

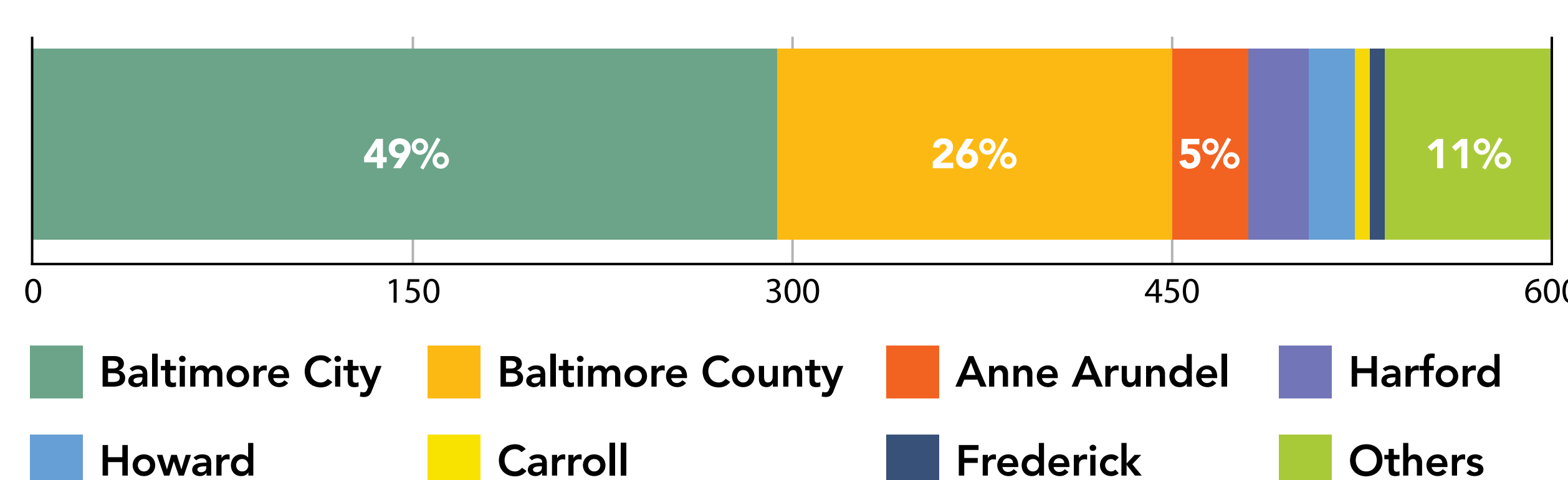
Evaluating the Impact of a Medical-Legal Partnership on Children with Disabilities

Da-Yea Song, MHS; Maureen van Stone, Esq., MS; and Mallory Finn, Esq.

