

ALIGN Group Care Agency Survey

2022

TOGETHER FOR
CHILDREN AND
FAMILIES

ALIGN
ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES



INTRODUCTION

This report offers a picture of the current Group Care Situation. 22 agencies participated and shared their experiences from 2019 to present

As you read through this report you will see data, numbers, and agency quotes that outline some of the concerns of group care agencies throughout Alberta.

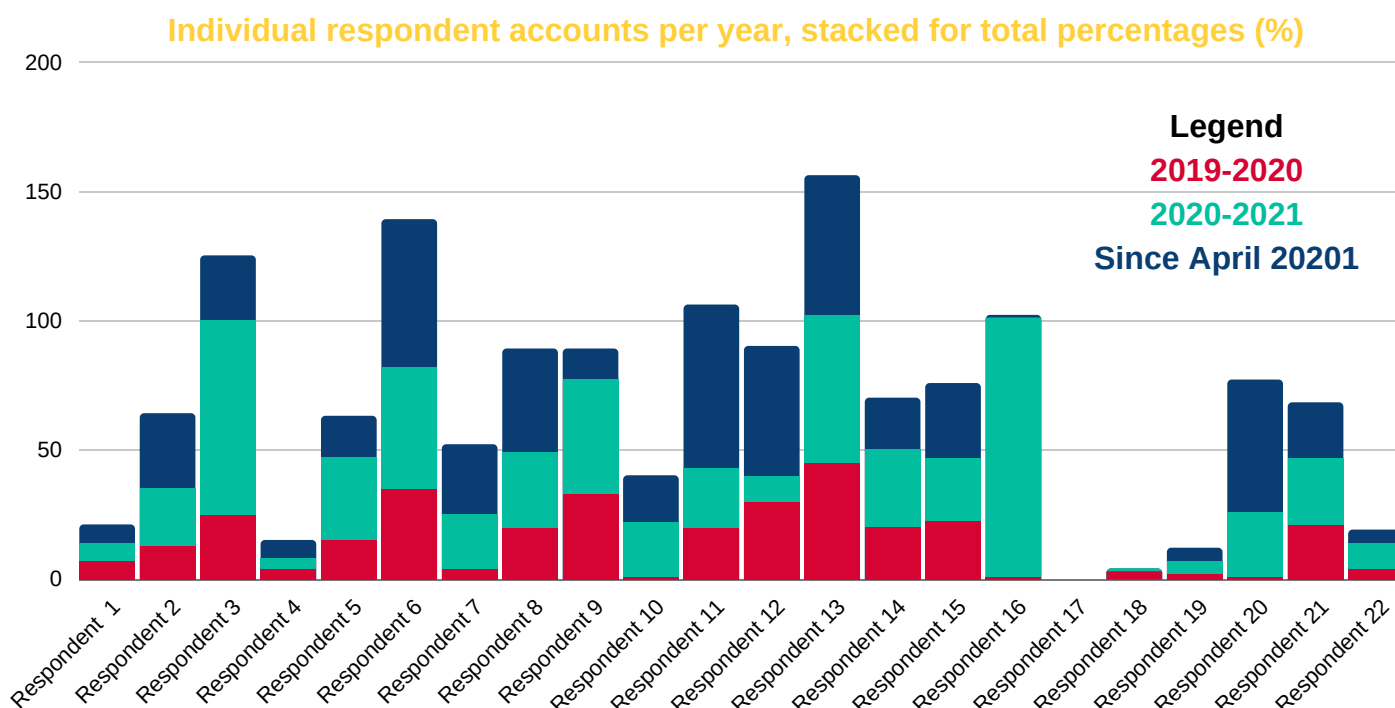
Summary

- Turnover rates have been significant over the last two years. Over 68% of respondents have experienced 45-100% staff turnover.
- 10/22 (45%) respondents noted that since April of 2021 has been their highest rate of staff turnover.
- Respondents note an impact of COVID on their frontline workers. 82% of agencies have had staff off on COVID-related leaves. Since Omicron these numbers are undoubtedly higher although we have no way of tracking these numbers accurately. AHS input has been inconsistent and tracking is not being maintained as it was earlier in the pandemic.
- Onboarding of well-trained and prepared staff is costly for agencies. The onboarding process of frontline staff ensures well-run and safe homes for children and youth. The average cost of onboarding trained staff is \$8061. When agencies are required to hire inexperienced staff these costs increase to ensure comprehensive training and safe staff practices.
