



Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Rural Adult Cancer Survivors

WHAT DID WE WANT TO KNOW AND WHY?

There are **17** million cancer survivors in the US.

million cancer survivors in the US.

We wanted to understand their attitudes about COVID-19 and how the pandemic affected them.

WHAT DID WE DO?



The Cancer Prevention and Control Research Network (CPCRN) at the EPRC conducted a survey of adult cancer survivors over 18 years of age within the Phoebe Cancer Center.

The survey asked about:



COVID-19 Preventative Behaviors



Impact of COVID-19 on survivors and families



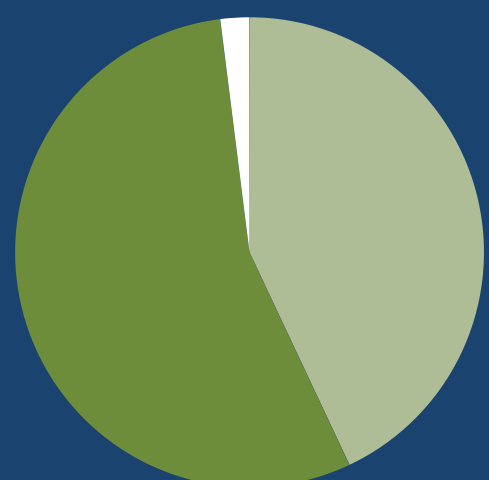
Use of health and cancer care



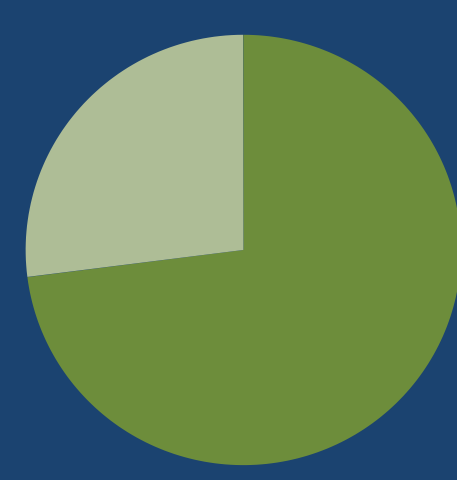
COVID-19 vaccination

WHAT DID WE FIND?

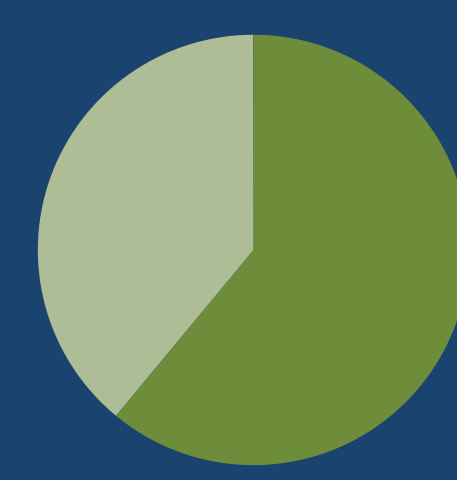
The 49 Cancer survivors who responded to the survey (34% response rate) were:



