



TOWN HALL

Monthly Briefing: Policy Updates and Coordinated Response

September 30, 2026

8 pm ET | 7 pm CT | 6 pm MT | 5 pm PT

PROFESSION-WIDE EVENT

WWW.AHMCOALITION.ORG

QUICK PARTICIPATION TIPS

- ✓ All Attendees are muted
- ✓ You can ask questions using your dashboard. All questions will be answered during or after the meeting
- ✓ To ensure proper attendance: attendee must be able to see this presentation and the dashboard on their device
- ✓ PDA Certificate of Completion will be distributed within two (2) weeks from the event date
- PDA Points will be reported to Diplomate's Recertification Transcript
- In addition, PDA Certificates of Completion will be uploaded to Diplomate's Certification Portal in the Diplomate Benefits => *My Learning Section*

QUICK PARTICIPATION TIPS

- Attention family and friends! You can watch the presentation together, but each attendee must be logged into the session separately in order to receive PDA points
- ***All Attendees!*** To receive PDA points, be sure you have registered with your name and NCCAOM ID number as they are recorded in your Certification account. We cannot edit any registration information.
- The Town Hall is being recorded and will be posted to the AHM Coalition Website.

	Diplomate Name	NCCAOM ID #
Correct	John Doe	12569
Incorrect	Dr. John Doe	NCC12569
Incorrect	John Doe, L.Ac.	12569FL
Incorrect	John Doe	Doe12569
Incorrect	John Doe, MSOM	12569

PRESENTERS



Mark McKenzie, LAc, PhD (China), MSOM, Executive Director, ACAHM

Jason Wright, LAc, Dipl. OM, Director of Accreditation Services, ACAHM

Paul Magee, Ma.O.M., L.Ac., Chair, ASA

Thomas Kouo, DAOM, L.Ac., Dipl. OM, President, CCAHM

Ben Griffith, L.Ac., Dipl. AC, Vice President, CCAHM

Kristin Richeimer, CAE, Executive Director, CCAHM

Mina Larson, M.S., MBA, CAE, Chief Executive Officer, NCBAHM





April 29 - May 2, 2027 Baltimore, MD USA
Hybrid format (in-person or virtual)

SAR 2027 RESEARCH CONFERENCE

*From Needles to Networks: Advancing Whole Person Health
Through Acupuncture and Traditional East Asian Medicine*



Co-sponsored by  VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY OF
INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE

 Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

 Osher Center for Integrative Medicine
HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL AND BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S HOSPITAL 

Call for Abstracts & Presentations open — deadline October 5, 2026

www.AcupunctureResearch.org/2027-conference





Global IMPlimentation of Acupuncture Cancer Therapy (**GLO-IMPACT**) Course

Addressing Cancer-Related
Pain Through Acupuncture

Application Deadline: Dec. 4, 2026

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE FOR COHORT 2
Course Fee (after scholarship): \$150 USD
(Scholarship value: \$245 USD)



- ✓ 8-hour On-demand Learning Course
- ✓ Eligible for 8 PDAs through NCBAHM (formerly NCCAOM)
- ✓ Access to SAR-led live monthly webinars
- ✓ Opportunities to share case examples and practice experiences



MORE INFORMATION

www.acupunctureresearch.org/GLO-IMPACT



THE SOCIETY FOR
ACUPUNCTURE
RESEARCH



AHMC Webinar

NACIQI Update – Mark McKenzie
June 2026 Straw Poll – Jason Wright



NACIQI Update

Mark S. McKenzie
ACAHM Executive Director

Continuing Recognition with USDE

- Every five years, ACAHM, as a recognized accrediting agency is reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education for compliance with 34 CFR Part 602.
- ACAHM submitted its petition in July 2024, received the initial draft staff report in Sept 2025, submitted our response in Feb 2026 and received the final staff report 21 August 2026.
- Department Staff recommended:

Continue the agency's recognition as a nationally recognized accrediting agency at this time and require the agency to come into compliance within 12 months with the criteria listed below (11), and submit a compliance report due 30 days thereafter that demonstrates the agency's compliance.

The agency has also been found substantially compliant with criteria listed below (5), and Department staff recommend a monitoring report due within 12 months of the SDO decision.

National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity

- The National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) is a federal advisory body that advises the U.S. Secretary of Education on higher education accreditation, including recommendations regarding continuing recognition of accrediting agencies.
 - As an advisory body, the recommendations are non-binding. Final determination regarding recognition rests with the Senior Designated Official (SDO)
 - ACAHM's petition and the Department's Final Staff Report were reviewed at the 23-24 September 2026 NACIQI meeting.

NACIQI Review

- NACIQI is composed of up to 18 members with six each appointed by the Secretary of Education, the House of Representatives and the Senate.
- Members review accrediting agency petitions and the final staff reports in advance of the meeting
- NACIQI primary readers and USDE Staff brief the members on the agency
- Agency comments on the final staff report
- NACIQI members question the agency
- Opportunity for third-party comments w/brief agency response
- Department staff response to agency and third-party comments
- Discussion, Motion & Vote

NACIQI Recommendation

- "NACIQI recommends that the Senior Department Official (SDO) continue the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine's recognition as a nationally recognized accrediting agency at this time and require the agency to come into compliance within 12 months with the criteria listed in the final staff report, and submit a compliance report due 30 days thereafter that demonstrates the agency's compliance, address admissions transparency, curriculum requirements, and career earnings to student-debt ratios for its accredited institutions and programs. The agency has also been found substantially compliant with criteria listed in the final staff report, except that student achievement 602.16(a)(1)(i) be found noncompliant and require a compliance report, and recommend a monitoring report due within 12 months of the SDO decision."

Current Recognition Status

- In short, ACAHM's recognition continues for now and we expect to receive the SDO's final determination letter within 90 days.
- We do expect that we will need to submit both a compliance and monitoring report in late 2027, early 2028 to follow-up required on any criteria found to be in non-compliance and/or substantial compliance.
- We'll continue to monitor the process and will post the Department's final decision on our website once it is issued.
- Additional comments, if any



