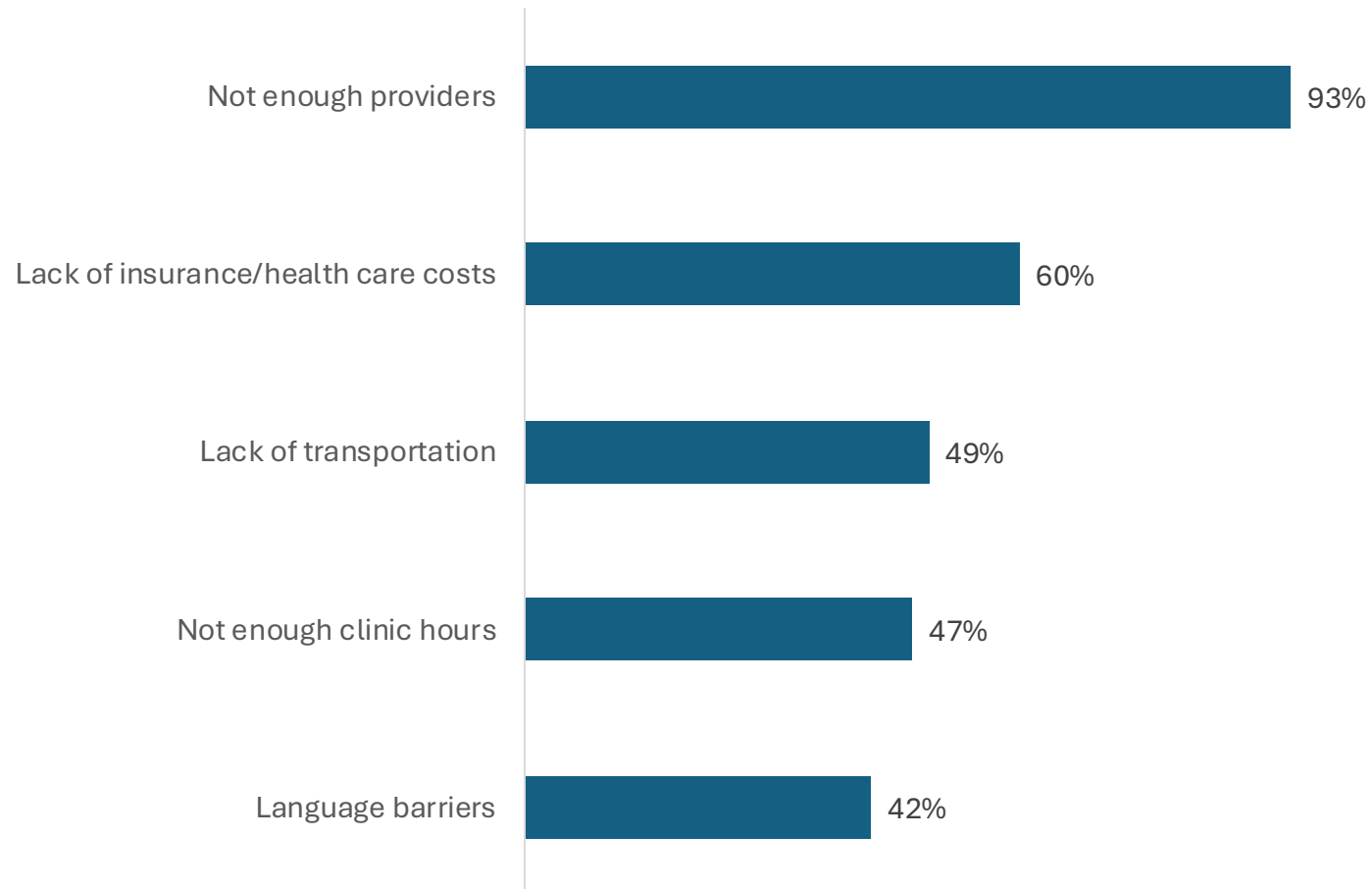
“Access to care. Patients unable to travel off island due to airline issues (Mokulele).”

Health care professionals agree that the provider shortage is the biggest impediment to care



Meaningful numbers also point to costs, transportation, lack of clinic hours, and language barriers.

“What do you feel prevents the community from accessing health care services?” (Health care professionals only)



Biggest health care concerns among providers

“There are not enough medical providers on island. There are not enough care agencies to provide basic PA 1 or PA 2 supports. There are no enough transportation providers to ensure that my clients are able to get to their appointments.”

