

Inclusivity of people with disabilities in emergency preparedness in Pennsylvania: A statewide poll

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Where numbers count and communities matter

Presenter Disclosures

Inclusivity of people with disabilities in emergency preparedness in Pennsylvania: A statewide poll

The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 24 months:

No relationships to disclose.

Background

- About 28% of Pennsylvanians aged 18 years or older had a disability in 2022, including 14% of individuals with a cognitive disability¹.
- COVID-19 morbidity is elevated among people with disabilities².
- Emergency management (EM) and disaster response often fail to address needs of people with disabilities³.

Goal: Learn how the preparedness plans of Pennsylvania's county emergency management (EM) offices meet the needs of people with disabilities to shape and strengthen future practices.

What is the status of disability inclusion in Pennsylvania's county preparedness efforts?

What are the best practices for current preparedness efforts addressing disability considerations in the U.S. ?

Literature Review

Are disability-inclusive policies and partnerships incorporated into PA's emergency plans and overall work?

Emergency Management Coordinator Poll

Methods



Gathered literature on disability inclusion in emergency preparedness



Built poll in Alchemer and invited PA emergency management coordinators



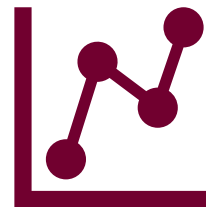
Identified best practices from the literature review



Disseminated poll and collected data/responses

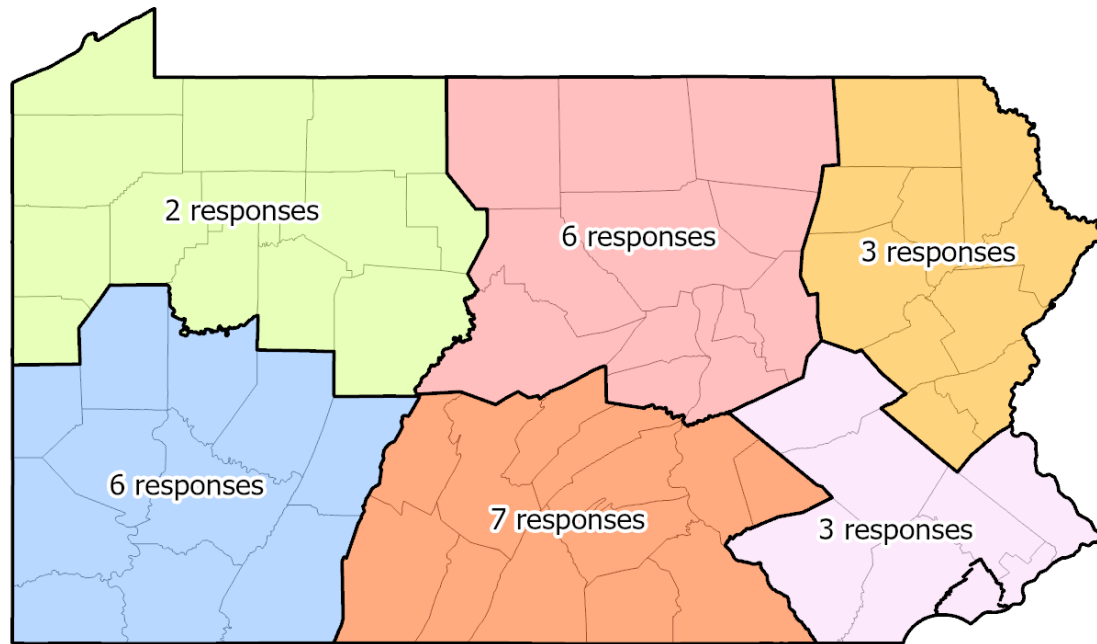


Drafted poll based on best practices and other key findings



Analyzed poll results and reported findings

Who participated in the poll on disability inclusion in Pennsylvania's county preparedness efforts?