Program Revision Proposals Update

June 2026 Straw Poll – Jason Wright Dir of Acc Srvs
Preliminary Outcomes

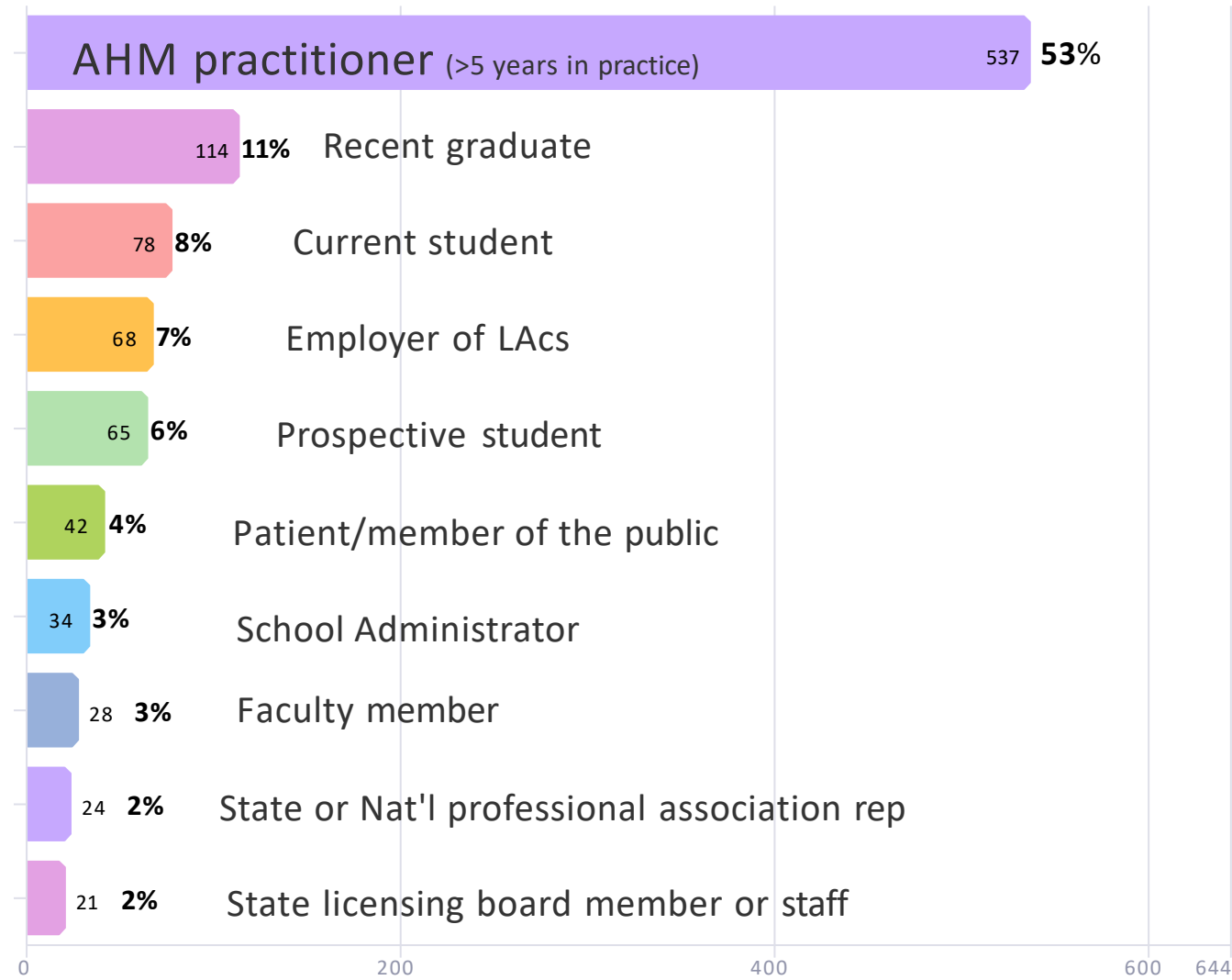
Standards Review Process

Federal regulations and ACAHM policies require that the process to review and update accreditation standards involves all of the **agency's relevant constituencies** in the review and affords them a meaningful opportunity to provide input into the review.

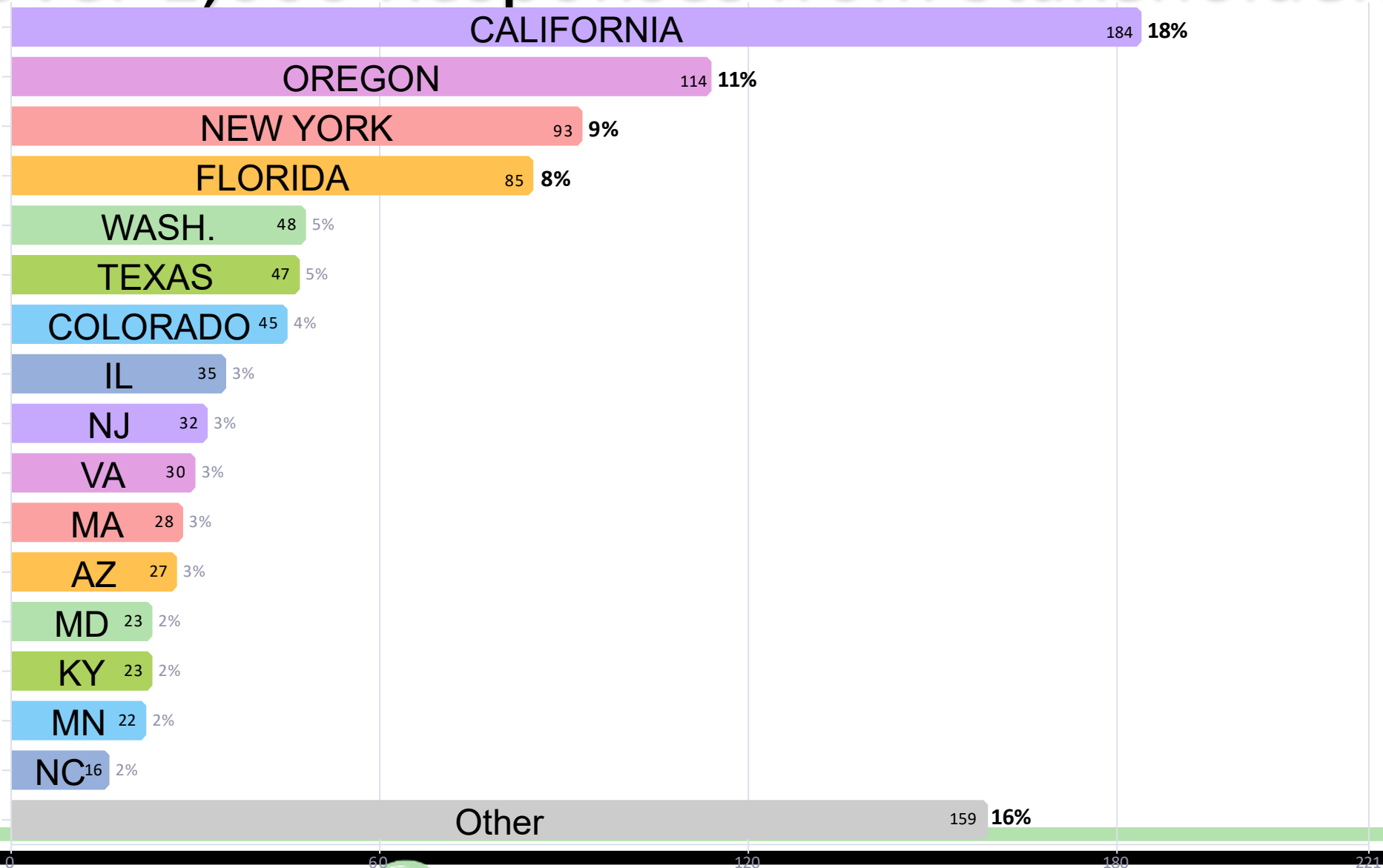
Straw Poll - June 2026

- Purpose - to evaluate where stakeholder support and concerns sit for **three (3) draft proposals** that support students' ability to obtain acupuncture degrees, achieve professional competencies, and become safe and competent licensable professionals.
- The Commission is in the process of thoroughly reviewing the gathered input to determine which proposals, if any, should be further developed into draft accreditation standards for a formal public comment period.
- More details of analysis will be forthcoming.
- Review has identified a few stakeholder misunderstandings.
- Some readily apparent outcomes have been identified.

Over 1,000 Responses from Stakeholders



Over 1,000 Responses from Stakeholders



Review of Draft Revision Proposals

- **DRAFT PROPOSAL 1:** decrease minimum requirements for MAc program
- **DRAFT PROPOSAL 2:** Bachelor of Science in Acupuncture as additional entry-level program
- **DRAFT PROPOSAL 3:** “Applied” Bachelor’s Program plus MAc

Common Misunderstandings

- Proposal 1 does not address the impending financial aid issues
 - not intended to
 - based on stakeholder suggestions received prior to OBBA
- Exclusion of herbal medicine training would redefine profession
 - herbal training not required in many states
 - herbal training is already available as a stackable certificate that can be added to a MAc degree
- Portability & licensure eligibility would be sacrificed
 - current ACAHM program minimums do not guarantee portability
- California exclusion is unacceptable
 - NONE of the current ACAHM program minimums meet CA requirements
- Entry-level doctoral program exclusion
 - not required for licensure in any states

Preliminary Outcome - Proposal 1

Decrease minimum requirements for Master of Acupuncture program

- Opposed by 61% of respondents; supported by 26%.
- ACAHM will not proceed with further development of proposal 1 as drafted.

Preliminary Outcome - Proposal 2

Bachelor of Acupuncture program as entry-level option

- Opposed by 66% of respondents; supported by 22%.
- ACAHM will not proceed with further development of a stand-alone, entry-level bachelor's program.

