



**Justice
Reinvestment
Initiative**
Iowa



Justice Center
THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

Iowa's Justice Reinvestment Initiative

Second Presentation to the Oversight Committee
June 2, 2022



Overview

- 1 Project overview
- 2 Changes in community-based corrections operations & outcomes
- 3 Areas for future analysis
- 4 Next steps

Project overview

1



A data-driven approach to improve public safety, reduce corrections and related criminal justice spending, and reinvest savings in strategies that can decrease crime and reduce recidivism

The Justice Reinvestment Initiative is supported and funded by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Iowa leaders want to understand the public safety impact of changes made to community-based corrections (CBC) practices in response to COVID-19.

- The Justice Reinvestment Initiative is an approach to answer systemic criminal justice challenges. It is responsive to the unique needs of each state.
- In the summer of 2021, Iowa was approved by BJA and Pew to utilize the Justice Reinvestment Initiative process to answer this question about CBC and public safety.
- This project is one of the first in the country aimed at understanding the public safety impact of recent criminal justice changes.
- The Oversight Committee leads this effort in Iowa.



Since launching this initiative, state leaders have focused on answering the following questions:

- Did recent changes that were implemented in March 2020 have a positive, negative, or neutral impact on public safety and CBC operations?
- Should Iowa continue and/or enhance these new procedures to increase officers' ability to successfully supervise individuals in the community?
- Do the Iowa Department of Corrections (IDOC) and CBC need any specific resources to successfully supervise individuals in the community?
- What data-driven recommendations can maximize potential benefits and resources to improve success for clients in the community?

The Oversight Committee will prioritize final recommendations that can have a positive, lasting impact on CBC in Iowa.

The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center staff will support and guide the committee by

- Conducting agency-spanning data analysis;
- Presenting data findings and assessment results; and
- Developing recommendations for improvement.



There are several goals for today's presentation.

- Review CSG Justice Center analysis of CBC data trends since March 2020
- Discuss findings from the CBC assessment
- Preview areas for future analysis and engagement



The findings in today's presentation are informed by multiple information sources and research activities.

Quantitative

- CSG Justice Center staff received case-level data from IDOC to create a study cohort of individuals on supervision or in prison between July 2018 and December 2021.
- These data include information on client demographics, supervision activities and outcomes, and case manager caseloads.
- CSG Justice Center staff have been working with IDOC research staff to clean, sort, combine, and prepare the data for analysis and to produce and interpret descriptive findings.

Qualitative

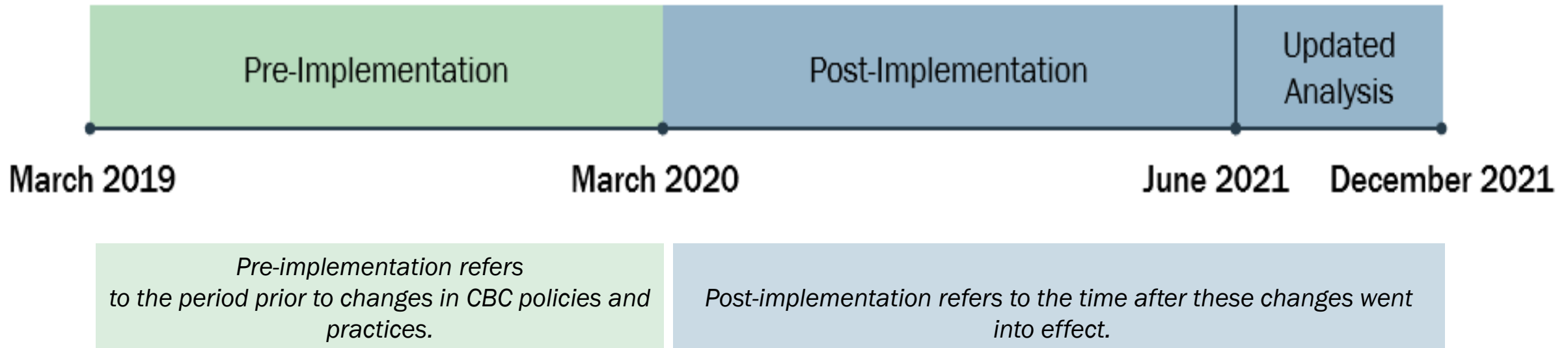
- CSG Justice Center staff have engaged **85** stakeholders to provide additional context on CBC changes implemented after March 2020 and their impact on operations.
- Stakeholders include
 - CBC leadership, staff, and board chairs;
 - Individuals on CBC supervision;
 - Administrative law judges; and
 - IDOC leadership and staff.

We explore data trends in this presentation through rates and percentages.

Rates: To account for the sample growing over time, we often use rates. Either grouped by month or day, **a rate allows us to measure the frequency of an event**—like appointments with case managers—while accounting for the size of the CBC population sample at a given point in time. For example: if there were 100 supervision cases in September and 200 total appointments with clients, the appointment rate would be 200 appointments/100 cases, or 2 appointments per case for the month. This also helps us compare geographies of varying population and supervision caseload sizes.

Percentages: To **explore the composition of subgroups over time, we also use percentages rather than raw frequencies or counts.** As an example, we looked at the percentage breakdown of supervision type in both the pre- and post-implementation period. This also helps us account for a fluctuating sample size over time.

To better understand our study cohort and make comparisons, our analysis focuses on certain time periods.



Findings from the first in-depth analyses and assessments focus on major developments and challenges facing Iowa's community-based corrections system.

- CBC operations were altered during the post-implementation period.
- Revocation rates and other key trends changed before and after implementation of these operational changes.
- CBC officers report many strengths and challenges related to responding to client behavior as a result of these new operations.
- Access to resources and supportive interventions did not increase post-implementation, and resources in the community are inconsistently available statewide.

Changes in community- based corrections operations & outcomes

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In March 2020, criminal justice agencies and local community stakeholders took measures to protect the health and safety of facility-based staff and clients.

- Increased use of technology
 - Virtual opportunities for connecting clients with families for visits
 - Virtual delivery of interventions to address client behavior
 - Virtual initial appearances and court hearings
 - Virtual opportunities for telehealth
- Released individuals whose behavior did not pose a risk to public safety from the state's correctional facilities onto the state's CBC caseload
- Prioritized jail and prison space for those whose behavior posed a risk to public safety



CBC agencies also adapted quickly to the public health crisis and implemented similar practice changes.

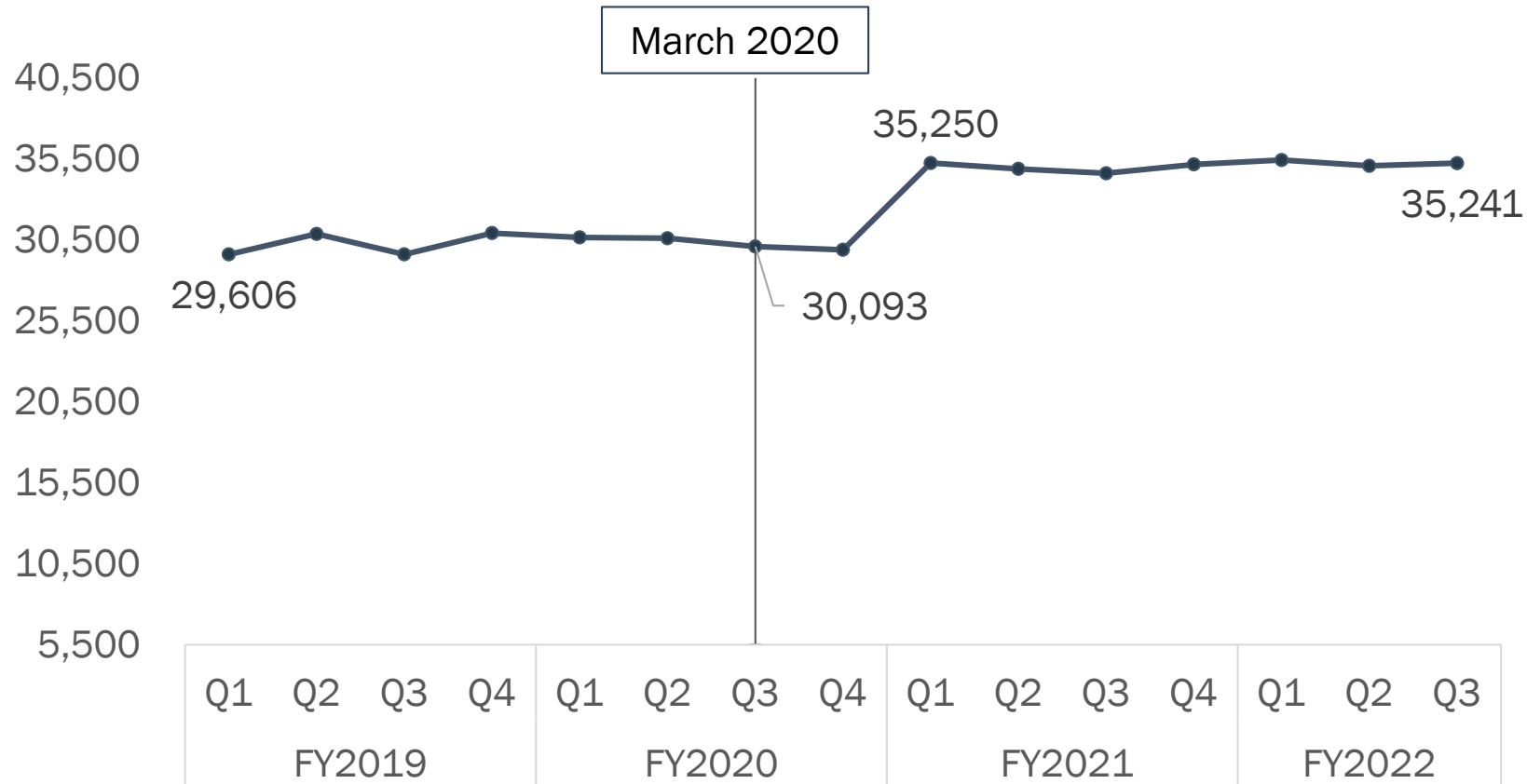
- Conducted virtual court and revocation hearings, treatment groups, and client contacts; released clients from residential facilities, jails, and prisons; and put an **emphasis on exhausting resources and keeping clients supervised in the community**
- Expanded the practice of **reviewing recommendations for revocations** to limit the number of people returning to prisons and jails
- Allowed officers to work from home for a portion of the week, a practice that many supervisors report has **continued to some extent**



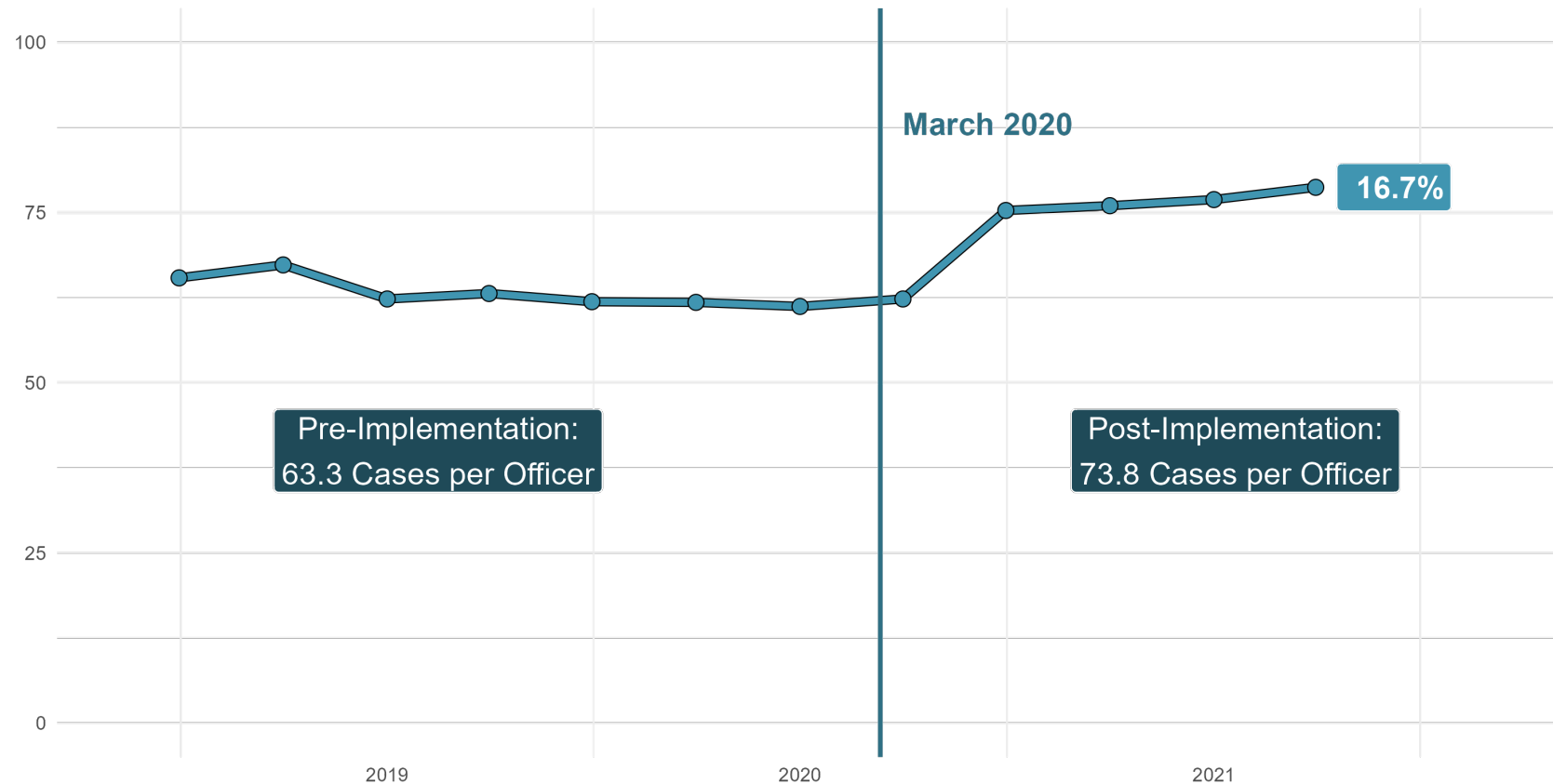
Two years later, state leaders want to understand the extent and impact of these changes on CBC operations.