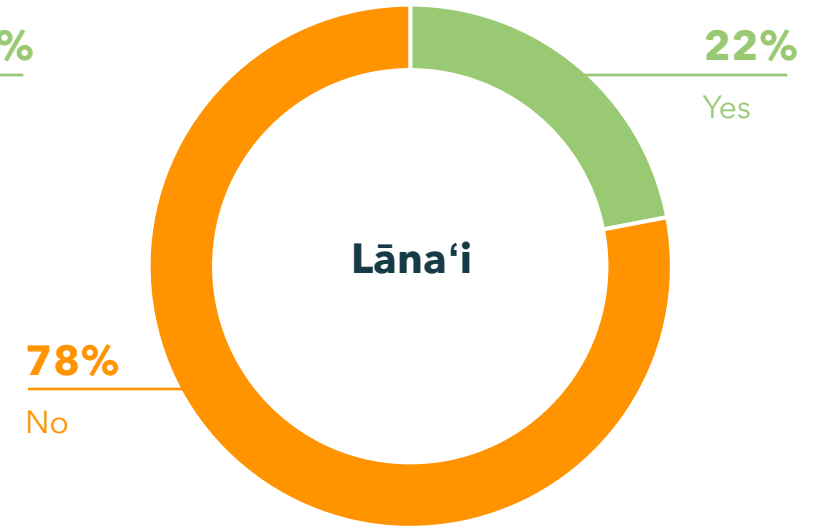
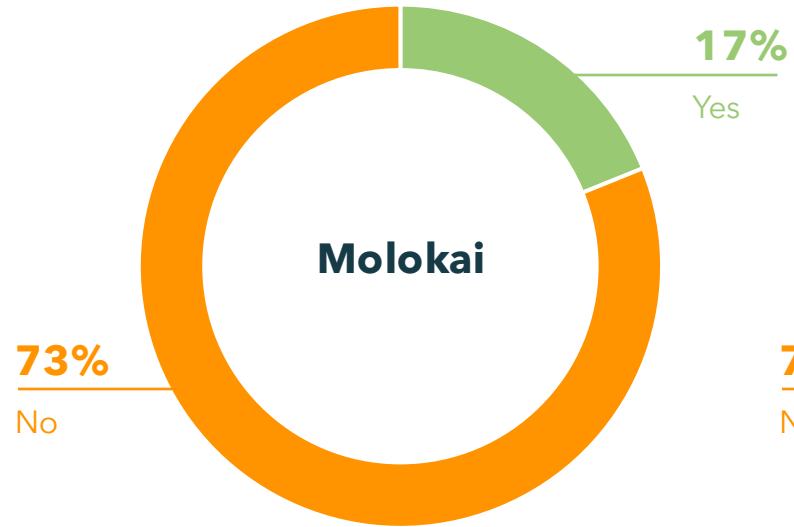
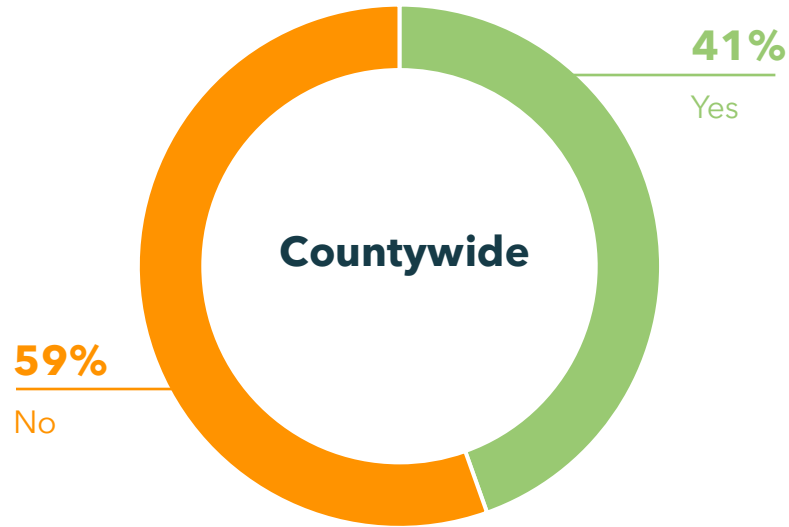
“Access to primary care physicians and delays in transport for critically ill patients.”

“Current clinics/physicians/medical providers have a long wait or are not accepting new patients and are difficult to reach. We need quality providers who want to live here long-term and provide consistency to our community. Cost of living needs to be evaluated and employers should compensate employees accordingly.”