Preliminary Outcome - Proposal 3

“Applied” Bachelor plus Master of Acupuncture program as entry-level option

- Approximately 41% support further development and 40% oppose further development.
- Scope expansion with Dept. of Education is lengthy.
- 3-year “applied” bachelor’s degree may be challenging to defend.
- ACAHM is further evaluating viability.

Efforts to Improve Program Affordability

- ACAHM will be working with schools to identify cost saving measures available under current ACAHM standards, such as:
 - off-campus clinical training,
 - acceptable use of transfer credits,
 - incorporation of distance education,
 - scheduling of educational activities (i.e., modular, evening, weekend, etc.),
 - resource sharing (i.e., contractual or consortial agreements with other institutions)
- ACAHM will be considering revisions to its accreditation standards to address federal regulations by the U.S. Department of Education that tie college program financial aid eligibility to graduate earnings (Student Tuition and Transparency System and Earnings Accountability framework).



Paul Magee
Ma.O.M., L.Ac.
Chair
ASA





Kristin Richeimer,
CAE, Executive Director, CCAHM



KEY EDUCATION RULEMAKING COMMITTEES



1 Reimagining and Improving Student Education (RISE) Committee

2 Accountability in Higher Education and Access Through Demand Driven Workforce Pell (AHEAD) Committee (PELL)

3 AHEAD Committee Student Tuition and Transparency System and Earnings Accountability (STATS) Framework

- ✓ CCAHM, AHMC, APWA Coalition Comments Submitted
- ✓ NPRM Public Comment Closed March 2, 2026
- ✓ Final Rule Published May 1, 2026

- ✓ CCAHM, ACAHM, AHMC Comments Submitted on PELL and STATS Framework
- ✓ NPRM Public Comment CLOSED April 8, 2026
- ✓ Final Rule (PELL) Published May 19, 2026

- ✓ CCAHM, ACAHM, AHMC Comments Submitted on STATS Framework
- ✓ NPRM Public Comment CLOSED May 20th
- ✓ Final Rule (STATS) published July 1, 2026 for implementation July 1, 2026



FEDERAL RULEMAKING (Continued)



Accreditation, Innovation, and Modernization (AIM) Committee

“Tasked with developing proposed regulations to reform the higher ed. accreditation system, aimed at reducing costs, increasing innovation, and shifting focus toward data-driven student outcomes rather than bureaucratic compliance.”

Neg Reg sessions occurred:

April 13-17, 2026

May 18-21, 2026



Committee Consensus Achieved,



NPRM Public Comment CLOSED Sept 20th

Final Rule expected by Nov 2026 for implementation July 1, 2027



Regulation for Financial Assistance

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has released a sweeping proposed rulemaking to revise the *Uniform Guidance*, which governs federal grants and cooperative agreements across the federal government. This is a government-wide proposal that would affect grants administered by agencies including HHS, HRSA, NIH, NSF, and many others.



NPRM Public Comment Deadline: July 13, 2026



ON THE HORIZON (ED)

- FERPA
- HHS Restructure
- DOE General Administration
- Title IX
- SAVE Plan
- Reducing Anti-Competitive Barriers
- Campus Safety & Security Reporting



LITIGATION Updates

- **Active Lawsuits (8)**
- **AANMC/AANP Filed Aug. 4th**
- **Key Issues**

Press Release

DEMOCRACY
FORWARD

Broad Coalition Challenges Unlawful Student Loan Restrictions That Target Nurses, Counselors, Public Health Professionals, and Educators

National Healthcare and Higher Education Associations and Unions Unite to Stop Threat to Thousands Who Rely on Federal Student Loans

Coalition of 25 States Sue ED Over OBBBA Loan Limits, Claim New Rule Will Worsen Workforce Shortages

By Maria Carrasco, NASFAA Staff Reporter

Forbes

Nursing Associations Sue Trump Administration Over Student Loan Limit Rule

By [Michael T. Nietzel](#), Senior Contributor. © Michael Nietzel, former college pr...

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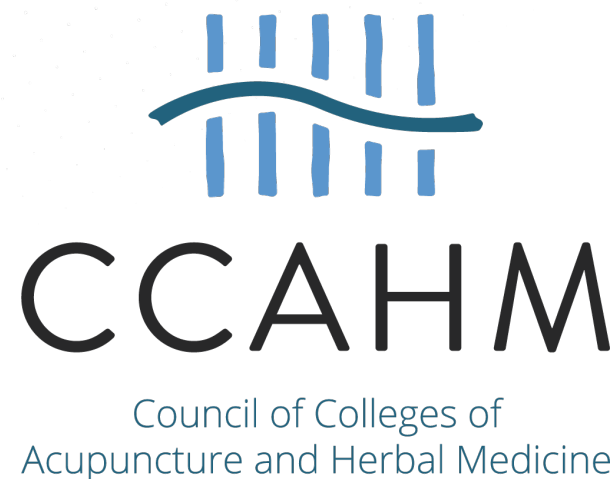
Published May 30, 2026, 09:16am EDT, Updated May 30, 2026, 10:02am EDT

Statement Regarding Lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Education's "Professional Degree" Rule

CCAHM and AHM COALITION RESOURCES



www.AHMCoalition.org



www.CCAHM.org

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY & HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY

The Council of Colleges of Acupuncture & Herbal Medicine (CCAHM) engages in federal and higher education policy work that protects student access, supports institutional stability, and strengthens the long-term viability of Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine (AHM) education. This work is grounded in CCAHM's 2026–2028 Strategic Plan, including Priority 4: Expand Legislative Advocacy and Regulatory Engagement.

Advocacy focus areas

- Federal student aid and affordability for AHM students
- Education policy and accountability frameworks affecting degree programs
- Regulatory engagement, including negotiated rulemaking
- Coalition-building to amplify the voice of AHM institutions

Why this work matters

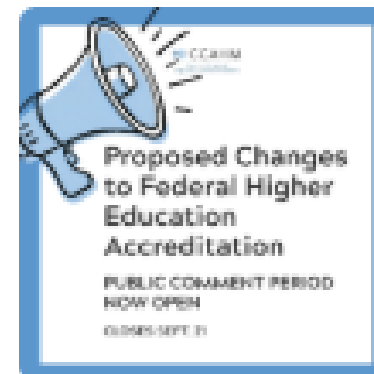
Federal and state policy decisions shape whether students can finance their education, how programs are evaluated, and how institutions plan for workforce needs. CCAHM's role is to represent the higher education perspective of accredited AHM colleges and help ensure policies reflect how professional education actually works. This has become especially critical in recent months, with key provisions of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act impacting higher education and the Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine sector.

Current policy issues

Student aid and affordability; Earnings Metrics and Accountability

We monitor and engage on policies affecting graduate/professional borrowing, program eligibility and affordability for students pursuing Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine education, as well as earnings metrics and accountability measures for institutions of AHM Education.

September 21, 2026 Update



AIM NPRM: Submit Your Public Comment by September 21

The U.S. Department of Education is accepting public comments on the Accreditation, Innovation, and Modernization (AIM) proposed rule through 11:59 p.m. ET today. The proposed rule includes provisions that could affect how specialized health-profession education programs are evaluated, including program length, program requirements, and standards adopted in the public interest.

[View Templates & Information](#)

July 30, 2026 Update



APWA FAQ: What Happens Now for Graduate Student Loans?

This document addresses some questions after the RISE rule took effect July 1, 2026, along with updates following ongoing related litigation.

[Read the FAQ](#)

July 6, 2026 Update



AHM Coalition Federal Regulatory Update

The AHM Coalition has drafted a Federal Regulatory update for the profession after recent litigation and other developments. You can read or download the update on the AHM Coalition Website.

[Read the Update](#)

May 18, 2026 Update



We encourage Licensed Acupuncturists and others to submit public comment to protect access to AHM education. Comments are most effective when they reflect your own professional, educational, patient, or community experience and explain how the proposed rule may affect students, patients, healthcare access, and the AHM workforce.