The size of the CBC population increased by nearly 20 percent immediately post-implementation but has remained steady since September 2020.

Quarterly CBC Population, FY2019-Q1–FY2022-Q3

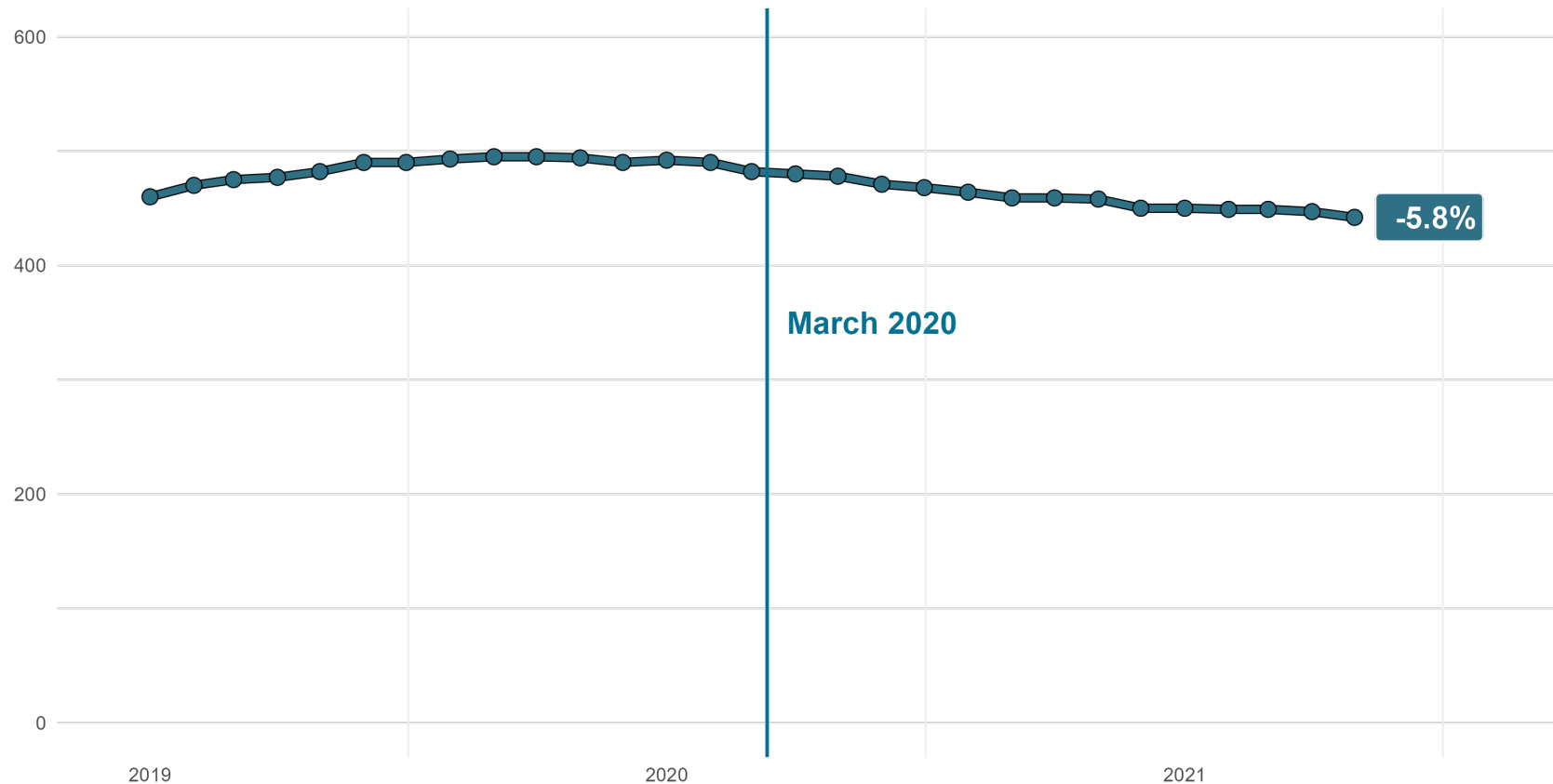


CBC case manager and officer caseloads increased by nearly 17 percent from pre- to post-implementation.



Note: The pre-implementation period here is July 2018 through December 2020 while post-implementation is April 2020 through June 2021

During the same period, CBC agencies experienced a nearly 6 percent decrease in case managers and officers.

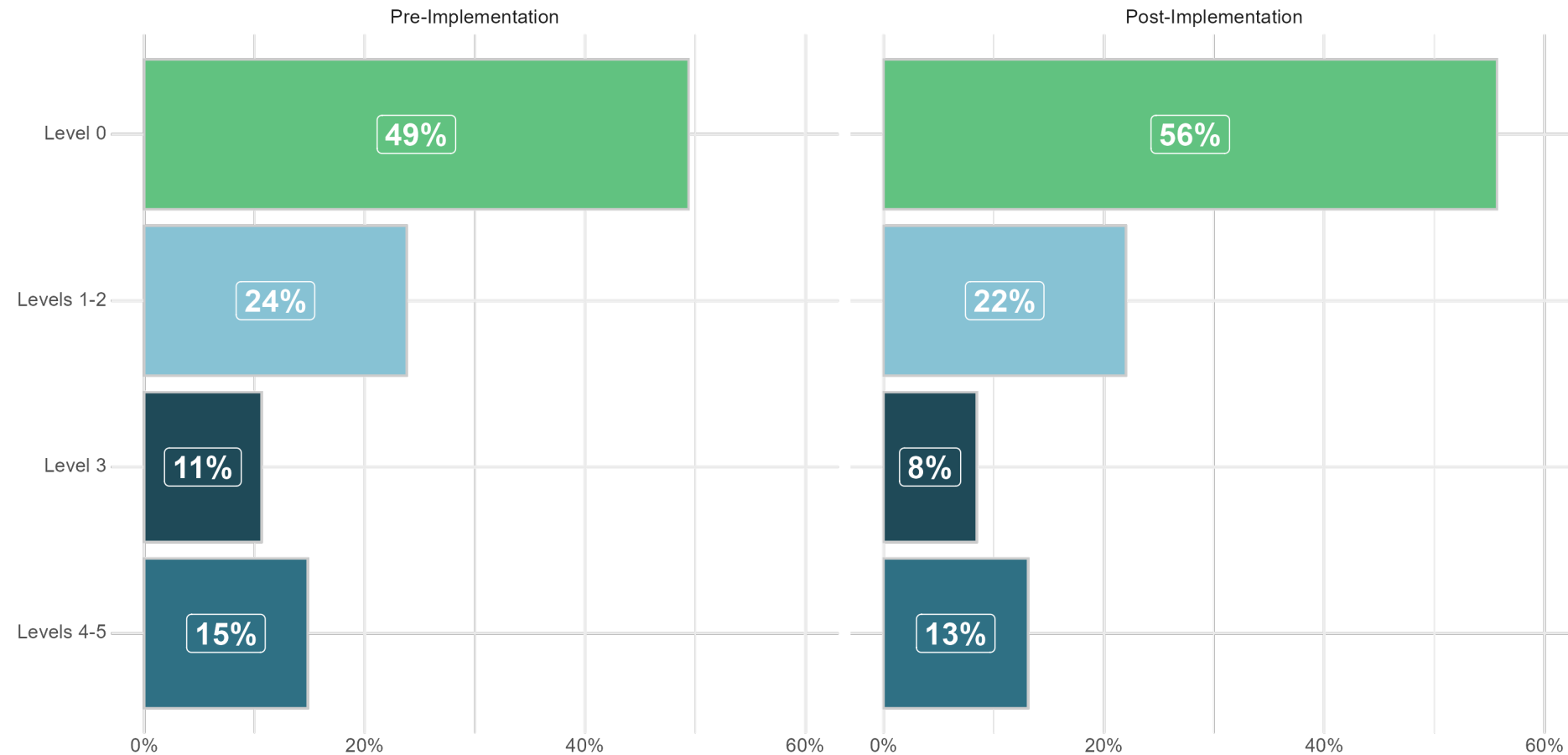


Note: The pre-implementation period is March 2019 through February 2020 while post-implementation is March 2020 through May 2021

Risk assessment results are used to determine a person's supervision level unless they are assigned to level 0 by district policy.

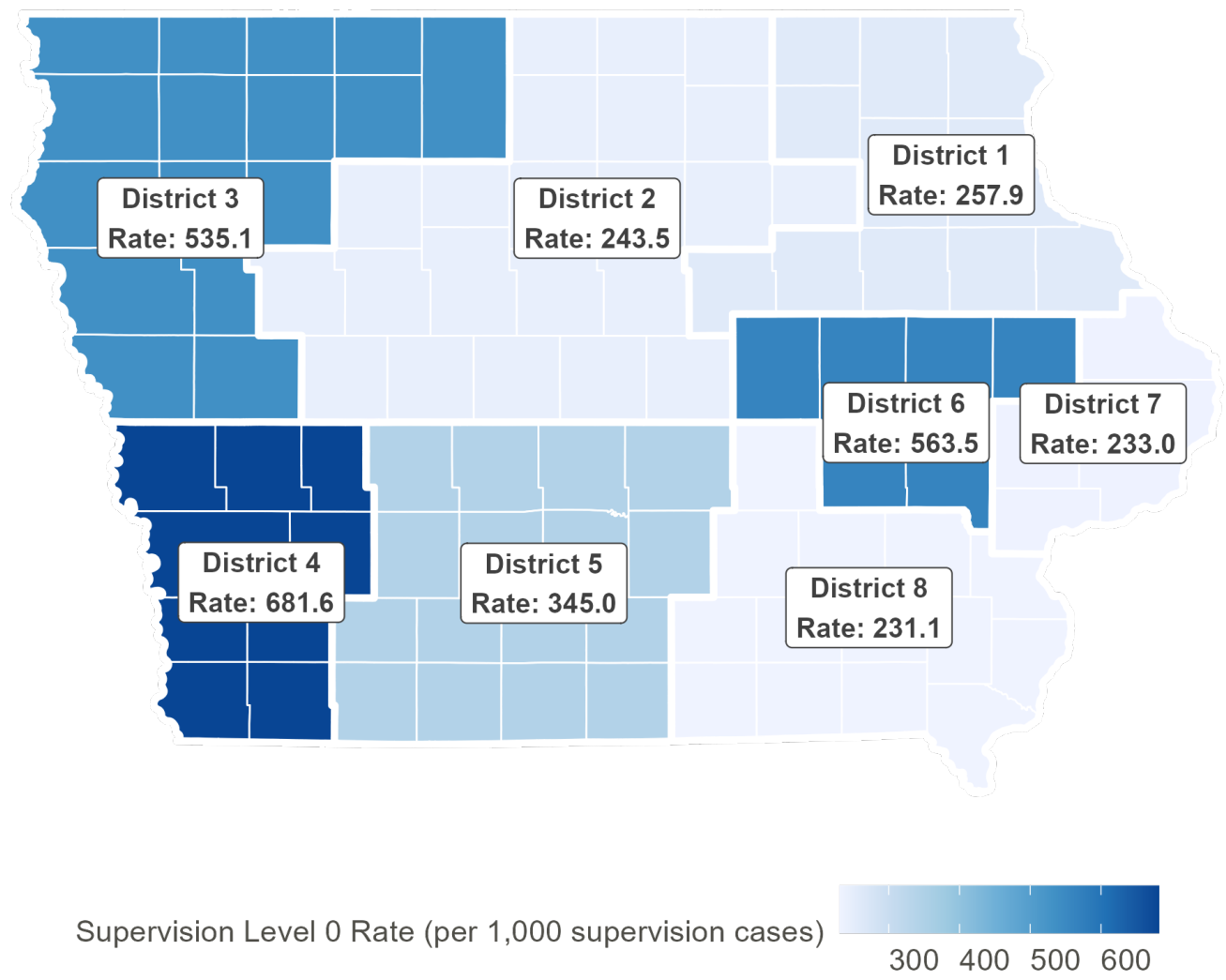
- Supervision levels range from 0 to 5.
- A person's supervision level dictates how many contacts they must have with their supervision officer, how many collateral contacts their officers must make, and supervision/programming strategies.
- **Supervision Level 0:** No structured contacts with an officer, referrals made as needed, no risk assessment completed
- **Supervision Level 5:** 4 officer contacts and 4 collateral contacts per month, supervision/programming are intensive

The largest percentage change in population was for people with a supervision level of 0.