While lack of access to on-island health care is a problem countywide, it is much more problematic for Molokai and Lānaʻi

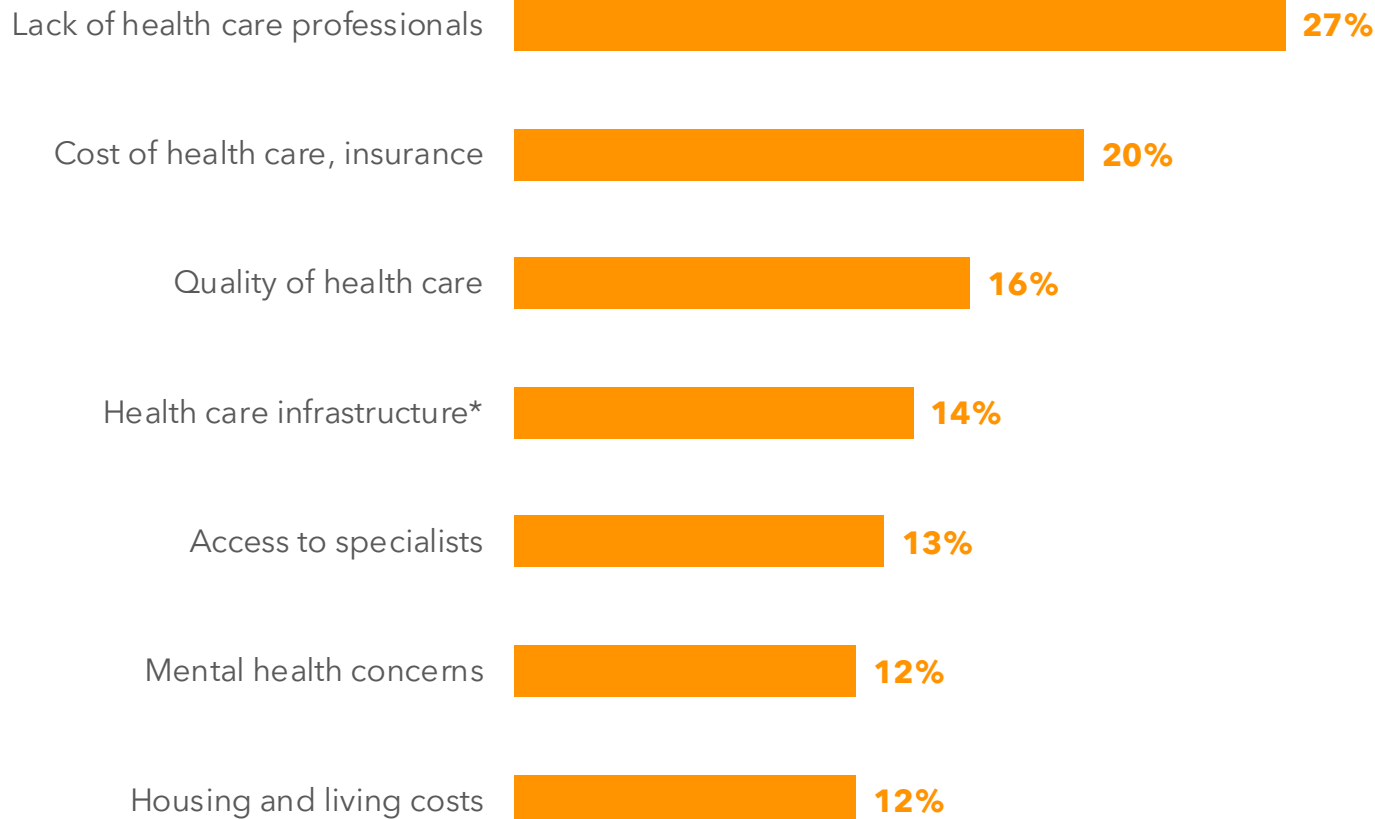
Thinking over the past year, were you able to get all your health care needs on the island where you live?



While lack of professionals is a dominant theme across the county, fire survivors mention mental health concerns

For Molokai and Lānaʻi, **health care transportation** is the dominant concern, followed by access to doctors, including specialists.

"Please finish the following sentence in your own words: My biggest health care concerns on the island where I live are ____." (open-end)



Top concerns among fire survivors

(rank ordered)

- Mental health concerns
- Health care infrastructure
- Lack of professionals
- Quality of health care
- Cost of health care

Top concerns among Molokai residents:

(rank ordered)

- Transportation for health care
- Lack of professionals
- Access to specialists
- Health care infrastructure
- Cost of health care
- Quality of health care

Top concerns among Lānaʻi residents:

(rank ordered)

- Transportation for health care
- Access to specialists
- Quality of health care
- Lack of professionals
- Emergency medical services