Templates are available for:

- Licensed Acupuncturists | Practitioners
- Faculty | Educators
- Healthcare Providers and Referrers
- Associations, Organizations, and AHM Businesses
- Patients and Community Members

[Access Templates](#)

May 14, 2026 Update



Member school institution response templates are available now on CCAHM Connect and have been emailed to members. Thanks to the member schools who joined the May 14 CCAHM Now event to discuss the public comment and the Department of Education's AHEAD STATS framework. Stay tuned for additional updates and public comment templates. Contact kricheimer@ccahm.org if you need more information.

AHEAD Advocacy: Where We Stand

An overview regarding the Department of Education's AHEAD/STATS rule and CCAHM's advocacy & outreach.

Presented by:

Dr. Thomas Kouo, CCAHM President

Dr. Ben Griffith, CCAHM Vice President



THE RULE

What AHEAD Does

Effective July 1, 2027

Fail twice, lose federal loans

Measures net, not real, income

Built on data ED won't publish

THE STAKES

Why Congressional Support Is Needed

- ED sets the metrics administratively — **only Congress** can fix the underlying statute to require accurate, program-appropriate measures
- **AHM, Social Work, Public Health, Early Education, Theology, Cosmetology, etc. are examples of programs impacted and likely to fail the metrics.**
- The window is narrow: language needs to move before the rule takes effect July 1, 2027

ON THE HILL

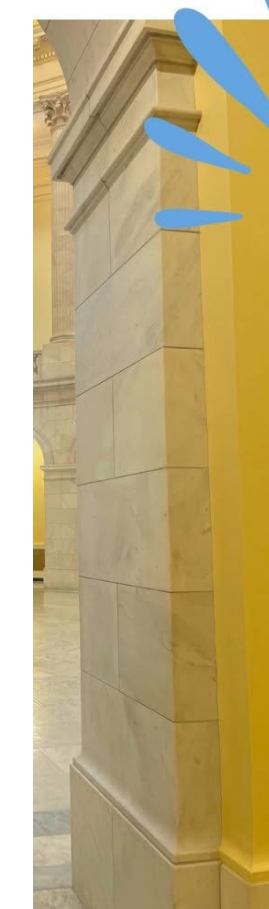
Where We've Engaged

20+

meetings on the Hill since
July, House and Senate
combined



CCAHM
On Capitol Hill



Letters, Leave-Behinds & Legislative Fix

Sign-on & Community Materials

- Republican sign-on letter to Secretary McMahon
- Institutional sign-on letter
- Profession-wide sign-on letter to encourage support of legislative fix

Hill-ready tools & strategy

- Leave-behinds for every Hill meeting
- Legislative fix language, strategy memos
- Federal data workbook covering member institutions
- State fact sheets built for member-school advocacy days

CALL
TO
ACTION

TO BE AVAILABLE ON
AHMCoalition.org | CCAHM.org

LOOKING AHEAD

Next Steps & Strategy

- Work in coalition with other affected professions
- Move to identify and secure a Hill champion for the appropriate-metrics fix
- Push to get language included in a year-end legislative package — continuing resolution or omnibus — ahead of the July 1, 2027 effective date
- Analyze and adjust based on mid-term election results

Questions? Reach out to Venicia Gray, Vogel Group (venicia@vogelgroupdc.com) or CCAHM Staff Kristin Richeimer, CCAHM Executive Director: kricheimer@ccahm.org



**Mina Larson,
M.S., MBA, CAE,
Chief Executive Officer,
NCBAHM**



2024 NCBAHM JOB TASK ANALYSIS: KEY FINDINGS AND INSIGHTS



JOB TASK ANALYSIS

- ✓ Defines and analyzes descriptions of job-related elements linked to the purpose of the credential
- ✓ **Analysis of the demographic and professional characteristics of the survey**

