

To: The Honorable Chair, Senator Delores Kelley, and members of the Finance Committee

From: Melissa S. Rock, Birth to Three Strategic Initiative Director

Re.: **SB 425: Workgroup on Screening Related to Adverse Childhood Experiences**

Date: February 16, 2021

Position: **SUPPORT**

ACEs, or Adverse Childhood Experiences, are a category of early life traumas which negatively impact long-term health, prosperity, and social mobility outcomes.ⁱ ACEs encompass traumatic experiences at all levels of severity and include: emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, emotional and physical neglect, domestic and intimate partner violence, illicit substance use in the home, untreated mental illness in the home, the incarceration of a household member, and the separation and/or divorce of adult caregivers.ⁱⁱ ACEs have the potential to hinder an individual's neurological, socio-behavioral, and emotional development, all of which have repercussions for students' well-being and their ultimate academic success.

ACEs don't target individuals based on race, gender, ability status, sexuality, nationality, socio-economic status, or any of the identity markers we typically use when disaggregating data. The groundbreaking 1998 study found that ACEs are relatively common—**about 67% of survey participants had at least one ACE**.ⁱⁱⁱ Unfortunately, the study also demonstrated that when an individual had more ACEs, the odds of them experiencing negative outcomes like alcohol and substance abuse, depression, adolescent parenthood, and many other issues also increased. Having 3 or more ACEs is typically the threshold for these negative outcomes. More than 40% of Maryland children have at least one ACE—**15.4% have had two or more**.^{iv} Please find the attached county-level ACEs data from the 2018-2019 Maryland Youth Risk Behavioral Survey.^v

Given how high the prevalence of ACEs is among Maryland's children, it is critical that we increase our screenings for ACEs in young children, to ensure they get the support they need to prevent these ACEs from adversely impacting their development. 85% of a person's brain development happens in their first three years. A strong attachment to a caregiver can buffer the impact ACEs can have on a young child's brain development and ensure the develop the social emotional skills they need to succeed. SB 425's Workgroup on Screening Related to ACEs will ensure this increased screening for ACEs can be implemented across Maryland. **ACY urges this committee to issue a favorable report on SB 425 to ensure children with ACEs get the support they need so those ACEs do not lead to dangerous behavior and negative health outcomes.**

ⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acestudy/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fviolenceprevention%2Facestudy%2Findex.html