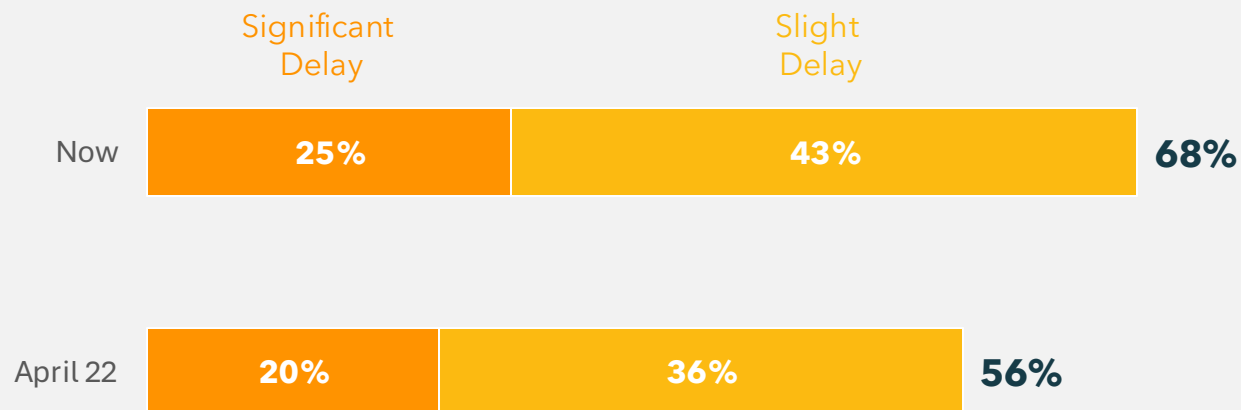
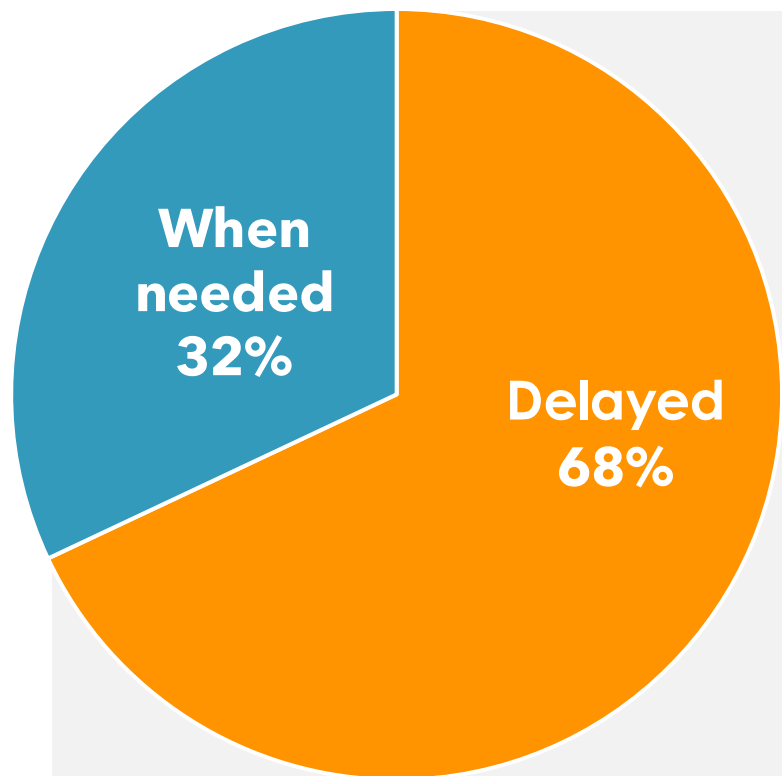
*Inadequate healthcare infrastructure, including hospitals and clinics, particularly in rural or isolated areas. "Only one hospital an hour away and one two-lane road to get there."

Over two-thirds report health care delays, with significantly higher numbers on Lānaʻi and Molokai This is a significant uptick in reported delays countywide in two years

Even most health care professionals report delays when accessing care for themselves and their families.



Thinking over the past year, when accessing health services, were you able to get them when wanted or needed or were there delays?



	Significant	Slight	Total delay
Molokai	37%	46%	83%
Lānaʻi	50%	27%	77%
Providers	35%	46%	81%

Lack of providers resulting in difficulty in making medical appointments are the two biggest reasons for delayed care on Maui

Airline delays and other transportation challenges top the charts on Lānaʻi and Molokai.

“

It took me over a year to schedule a mammogram. Missed calls, not returned calls. No appts made.

OBGYN care here is horrific, they cannot have this **limited availability for women and babies.** I needed another opinion and couldn't even get one in time.

Yes, **my primary care physician just left** and we definitely have a shortage. It's hard to get in to see anyone.

”

The county needs to provide funding for mental health services. Every county I have lived in since I can remember has a robust mental health budget. Maui does not!

It takes forever to get appointments from specialists. I had a kidney stone pass. It took FOUR MONTHS to get an appointment!!!!

If delayed, how come? (countywide)

No providers	57%
No appointments	55%

Inter-island travel woes were pervasive on Molokai and Lānaʻi, with Mokulele Airlines receiving the brunt of their frustrations, Being permanently “canceled” by doctors and missing important milestones are other concerns



Each island has a nickname for the airline, “Mo-delay-lay” on Molokai, and “Moku-late-late” on Lānaʻi.