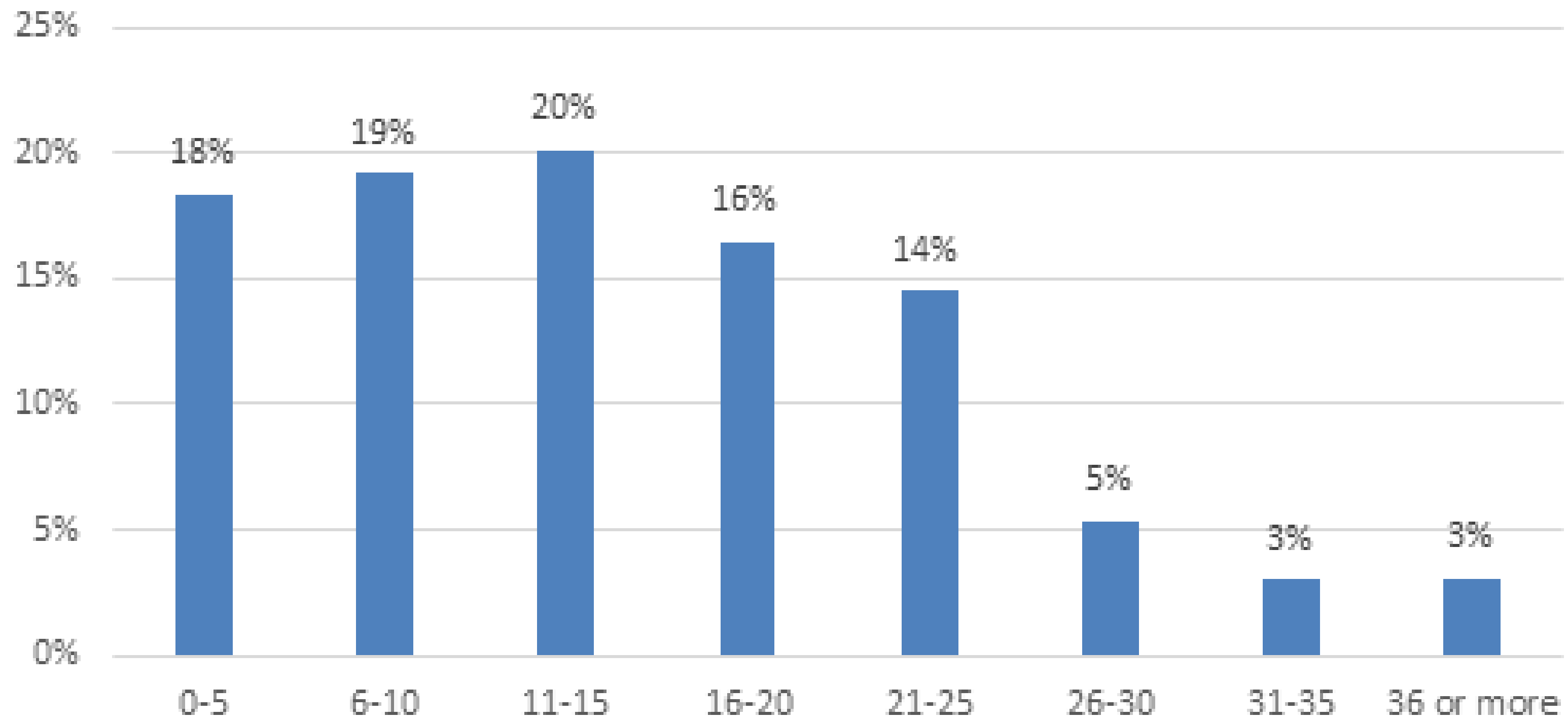


JOB TASK ANALYSIS

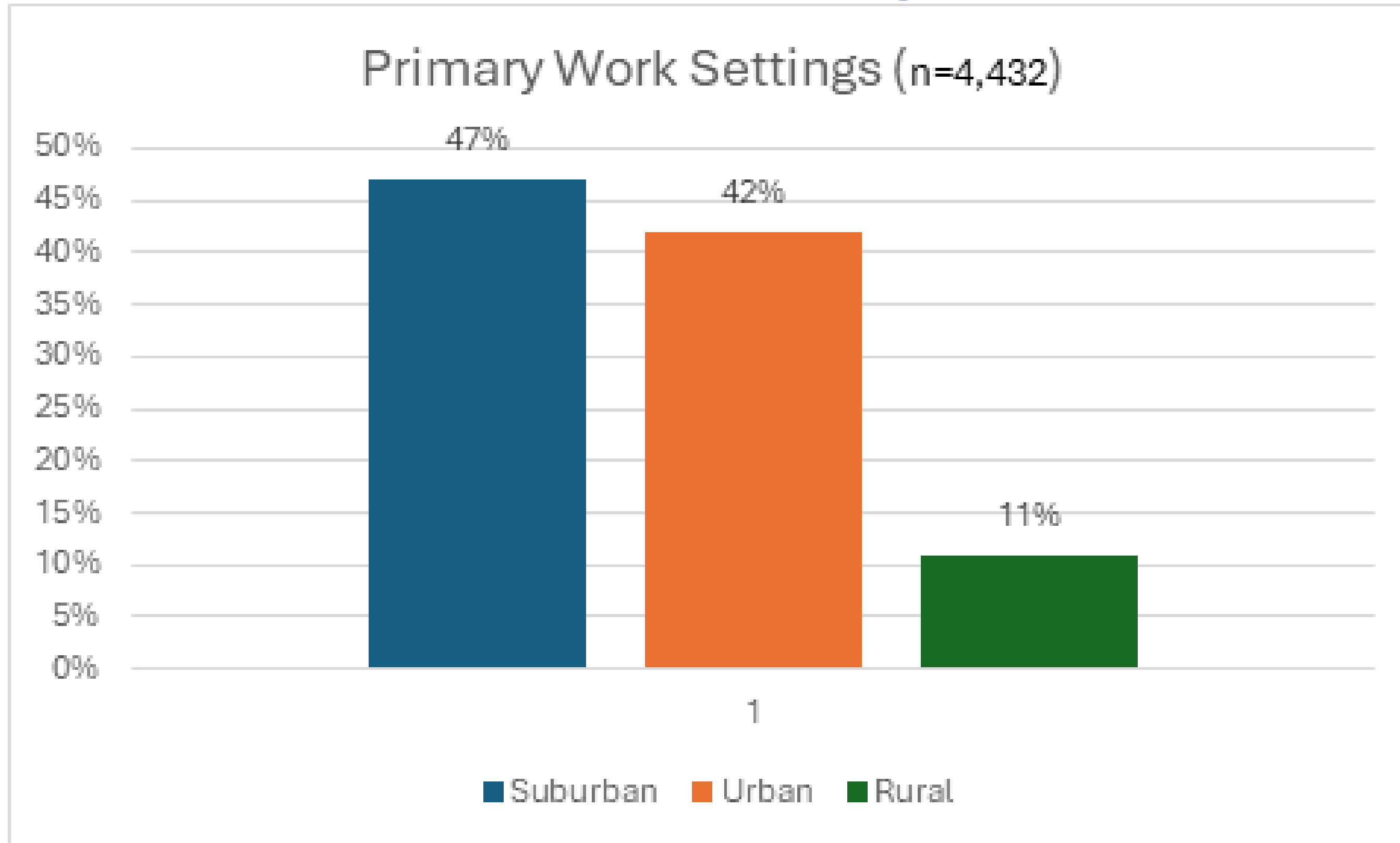
- ✓ Online survey and administered to over 30,000 licensed acupuncturists in the U.S.
- ✓ The response rate was 17.1%. Most respondents (95%) were certified with the NCBAHM. The reliability of job task ratings was high (Cronbach's alpha = 0.96).



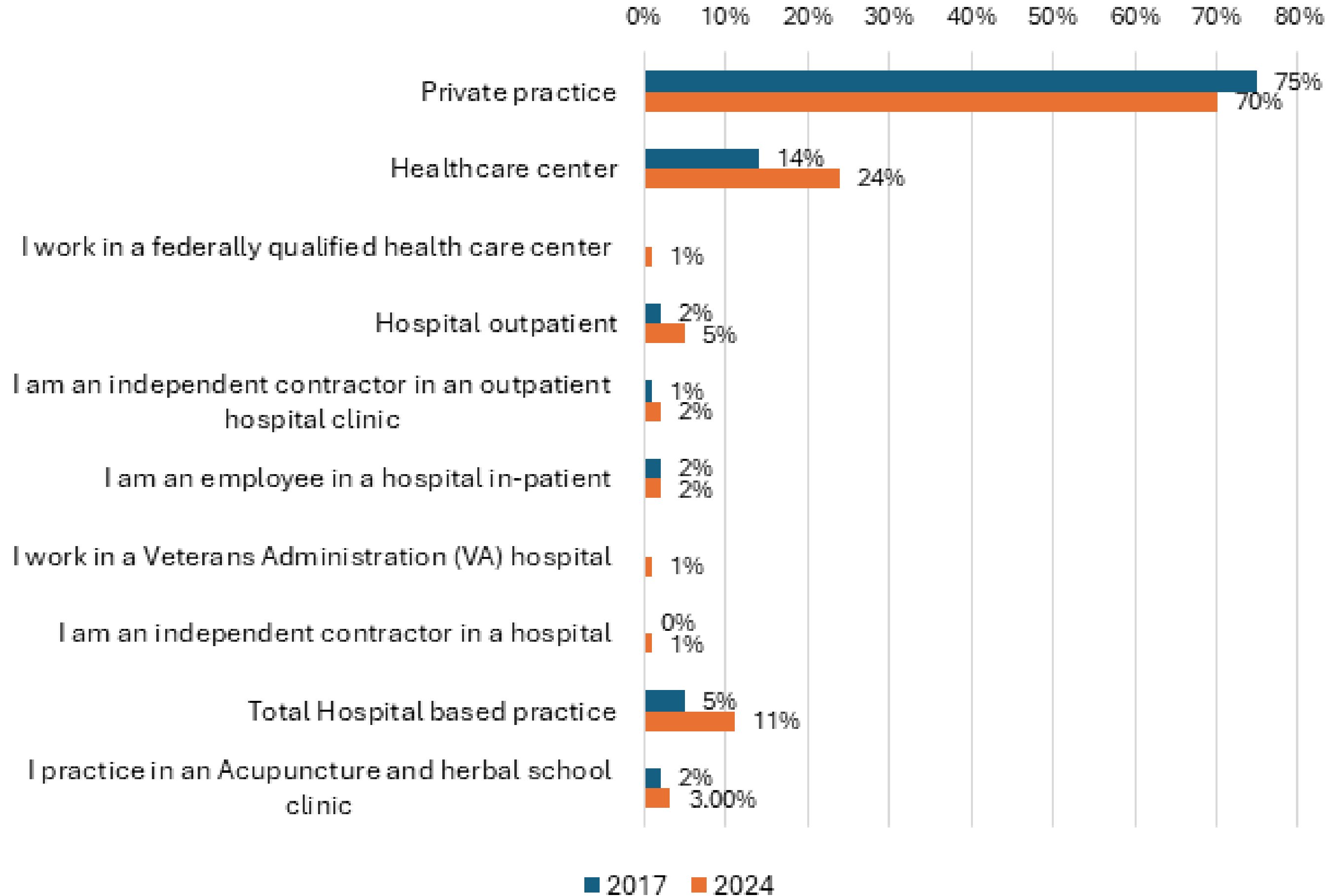
5. How many years have you been in practice as a Licensed Acupuncturist? (n=4,432)