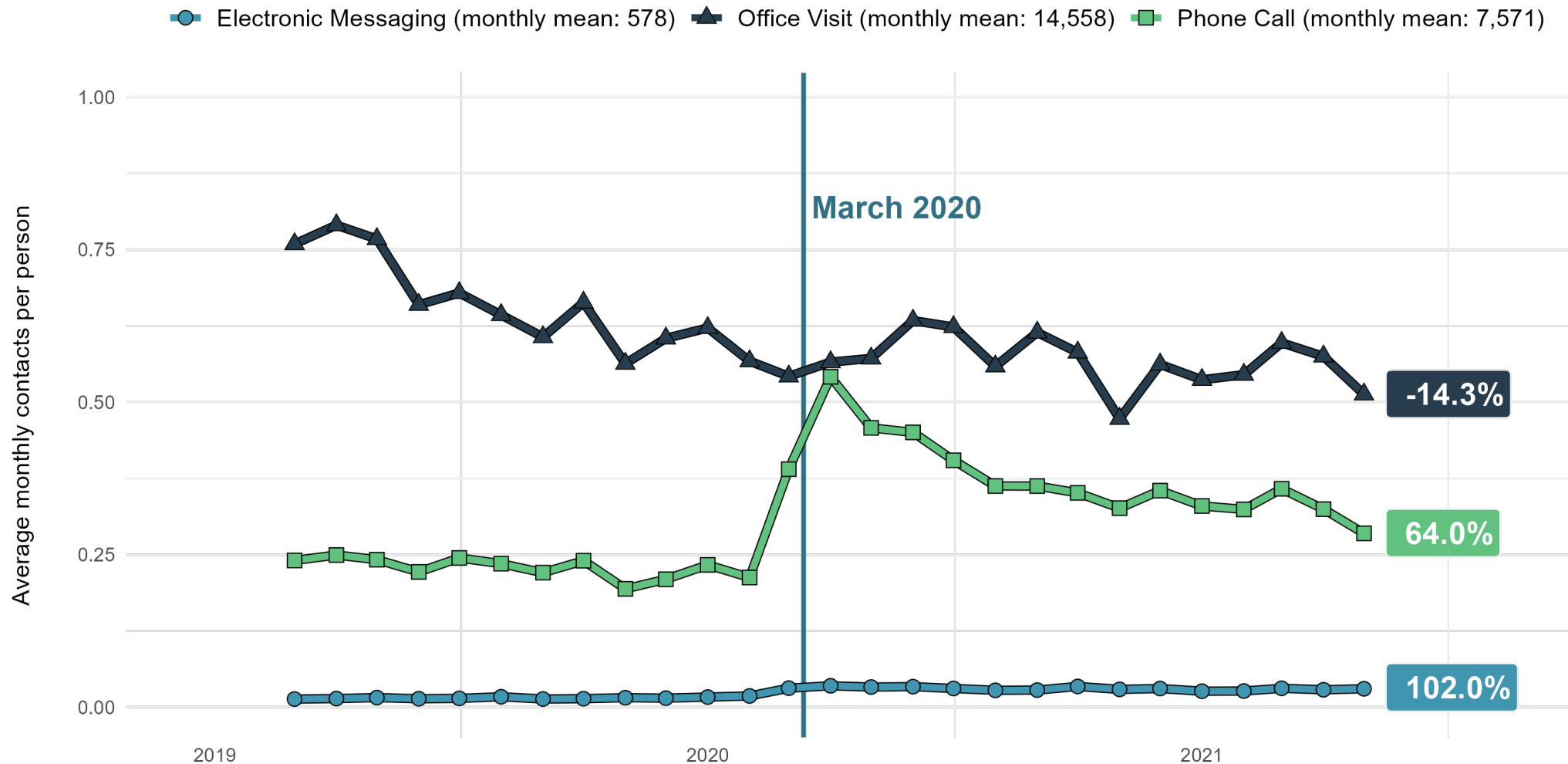
Note: The pre-implementation period is June 2019 through February 2020 while post-implementation is March 2020 through May 2021 for this visual as a result of supervision level policies changes enacted on May 31, 2019

The rate of supervision level 0 cases varies widely by districts.



Note: Supervision level rate is based on supervision cases from June 1, 2020

Use of phone calls to connect with people on supervision monthly increased, while use of office visits decreased.



Note: The pre-implementation period is March 2019 through February 2020 while post-implementation is March 2020 through May 2021

In focus groups, CBC staff identified improvements that developed post-implementation.

- Staff reported **higher client participation and completion rates** in programs, increased job opportunities and training for clients, and flexibility for officers with remote work options.
- Many officers reported being well-equipped by their districts to shift to virtual contacts. Officers enjoyed having virtual court and revocation hearings, as it allowed them **more time to focus on client contacts and data entry** since they did not have to drive and wait for their client's hearing.
- **Clients appreciated how accessible their officers were** during the pandemic, even without seeing them in person.
- Virtual programming helped limit revocations, as it **reduced transportation barriers** that could result in a violation if clients missed sessions. It's also helpful for clients in less populated areas where it can be harder to get enough people to hold an in-person group.

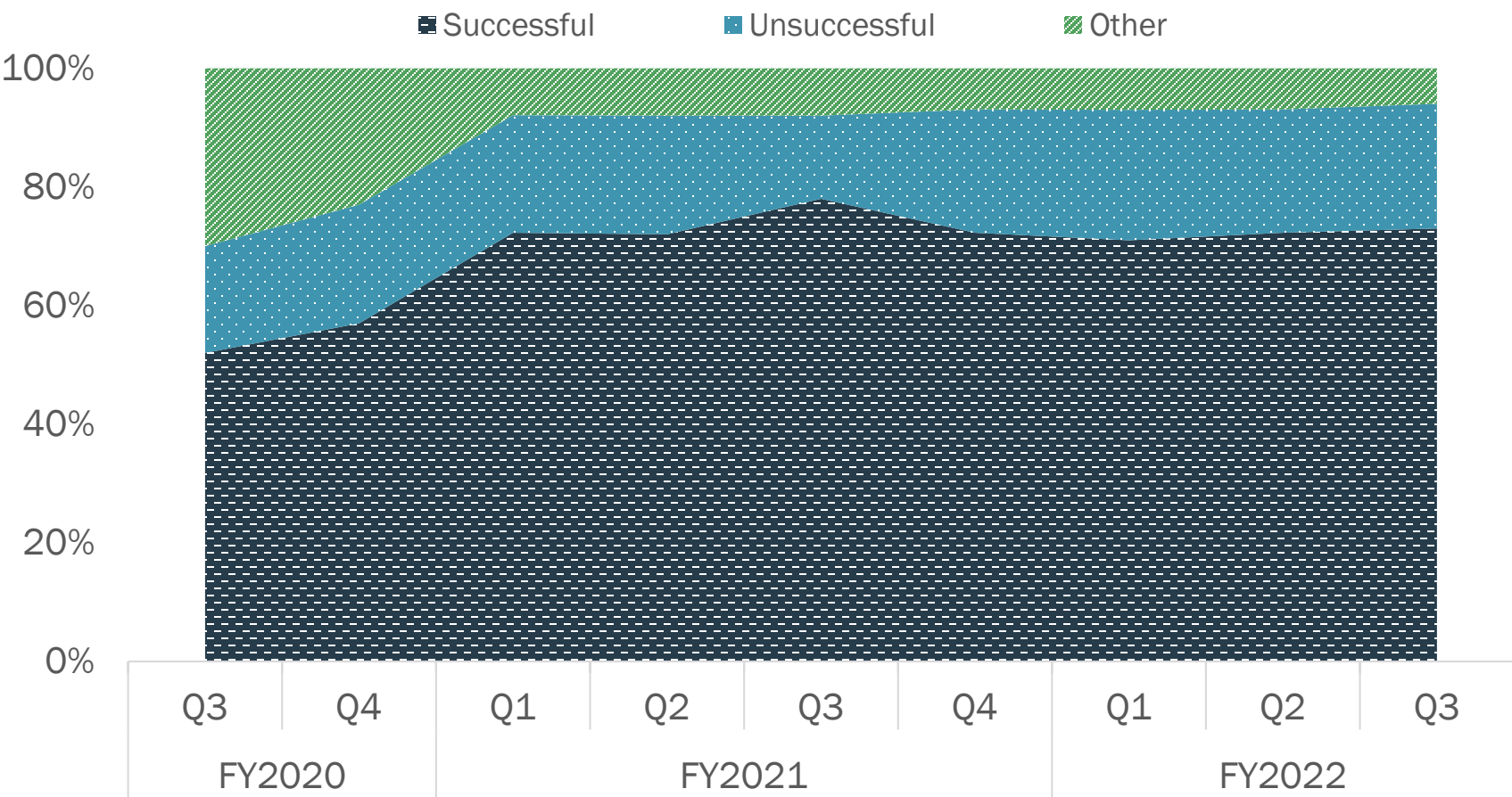
CBC staff also identified important challenges they faced during this period.

- For revocation hearings, staff dealt with challenges of attorneys not showing up, the logistics of getting multiple parties on a video call, and **jails that were sometimes ill-equipped to use video conferencing.**
- Some officers believed clients didn't show up to appointments, hearings, or treatment groups because **they “knew they wouldn't be sent to jail.”**
- Officers said it was **difficult being unable to do home visits**, as it could be challenging to get an accurate assessment of how a client was doing and whether they were compliant with their supervision terms.

Practice changes resulted in a drop in violations and revocations. Even small reductions in revocations impacted hundreds of people.

In the two years following March 2020, more than half of the people on supervision met all the conditions of their sentence.

Quarterly CBC Closure Outcomes, FY2020-Q3–FY2022-Q3

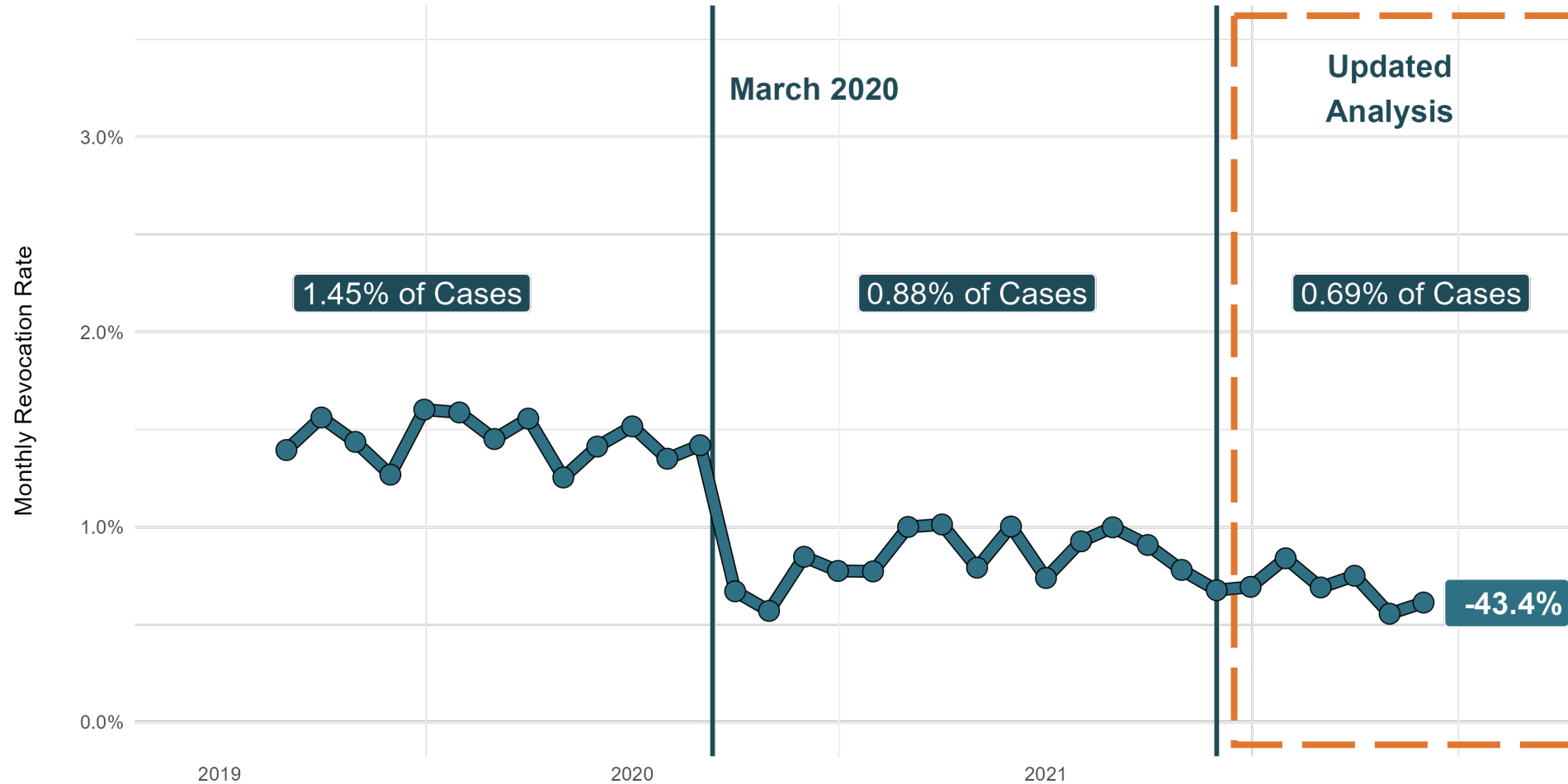


“Other” includes administrative and intermediate sanctions.
Note: Prior to FY2021, CBC total populations included in-person, virtual, and virtual tracking (i.e., absconders). Starting in FY2021, virtual tracking cases were dropped from the total CBC population count.



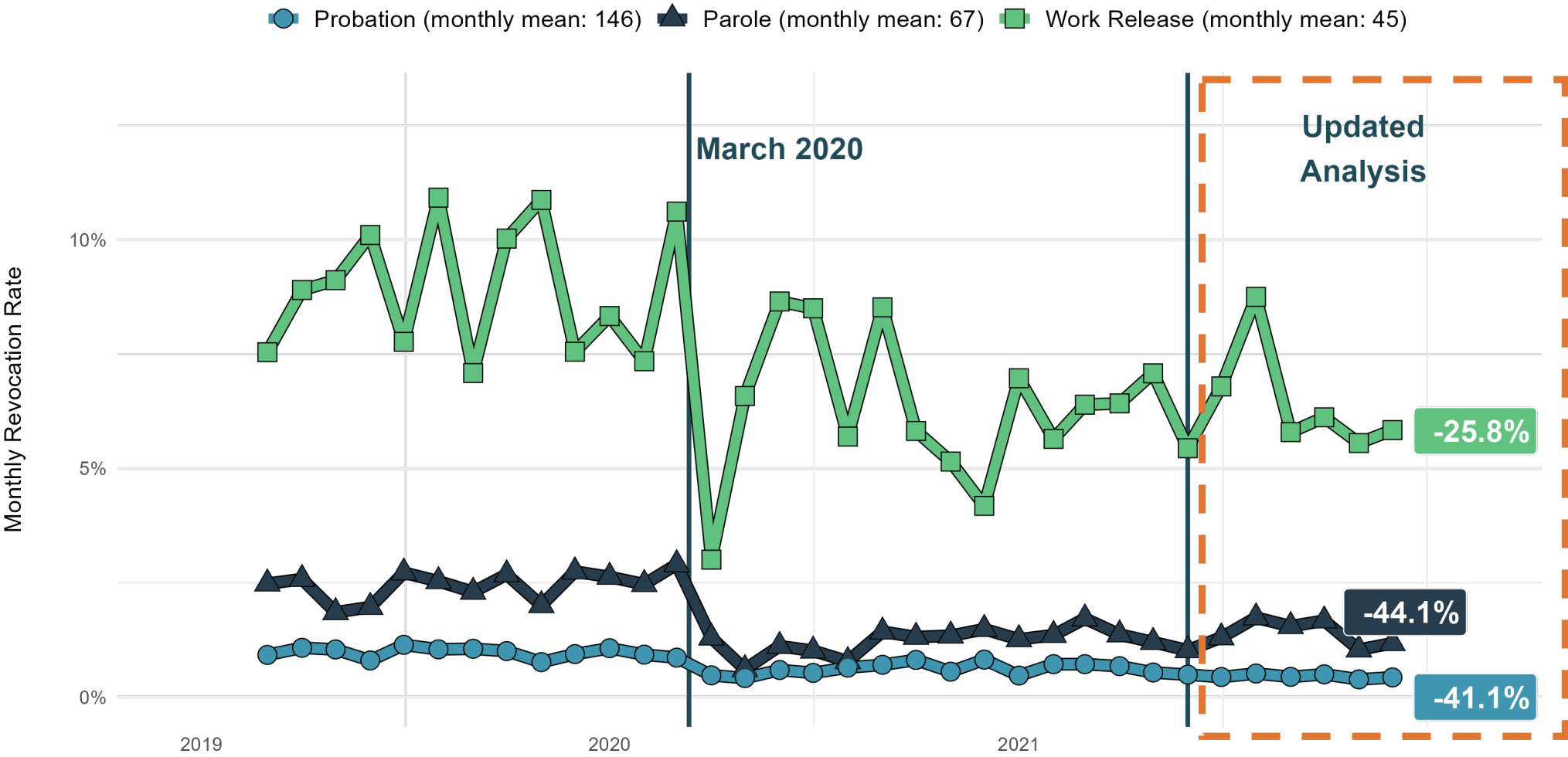
“Quarterly Quick Facts, March 31, 2022,” Iowa Department of Corrections, accessed May 31, 2022, <https://doc.iowa.gov/data/quick-facts>.