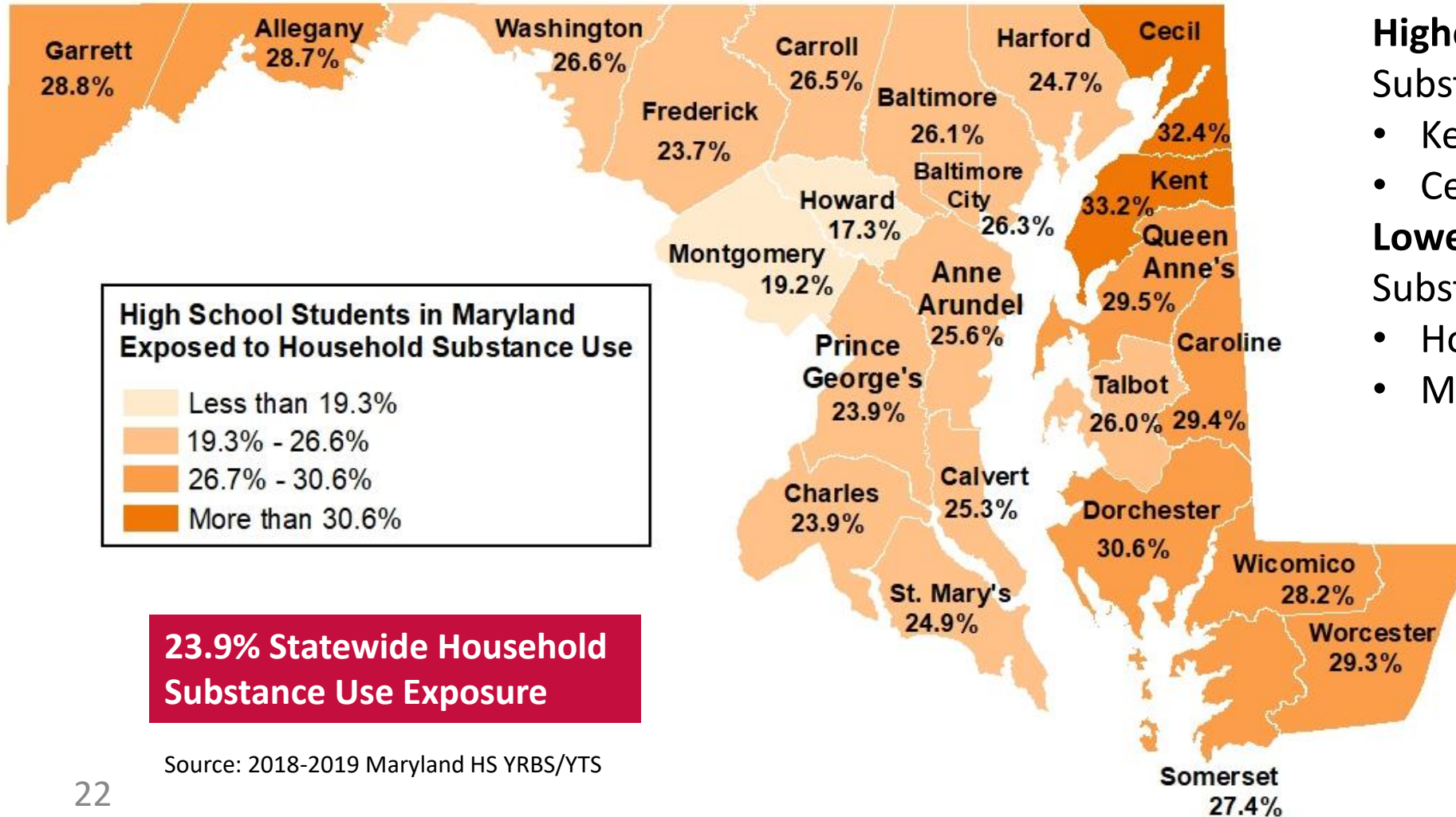
ⁱⁱ Id.

ⁱⁱⁱ Id.

^{iv} Baltimore Sun. *More than 40 percent of Maryland children experience traumatic events*. October 19, 2017.

^v Jallah, Nikardi, MPH, "Adverse Childhood Experiences on the Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey/Youth Tobacco Survey (YRBS/YTS) (Frederick & Baltimore City Examples)" presentation to Maryland's State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect, December 3, 2020. The Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey is an anonymous survey and the 2018-2019 data included 41,091 surveys from students across Maryland.

MAP: High School Students Who Have Ever Lived with Anyone Who Was an Alcoholic or Problem Drinker, Used Illegal Street Drugs, Took Prescription Drugs to Get High, or Was a Problem Gambler



