



**RECOVER**  
**ALASKA**

# Presentation Outline

1. Recover Alaska's work
2. Impacts of alcohol misuse in Anchorage
3. What Works? What's Needed?
4. Policy Recommendations

# WELCOME

WHETHER YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SUPPORT FOR YOURSELF OR A LOVED ONE, YOU ARE NOT ALONE. WE ARE HERE TO HELP AS YOU NAVIGATE THE PATH TO RECOVERY.



GET HELP



STORIES



SCREENING



ABOUT TREATMENT



NEWS & EVENTS



ABOUT RECOVER ALASKA

GET HELP NOW



RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE  
HOPE STARTS HERE



THE  
**ALLIANCE**

United to Prevent Alcohol Misuse &  
Promote Community Wellness

# What do we mean by...

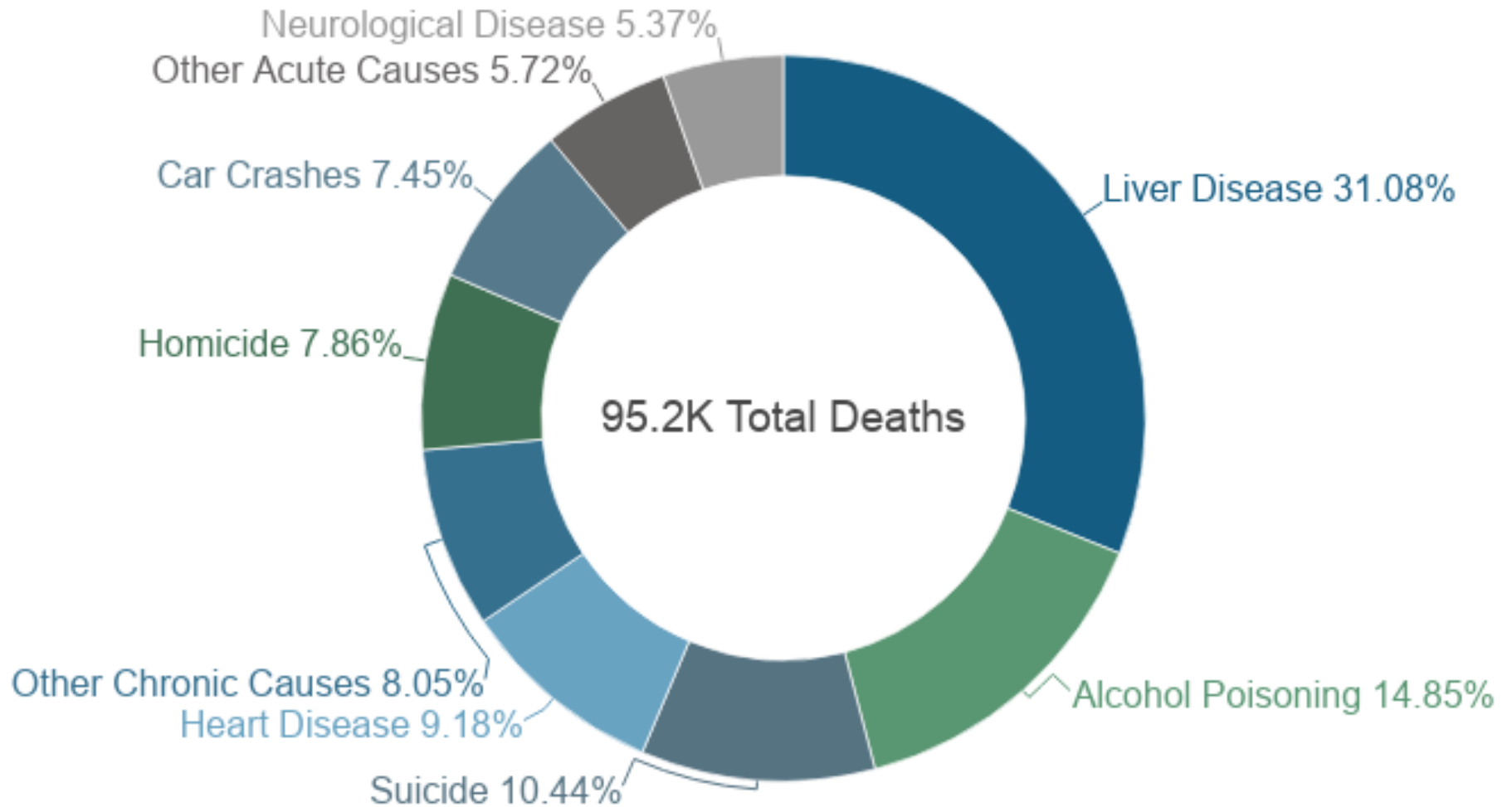
**Addiction:** treatable, chronic medical disease involving complex interactions among brain circuits, genetics, the environment, and an individual's life experiences. Compulsive behaviors that continue despite harmful consequences.