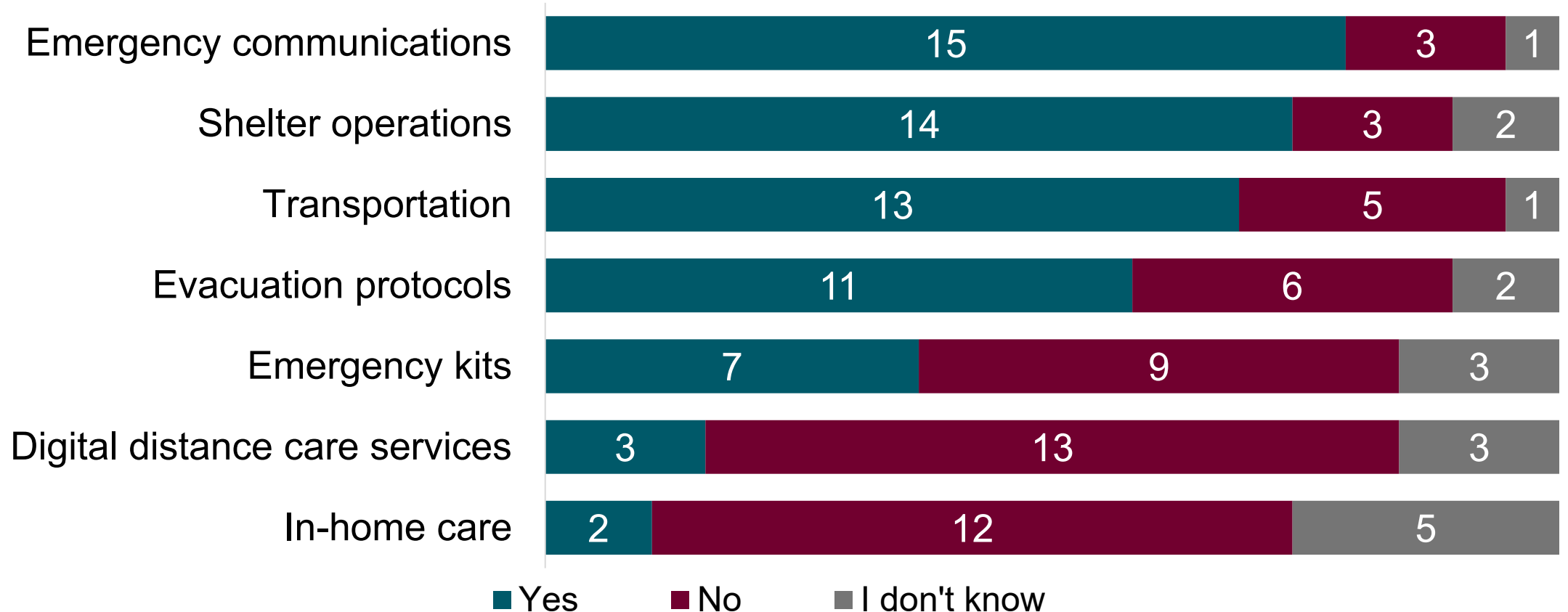
27* out of 67 counties responded (16 complete responses and 11 partial responses).

22 respondents self-reported as rural counties and 5 as urban counties.

On average, respondents had been in their positions for 6.5 years

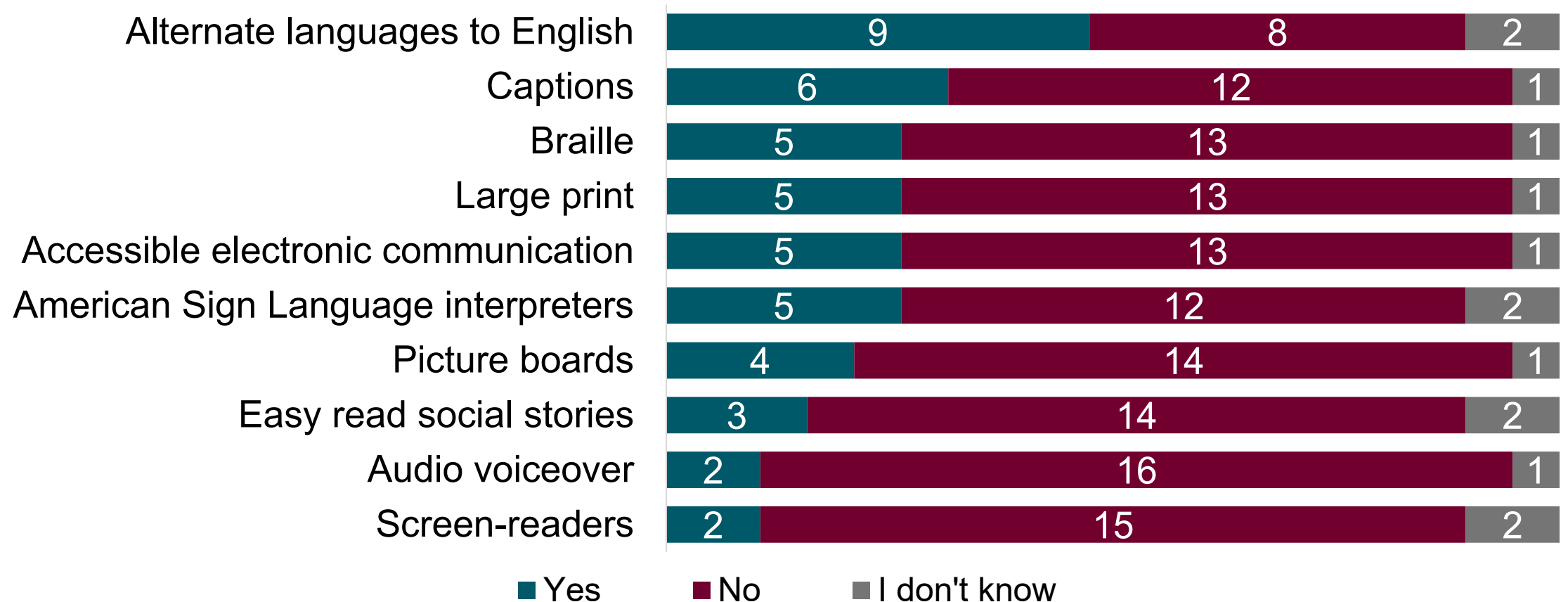
Emergency plans included guidance for **some** disability-related needs, but not all.