55% White
43% Black



73% Female
27% Male



61% college graduates of whom 67.3% have an income over \$50,000

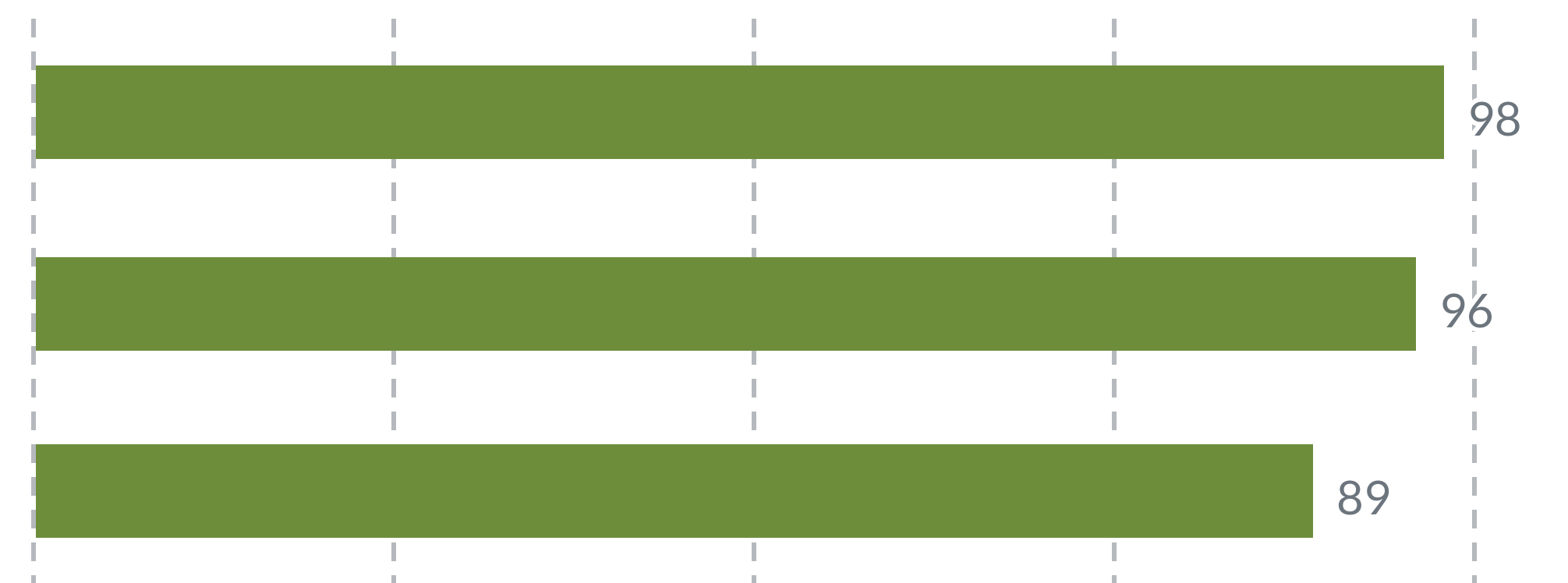
Survey results:



Preventative Behaviors

Almost all practiced COVID-19-related protective behaviors:

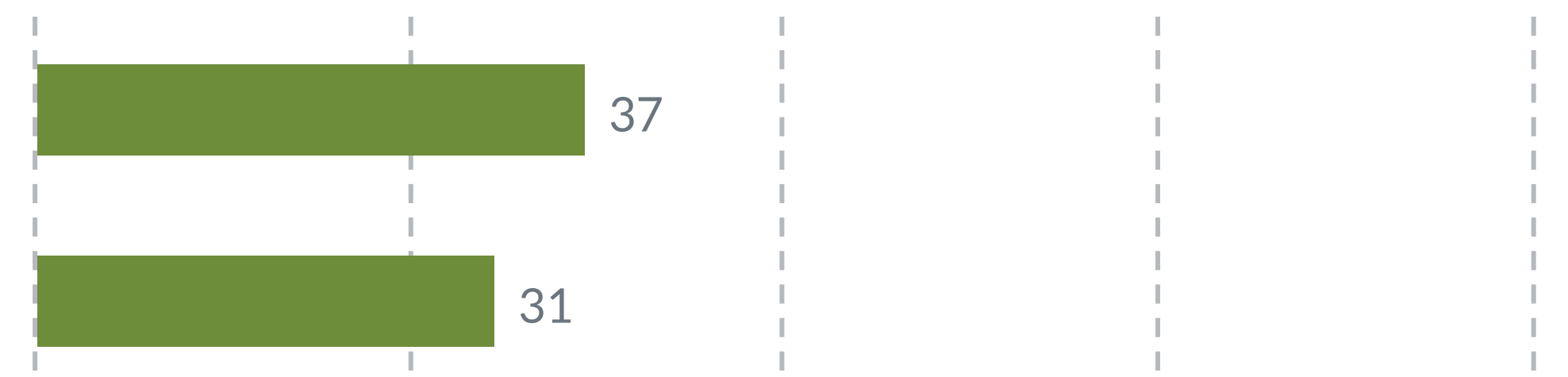
- 98% wore masks
- 95.9% increased handwashing
- 87.8% avoided close contact with people who were sick