**Substance use disorder:** substance use (alcohol, drugs) that interferes with life responsibilities and/or physical health.

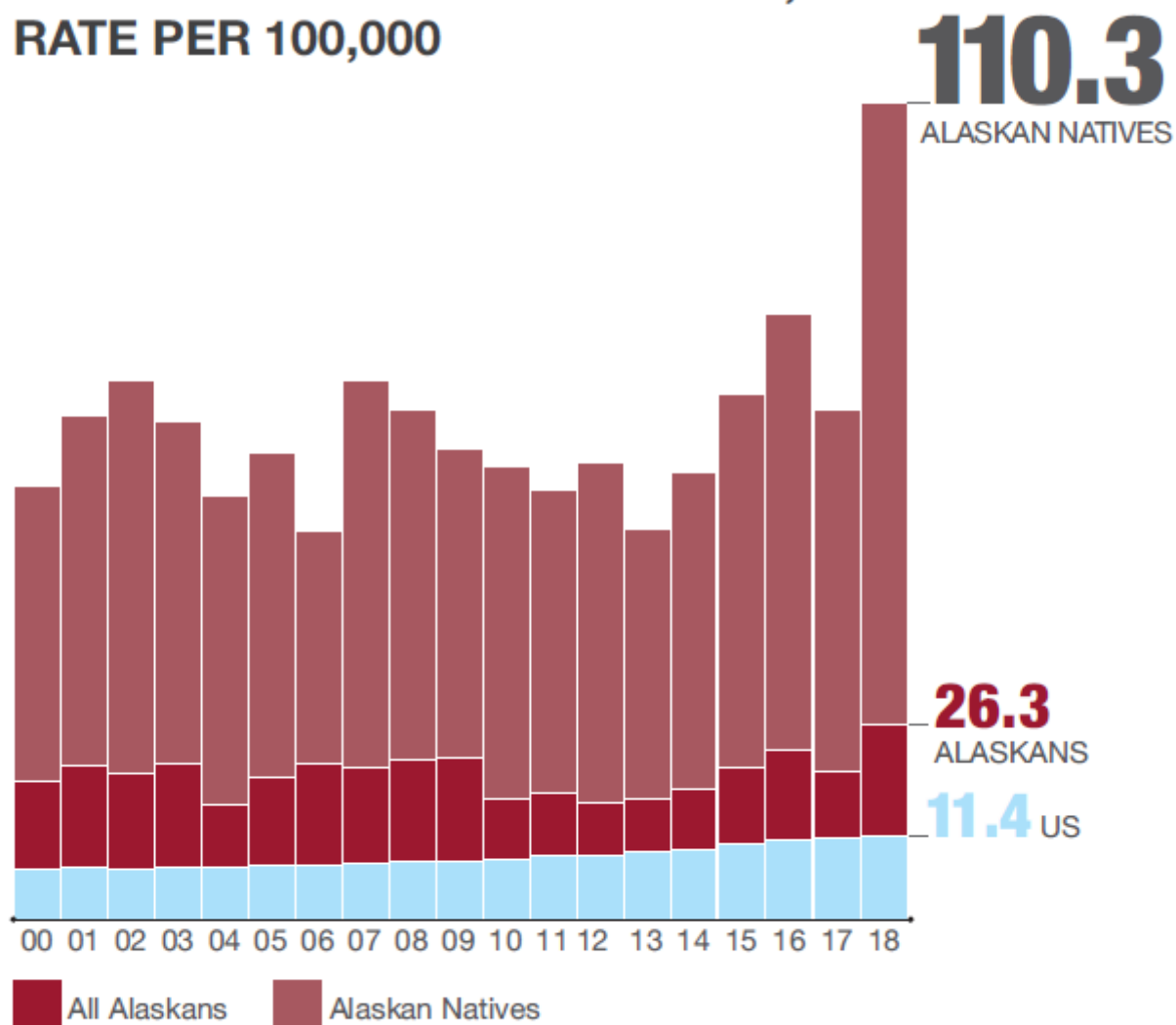
**Recovery:** the achievement of an optimal state of personal, social and emotional wellbeing, as defined by each individual, while living with or recovering from a mental health issue.

# ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AND HARMS DATA

# Causes of Alcohol-Related Deaths



# ALCOHOL-INDUCED MORTALITY, RATE PER 100,000



Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics, Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Social Services  
National Vital Statistics System, National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# How alcohol harms your health

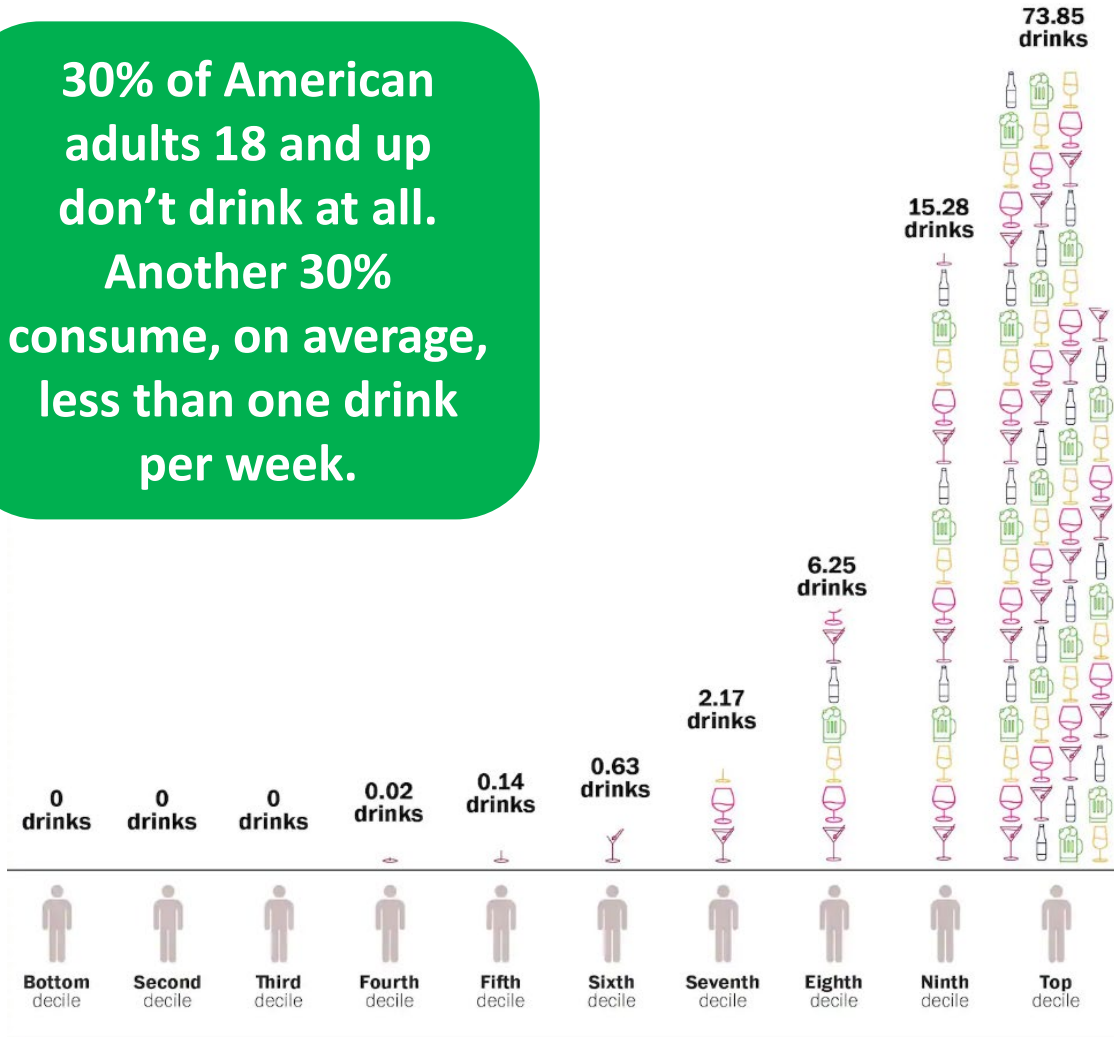


**“No level of alcohol consumption improves health.”**



# Weekly drinks per capita by decile

30% of American adults 18 and up don't drink at all. Another 30% consume, on average, less than one drink per week.



The top 10% of drinkers consume 75% of our nation's alcohol: nearly 74 drinks each week.