Does your emergency management plan provide guidance on how to accommodate people with disabilities in:



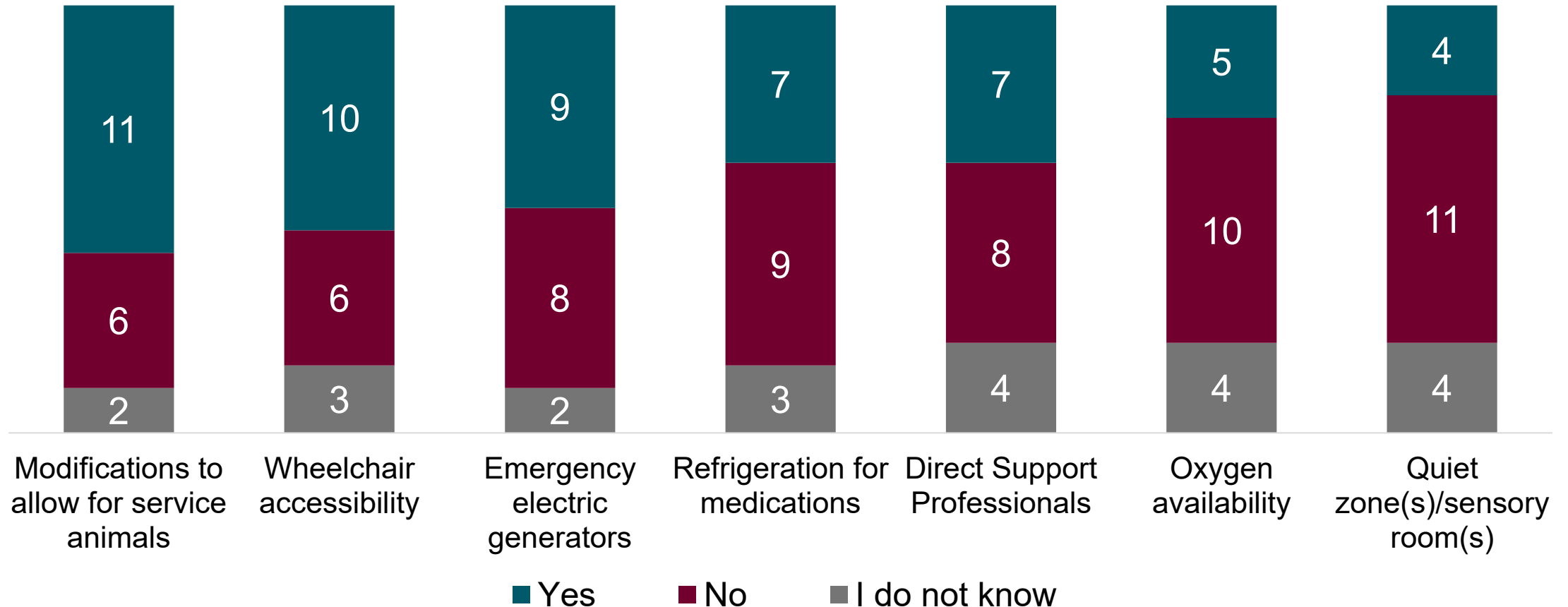
Emergency plans **generally lacked** inclusive communication-related guidance.

Does your emergency management plan provide guidance on the following alternative communication methods?



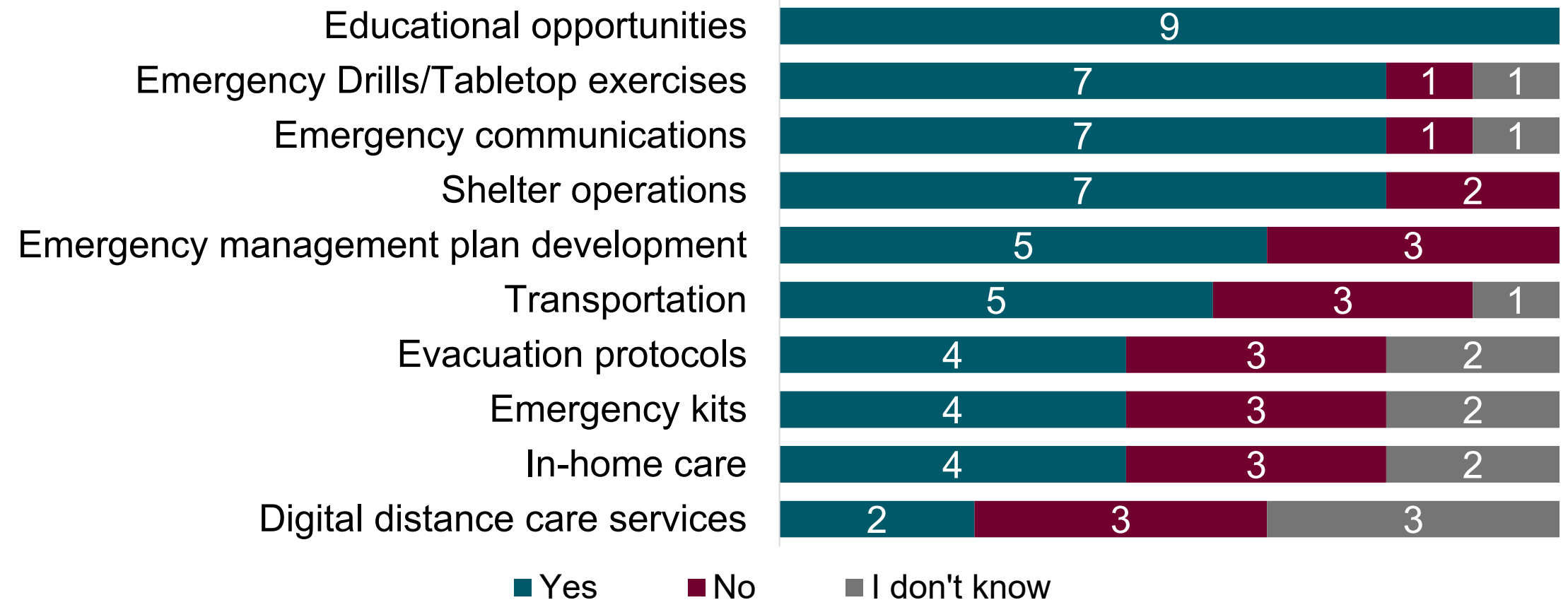
Guidance for PWD in EM plans was **inconsistent** across shelter accommodations.

Does your emergency management plan provide guidance on how shelters can accommodate the following accessibility features?



Respondents with disability organization partners (63%) involved them in **some, but not all**, EM plan components.

Have these partners been involved in the following emergency preparedness components?

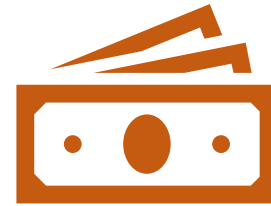


Challenges and Needed Resources

Challenges:



Staffing



Budget constraints



Lack of networks and relationships

Needed Resources:



Policies from other organizations



Collaborations



Subject matter experts

Limitations

- Only **16 out of 67** county EM coordinators provided full responses.
 - There were 11 partial responses (respondents who started the poll but did not answer all questions).
- Most respondents (**n=22 out of 67**) were from rural counties.
- Poll questions did not always ask about specific types of disabilities.

Discussion & Final Thoughts

- Challenges identified in this poll emphasized the **gaps in addressing the full spectrum of disability-related EM needs**.
 - More guidance on accommodations for physical and sensory disabilities were present in EM plans.
 - Lack of guidance on in-home and distance care warrants scrutiny.
- The critical role **resource limitations** play in county-level emergency management offices must be considered when discussing disability inclusion.
- Accelerating collective progress lies in approaches that minimize the burden on individual departments through **collaboration and resource sharing**.

Sources

1. CDC (2022). *Disability and Health Data System (DHDS)* [Dataset]. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
2. Kuper, H, & Smythe, T. (2023). Are people with disabilities at higher risk of COVID-19-related mortality?: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Public Health* 222, 115-124. doi: 10.1016/j.puhe.2023.06.032.
3. UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. (2023). *2023 Global Survey Report on Persons With Disabilities and Disasters*. UNDRR. https://www.undrr.org/report/2023-gobal-survey-report-on-persons-with-disabilities-and-disasters#on_this_page

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Thank You

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