Background

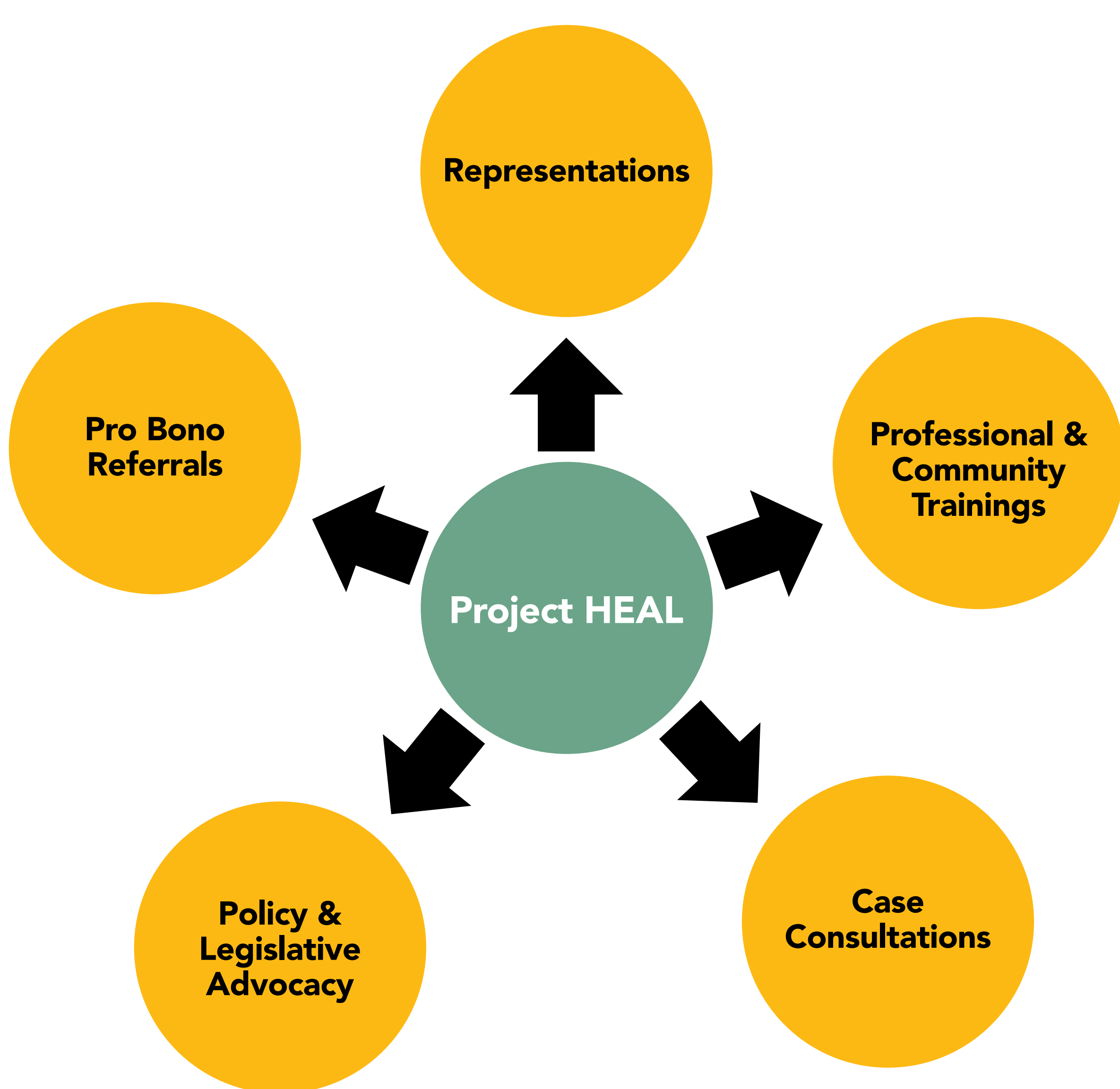
Social determinants that affect the health and well-being of individuals are often influenced by unmet legal needs that act as a barrier to enhancing patient and population health. To overcome these barriers, healthcare clinicians and legal professionals work together in medical-legal partnerships (MLPs) to identify vulnerable individuals and help ensure their access to benefits and services. While there are more than 300 MLPs nationwide, Project HEAL (Health, Education, Advocacy and Law) is Maryland's only comprehensive MLP.

Figure 1 (Representation by Project HEAL attorneys)



Helping children with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families address the civil legal issues they face in their everyday lives, Project HEAL attorneys collaborate with Kennedy Krieger professionals to ensure that patients receive the medical and legal care that they need.

Figure 2 (Project HEAL services)



Methods

Testimonials from Project HEAL clients and their families demonstrate the importance of this work. In December 2017, 100 professionals with diverse backgrounds across a variety of clinical departments and programs within the Institute completed an online survey about Project HEAL's impact.