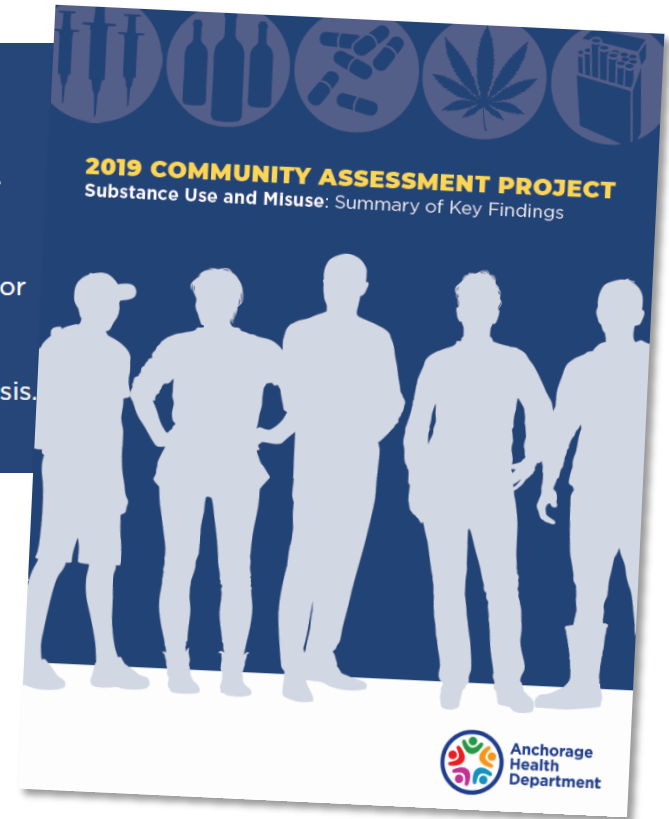
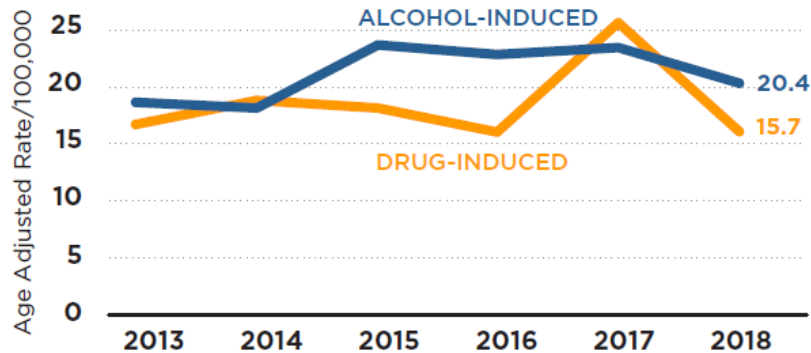
# ANCHORAGE DATA

# Previous Anchorage Health Dept. Work: Community Assessment, Substance Misuse (2019)

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Alcohol is the substance of highest use and misuse in Anchorage.
2. Preliminary 2018 mortality data indicates decreases in all drug overdose mortality citywide.
3. Methamphetamine on the rise.
4. Addiction rates of Alaskan youth are the highest in the nation.
5. Anchorage high school students primarily misuse alcohol, vapes (either flavoring, nicotine, or marijuana), marijuana, tobacco, and prescription medicine.
6. Stigma surrounding substance use and addiction is high in the community.
7. The lack of behavioral and psychiatric health services exacerbates the substance misuse crisis.
8. There is a lack of substance misuse treatment options in Anchorage.

## ANCHORAGE DRUG- AND ALCOHOL-INDUCED MORTALITY RATE



# Community Health Needs Assessment (Anchorage, 2021)

## Mental & Emotional Well-being

- On average, residents reported:
  - 6.3 days/month were poor mental health days
  - 4.3 days/month were debilitating health days (unable to carry out usual activities)
- **1 in 5 needed mental health services or substance use treatment, but nearly half were unsuccessful securing services.**
- Nearly 7% of residents --14,000 people --seriously contemplated suicide in the past 12 months. 34% sought but were unsuccessful accessing mental health services.
- 16% of respondents drank more. 14% report binge drinking.

# Community Health Needs Assessment (Anchorage, 2021)

## Community's High-Priority Health Needs

### 1. Behavioral health challenges:

both mental health and substance use disorders.