Mokulele is an unreliable airline and greatly affects access to care. Since Mokulele is also only airline available, it is extremely expensive to travel (round trip \$220) so many patients cannot afford to travel for specialist appointments. It is extremely difficult to practice on Molokai given the airline issue because **I often find myself doing things that are at a specialist level and above my scope of practice.** Health Care Provider

The Mokulele delays mean specialists can't come in. **It's harder to get out to appointments** you have to spend the night before sometimes if you want to make sure you're there.

I actually had one patient that they, because of his size, they had to get a military plane on a C-130 just to get them off island because he couldn't fit on a Mokulele plane. Health Care Provider

It's funerals, the **things that are once in a lifetime event that's related to your family, that's what we miss** [due to Mokulele's inconsistent service].

As most Lānaians know, our biggest problem is **lack of reliable air transportation!!!** How can Mokulele continue to rearrange our flights, sometimes just before our flight day??

Not enough flights on Mokulele airlines There is too much delays and flights are expensive which does not allow most residents to seek off island medical appointments on a timely manner which causes a lot of cancellations and concerns that are not met.

Access to specialists and doctors off island. We need to see them, but our one airline transportation situation makes it difficult. It cost \$300 at the most to fly to Oahu just to see the doctor. More options such as telehealth or upgrading our health care systems would be better.

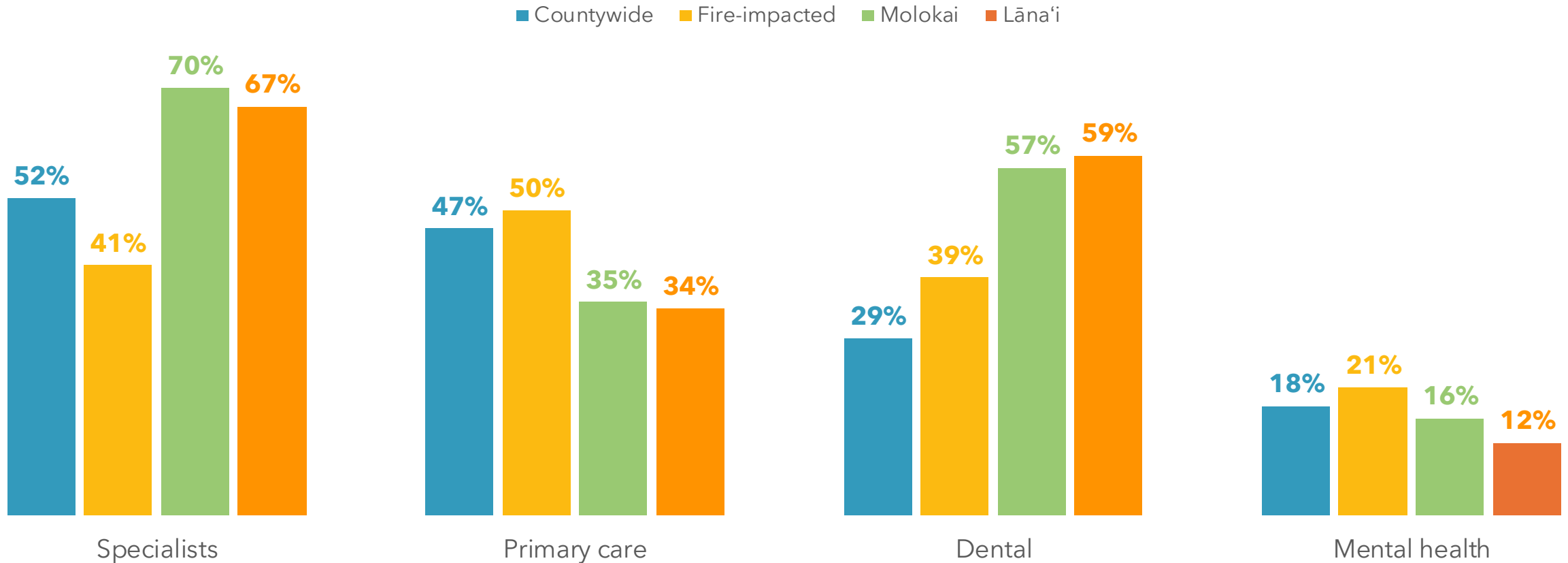
If delayed, how come? (Lānaʻi and Molokai)

Airline delays	59%
Have to go off-island	53%
No providers	52%
No appointments	35%
Too much time/too far	20%

Primary care and specialists are in greatest need, according to respondents

Access to specialists and dental care are more challenging on Lānaʻi and Molokai.

What types of health care appointments are the hardest for you to get?