Practice Settings

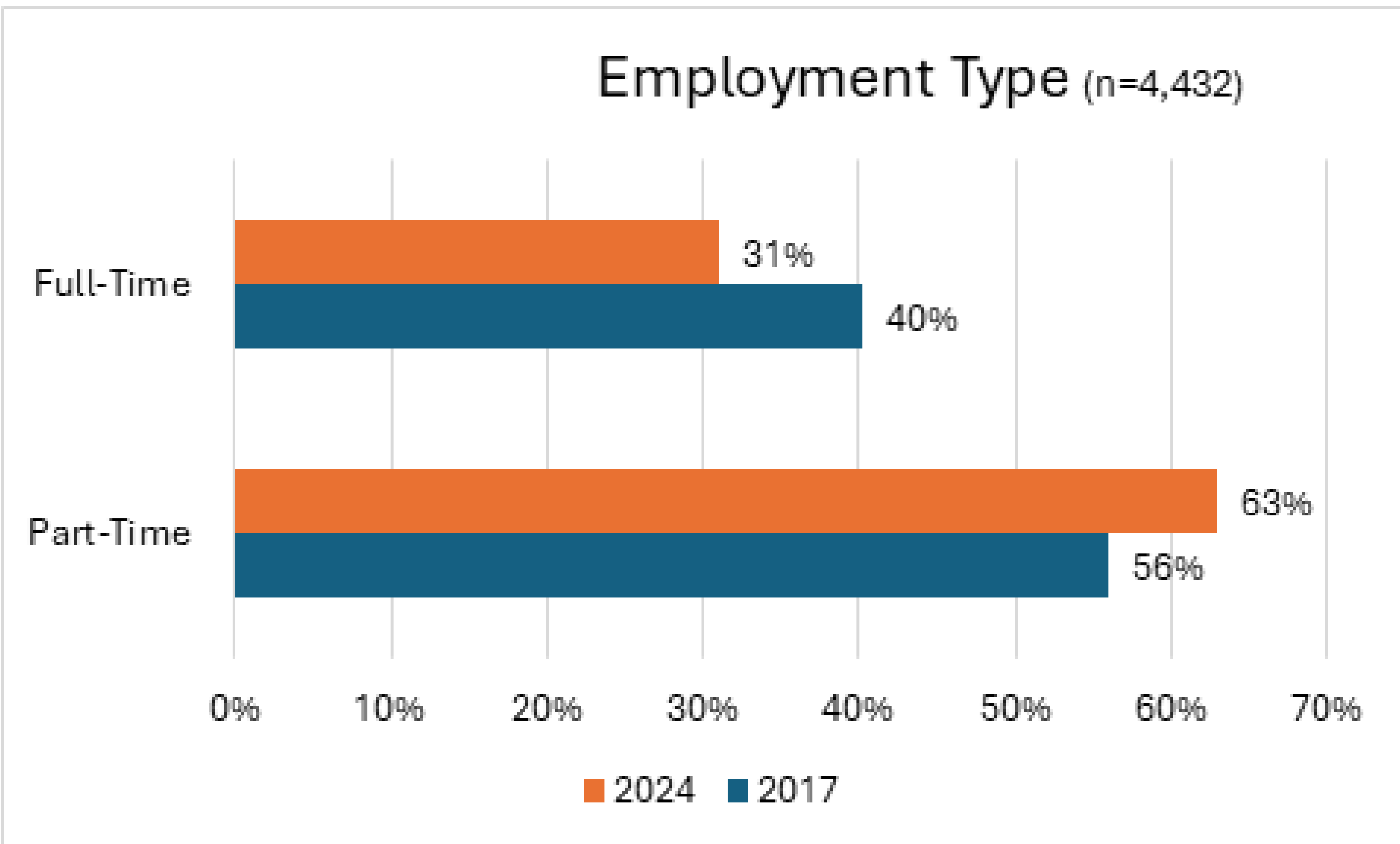


Practice Setting Distribution (n=4,432)

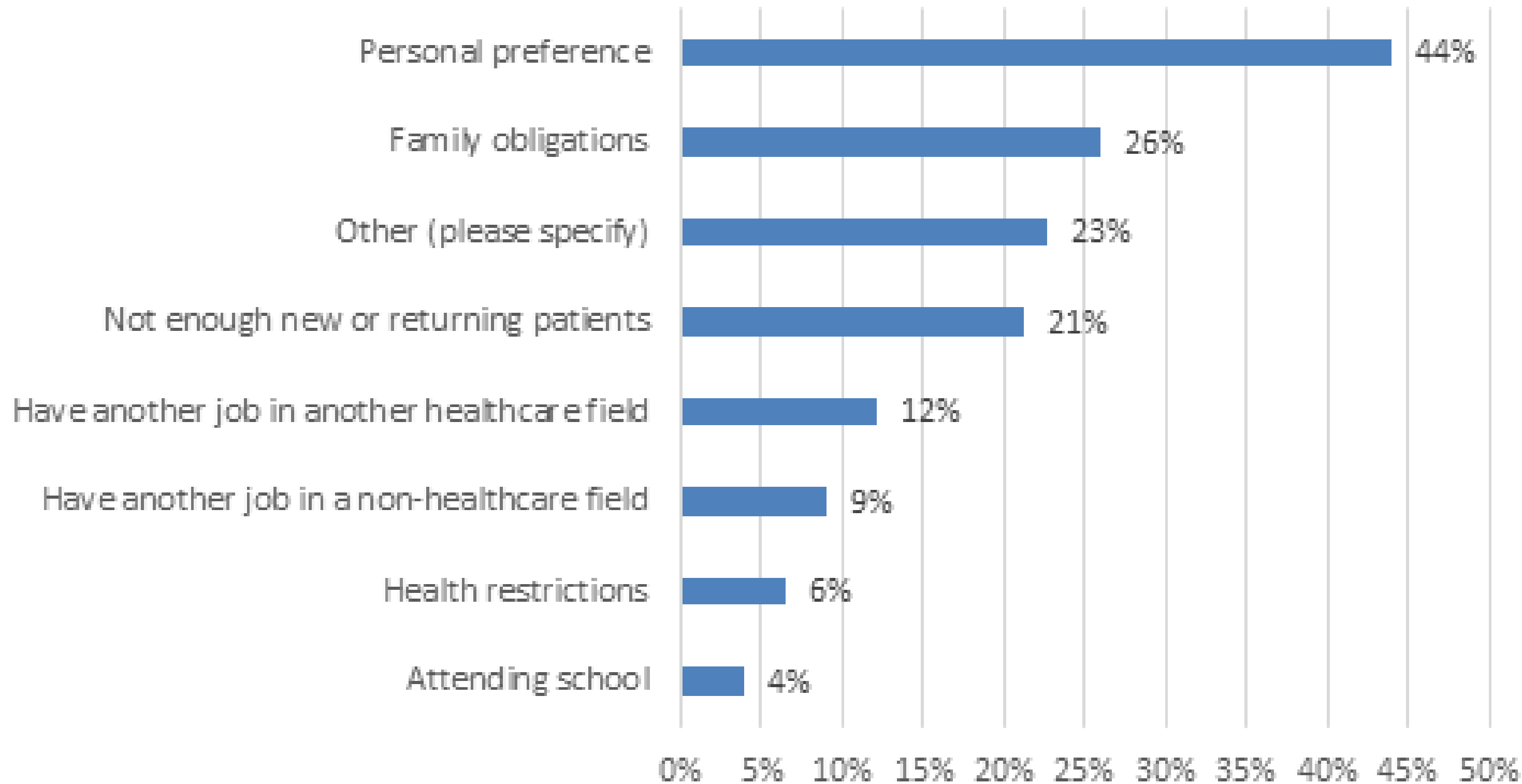


Practice Settings

Employment



12. If you are working part-time or less as an Acupuncturist, select the reason. You may select a maximum of 4 options. Base: Respondents who are not working full-time as an Acupuncturist. (n=3,066)



Employment

Summary of Trends (2017 JA vs. 2024 JA)

More acupuncturists are working in multi-discipline clinics/
healthcare centers **(+10%)**

More acupuncturists are working in Hospital-based setting
(+7%)