Figure 3 (Impact survey participants)

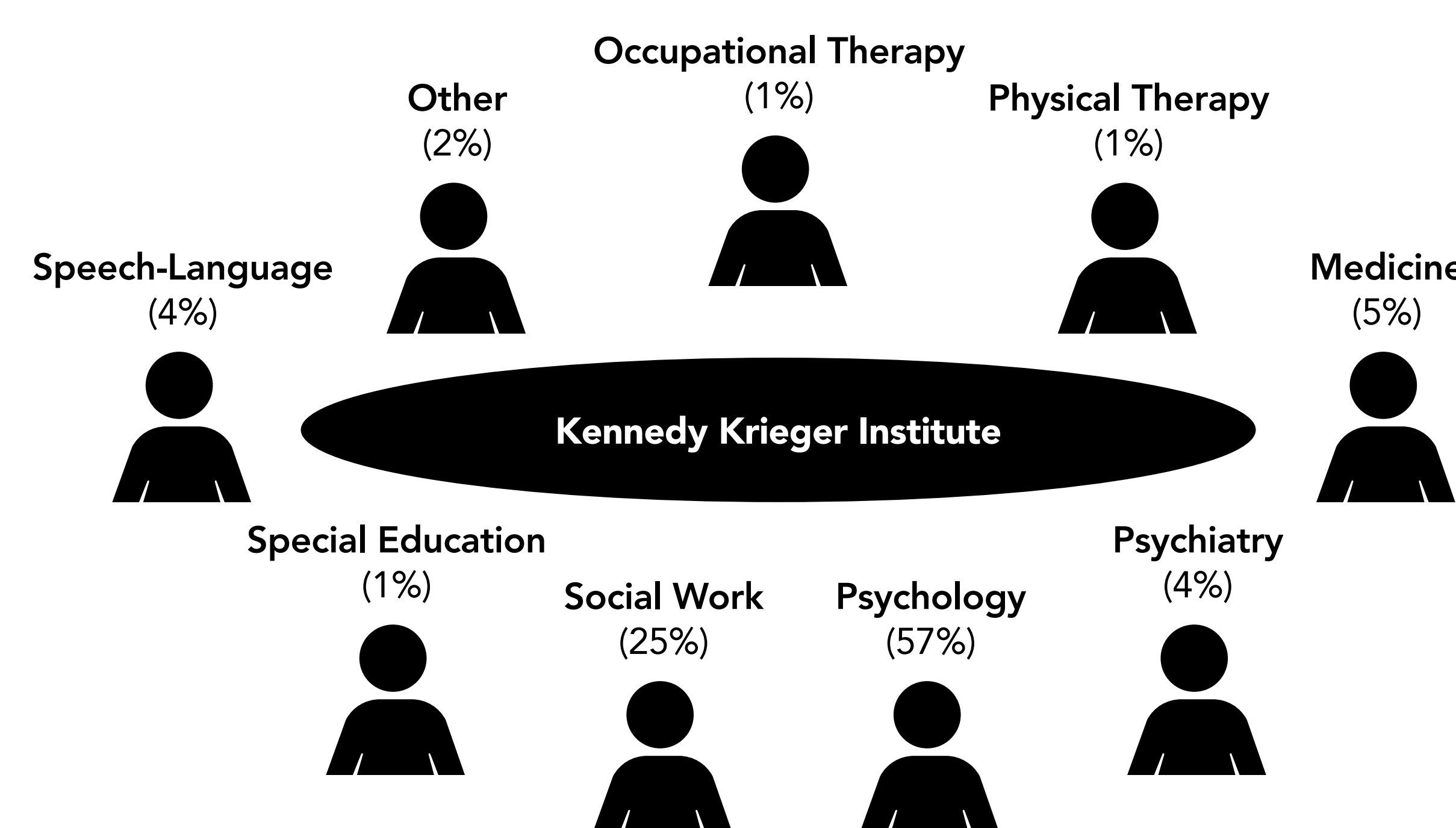


Figure 4 (Survey respondent number of annual case consultations with Project HEAL)



The anonymous online survey included nine questions. The questions represented a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches that were adapted from the annual survey by the National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership. Responses from the qualitative questions were categorized into groups for data analysis.