Nearly one-quarter of County residents and three in 10 of the fire-impacted say mental health care is needed in their household

Note the number who “prefer not to say” and the fewer number of fire-impacted survivors who are a “no.”

A lot of people are feeling under pressure right now. Are you or is someone in your household in need of mental health counseling or help coping with life right now?

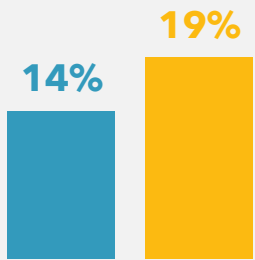
■ Countywide ■ Fire-impacted

Most in need countywide:

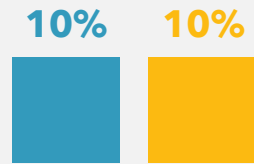
Younger college-educated; women under 55; low-income residents, especially Filipino and Native Hawaiians; single head of household; unemployed; and Med-QUEST patients.

Most in need among fire impacted:

Those living in South Maui; Caucasians; low-income residents, especially white and Filipino; and not currently married.



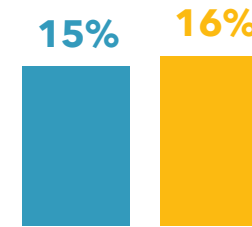
Yes, I need help



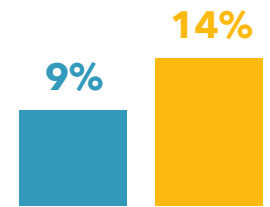
Yes, someone in my household needs help



No



Not sure



Prefer not to say

Unlike the public, health care professionals prioritize psychiatry and mental health counseling above all other specialties. They also worry about hospital capacity, including ER facilities

What medical services are needed in order to improve the community's health?

Mental health, counseling	82%
Psychiatry	79%
Endocrinology	63%
Dental	58%
Rheumatology	58%
Dermatology	51%
Urology	49%
Rehab (PT/OT/Speech)	49%
Oncology	49%
Cardiology	44%
Other	39%
ENT	37%
Orthopedics'/orthopedic surgery	33%
Pharmacy	26%

Biggest health care concerns among providers

"Availability of PCP appointments and behavioral health support."

"We need more dedicated staff who want to work in the field of mental health and are skilled in the field of mental health."

"Lacking specialist care especially GI, pulmo, rheumatology, urology to name a few."

"Our hospital is not equipped to handle the amount of people that live in our county. We need to improve our hospital. The ER situation is horrible. Lanai's ER situation is horrible."

"Maui needs OBGYN and GASTROENTEROLOGY DESPERATELY."

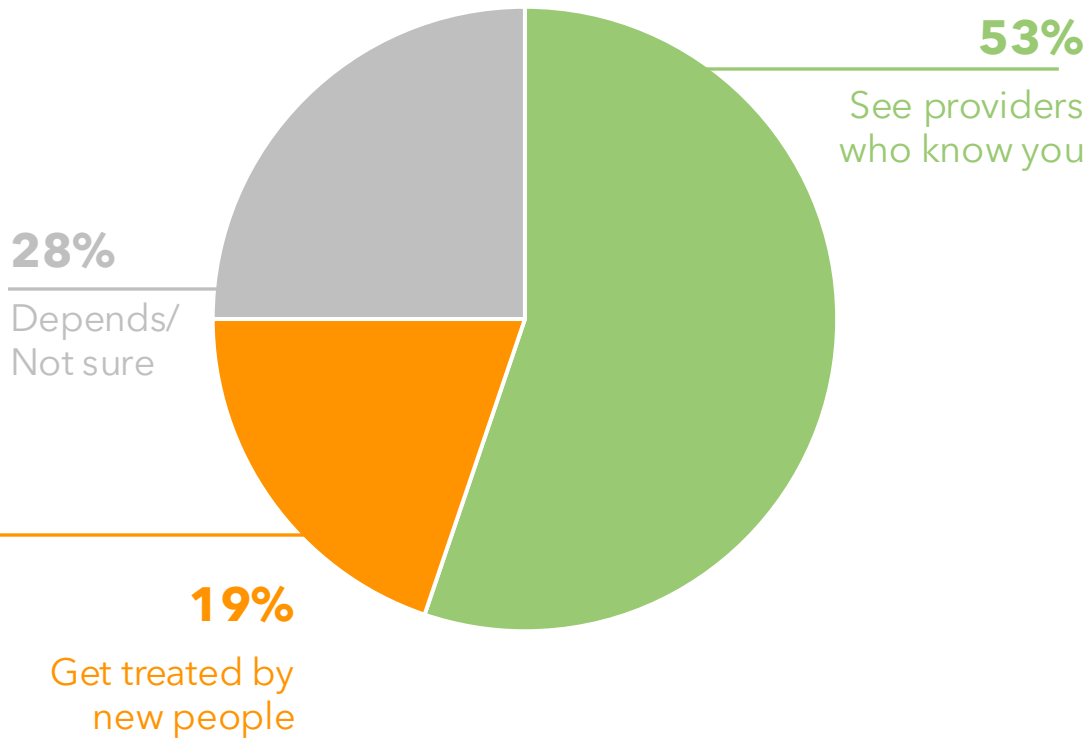
Access to primary care and after hours clinics. Patients use ER for simple non-life threatening problems."