“Behavioral health is an upstream cause of violence and abuse”

“Lack of system capacity to meet demand: long wait lists”

“Biggest gaps for young people, Alaska Natives, people with primary language other than English, people experiencing homelessness”

### 2. Homelessness and lack of safe, affordable housing

### 3. Obesity and chronic conditions

### 4. Access to health care services

### 5. Economic insecurity

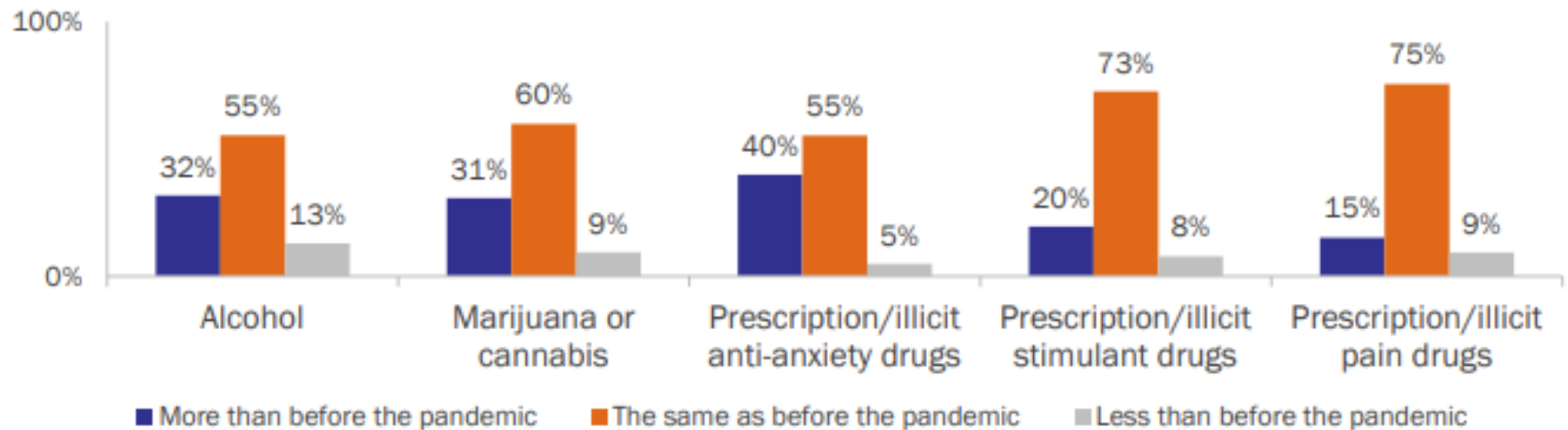
# ALCOHOL AND COVID-19

# ALCOHOL USE DURING COVID

- **30%** of respondents **used alcohol or drugs to cope** with a difficulty caused by the pandemic

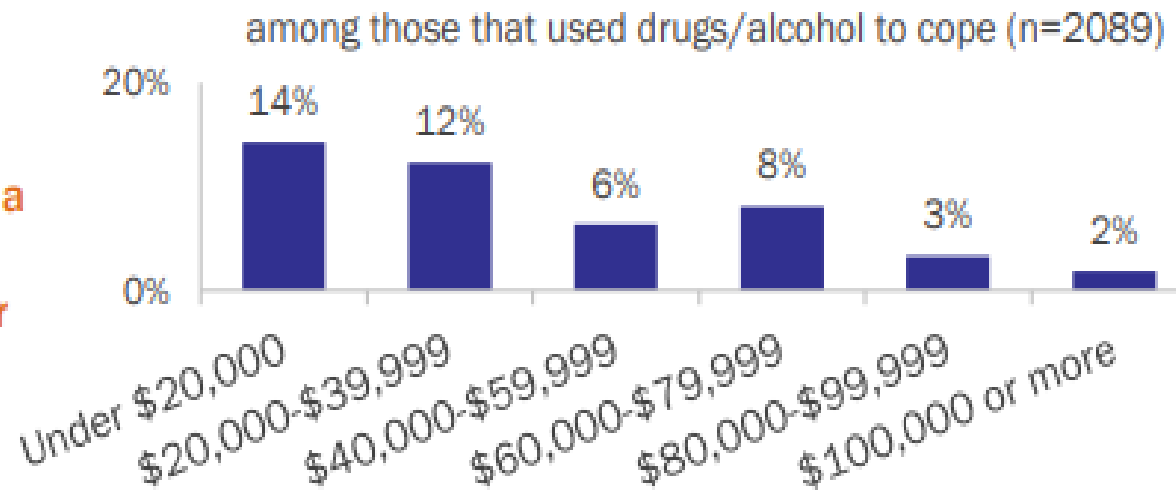
## HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL & DRUGS

among households that consume alcohol (n=5248), marijuana (n=1732), or prescription/illicit anti-anxiety drugs (n=1307), stimulant drugs (n=650), or pain drugs (n=652)