Results

Figure 5 (Project HEAL's impact on children and families)

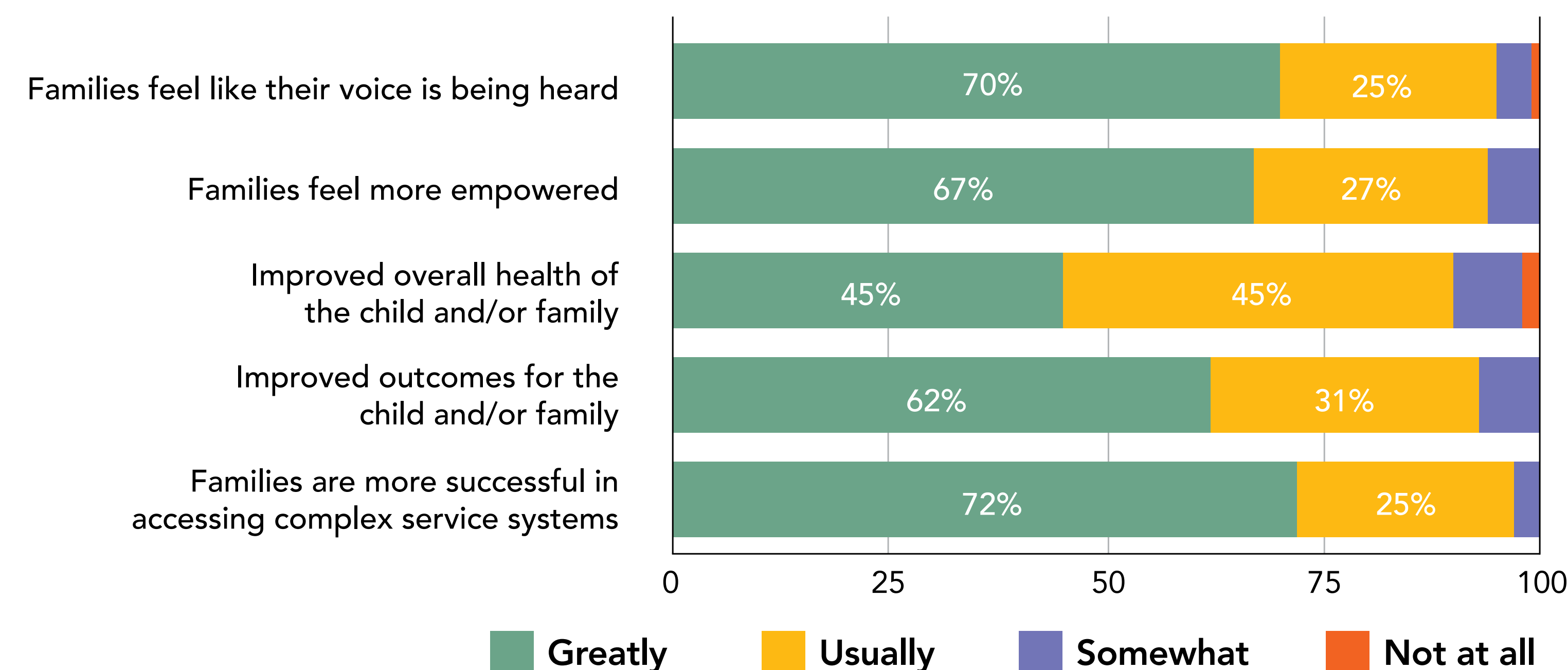