Statewide, the average monthly revocation rate decreased by over 40 percent between March 2020 and December 2021.



Note: The pre-implementation period is March 2019 through February 2020 while post-implementation is March 2020 through December 2021

The monthly statewide revocation rates decreased for all supervision types during this period.

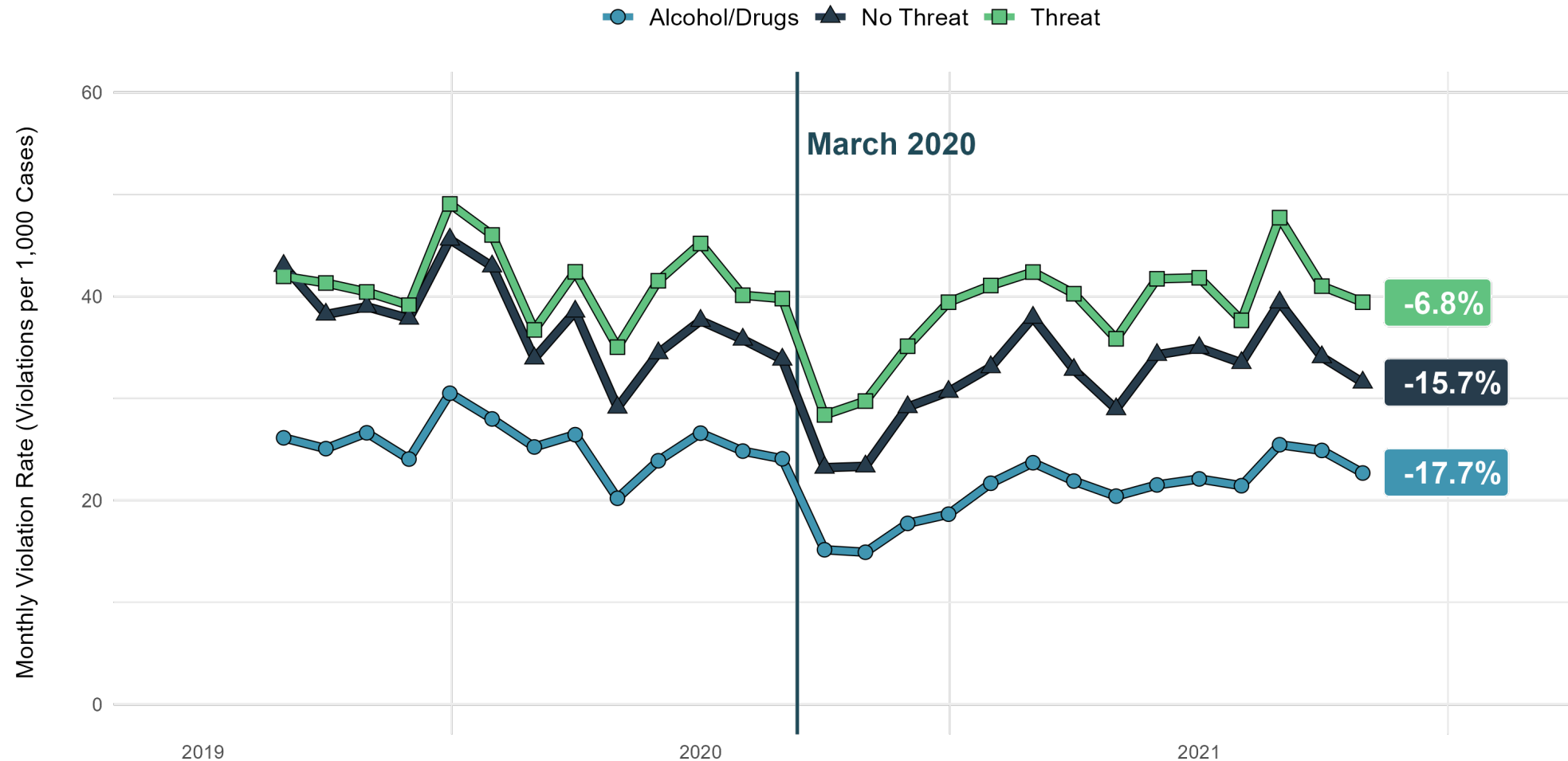


Note: The pre-implementation period is March 2019 through February 2020 while post-implementation is March 2020 through December 2021

Implementing revocation reduction efforts was not an easy task.

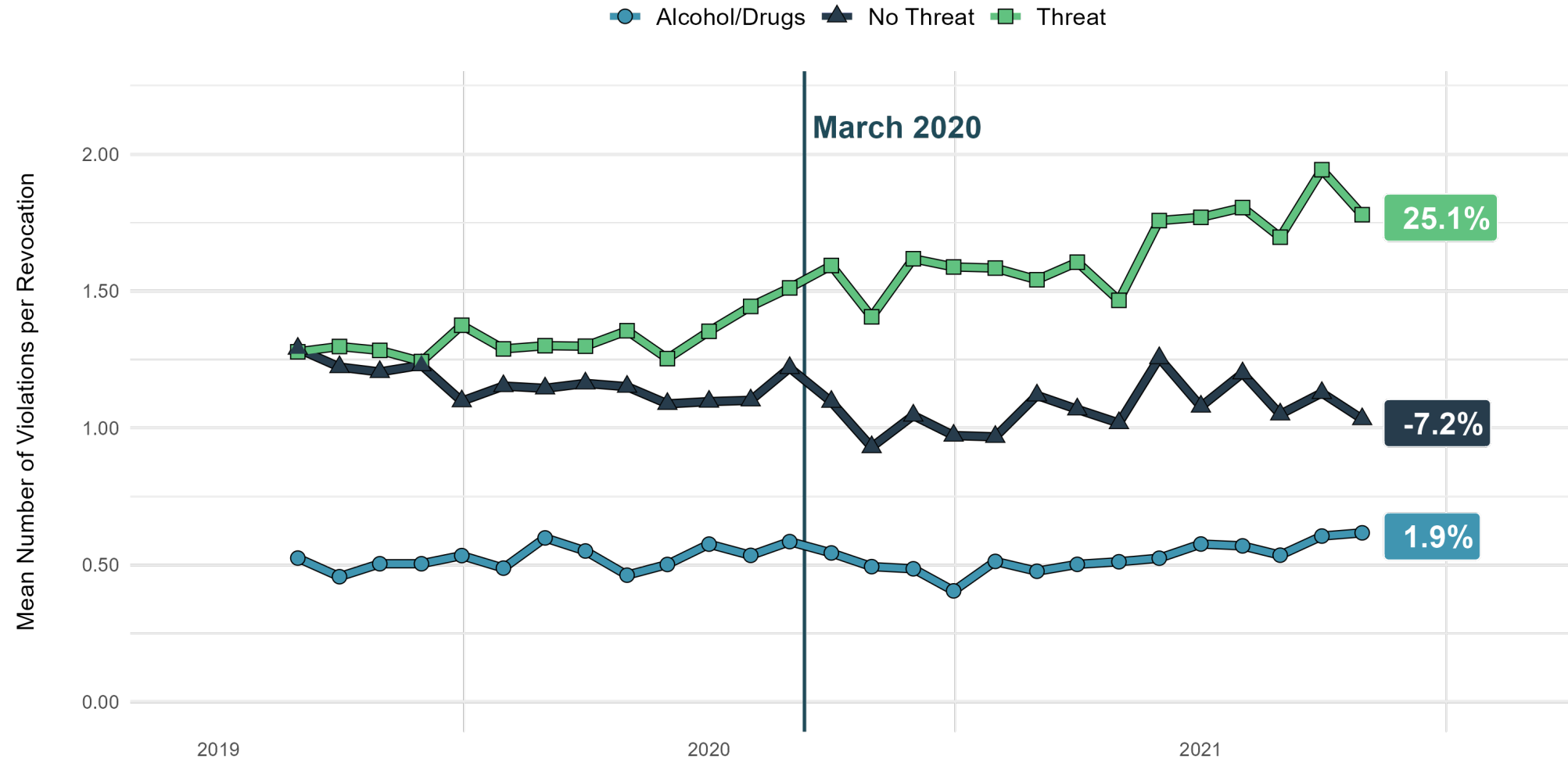
- Officers report that before COVID-19, they had “full discretion” to recommend revocation, but now they **don’t often recommend revocation**; judges often don’t want to use jail or prison.
- Typical behaviors that result in revocation now include **significant violence, weapons charges, multiple felonies, or repeated patterns of behavior**.
- **Some officers struggle with limiting revocations.** They feel clients may be given too many chances or some clients’ behavior warrants revocation, yet they are unable to recommend it because they lack the discretion they used to have.

Violations decreased after March 2020, with alcohol/drug and non-public safety threat violations decreasing the most—almost 18 and 16 percent, respectively.



Note: The pre-implementation period is March 2019 through February 2020 while post-implementation is March 2020 through May 2021

Revocations after March 2020 had approximately 25 percent more public safety threat violations linked to them.

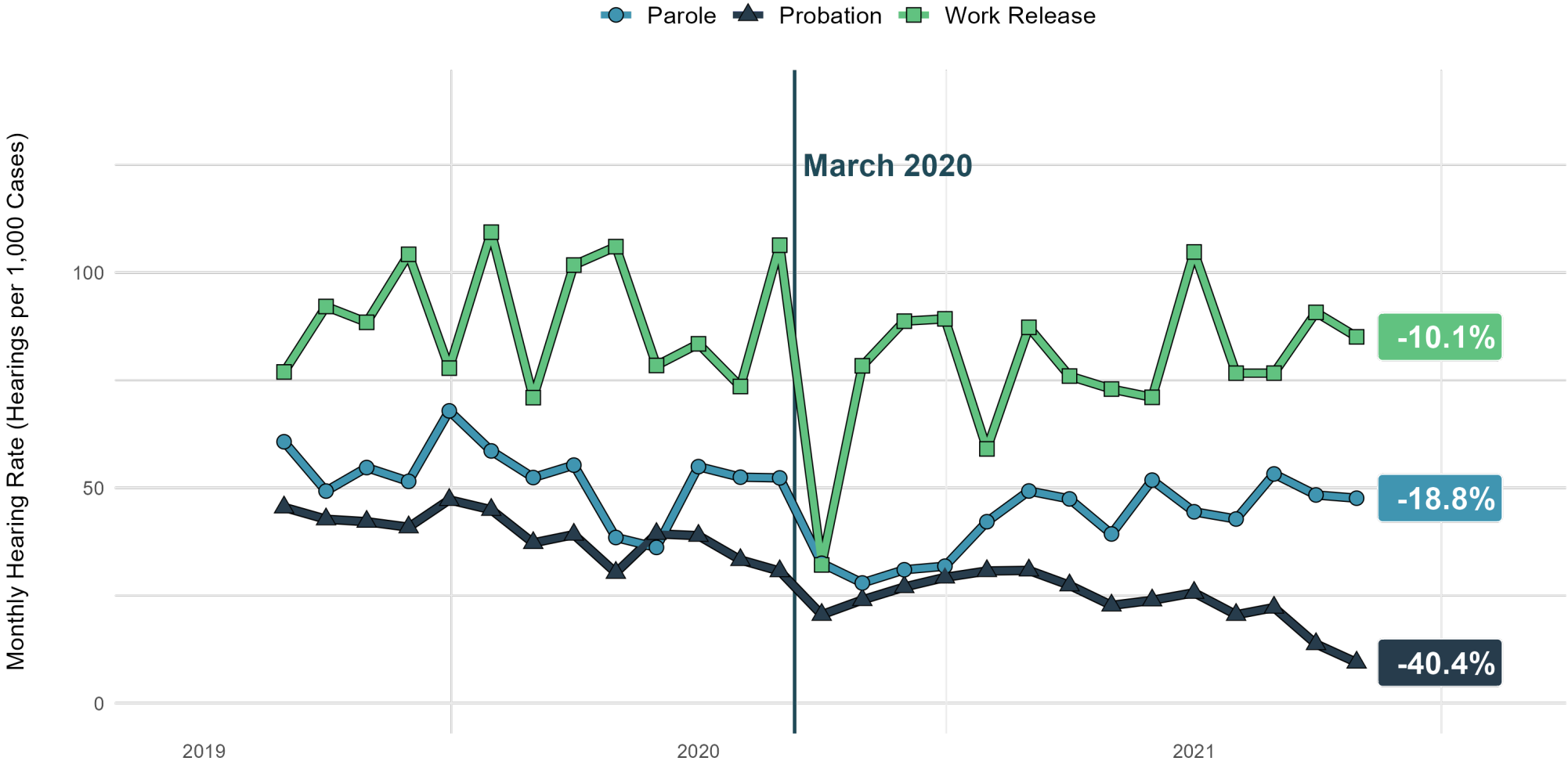


Note: The pre-implementation period is March 2019 through February 2020 while post-implementation is March 2020 through May 2021

Implementing revocation reduction efforts was not an easy task (*continued*).