# ALCOHOL USE DURING COVID

- Roughly 5% of respondents who used drugs/alcohol to cope with COVID-19 difficulties relapsed from a prior drug/alcohol recovery, with higher rates of relapse among lower income respondents

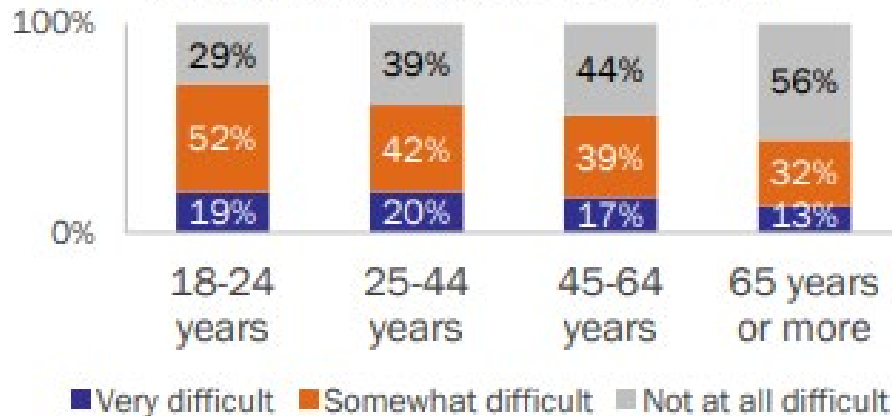




# ACCESSING TREATMENT DURING COVID

- 58% of respondents who sought services found it very (18%) or somewhat (40%) difficult to obtain mental health or drug/alcohol treatment services, with higher rates among younger respondents
- 90% of respondents who needed services needed outpatient counseling or individual therapy

Greater difficulty obtaining services among younger populations among those that sought services (n=1110)



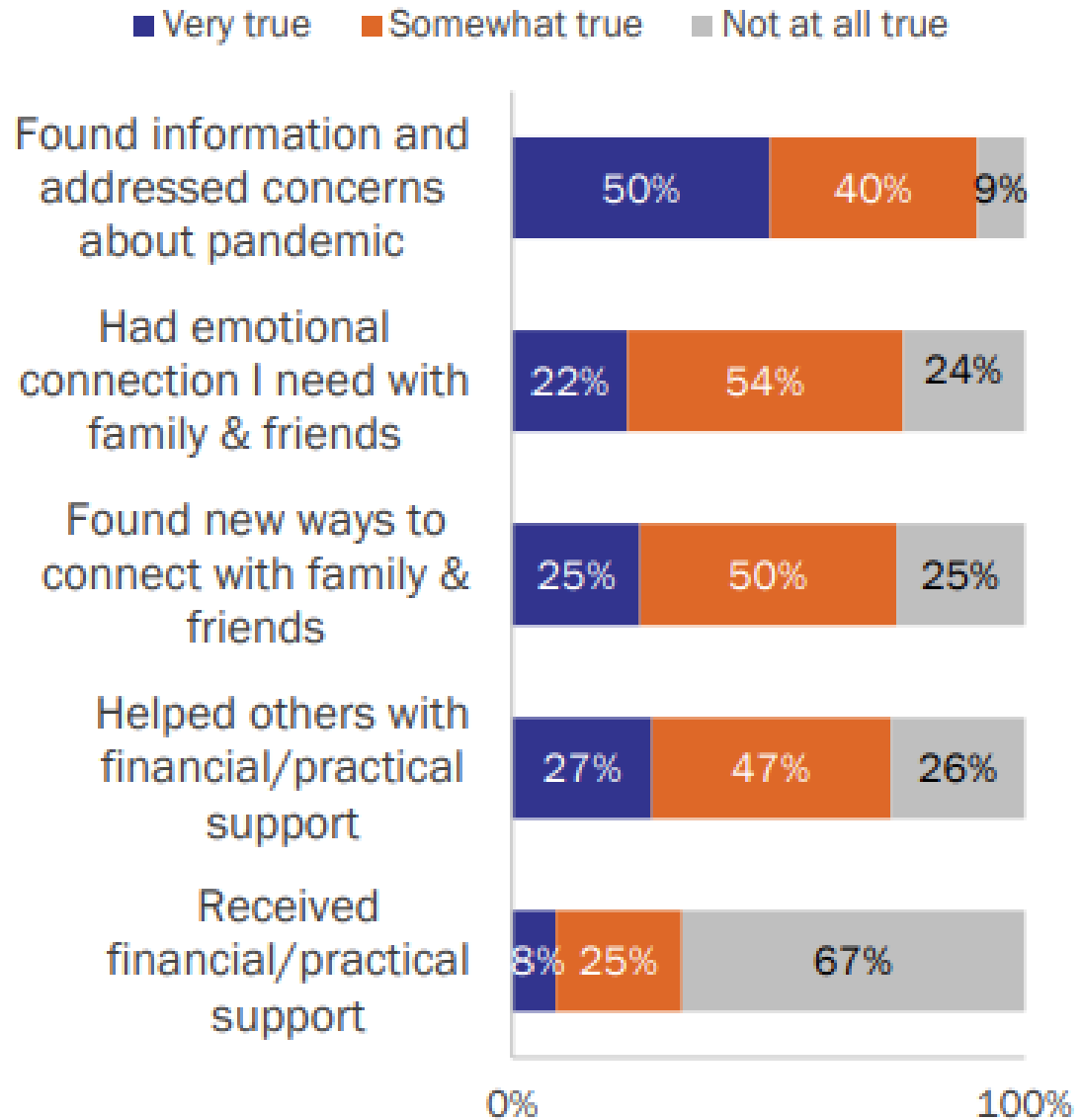
## What prevented getting needed services?