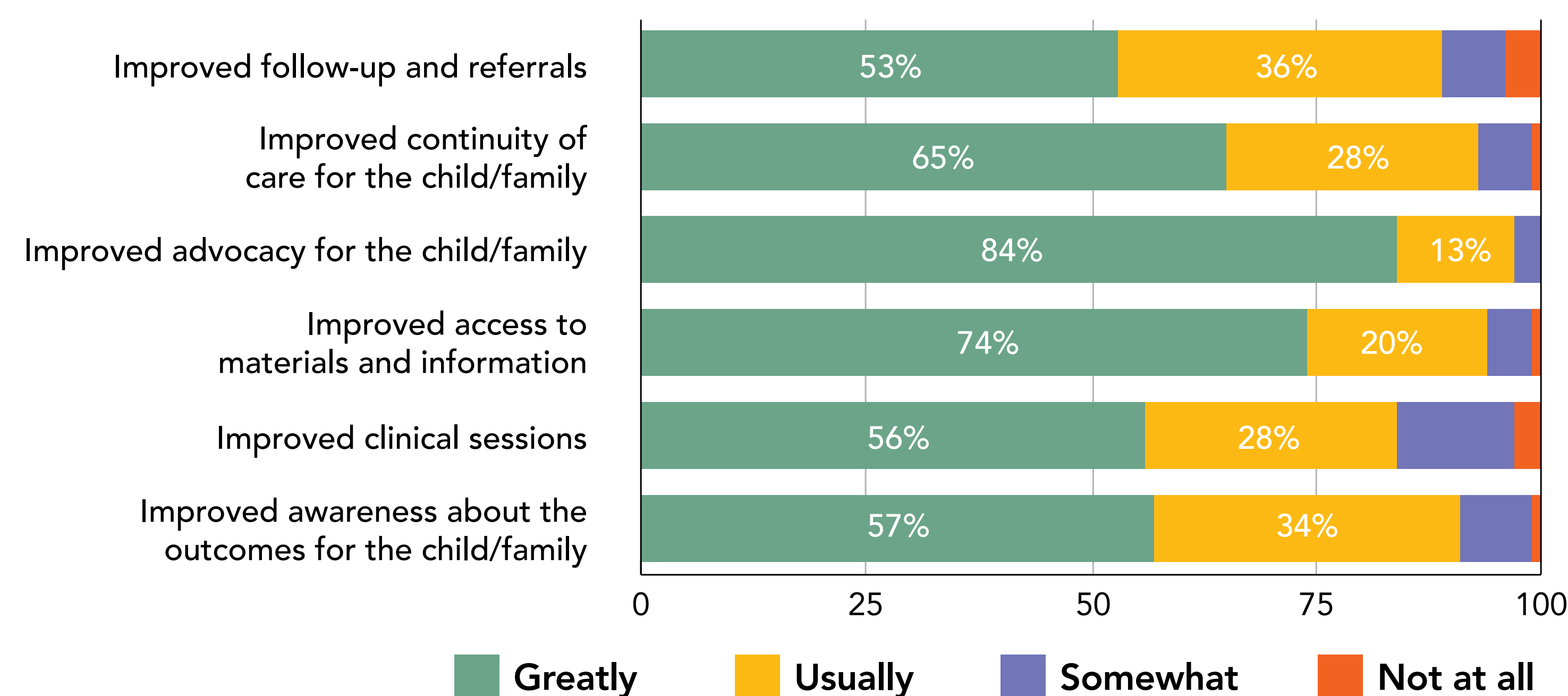
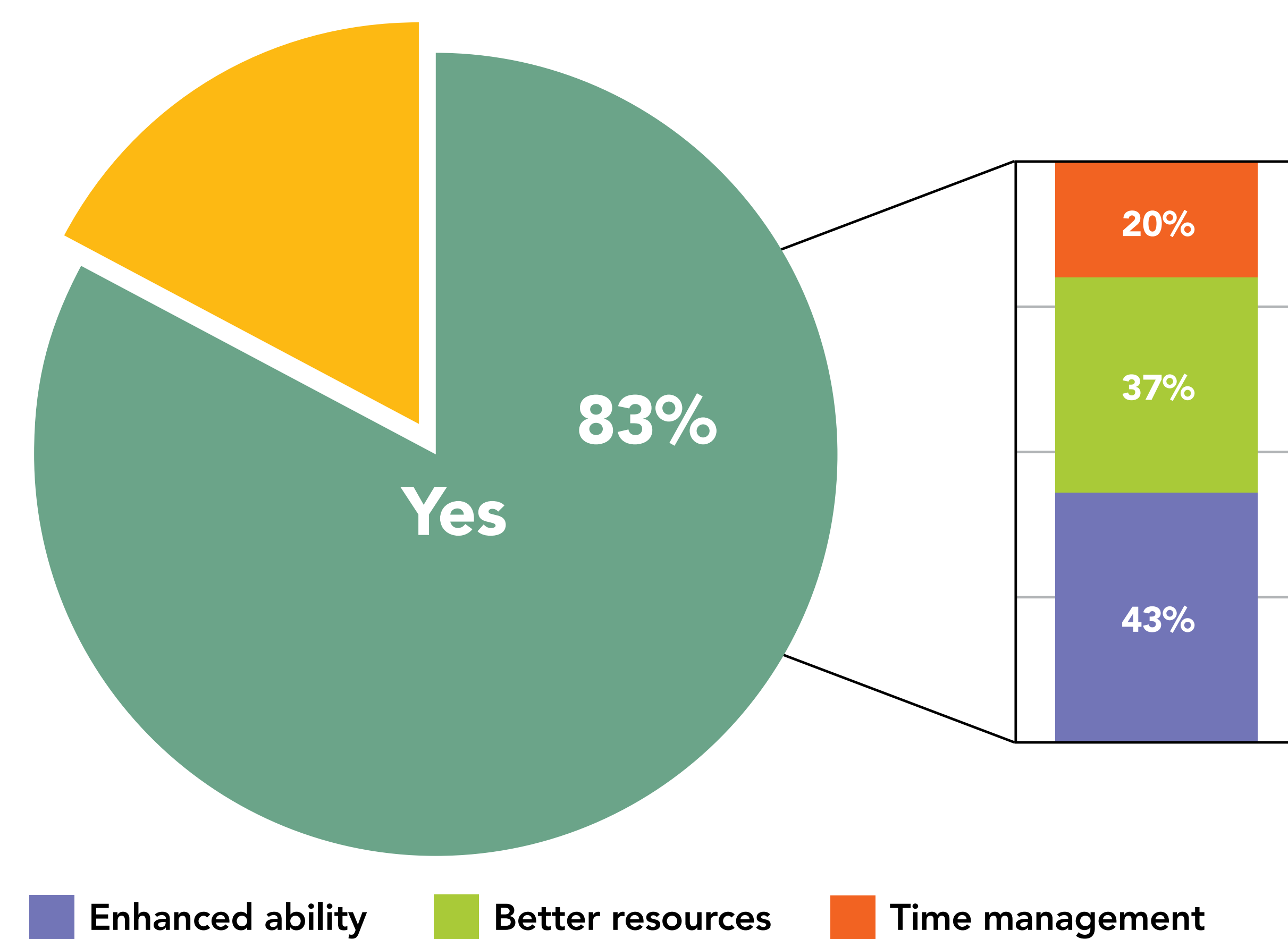