COVID-19 Impact

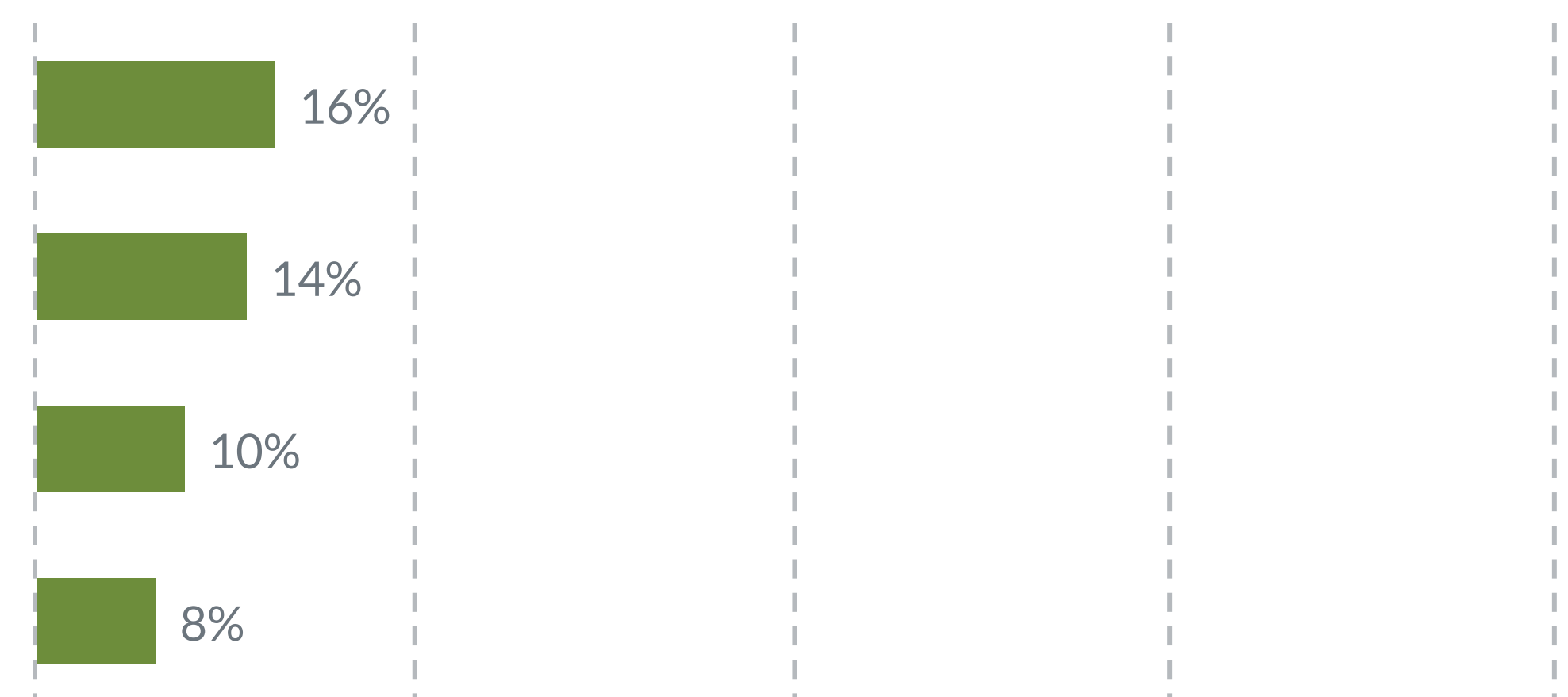
There were some mental health effects due to COVID-19. For example, in the past two weeks:

- 37% felt little interest or pleasure in doing things
- 31% felt down, depressed, or hopeless



Survivors reported facing limited financial hardship because of the pandemic. For example:

- Problems paying medical bills (16%)
- Loss of employment in household (14%)
- Loss of income in the next 4 weeks or had problems paying utilities (10%)
- Applied for Georgia Food Stamp Program (SNAP)(8%)