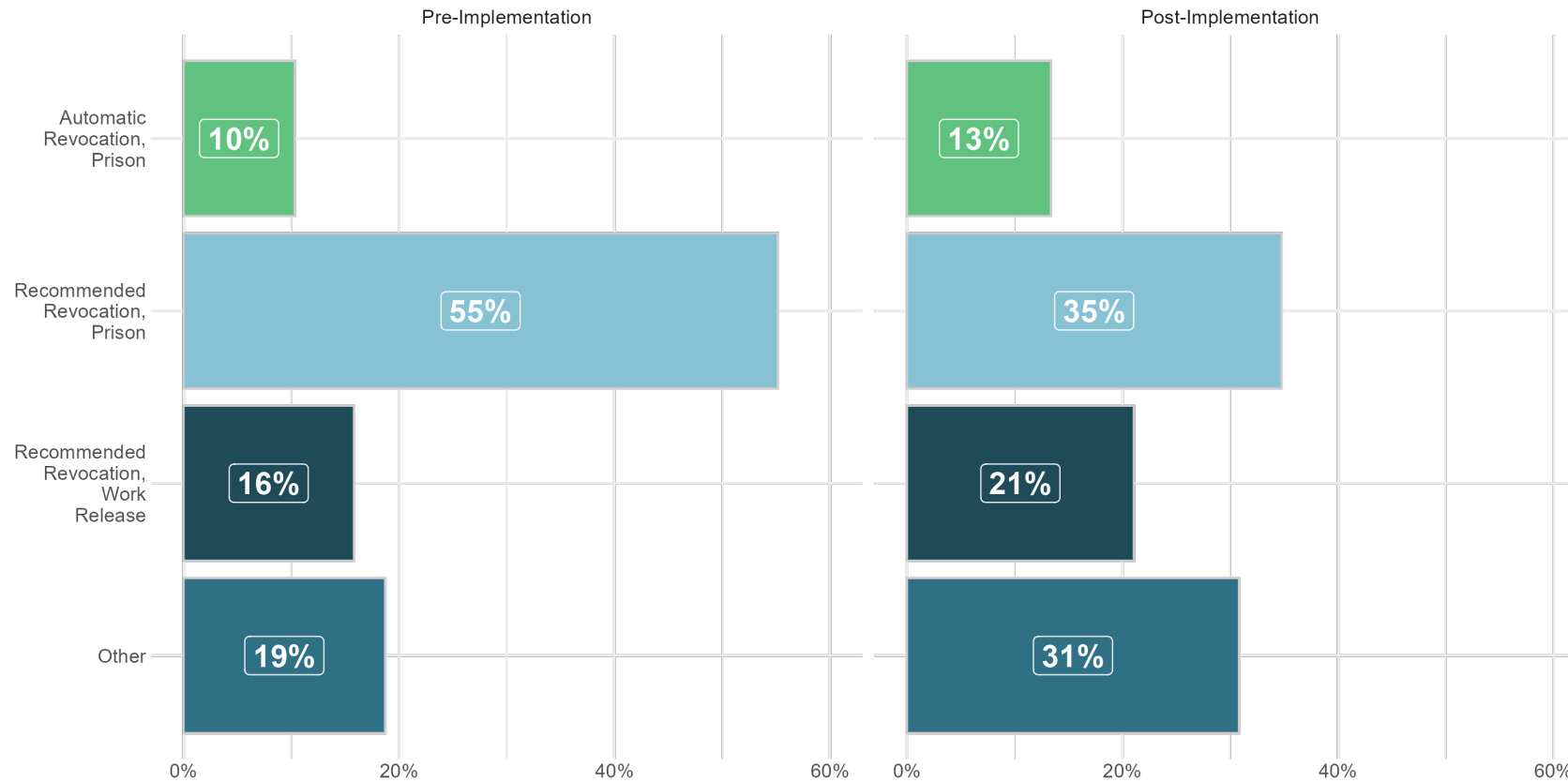
- Some officers viewed the change as a **good challenge**, saying “it was also a good thing because they [officers] can get desensitized with going that route” toward automatically recommending revocation, and the changes “made them think outside the box.”
- District directors felt the changes related to revocations **did not result in a sizeable shift in their philosophy** or operations.
- There were challenges associated with impacting probation cases statewide because they are handled by county attorneys and local judges in each district, whereas parole revocations are only brought before two administrative law judges.

There was a substantial decline of over 40 percent in probation revocation hearings after March 2020.



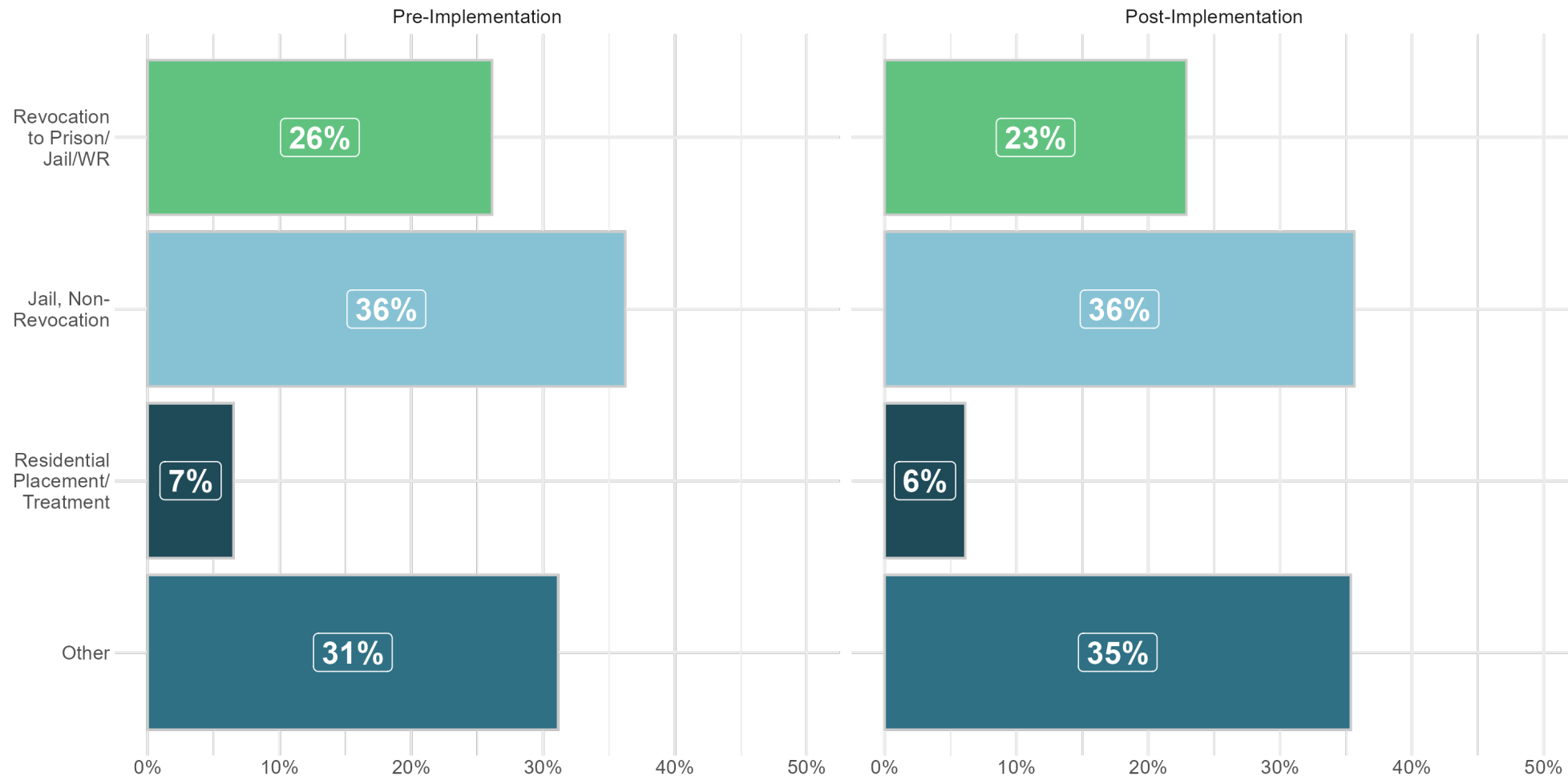
Note: The pre-implementation period is March 2019 through February 2020 while post-implementation is March 2020 through May 2021

As a percentage of parole hearing outcomes, recommended revocations declined from 55 percent to 35 percent.



Note: The pre-implementation period is March 2019 through February 2020 while post-implementation is March 2020 through May 2021

Probation hearings, however, experienced less of a shift in outcomes before and after March 2020.



Note: The pre-implementation period is March 2019 through February 2020 while post-implementation is March 2020 through May 2021

What might explain the difference in probation and parole revocation hearing outcomes?

CBC agencies have positive practices in place to respond to client violations and behavior.

- Iowa uses a **comprehensive response matrix** that includes guidance on the use of incentives to reinforce appropriate behavior.
- **Most sanctions do not result in incarceration**, which is consistent with efforts to keep clients supervised in the community and research that indicates community-based sanctions are as effective as incarceration sanctions and can be less disruptive to the stabilizing factors in a person's life.

CBC agencies have positive practices in place to respond to client violations and behavior (*continued*).

- Clients indicated good relationships with their officers and felt they were invested in their success. Officers were clear in outlining which behaviors would result in sanctions and under what circumstances they would be recommended for revocation.
- Supervisors reported a robust case planning process supported through the case management data system, ICON, which allows officers to track the client's targeted criminogenic needs, action steps, and SMART goals.

CBC staff also identified key strengths that supported their efforts in responding to behavior.

- Staff often reported that **IDOC does a good job developing relevant training** and is attuned to district needs. Some reported that while the initial training effort may be strong, people may receive booster training that lacks the same fidelity to the curriculum.
- Officers are trained to provide cognitive-behavioral programming and report **no issues getting clients into those programs** as needed.
- **Some officers reported good relationships with community-based treatment providers**, especially in smaller areas with fewer providers.
- While there are county behavioral health supports in place, they **vary across the state** and by population area.

Key Takeaways: Violations & Revocations

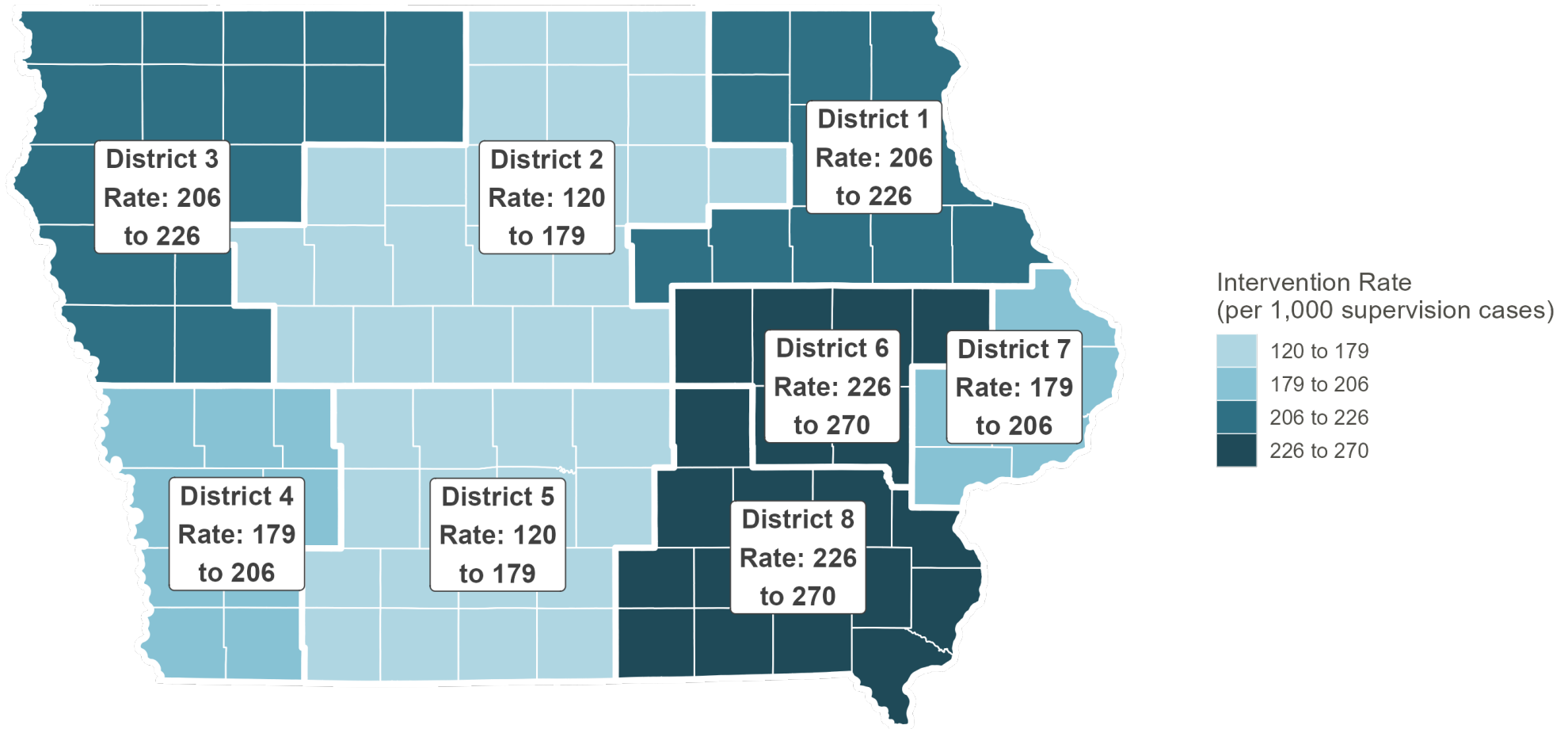
- Since March 2020, more than half of community supervision cases closed successfully.
- Violations decreased after March 2020, with alcohol/drug and non-public safety threat violations decreasing the most.
- Revocations decreased substantially, and the use of revocations seemed to focus more on addressing public safety concerns.

Despite positive practices and supports, CBC staff reported significant challenges when responding to client behavior.

Many of the challenges CBC staff experience are due to various policies and limited external resources for responding to behavior.