among those who sought services and had some difficulty (n=690)

(Top 3 responses)

1. Appointments were cancelled or postponed (40%)
2. Not available in my community or long wait list (38%)
3. Lack of insurance coverage or could not afford it (26%)

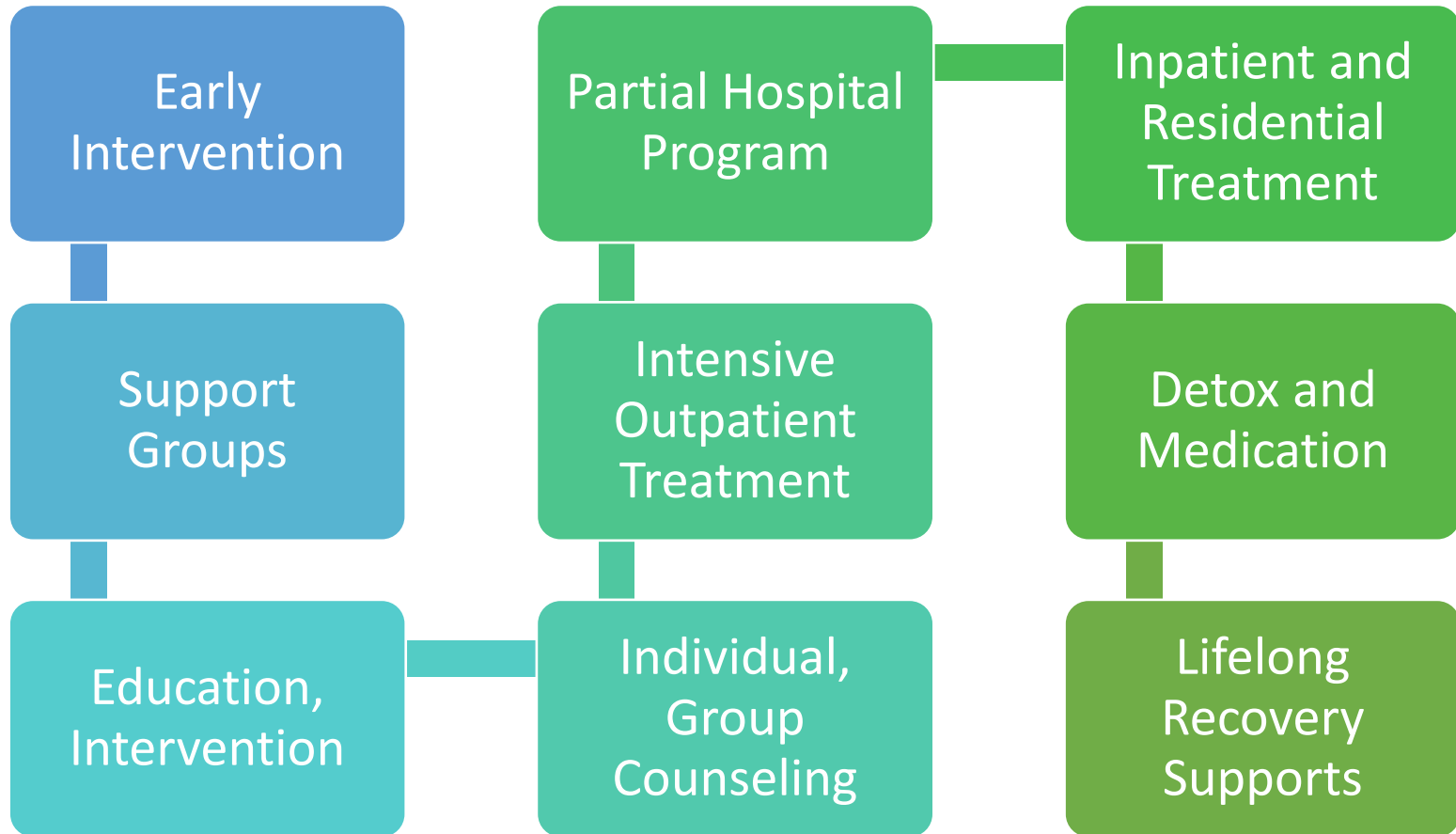
# RESILIENCE DURING COVID



# TREATMENT

# Treatment Continuum

*from prevention to after-care*



# Residential Treatment Options in Anchorage

- Volunteers of America: Clitheroe Center
- Cook Inlet Tribal Council: Chanlyut
- Southcentral Foundation: Dena A Coy
- Akeela: Akeela House, Stepping Stones
- Genesis Recovery House
- Veterans Admin (VA) *Veterans only*
- Eklutna: Ernie Turner Center

# Needed SUD Treatment: Anchorage (Region 1)

Program Type by ASAM Level	# <u>New</u> Units Needed
Level 2.5: Intensive Outpatient SUD Treatment	4 adult programs 4 youth programs
Level 3.1: Residential Treatment	15 adult / 5 youth beds
Level 3.3: Residential Special Populations ( <i>ex. co-occurring SUD + Intellectual, Developmental Disabilities</i> )	12 beds
Level 3.7 to 4: Med. Monitored Inpatient Withdrawal Mgmt.	2 programs
Ambulatory Withdrawal Management	1 program

## Notes

1. This is SUD treatment needs only. The 1115 waiver allows reimbursement of many more needed behavioral health services: intensive case management, mobile crisis, crisis stabilization, etc.

# Access to Care: Barriers



5 Core Issues Around Access to Care Arose



# RECOMMENDATION SLIDES



# Previous Anchorage Health Dept. Work: Community Assessment, Substance Misuse (2019)

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

**FINDING:** Alcohol is the substance of highest use and misuse in Anchorage

**POLICY:** Enact a 5% retail tax on alcohol

**POLICY:** Do not support increases in alcohol outlet sales hours

**FINDING:** Polysubstance use and misuse is high

**POLICY:** Anchorage Health Department will enact a policy that allows for Narcan distribution

**FINDING:** SUD