Figure 6 (Project HEAL's impact on Kennedy Krieger faculty, staff and trainees)



Project HEAL has had a positive impact on the Institute's faculty members, staff members and trainees. When asked, 83 percent of respondents indicated that Project HEAL enabled them to improve their performance as clinicians. They indicated that the collaboration with Project HEAL attorneys made them feel more comfortable and confident in their work by keeping them informed of legal issues and allowing them access to a team of experts providing invaluable guidance. This enabled clinicians to spend more therapeutic time with their patients.

Figure 7 (Improved performance at work)



An anonymous respondent remarked:

"Having the benefit of consulting with representatives from Project HEAL allows for efficient and meaningful exchanges and collaboration that is critical for our patients' well-being. It has impacted my performance at work, as I am able to offer information and services to clients that I otherwise would not be able to without the support of Project HEAL."

In addition to working together with patients and clinicians at Kennedy Krieger, Project HEAL offers training opportunities to faculty members, staff members and trainees on a variety of topics. Kennedy Krieger trainees, each of whom brings a distinct skill set to the table, have gained exposure to various resources and systems through Project HEAL. Through the impact survey, trainees expressed how Project HEAL trainings have shaped and prepared them for their current positions.

"I cannot say enough great things about how I value Project HEAL as a trainee ... and I value the resources provided by Project HEAL throughout various trainings."

Project HEAL attorneys provide trainings to help keep Institute faculty, staff and trainees informed of changes. As one survey respondent mentioned:

"The content of their training is so thorough, up to date and written so that all understand."

Conclusion

This large-scale impact evaluation has demonstrated how significant Project HEAL is to the lives of the patients and families with whom it works, as well as to the faculty members, staff members and trainees with whom it collaborates at Kennedy Krieger Institute.



Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities
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