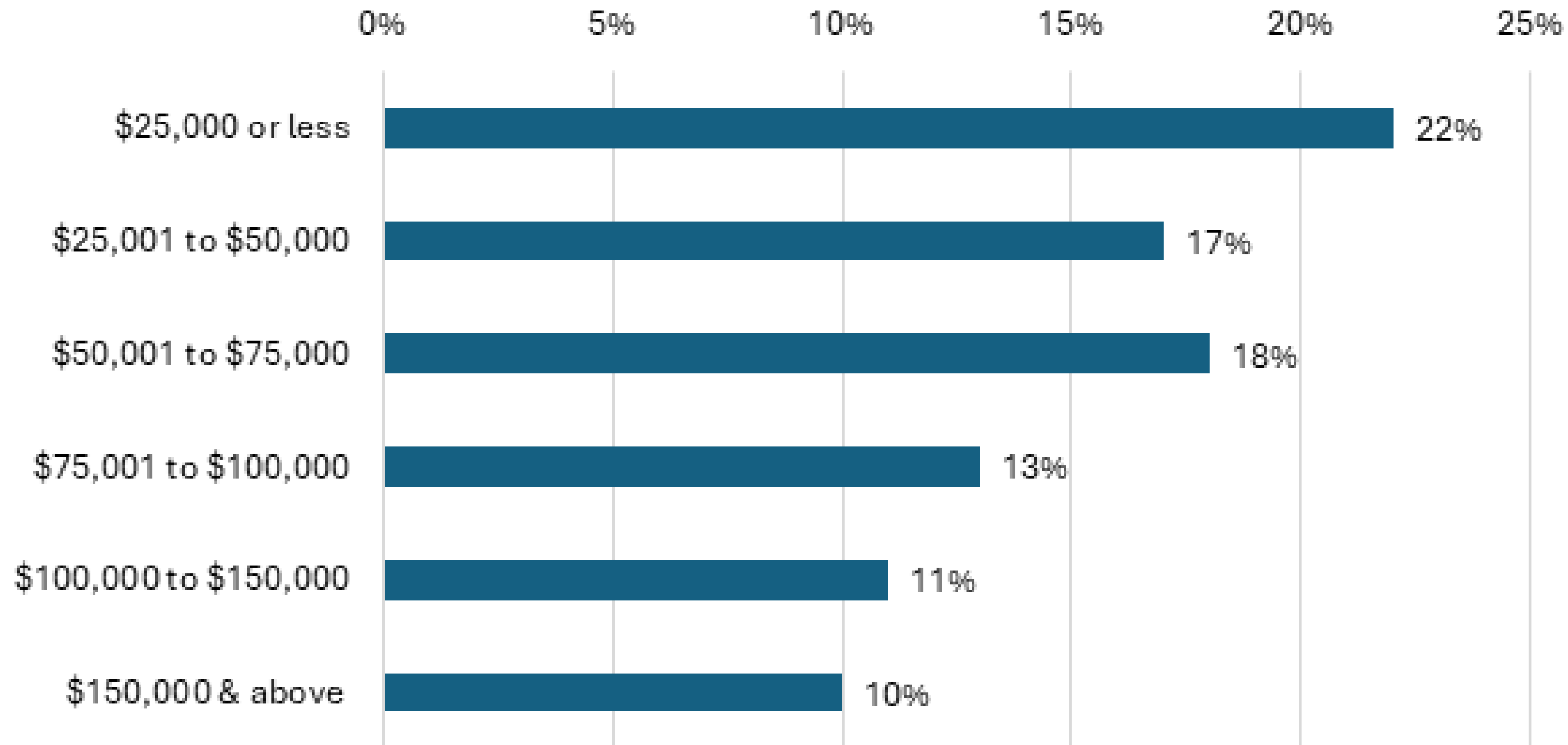
	2017	2024
Total Hospital-Based Practice	5%	12%
Multi-Disciplinary Clinic	13.8%	24.3%