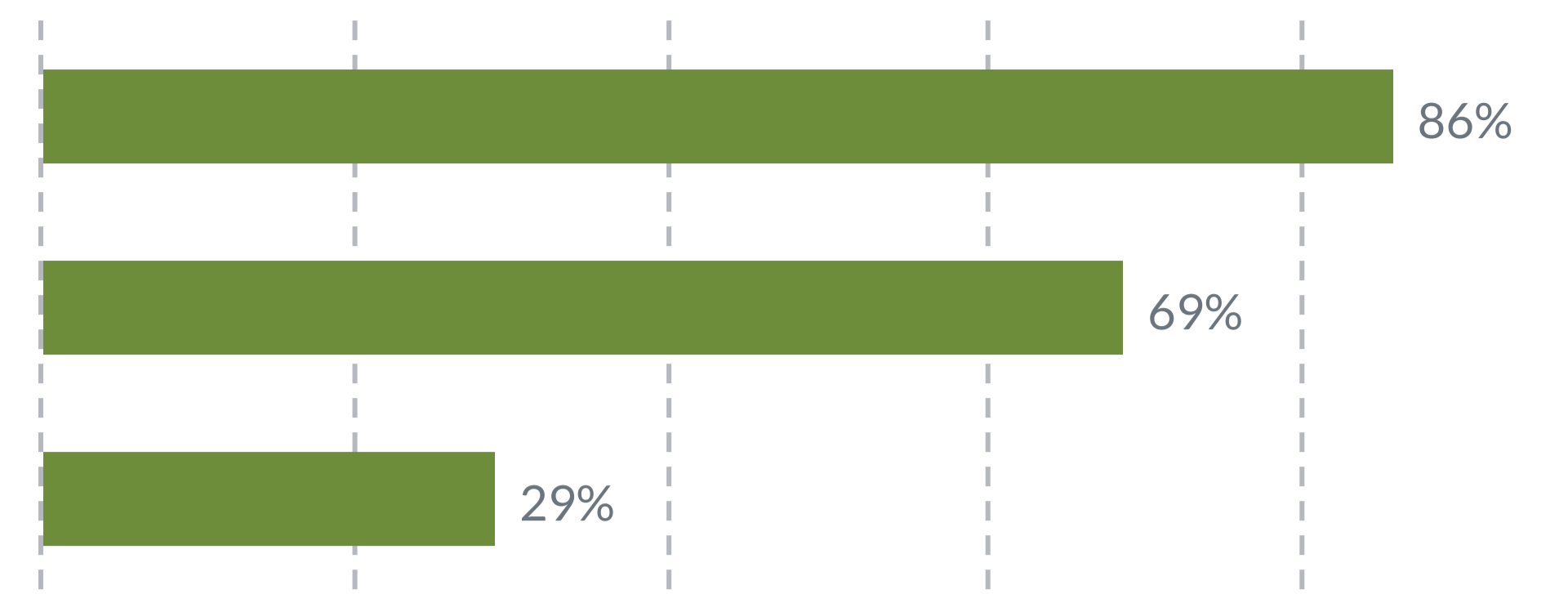
[More >](#)

Survey results cont.:



Healthcare use

- 86% did not skip or delay any type of medical visit because of the Coronavirus outbreak
- 69% were offered in-person visits
- 29% were offered both in-person and telemedicine