"More staff psychiatrists, more therapists, & more support staff (RN, MA, receptionist)."

Just over half report having consistency of care

The numbers are lower for the fire survivor community and on Molokai.

When seeking medical care, which do you do most often?



When seeking medical care, which do you do most often:	All	Fire-impacted	Molokai	Lānaʻi
See providers who know you	53%	42%	46%	57%
Get treated by new people	19%	22%	18%	14%
Depends/Not sure	28%	36%	37%	28%

In good news, there is interest in health care career training, especially among fire survivors

Over three-quarters of those interested asked to be contacted about career education and possible scholarships. They include individuals already in health care looking to upskill.



Are you or is someone in your household interested in career training for a job in health care like, for example, a certified nursing assistant, a registered nurse, a social worker, or some other health care job?

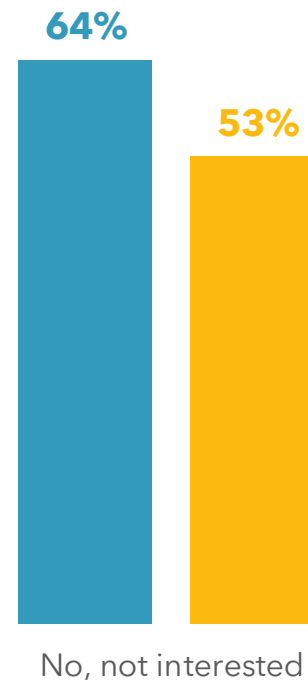
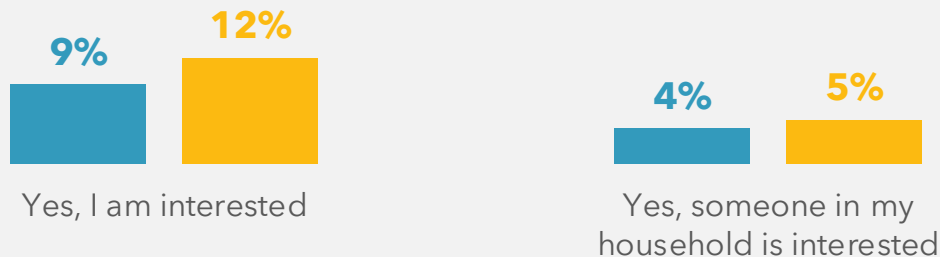
■ Countywide ■ Fire-impacted

Most interested countywide:

Lāna'i and Molokai; high school diploma or some college; women under 55; Filipino and Pacific Islanders, including men; low-income earners; keiki in household; unemployed; 35-54 years old; Med-QUEST patients.

Most interested among fire-impacted:

high school diploma or some college; men and women under 55; Filipino and mixed Asian; low-income earners; have keiki in household; currently unemployed; lived in Maui less than five years; Med-QUEST patients.



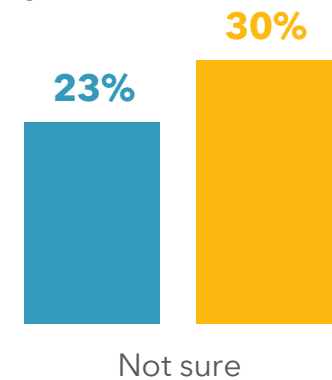
FROM PROVIDERS

"We need to establish more young competent professionals."

"Inadequate investment in local providers in every sphere of health care."

"We need to grow our own health professionals -- many come from the mainland and leave shortly."

"I have the privilege of serving the community that helped to raise me. It takes a village to raise a child, now the child can serve the village."