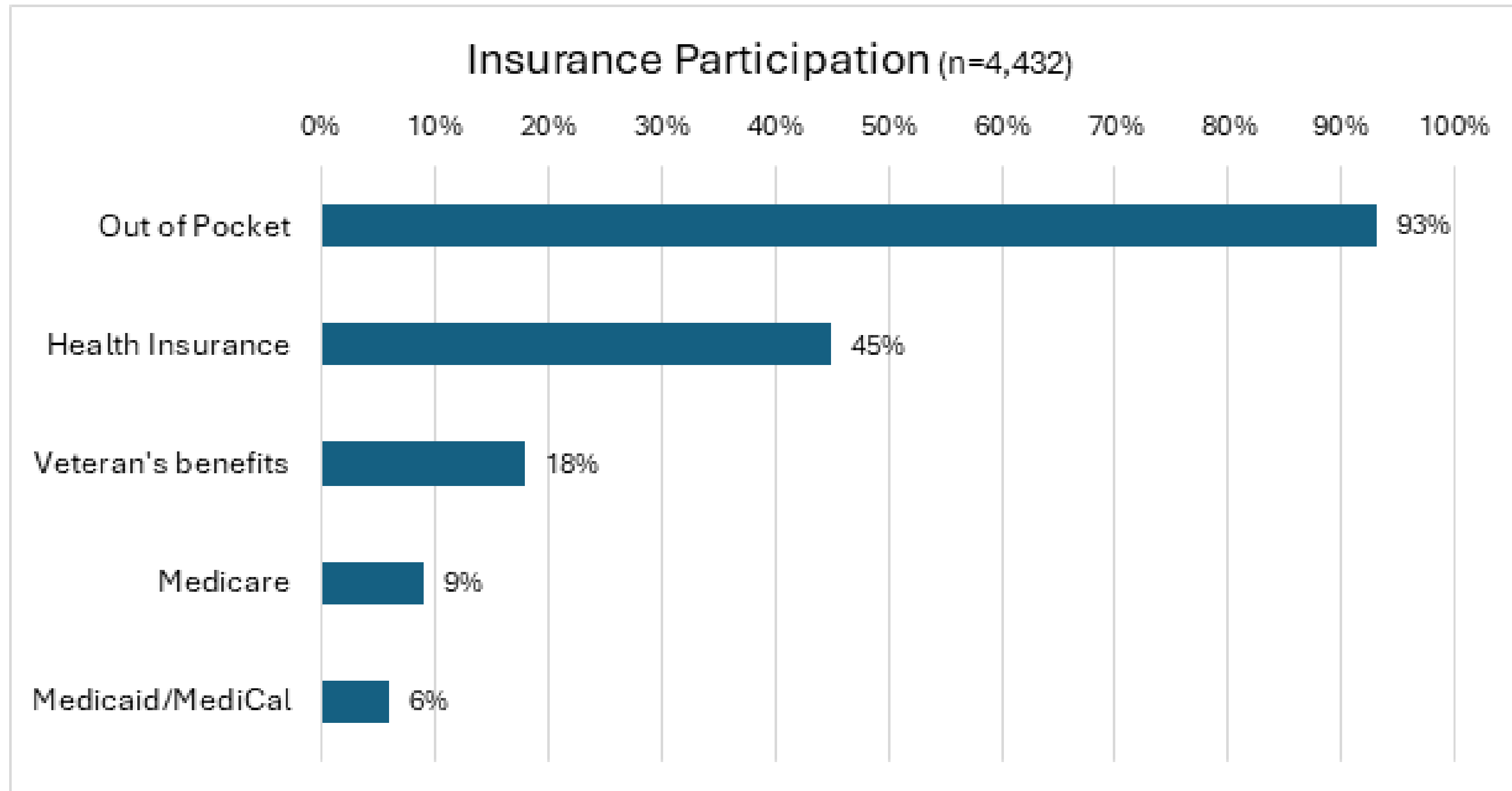
Gross Income

Gross Income Distribution

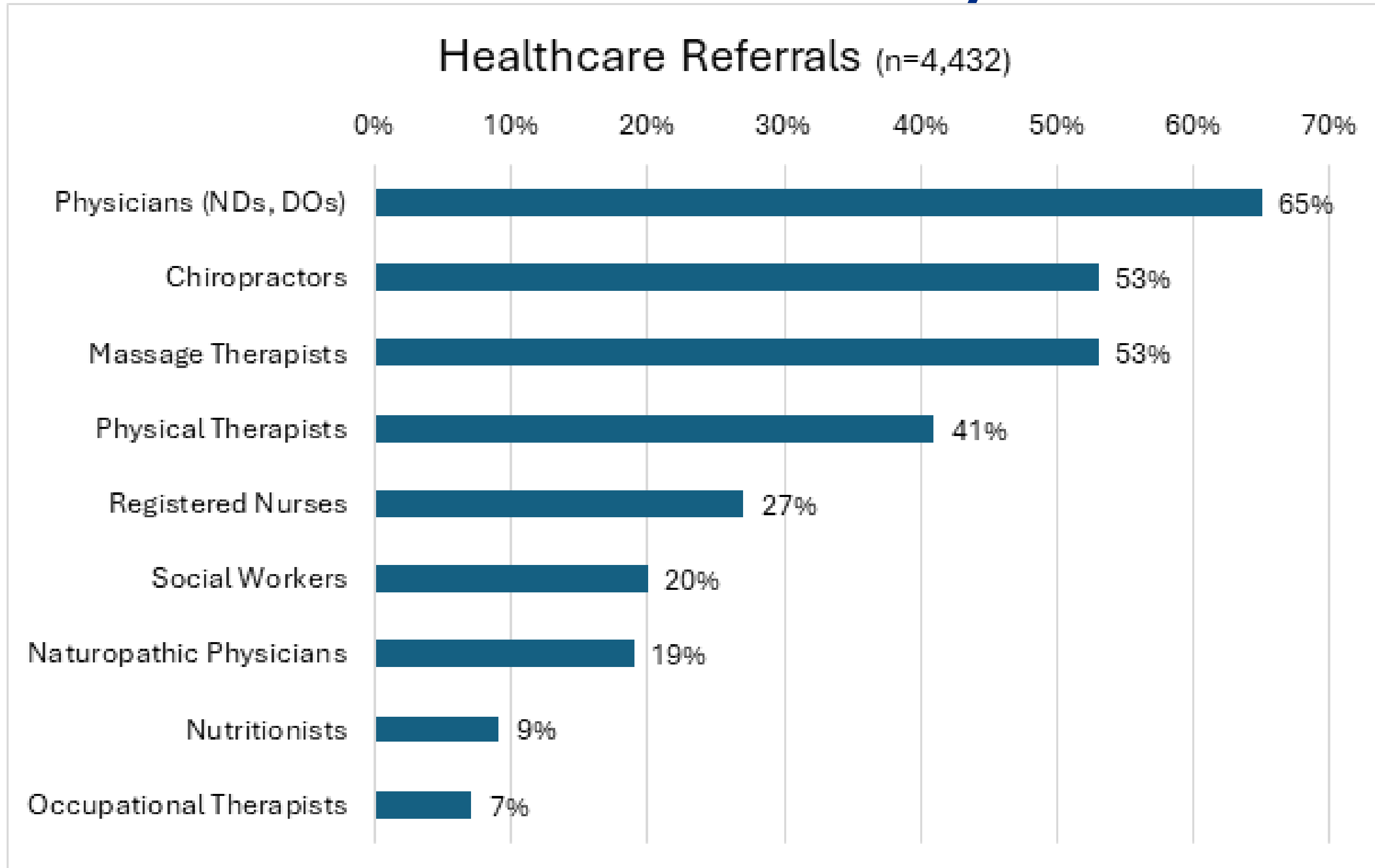
(n=4,432)



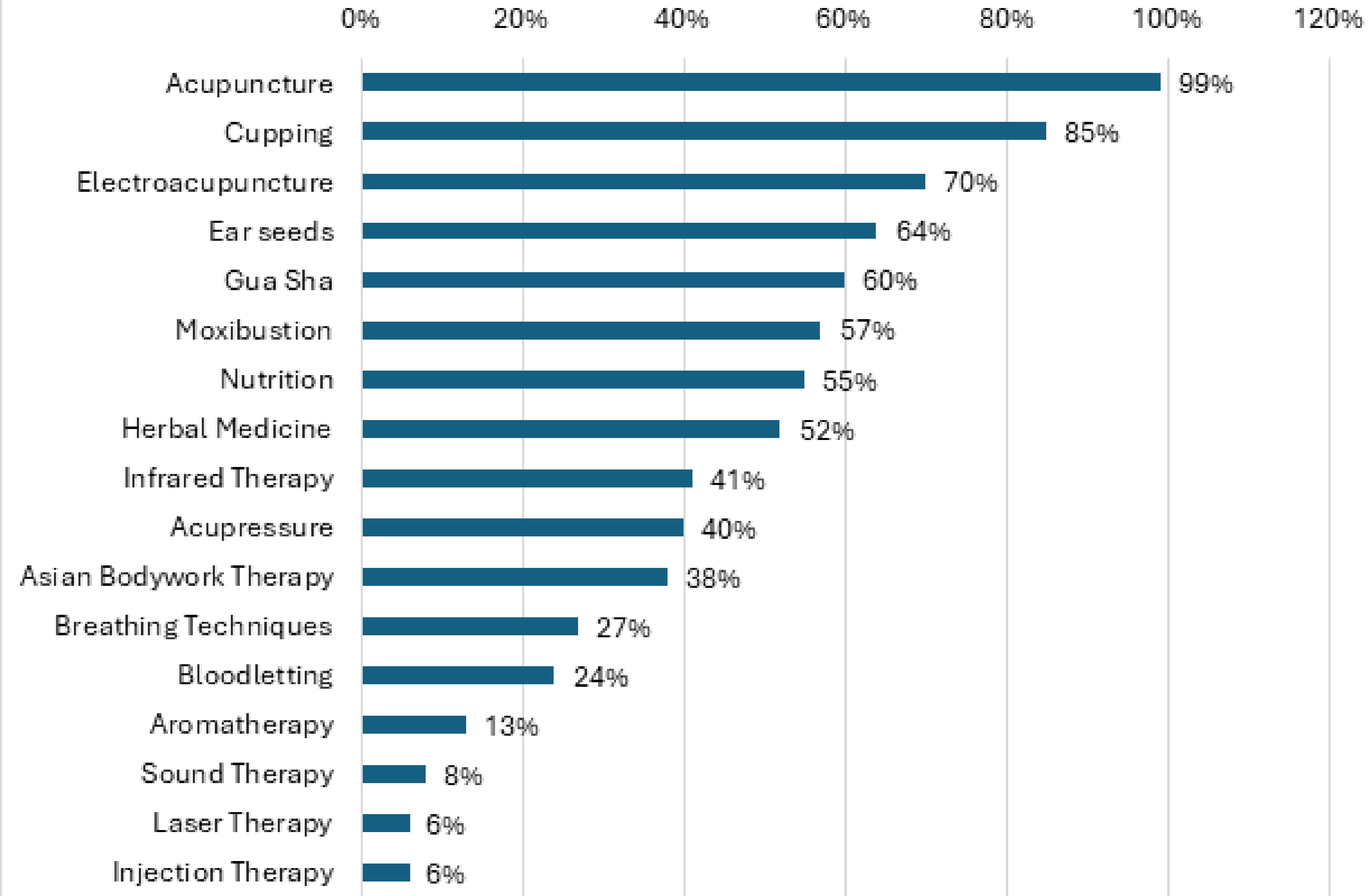
Payment Methods Accepted



Referral Pathways



Therapy Type Performed (n=4,432)



Modalities
Utilized



CONCLUSION

- The 2024 NCBAHM Job Analysis Report findings are instrumental in:
- Updating Government Data: 2024 Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS) Standard Occupational Classification (SOC)
- Shaping certification standards by updating NCBAHM Exam Content Outlines; ensuring Diplomates are equipped with knowledge and skills necessary to meet the demands of modern healthcare.





THANK YOU!

Please stay engaged!

***Don't forget to claim your
NCBAHM PDA Points!***

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