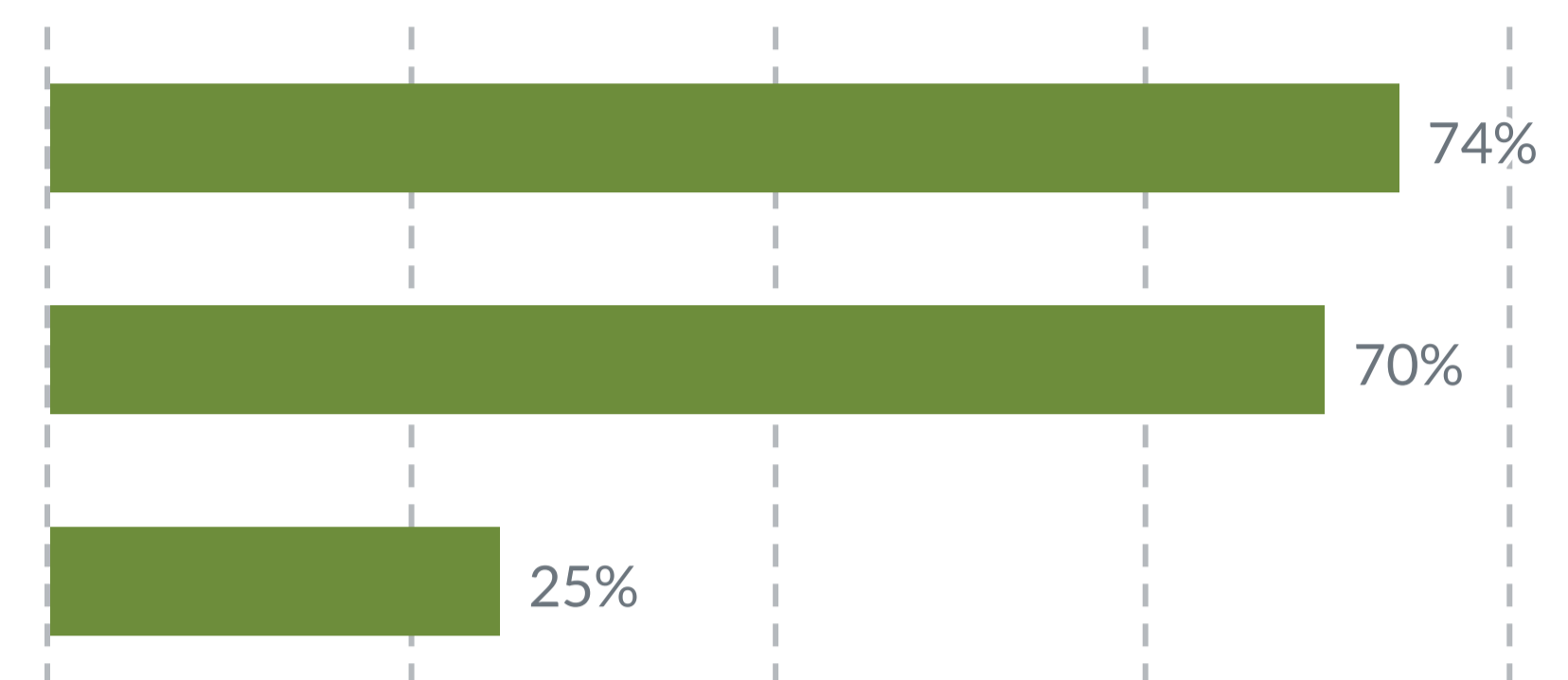


- Most who received telemedicine were satisfied and thought it should continue
- Almost half did not want to receive telemedicine, most stating they wanted to see their doctor in-person



Vaccines

- 74% of participants were vaccinated.
- 70% said they got vaccinated to protect themselves
- 25% specifically mentioned their illness/susceptibility



More than two-thirds had heard COVID-19 vaccine myths, yet it did not appear to impact vaccination behavior.

Respondents wanted more information about:

- boosters and their effectiveness
- the need for repeated COVID vaccination (similar to the flu shot)
- studies related to the vaccine and fertility issues
- long-term effects of the vaccines
- medical benefits
- research on the coronavirus
- how long the pandemic could last



WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- This was one of the first studies to investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on rural cancer survivors.
- Most were vaccinated and practiced other protective behaviors like mask wearing.
- Some studies have found impacts from COVID-19 on survivorship care, household finances, and mental health, yet among this population of rural cancer survivors:



- They did not miss their medical or survivorship care appointments and wanted to continue the option of either in-person or telemedicine visits.
- There were some impacts on mental health and household economics, but they were low overall.

In general, the impact of the pandemic on this population of rural cancer survivors was limited. It is possible that few patients missed appointments because the cancer center is located in their community and offered education about the vaccine.

For more information about this study, contact Cam Escoffery at cescoff@emory.edu.
For more information about the Emory CPRN visit <https://web1.sph.emory.edu/eprc/research/cpcrn.html>.

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