rates of Alaskan youth are among the highest in the nation

**POLICY:** Enact a Tobacco 21 Ordinance

**POLICY:** Invest in free or inexpensive extracurricular activities for youth

**FINDING:** The lack of behavioral and psychiatric health services exacerbates the substance misuse crisis

**POLICY:** Allocate funding for a crisis stabilization center

**FINDING:** There is a lack of substance misuse treatment options in Anchorage

**POLICY:** Anchorage Health Department will enact a Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) policy

**POLICY:** Issue a resolution in support of the development of true housing first options in Anchorage

**POLICY:** Pursue funding for the Alaska Center for Treatment project

**FINDING:** Stigma surrounding substance use and addiction is high in the community

**POLICY:** Require official municipal language to be in line with recognized best practice

**POLICY:** Require municipal employees to attend training on trauma and cultural competency

# Recommendations to Address Community Need

1. Help bring needed treatment facilities online.
  - Short-term launch funding from alcohol tax
  - Support & prioritize navigation services
  - Clitheroe Center
  - Former Golden Lion Hotel
  - Mobile Crisis Team
2. Update the 2019 Anchorage Health Department Health Assessment
  - Align with Healthy Alaskans 2030
3. Convene subject matter experts to discuss role of the Municipality
4. Focus on prevention
  - Support workforce development, training
  - Reducing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and promoting healthy children and families
5. Focus on equity
  - Collaborate with the Health Equity Advisory Committee
6. Support State-level policy change
  - SB9 (Title 4 re-write)
  - HB172/SB124 (Crisis Now)
  - HB265/SB175 (Telehealth)
7. Reduce stigma with health marketing campaign

# CONNECT WITH RECOVER



Tiffany Hall, Executive Director

[thall@recoveralaska.org](mailto:thall@recoveralaska.org)