Highest Exposure to Household Substance Use

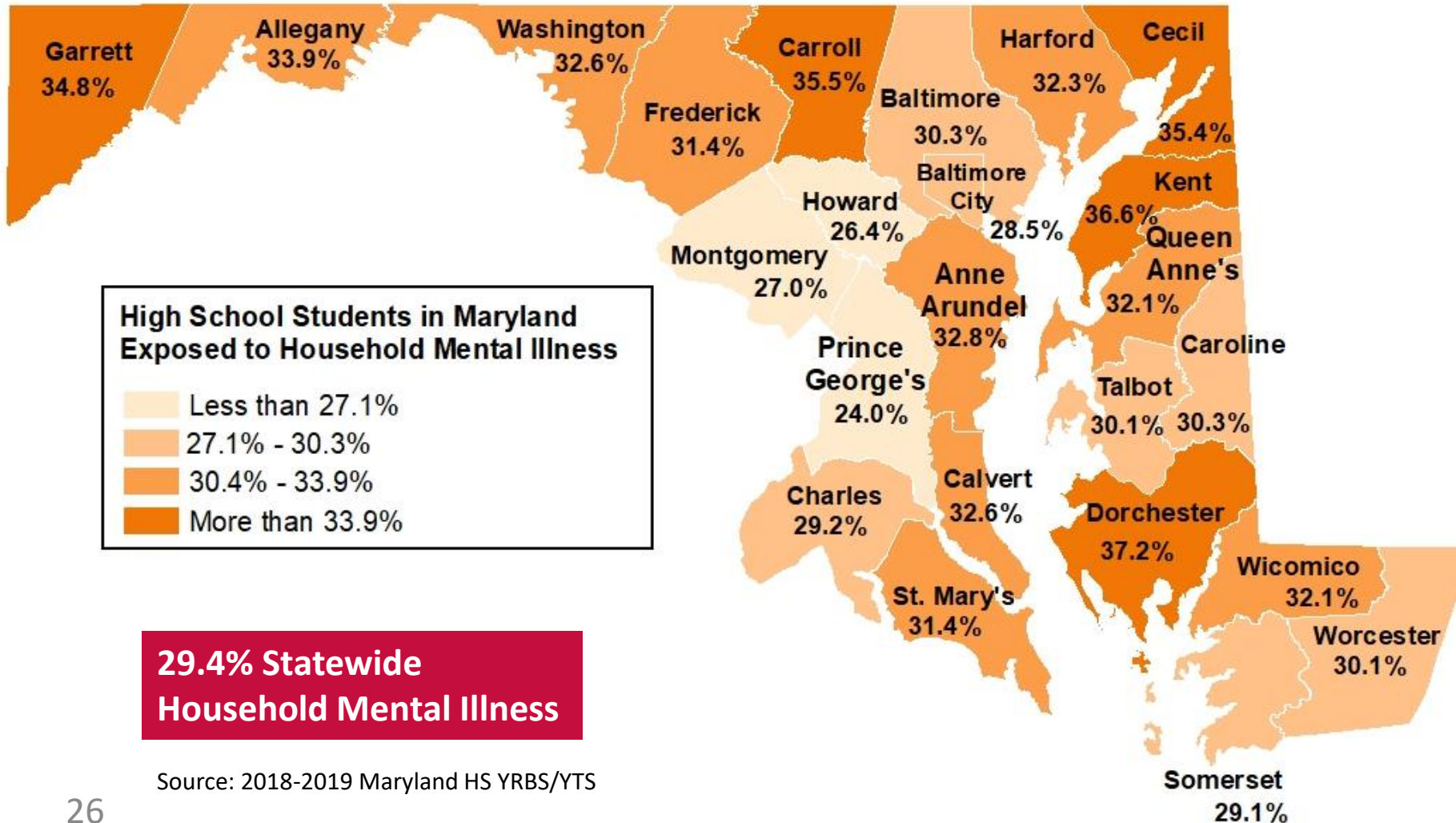
- Kent
- Cecil

Lowest Exposure to Household Substance Use

- Howard
- Montgomery

Source: 2018-2019 Maryland HS YRBS/YTS

MAP: High School Students Who Ever Lived with Anyone Who Was Depressed, Mentally Ill, or Suicidal