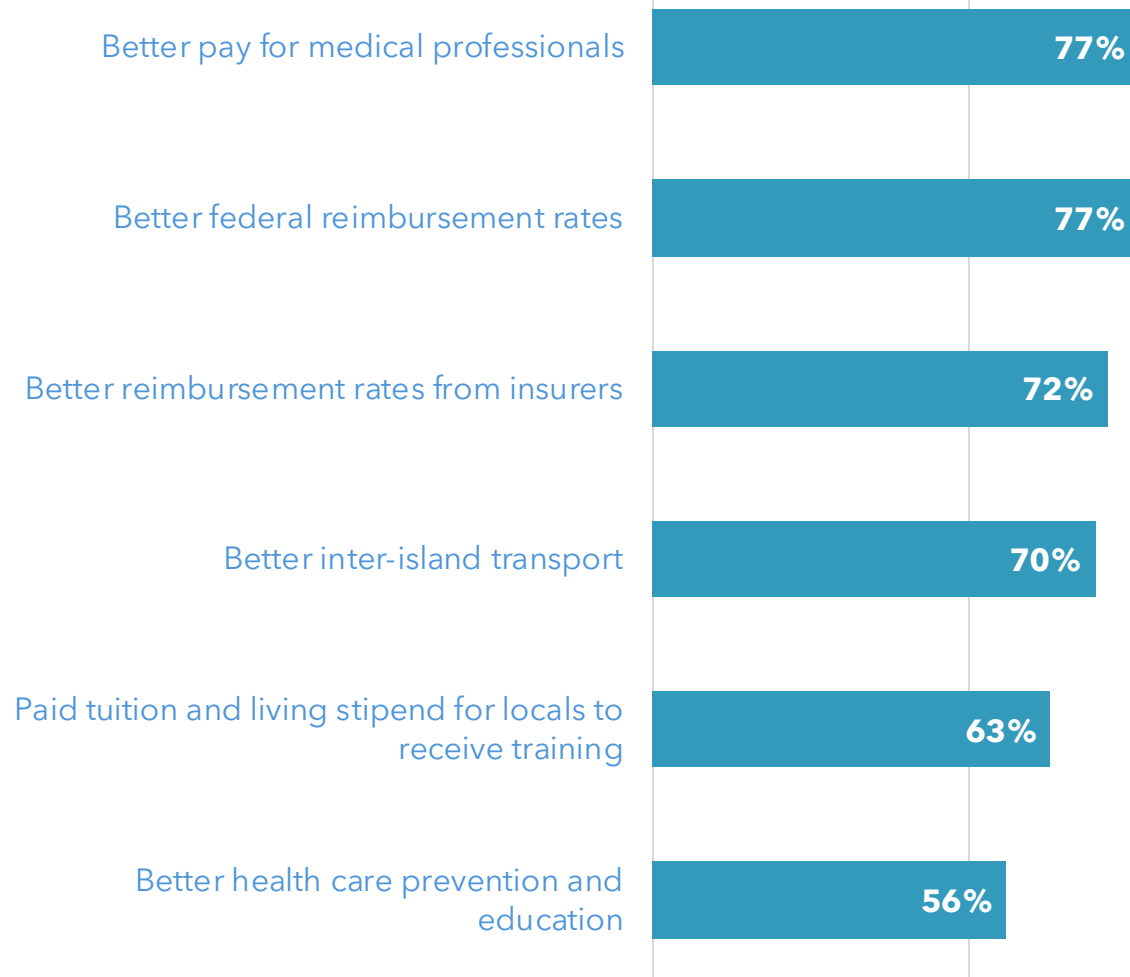


Better pay and reimbursement rates along with improved inter-island transport are key to solving Maui County's health care woes, according to health care pros



Conversely, cost of living, housing affordability and access, and low reimbursement rates are the biggest impediments to recruiting for medical careers.

How much do you think each policy item will alleviate some of the health care problems in Maui County? *Showing % a great deal*



Major obstacles to recruiting new providers, other health care professionals

High cost of living	85%
Lack/cost of housing	85%
Low reimbursement rates	65%
Isolation of location	52%

"Better pay; less control by HMSA over our state's entire health care system."

"HIGHER PAY."

"Being reimbursed for preventative care and mental health treatment for people who don't have a diagnosis per se but would still benefit from support (i.e. being able to bill for symptoms and not only diagnoses)."

"Better access to care for my patients. Better reimbursement. More providers to help ease the load."



Providers suggest that improved compensation, “best practice” health care, less insurance company control, and more community services would make their jobs more rewarding



The kindness of the patient community keeps some of them in the game.

What, if anything, would make your work more satisfying or rewarding?

- ✓ Better pay and compensation packages.
- ✓ More support staff.
- ✓ Ability to deliver health care in a timely manner.
- ✓ Better communication to the public about access to services, health care education and prevention.
- ✓ Increased employer-provided benefits countywide.
- ✓ Work to eliminate silos in the health care community.
- ✓ Fewer restrictions from insurance companies.
- ✓ Return to “best practice” medicine.
- ✓ More wrap-around social services for families.

“The system is so broken, but the people totally make every agonizing moment worth it.”

“Being allowed to practice the way I was taught. Being given more time per patient visit. Reduce administrative burden and non-medical people making medical decisions on care. Make insurance companies dependent on providers, not the other way around as it is.”

“More resources to provide to families with children who are struggling - wrap around care for mental health, addiction, parenting classes, financial education classes, services to help families prevent crisis.”



Mahalo!

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