- Officers in **residential facilities reported having challenges with clients** whose behaviors are violent or threatening, as they feel they have few options to manage such behavior. Several officers expressed frustration with what they view as unreasonable standards for revocation.
- Staff reported difficulty in moving clients down in supervision level, which would reduce the number of required contacts and act as an incentive for positive behavior. Staff reported that they **rarely see probation clients discharged early from supervision.**
- Although the response matrix includes numerous options, officers often feel that, in practice, they have few options to respond to clients' behavior since **residential facilities and treatment providers are often backlogged** and the use of jail/prison sanctions is restricted.

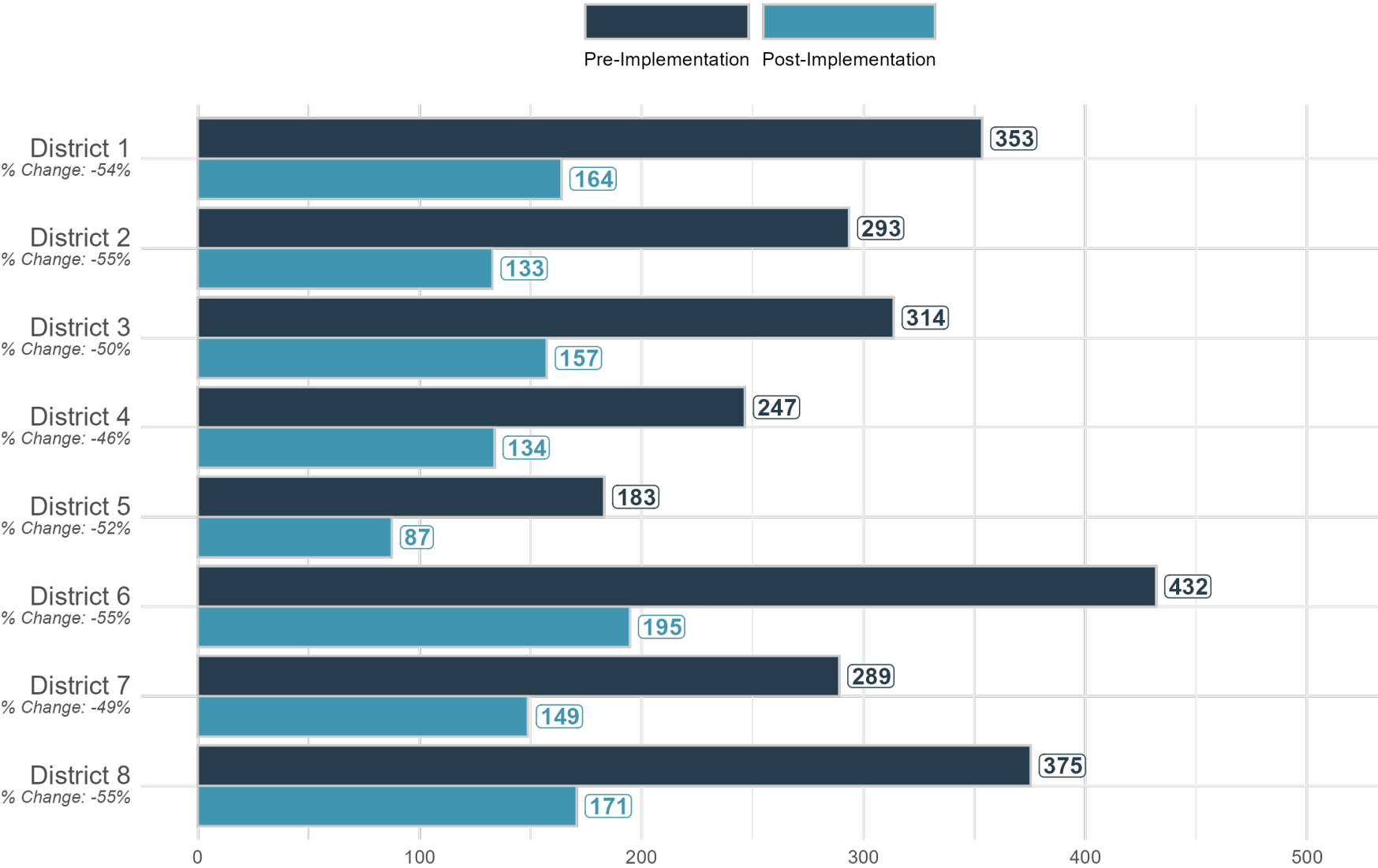
As of 2020, the use of either required or recommended educational or cognitive programming, as well as behavioral health treatment, varied widely across judicial districts.



Note: Intervention rate is based on supervision cases and interventions beginning in calendar year 2020

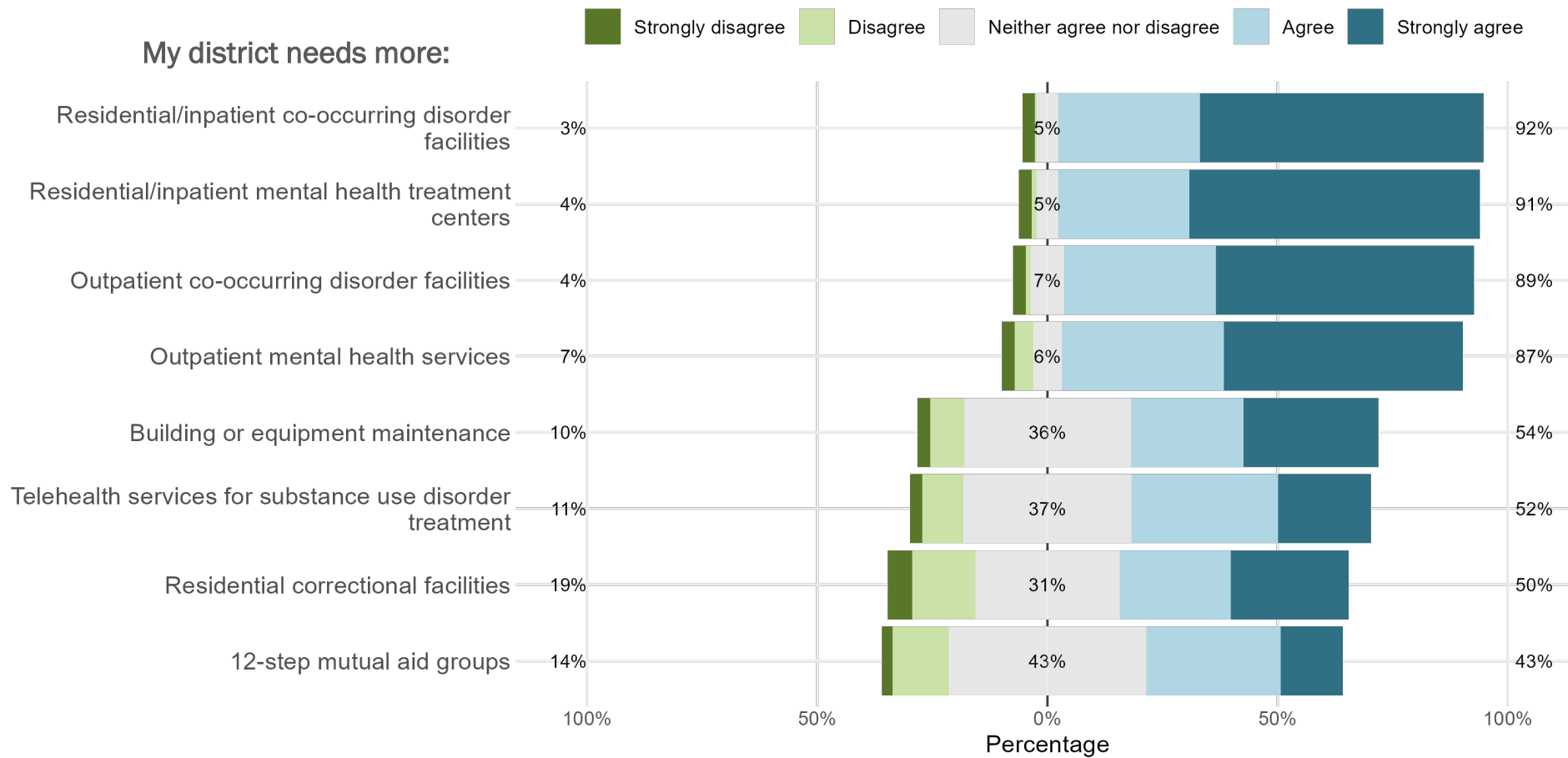
Referrals to required or recommended programming and treatment declined across all judicial districts.

Judicial-Level Intervention Rate, Pre- and Post-Implementation
% Change from Pre- to Post-Implementation period is listed below each district



Note: The pre-implementation period is March 2019 through February 2020 while post-implementation is March 2020 through May 2021

In a survey of CBC staff, almost all respondents agreed that additional mental health, substance use disorder, and co-occurring disorder facilities are needed.



Note: This visualization features the four questions with the highest percentage of agreement as well as the four questions with the highest percentage of disagreement in response

CBC staff consistently identified a lack of available resources as a key challenge in their work to support and supervise clients effectively.

- While treatment services were often backlogged before spring 2020, **services seem scarcer today.**
- Providers struggle to keep up with demand and experience challenges hiring and retaining staff.
- This **treatment backlog** can make it difficult for officers to utilize the community-based resources available to them in lieu of revocation, especially when “it seems like every resource the clients need are in the prison system.”

CBC staff consistently identified a lack of available resources as a key challenge in their work to support and supervise clients effectively (*continued*).

- Officers reported **struggles finding treatment providers** that will accept their clients and navigating limits on residential facility intakes.
- Officers said **judges sometimes struggle to understand that clients haven't received certain programs or treatment** due to a lack of availability and options.
- Many officers **struggle to communicate with community-based treatment providers**. Providers often do not pass along important information to them in a timely manner. This most often occurs when there's a high turnover rate with the provider.

CBC staff highlighted key service needs lacking for their clients.

The time it takes to get a client a date for an evaluation is too long. Clients struggling with mental stability cannot wait weeks to be seen.

Additional officers to ensure more time can be spent with individualized case plans.

Many services require insurance, which many of our clients do not have.

Mental health inpatient beds are in the greatest need.

We cannot truly make an impact on reducing crime until we are able to access more mental health services and better substance abuse treatment.

CBC staff highlighted key service needs lacking for their clients.

Transportation for clients in rural communities to treatment is an issue.

Residential facilities are not equipped to deal with clients who require specialized medical care.

Housing is a car wreck here.

There are zero options for nursing home/skilled nursing/skilled rehab for persons who are currently registered sex offenders.

More reentry assistance needed coming out of prison.

Key Takeaways: Community Resources

- There is a lack of community-based behavioral health treatment providers to meet the needs of the population.
- Waiting lists inhibit officers' abilities to support clients experiencing a mental health crisis.
- Clients struggle with having the necessary funds to pay for treatment services or find affordable housing.
- Clients convicted of a sexual offense have difficulties accessing housing and treatment services.
- Transportation is a huge barrier, especially for clients in rural areas.

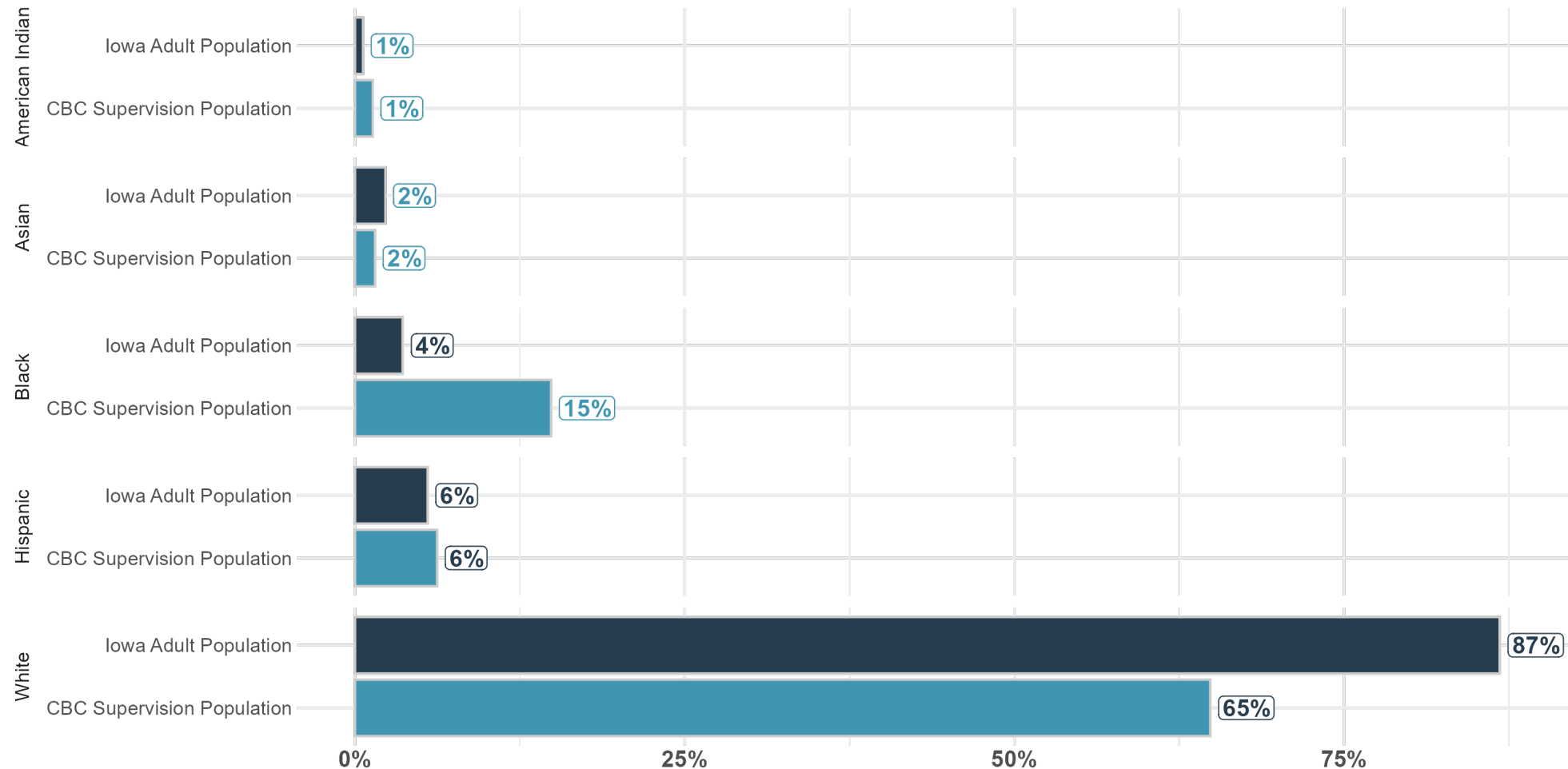
Areas for Future Analysis

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In the final months of the project, we will explore several additional questions.

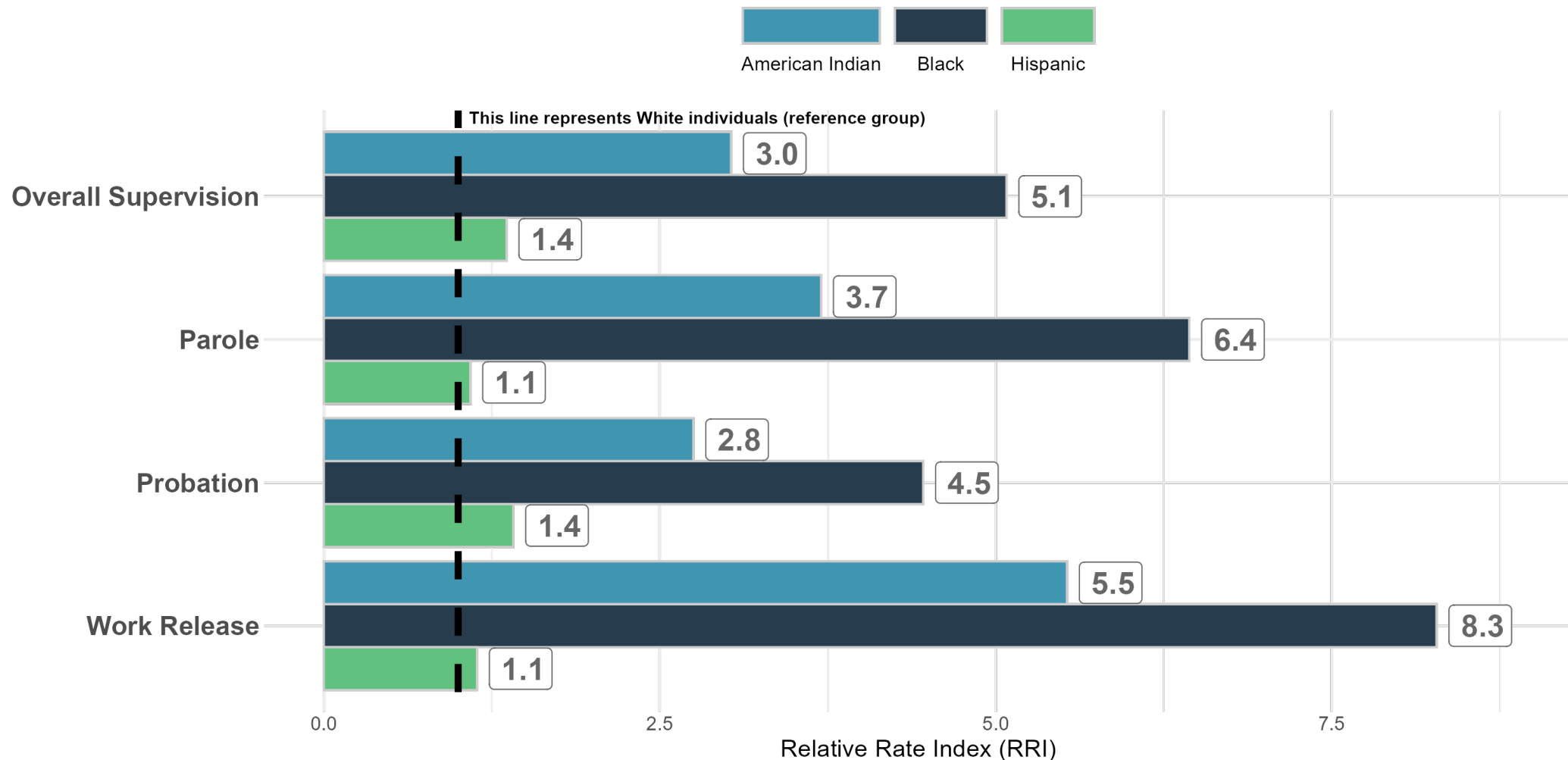
- The CSG Justice Center has begun and will continue analysis and outreach work to understand changes and trends in key focus areas:
 - Racial disproportionality in the CBC population
 - Criminal justice stakeholder engagement
 - Public safety measures and outcomes

Relative to the Iowa adult population, Black clients are overrepresented in the CBC supervision population.



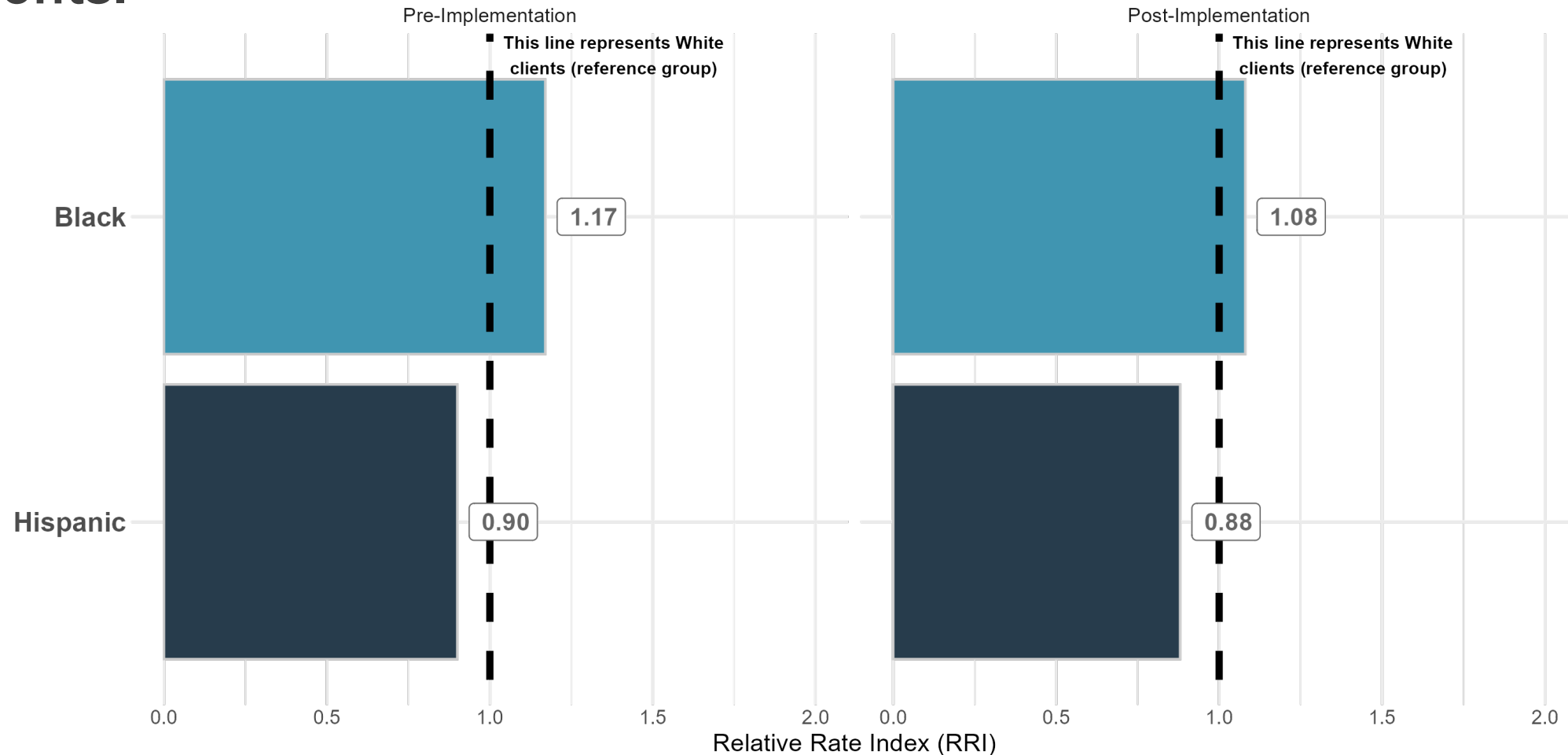
Iowa adult population data comes from the 2020 Census.
Iowa CBC supervision reflects unique individuals on probation, parole, or work release from 2018 through mid-2021

There is overrepresentation of clients who are American Indian, Black, and Hispanic on supervision.



Note: Iowa CBC supervision reflects unique individuals on probation, parole, or work release from March 2019 through May 2021

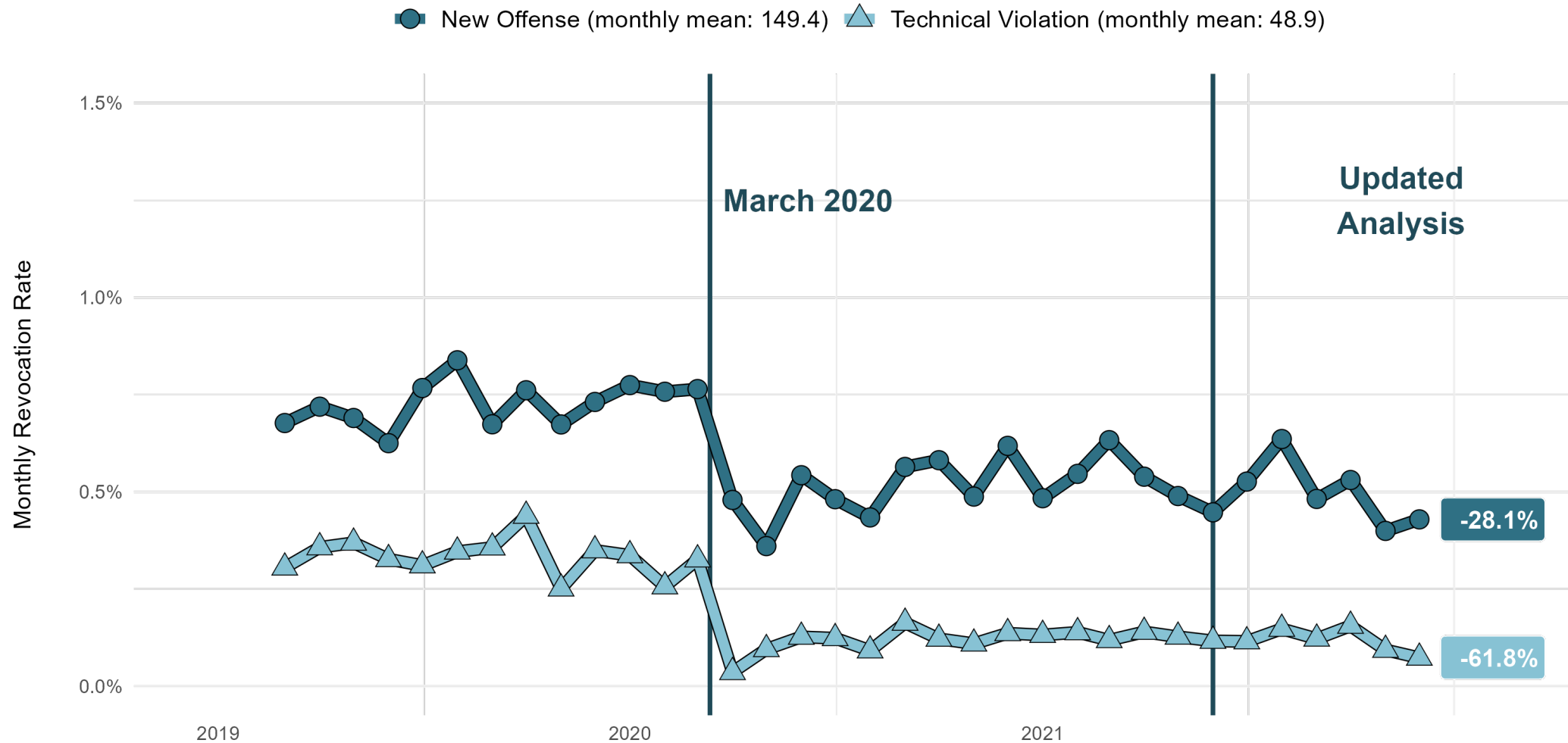
Despite overrepresentation within the CBC population, there is less disproportionality in revocation rates for Black and Hispanic clients.



Note: Iowa CBC supervision reflects unique individuals on probation, parole, or work release from March 2019 through May 2021

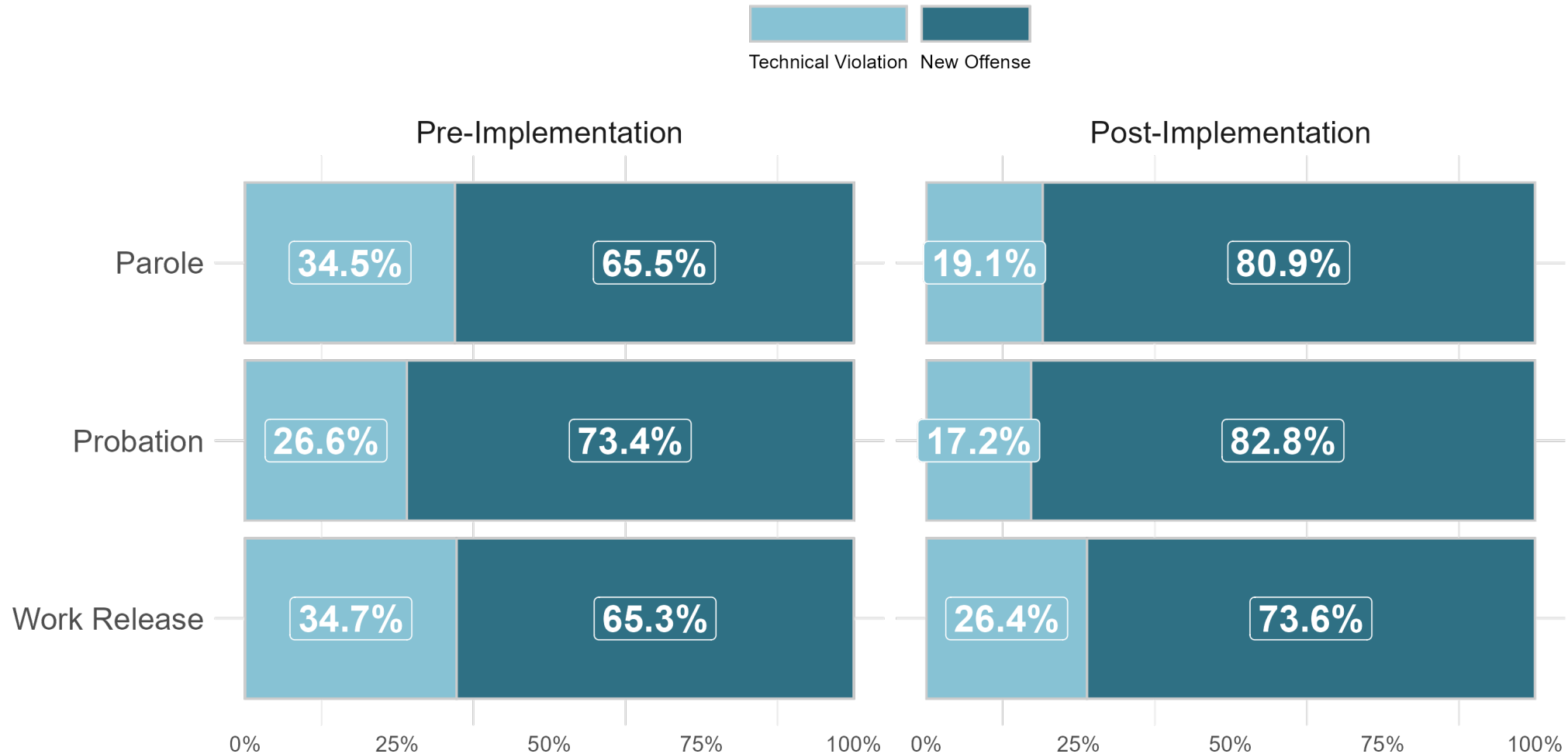
What questions about the race of people on supervision in Iowa are important to you?

Revocations for new offenses decreased by 28 percent while revocations for technical violations decreased by over 60 percent.



Note: The pre-implementation period is March 2019 through February 2020 while post-implementation is March 2020 through December 2021.
This analysis is restricted to supervision cases revoked to prison only.

Revocations were largely driven by new offenses before and after March 2020 but represented a higher proportion after.



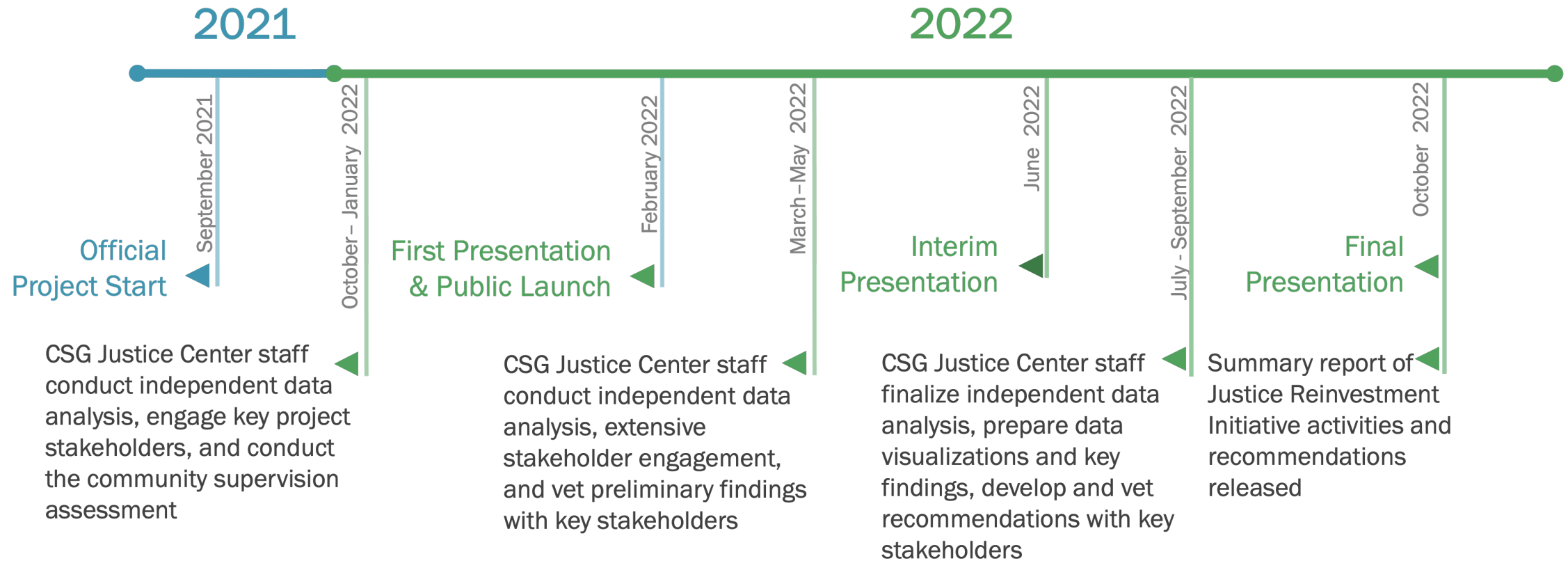
Note: The pre-implementation period is March 2019 through February 2020 while post-implementation is March 2020 through December 2021

What broader questions about revocations in Iowa are important to you?

Next steps

4

Iowa's Justice Reinvestment Initiative will continue until fall 2022.



Thank You!

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For more information, please contact Greg Halls at ghalls@csg.org

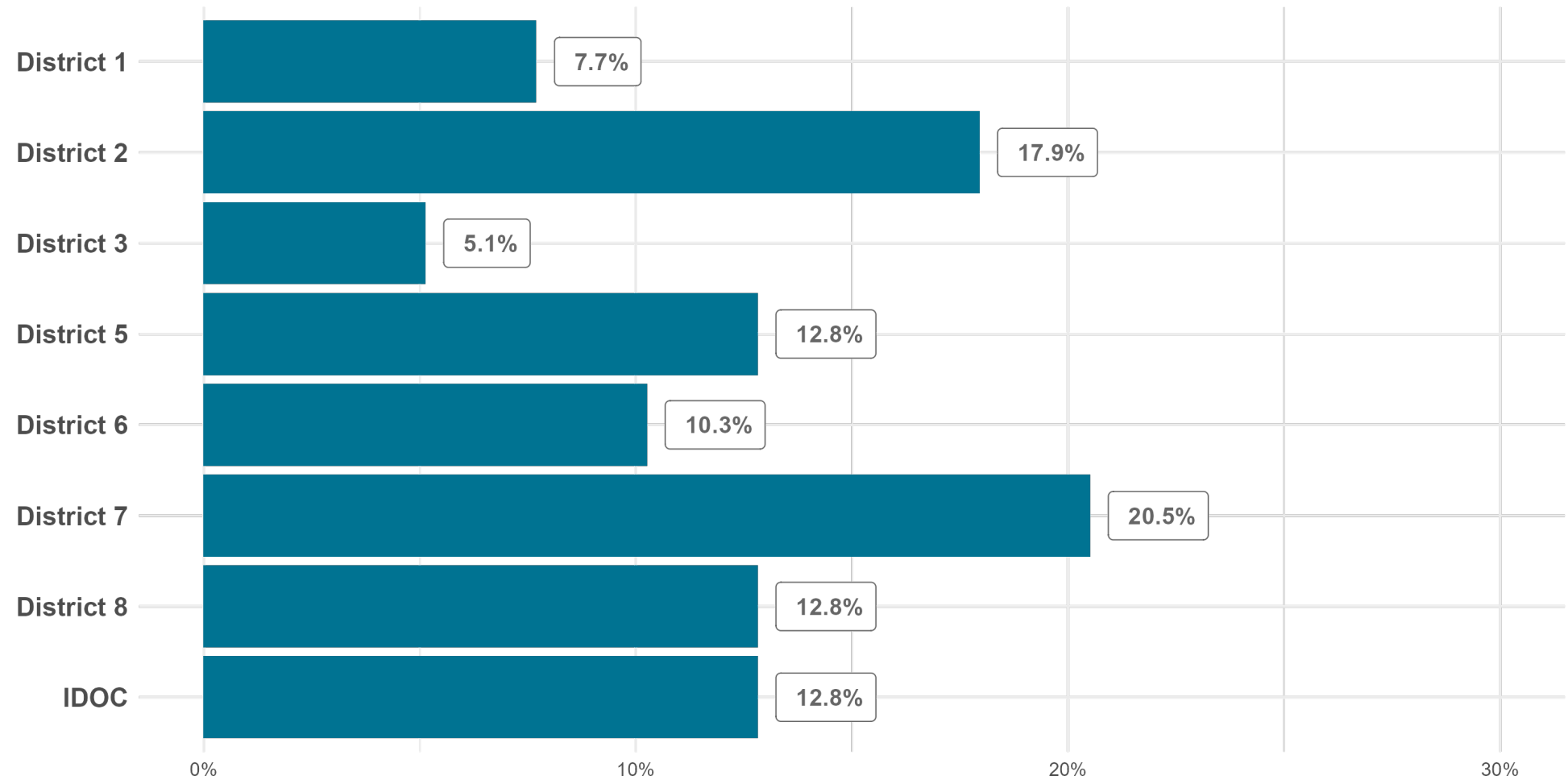
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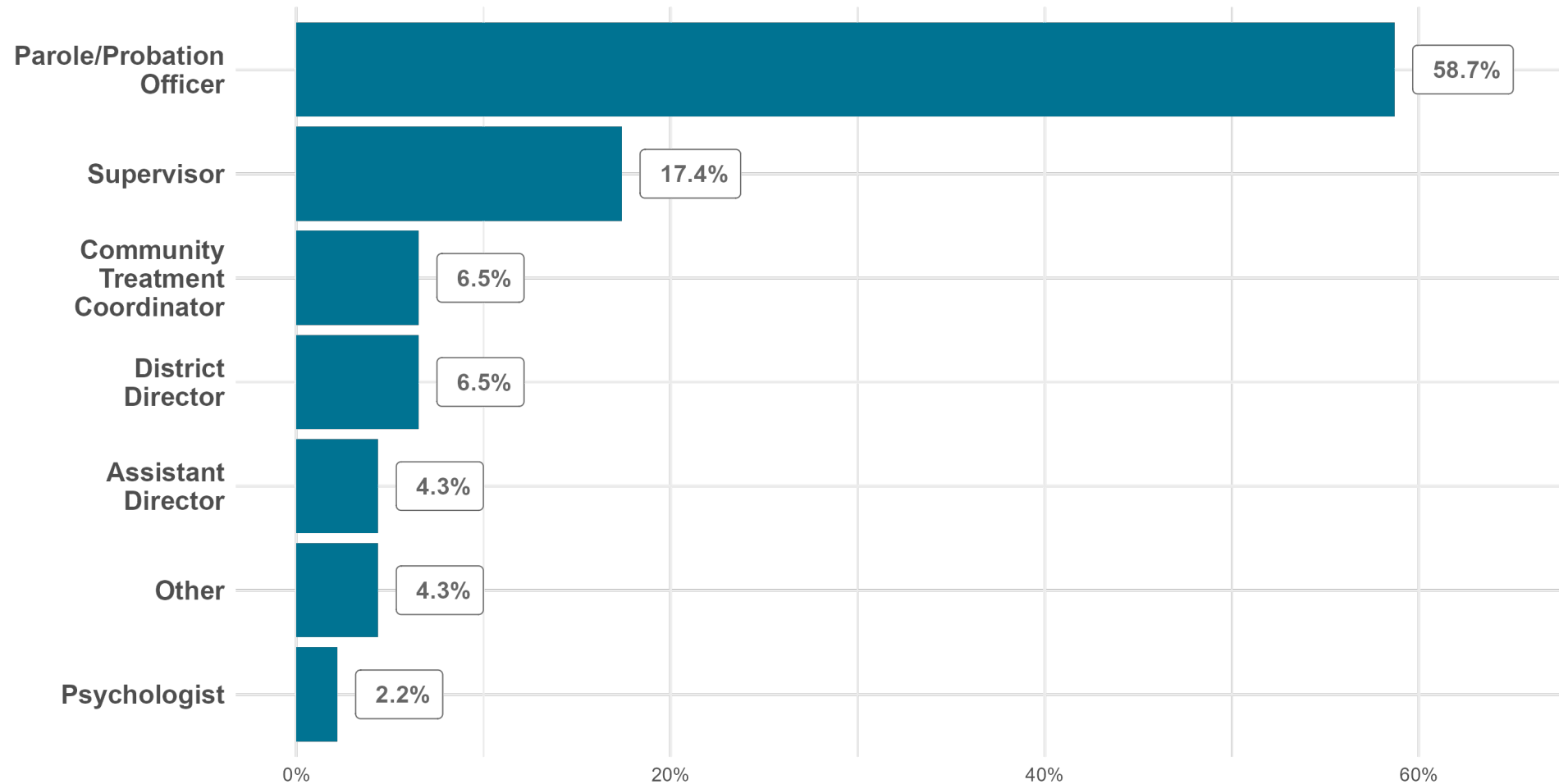


CSG Justice Center staff collected responses from the following criminal justice agencies across the state:



Note: Survey responses without a judicial district or IDOC indicated were dropped from this analysis

Parole/probation officers were the primary survey participants.



Note: 'Other' includes administrative and pretrial positions

Full data table for slide 47:

| Survey Response | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|----------------|
| Residential/inpatient co-occurring disorder facilities | 3% | 0% | 5% | 31% | 61% |
| Residential/inpatient mental health treatment centers | 3% | 1% | 5% | 29% | 63% |
| Outpatient co-occurring disorder facilities | 3% | 1% | 7% | 33% | 56% |
| Outpatient mental health services | 3% | 4% | 6% | 35% | 52% |
| Building or equipment maintenance | 3% | 7% | 36% | 24% | 29% |
| Telehealth services for substance use disorder treatment | 3% | 9% | 37% | 32% | 20% |
| Residential correctional facilities | 5% | 14% | 31% | 24% | 26% |
| 12-step mutual aid groups | 2% | 12% | 43% | 29% | 13% |