29.4% Statewide Household Mental Illness

Highest Exposure to Household Mental Illness

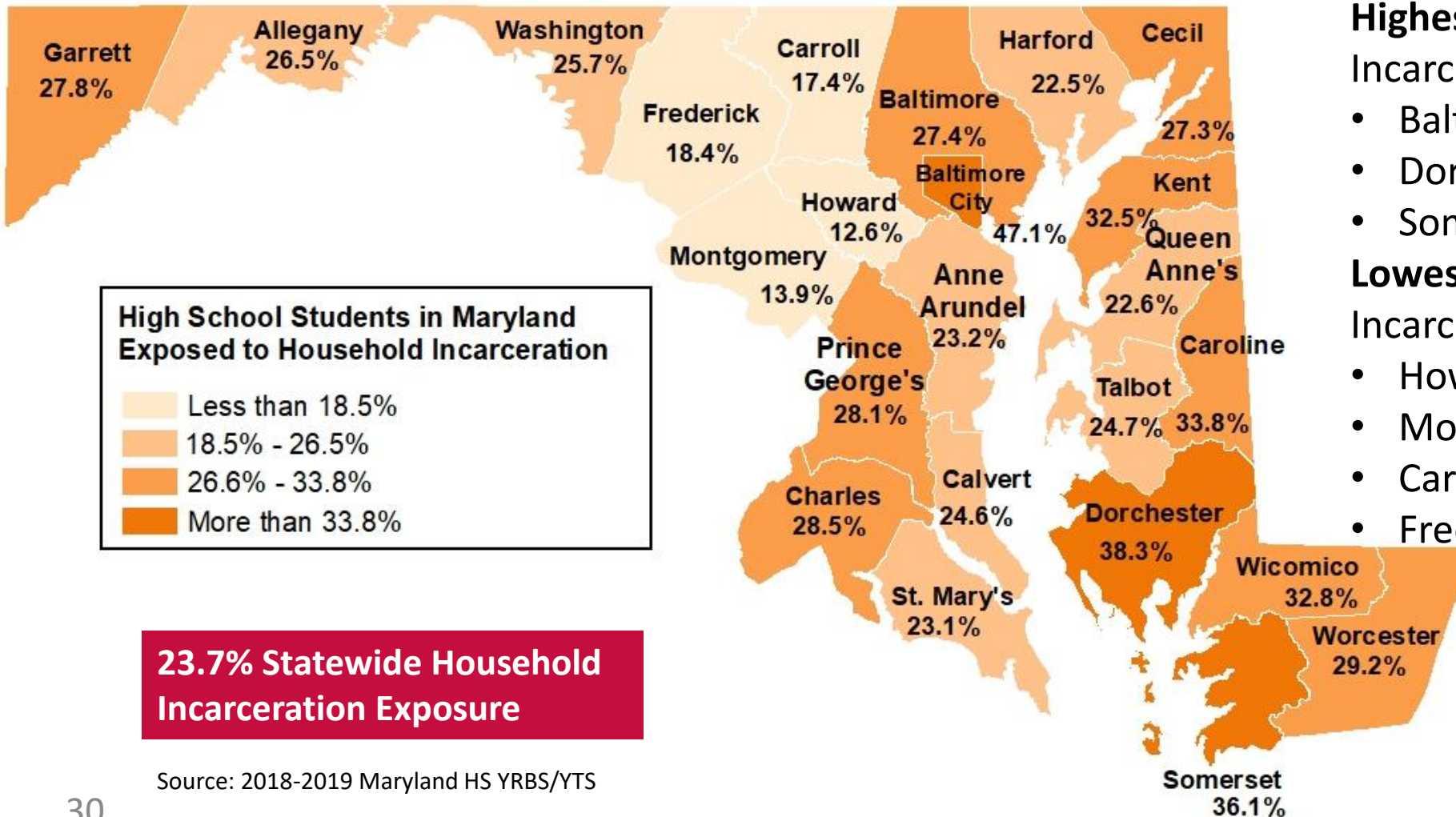
- Dorchester
- Kent
- Carroll
- Cecil
- Garrett

Lowest Exposure to Household Mental Illness

- Prince George's
- Howard
- Montgomery

Source: 2018-2019 Maryland HS YRBS/YTS

MAP: High School Students Who Reported Someone in Their Household Has Ever Gone to Jail or Prison



Highest Exposure to Household Incarceration

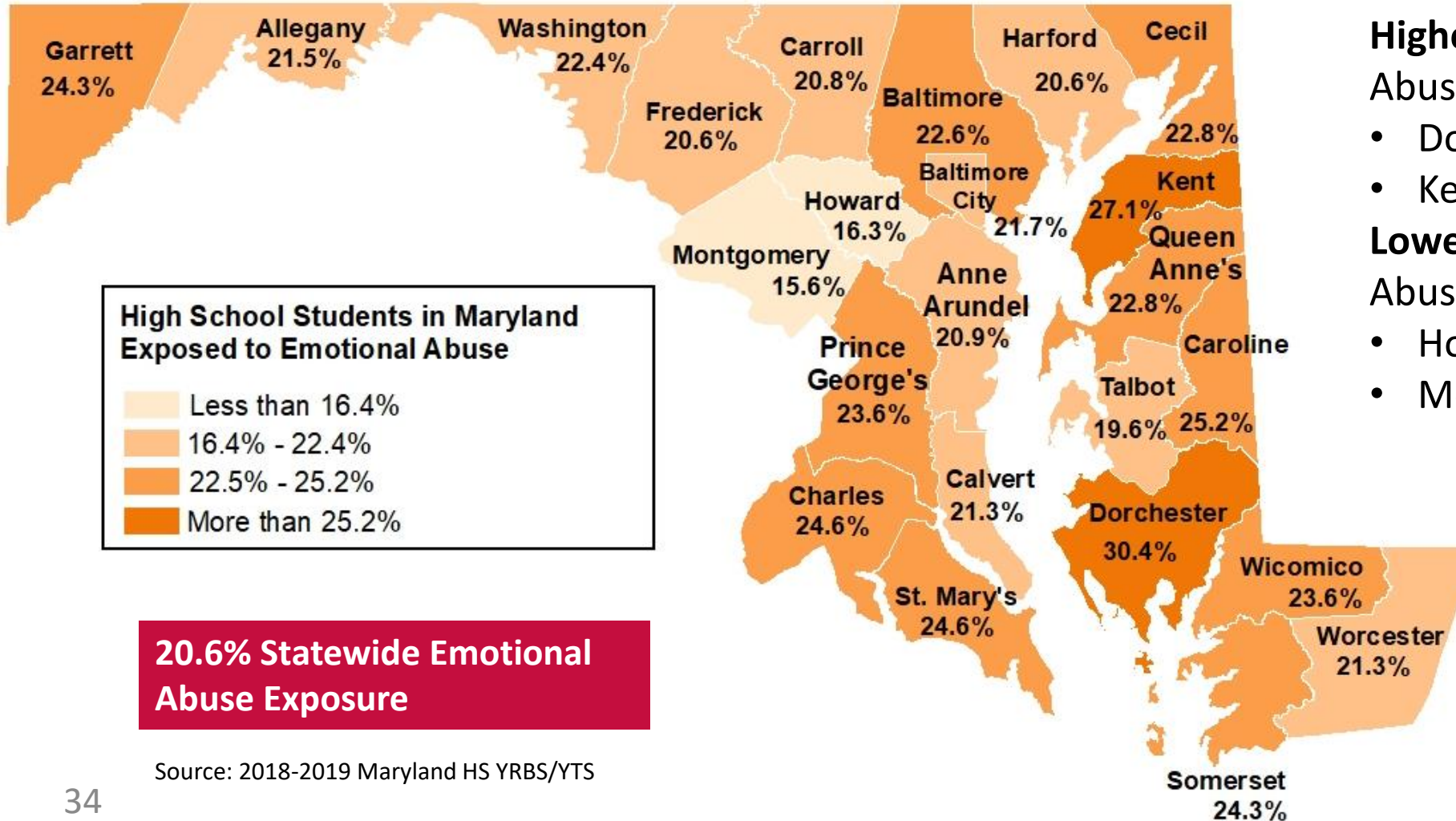
- Baltimore City
- Dorchester
- