

## Rural VIP No. 13: Social determinants of health in rural communities

The thirteenth survey for the members of the Rural Voice Information Panel (Rural VIP) was sent out October 1, 2020 to 218 members.

The purpose of the survey was to determine the level of understanding of and interest in the social determinants of health (SDH), determine if there is a need for RhPAP to provide learning or information-sharing opportunities and increase general awareness in the social determinants of health.

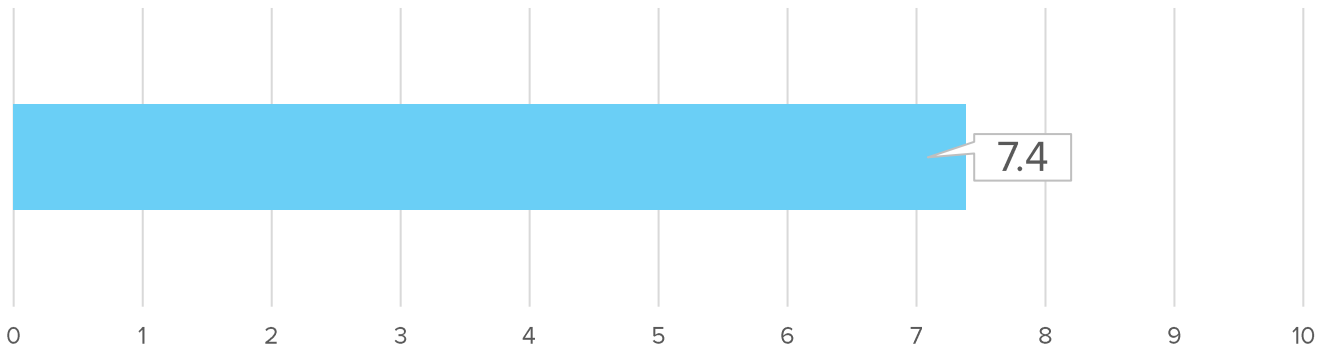
This document provides a summary of the responses.

### Key Learnings

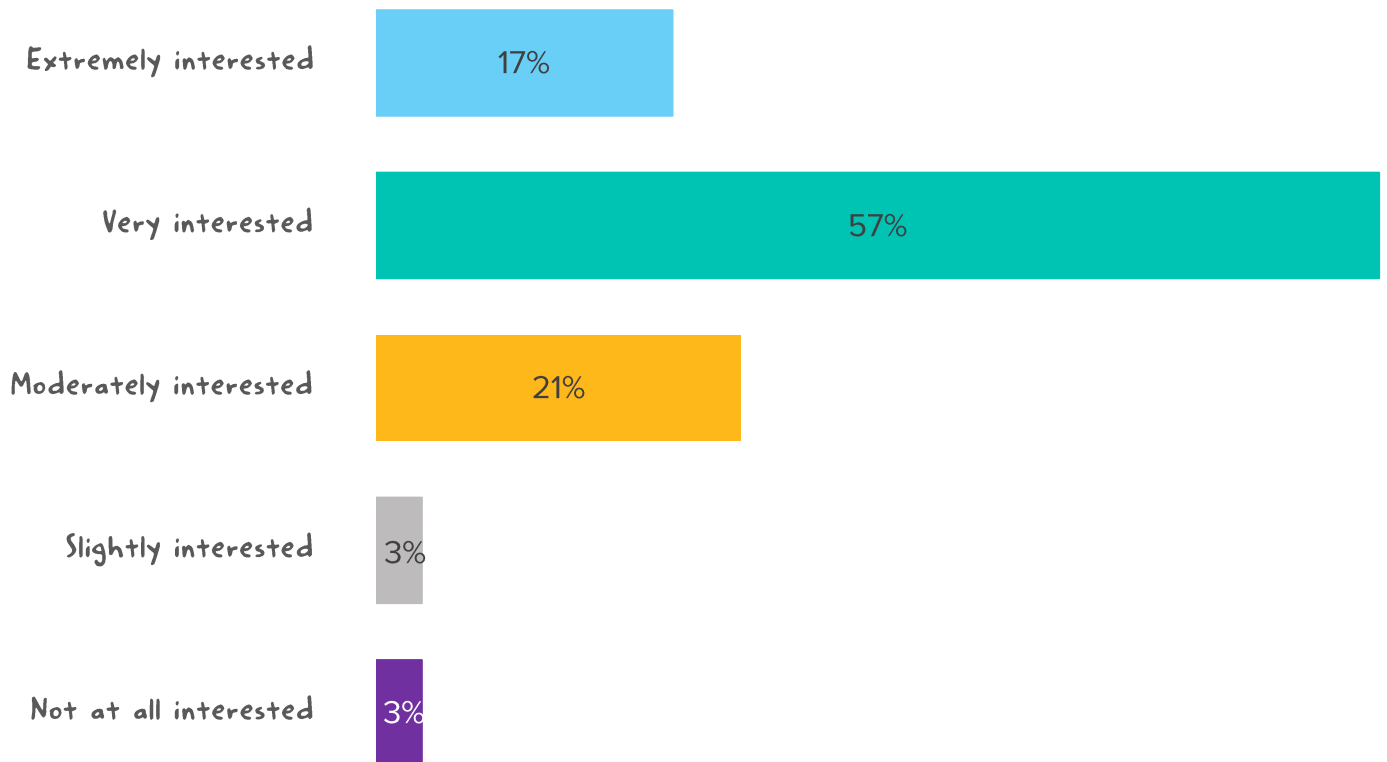


- **Q1:** The **majority of respondents** rated their overall understanding of the social determinants of health as 7.4/10.
- **Q2:** 97 per cent of respondents indicated some level of interest in learning more about the social determinants of health.
- **Q3:** Respondents indicated that they would be interested in learning about all of the listed social determinants of health (43 per cent) with health care (43 per cent), education (16 per cent), and social exclusion (13 per cent) being the next selected.
- **Q4:** There is an interest from respondents in learning more about all areas affected by the social determinants of health in rural Alberta.
- **Q5:** There were several opinions shared in related to challenges to rural health in their community. The four prevalent themes were **health-care providers (turnover, attraction and retention), timely access to physicians and specialists, local access to resources and services, and transportation.**

1. Overall, what is your current understanding of the social determinants of health (SDH)? Respondents were asked to drag a slider to indicate their level of understanding:

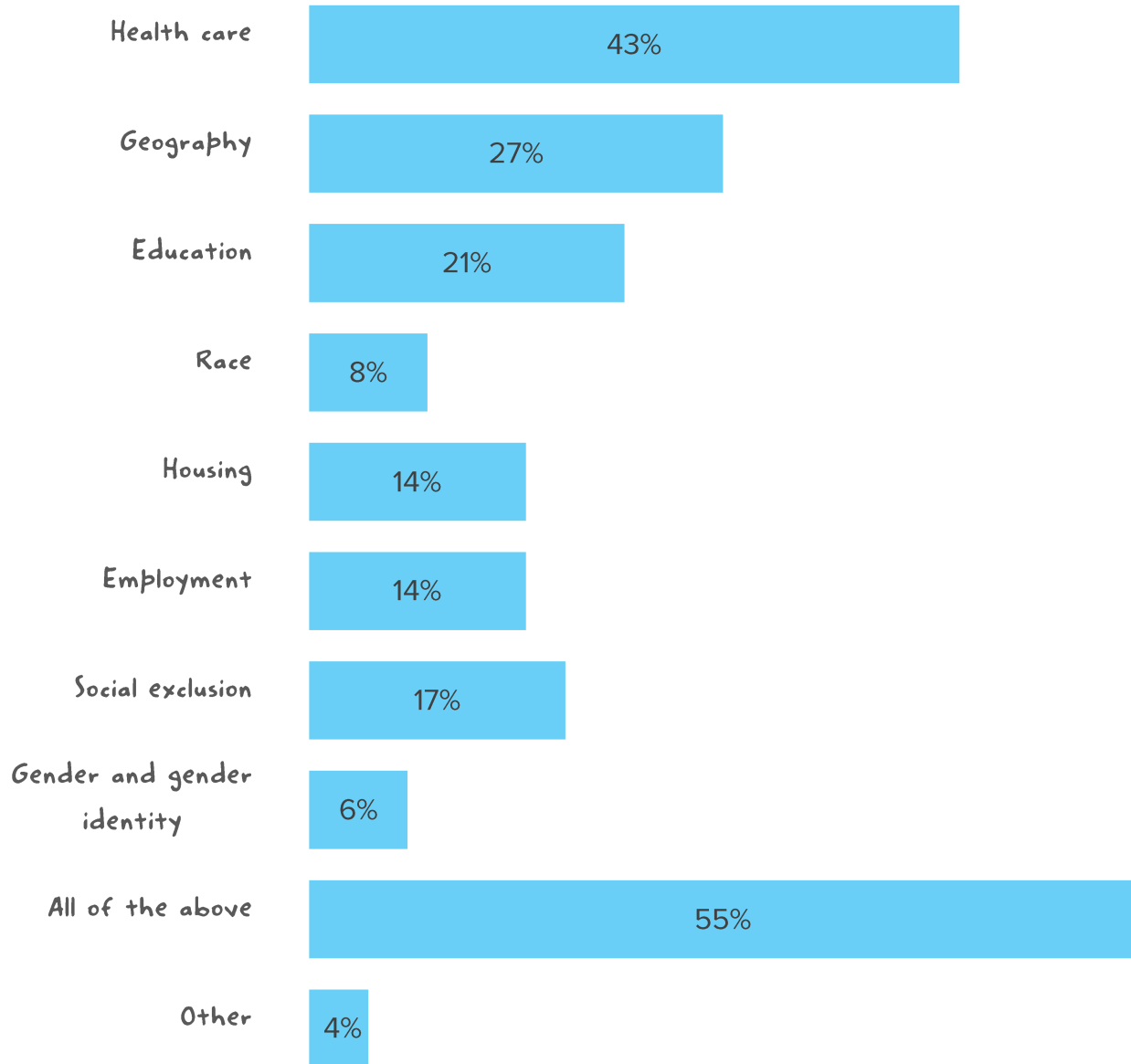


2. How interested are you in learning more about SDH?



**3. Which of the following SDH would you be interested in learning about?**

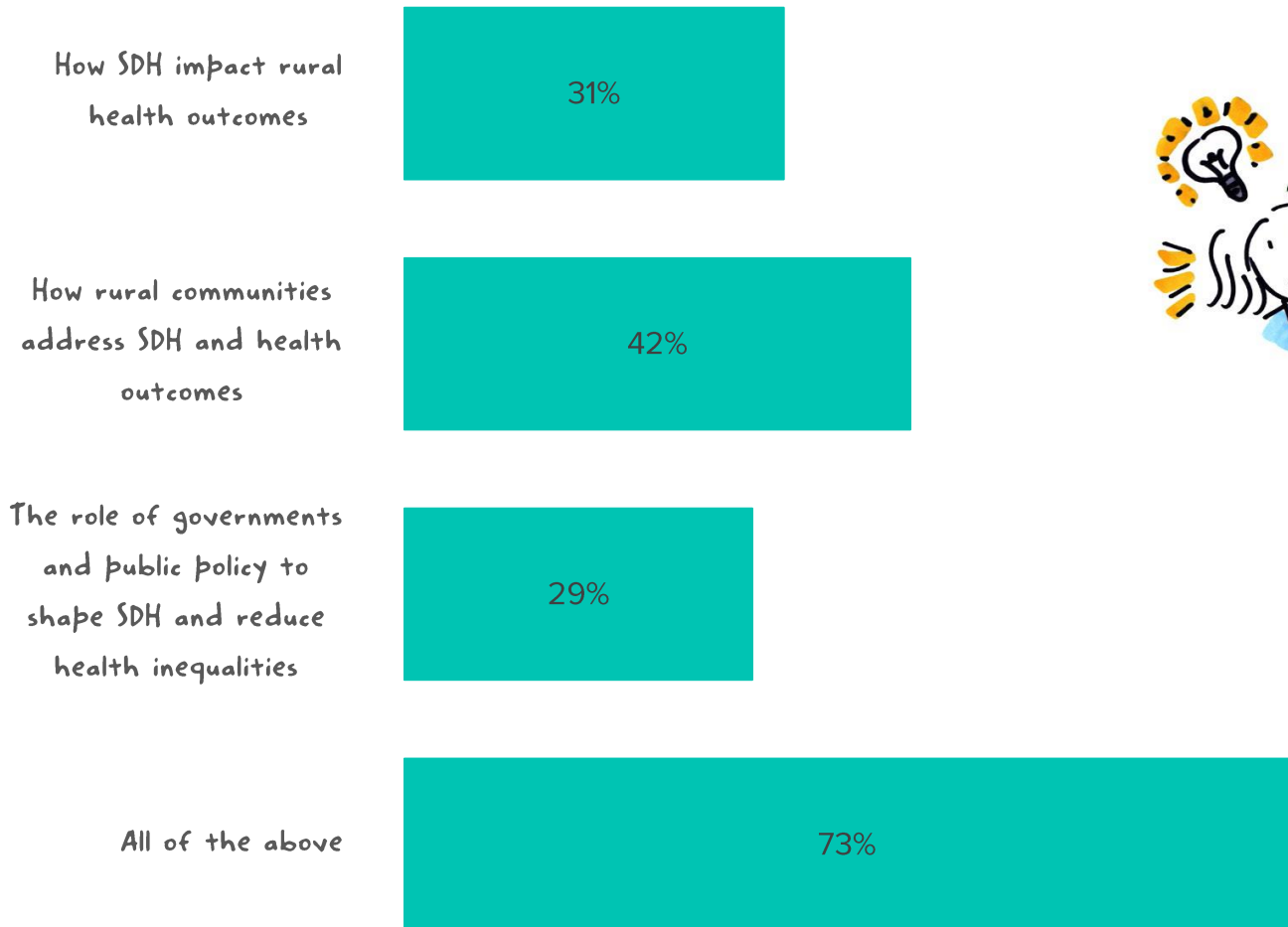
Respondents were asked to choose all that applied.



**Other identified:**

- Social networks/cohorts
- Community involvement
- Physical activity
- Income distribution

**4. Which of the following areas would you be most interested in learning about?** Respondents were asked to choose all that applied.



**5. Respondents shared their opinions on challenges to rural health within their communities:**

<b># of comments</b>	<b>Theme of the comments</b>
<b>23</b>	<p><b>Health-care providers</b> Health-care provider turnover; lack of rural physicians attracting new health care providers to rural communities long-term.</p>
<b>23</b>	<p><b>Timely access to family physicians and specialists</b> Difficulty making appointments; long wait times or waiting list to access physicians or therapists.</p>
<b>21</b>	<p><b>Local access to services and resources including mental health and addiction services.</b> Testing and laboratory services not available locally; specialists are in the cities.</p>
<b>19</b>	<p><b>Transportation</b> Cost, access to reliable transportation; time and distance to travel to appointments.</p>

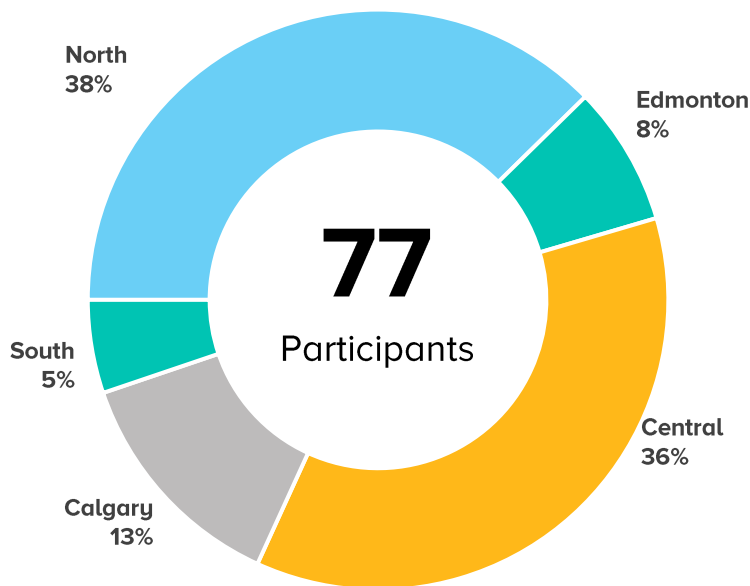
**Other Areas Identified:**

Seniors support; isolation; financial concerns; racism; access to public education and information; housing; internet access; unique rural community needs; aging health facilities; language barriers.

**What you said – Challenges include:**

- “[Decision makers] acknowledging that rural is unique and different than urban so that decisions reflect that;”
- “Services not delivered to rural communities because urban policy makers don’t have an understanding of rural challenges.”
- “Fewer resources in Rural Alberta and the trend seems to be swinging toward virtual care, which does not always resonate with rural Albertans. Also, internet connectivity can be a real issue in rural Alberta, so virtual care will not always work.”
- “Attracting potential physicians to come to rural and the reasons why they should want to.”

## 6. In which AHS (Alberta Health Services) zone do you live?



*\* Totals may not add due to rounding*

## What will we do with this feedback?

Your input helps us determine the Rural VIP's awareness and understanding of the social determinants of health and will inform RhPAP's educational resources and programming. Thank-you for participating in our survey.

RhPAP also shares learnings and feedback from the Rural VIP with health-care leaders, including Alberta Health, and the RhPAP Board of Directors, who represent the following organizations: Alberta Health Services, Alberta Medical Association, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta, Rural Municipalities of Alberta, and the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta.

To view the results of past Rural VIP surveys, click [here](#).

## Questions about RhPAP's Rural Voice Information Panel?

Email us at [ruralVIP@rhpap.ca](mailto:ruralVIP@rhpap.ca)