- Staff across all agencies are dealing with COVID protocols and precautions daily to ensure the safety of children, youth, and families. 68% of agencies have reported having at least one program on quarantine or outbreak status.
- Insurance costs have increased drastically for many agencies, with some reporting increases of 100%. 32% of respondents have seen at least a 25% increase in their insurance costs.
- Agencies are reporting increased WCB costs adding significantly to their overhead costs. Since April of 2021, there has been an average of at least a 21% increase in WCB costs. These increases range from \$40,000-\$350,000 annually.
- Respondents are reporting deaths in their programs. These deaths are related to COVID, Opioid use, and Suicide. 18% of respondents report at least one death in their programs in the last year.
- 62% of respondents have experienced near misses in their programs relating to Opioid use, Suicide, and COVID. Frontline staff are saving lives.

"Daily Child and Youth Care practice save lives"

WHAT WAS YOUR STAFF TURNOVER RATE IN NUMBERS AND/OR PERCENTAGES (%)?

All 22 respondents were asked to note the percentage of their staff turnover in 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and since April of 2021. Overall, an increase in staff turnover can clearly be seen from 2019 to present.



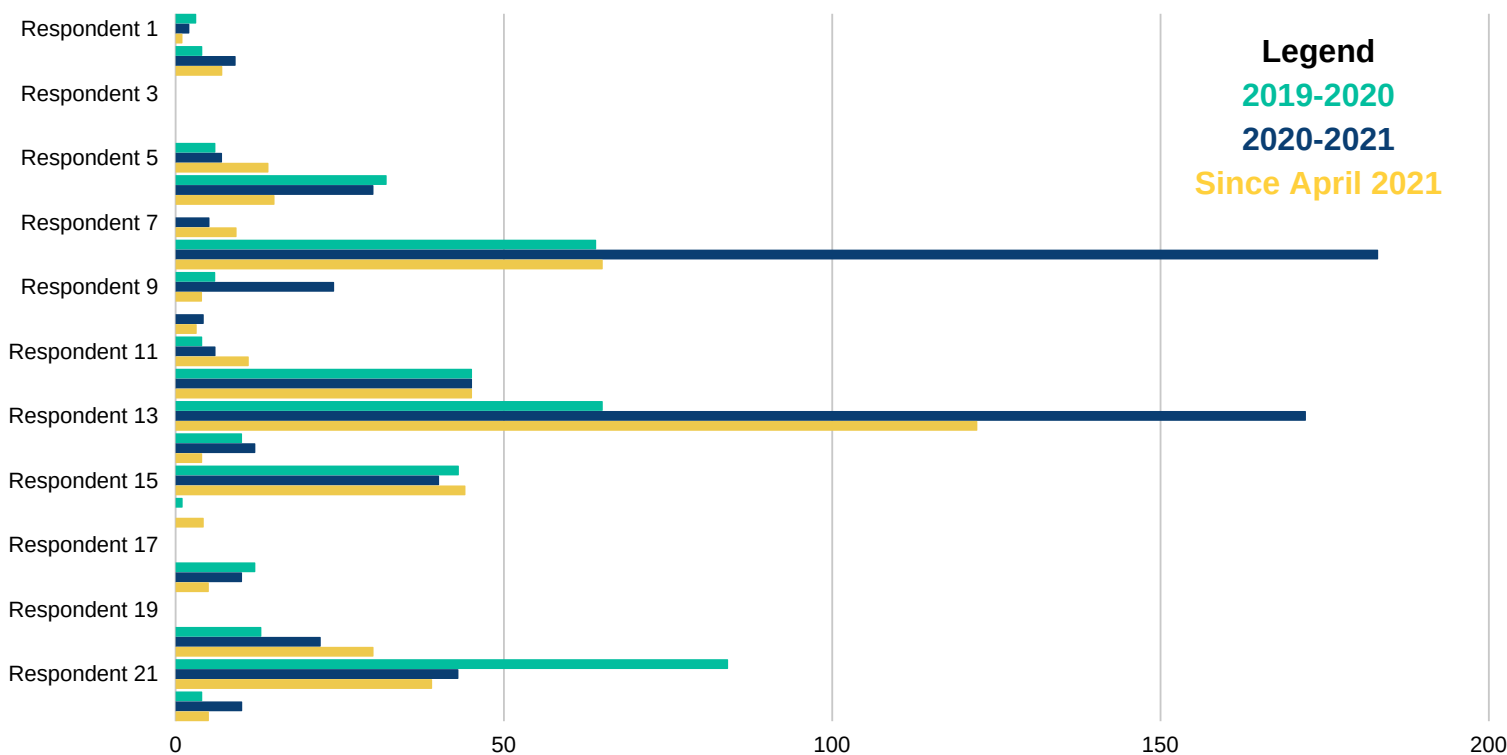
1. 15/22 (68%) respondents reported at least 25% staff turnover in at least one year between 2019 and 2022.
2. 7/22 (32%) respondents reported at least 50% staff turnover in at least one year between 2019 and 2022

3. 10/22 (45%) respondents noted that since April of 2021 has been their highest rate of staff turnover.
4. 5/22(23%) respondents have noted more than 100% staff turnover since 2019

NUMBER OF LEAVES DUE TO COVID STRESS OR ILLNESS

Respondents were asked to share the number of leaves they have on file that relate to COVID, either illness or stress. One respondent noted that they were not tracking leaves in this specific manner and thus had reported that there were zero COVID-related leaves in their files, another respondent chose to leave this question unanswered as they reported they were unaware of these numbers.

Individual respondent accounts per year



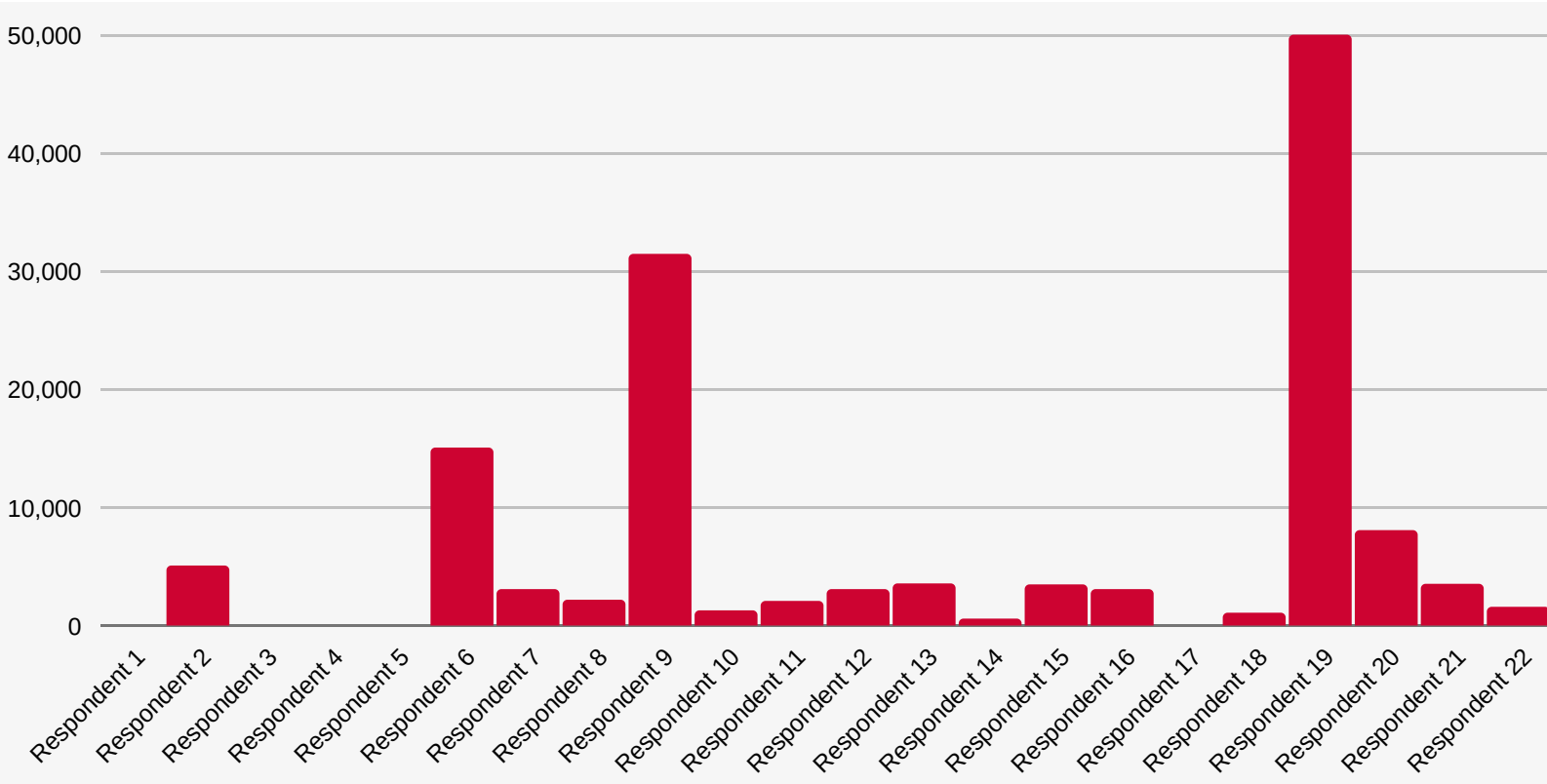
- 1. 18/22 (82%) respondents report at least one leave related to COVID illness or stress.
- 2. 6/22 (27%) respondents report an increase in COVID related leaves from 2019 to 2022

- 3. 7/22 (32%) respondents noted at least 25 staff leaves related to COVID in a single year
- 4. 5/22 (23%) respondents noted that they have had the largest amount of staff leaves since April 2021.

THE AVERAGE COST TO ONBOARD A FRONTLINE STAFF /PRACTITIONER

Respondents were asked to comment on the average cost to their agency to onboard frontline staff/practitioners. 17 of 22 respondents were able to identify these costs and shared a wide range of costs that differ by agency.

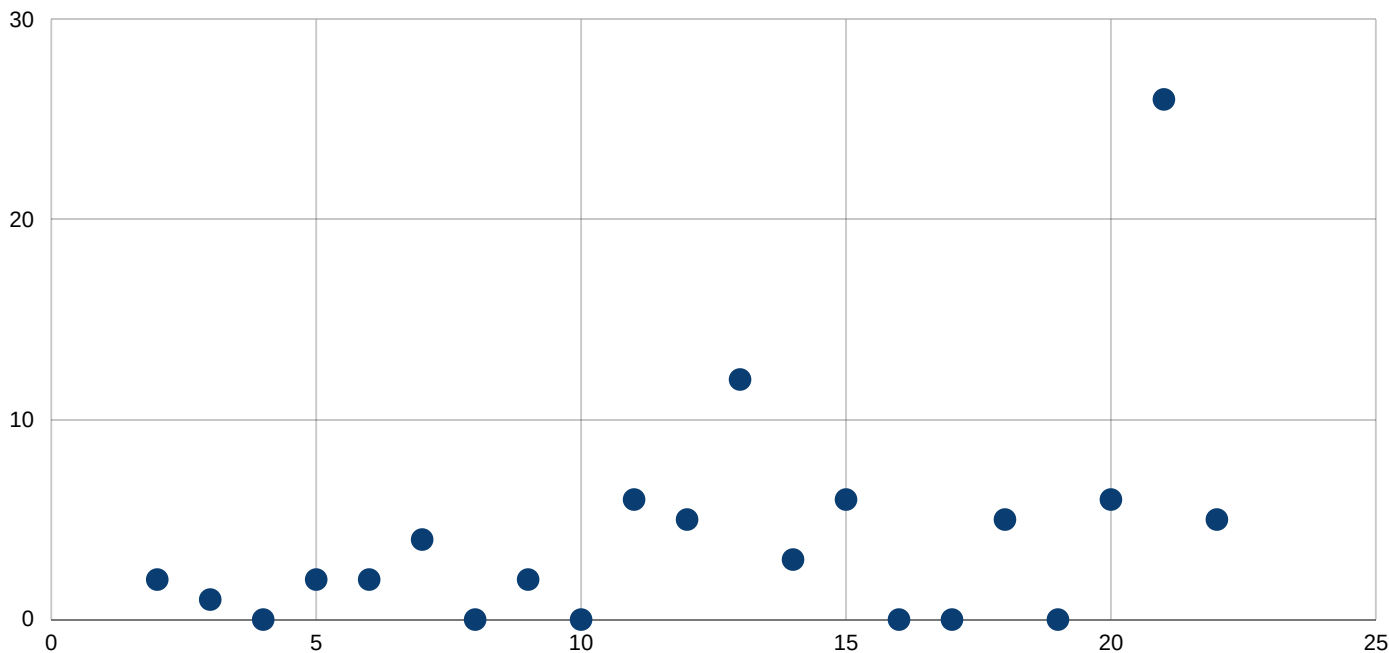
\$8061
Average cost to onboard staff across agencies



HAVE YOU HAD ANY PROGRAMS IN QUARANTINE OR OUTBREAK STATUS? IF YES- HOW MANY?

"At various times we have had multiple youth following COVID protocols"

"We have continually had an EI# (Employment Insurance account number for staff leaves) with CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention)"

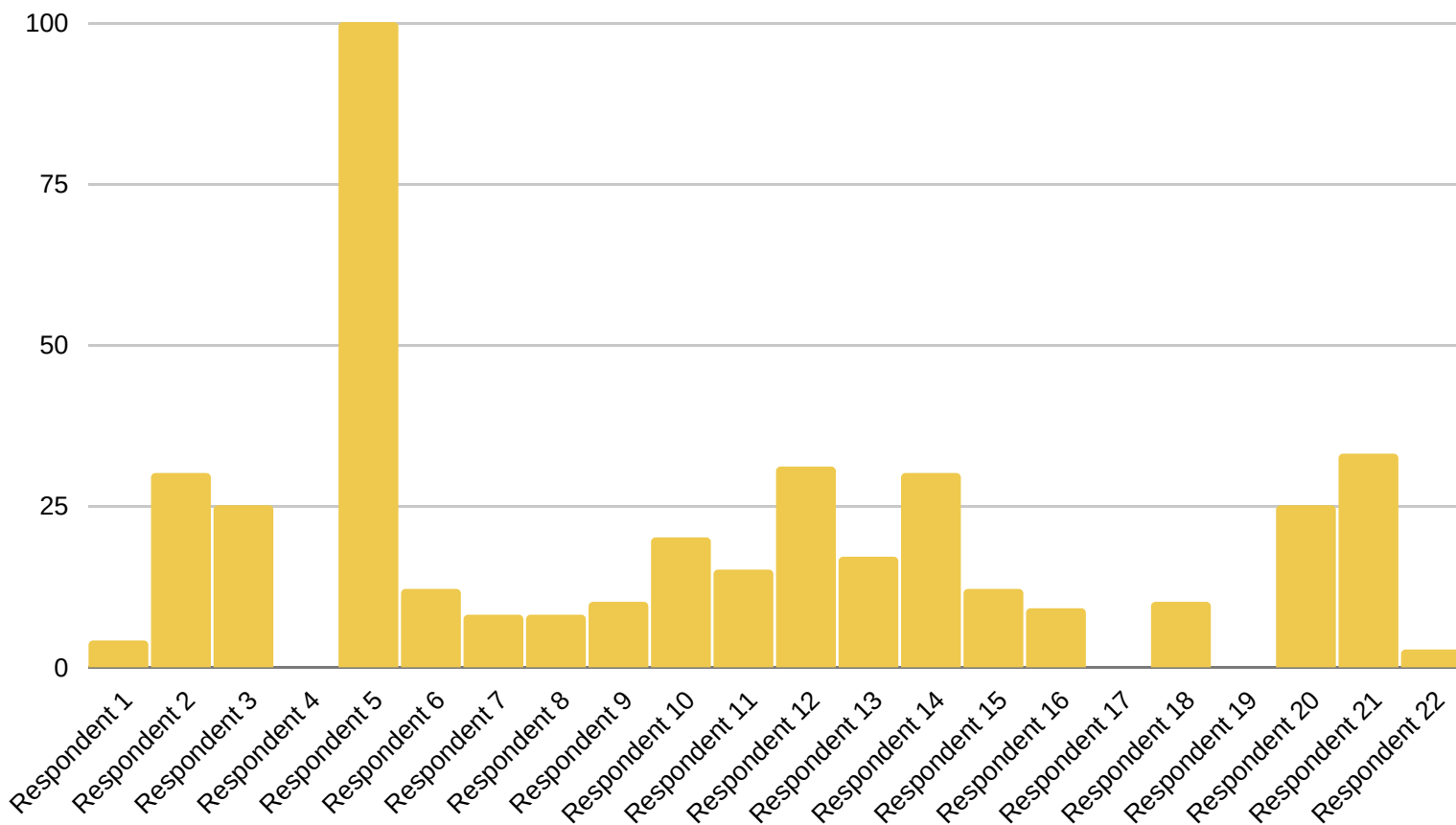


- Of the 22 respondents that took this survey, 15 have reported that they have had programs in quarantine or outbreak status. (68%)

- Of those 13 that have answered yes, 8 have had 5 or more programs in quarantine or outbreak status. (62%)

WHAT IS THE PERCENTAGE (%) INCREASE OF YOUR INSURANCE?

All agencies that reported on this question have noted an increase in their insurance rates since the start of 2019. Some agencies have seen increases of up 100%, doubling their annual insurance costs. 27% of agencies have advised of a 25% or more increase.



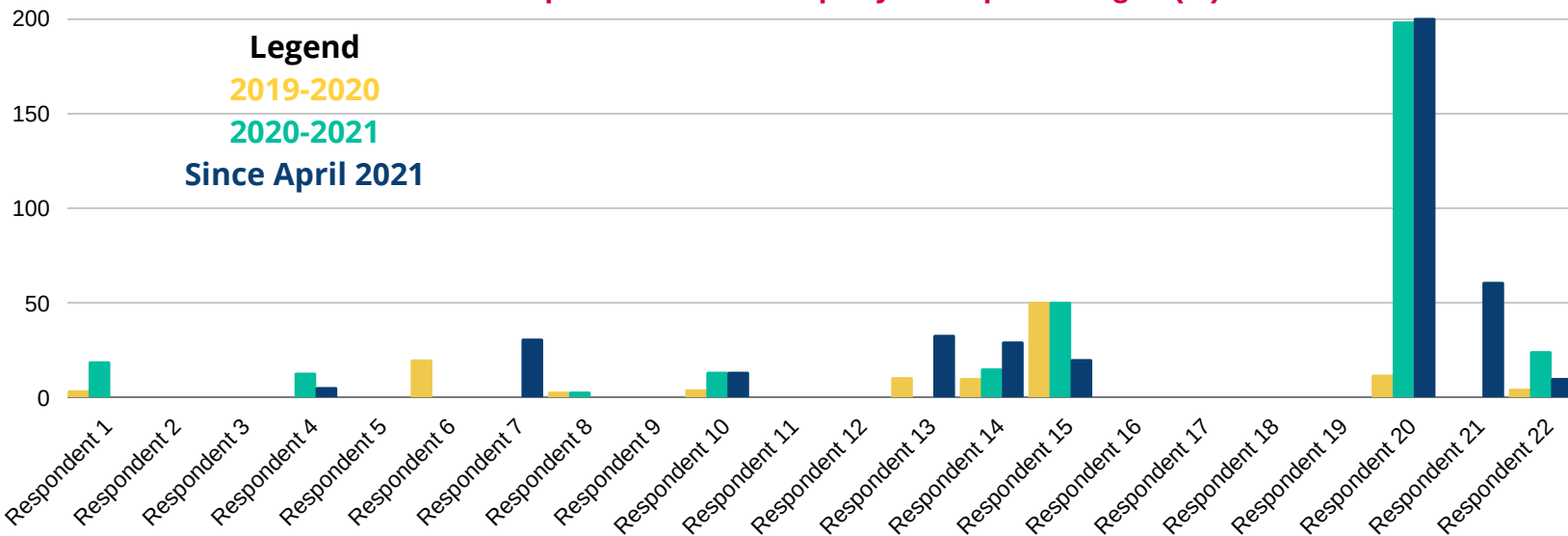
60%
an increase of \$367,000 in 9 months
- This is one respondent's experience in 2021.

WHAT IS YOUR PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN WCB COSTS?

Respondents were asked to share their increase in WCB costs across 2019-2020, 2020-2021, and since April of 2021; 12 respondents were able to comprehensively answer this question. Several participants noted that they did not have access to this specific information or were still waiting to receive this information to track it.

Of those that responded Since April of 2021, there has been a 21% increase in WCB costs. As such all conclusions are based on the 12 respondents that participated in this question.

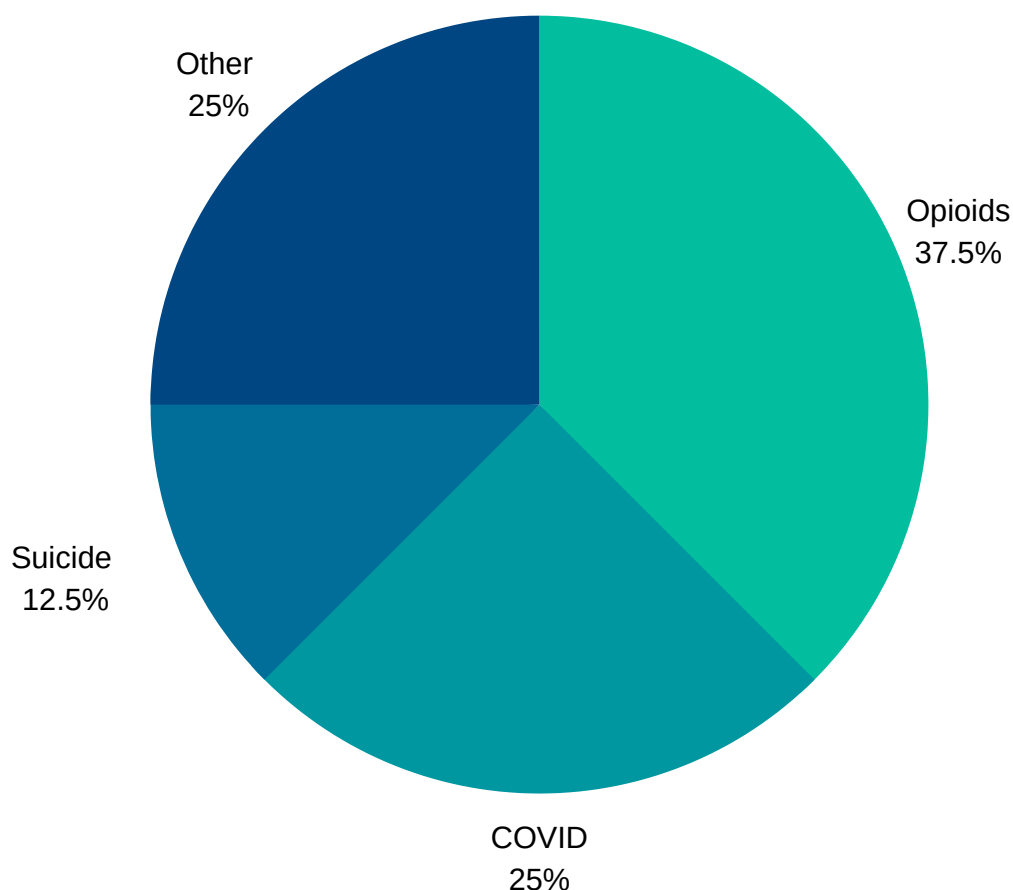
Individual respondent accounts per year in percentages (%)



- All agencies are reporting an increase in their WCB premiums since 2019.
- Agencies are noting increases as high as 200%, quadrupling their costs annually.
- Since April of 2021 there has been an average of at least 21% increase to WCB costs

HAVE YOU HAD ANY DEATHS IN YOUR CLIENT POPULATION? IF SO, HOW DID THEY DIE?

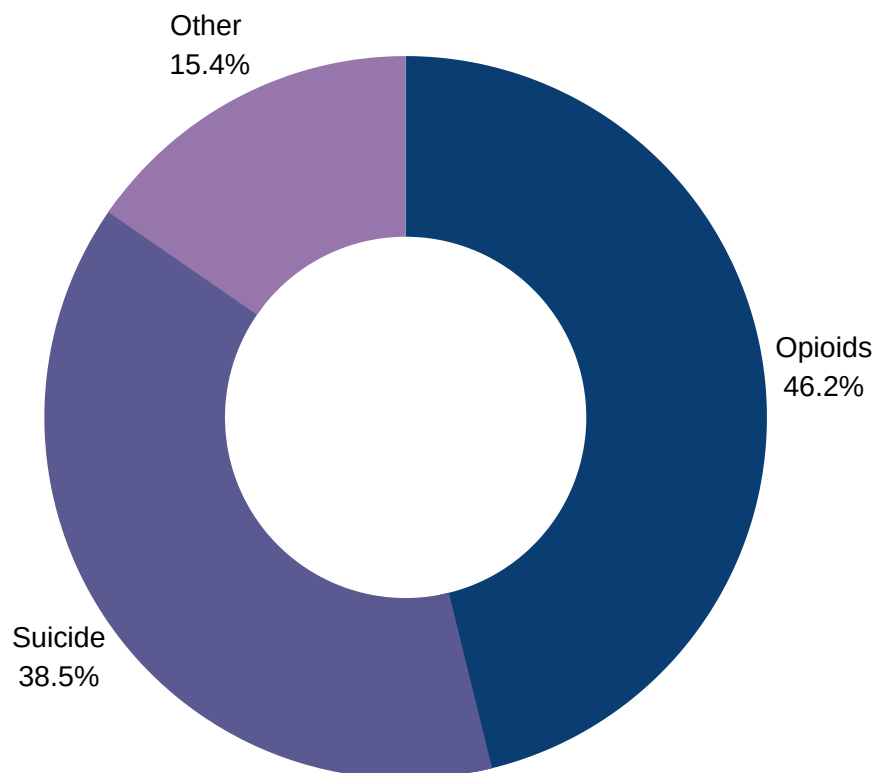
Respondents were asked to speak to the number of deaths in their client population in the last year and asked to provide the reasoning for these deaths (Opioids, Suicide, COVID, Other-please specify)



- 4 out of 22 respondents report at least one death in their programs in the last year (18%)
- Causes of death ranged from unknown through to COVID, Suicide, Opioid use, and accidents.

HAVE YOU HAD ANY LIFESAVING (NEAR-MISS) SITUATIONS IN YOUR CLIENT POPULATION?

Agencies were asked to share any high-risk near-miss lifesaving situations in their client populations in the last year. This question allowed respondents to answer as they saw fit to share their information.



"We have seen significant mental health in many of our youth, lots of suicidal ideation, one situation specifically where a youth disclosed that they had tried to hang themselves in their bedroom, but this was not witnessed by staff. Self-harm and suicidal ideation occur more frequently than in past years."

FINAL THOUGHTS

- This snapshot reflects a large portion of the group care sector and the challenges they are experiencing.
- The capacity to support young people in Alberta is being stretched due to the realities of COVID.
- COVID has derailed mental health capacity for workers as well as young people, this is reflected in Opioid use, Suicidal ideation, and increased sick time and leaves for staff. This requires more well-being supports necessary to maintain therapeutic environments
- Deaths within organizations are increasing and people are struggling to offer opportunities to process their grief and loss. There is an increase of vicarious trauma for staff trying to deal with the cumulative stresses and lack of mental health supports.
- Constant staff turnover makes it difficult for youth in programs to regulate and process their negative emotions and self-regulate.
- Group care staff are committed to their work and are now in a place of conflict choosing between their workplaces and their family and balancing keeping both safe as a result of COVID.
- COVID has become an ongoing threat for staff and young people.
- The cost of doing business is increasing significantly as evidenced by rising insurance and WCB costs. Wages are not keeping up with the cost of living while it continues to increase.
- This picture shows significant challenges faced by the group care sector ranging from overhead costs to staffing and mental health concerns. These challenges express an immediate need for increased investment in group care to stabilize the industry and allow for strategic planning.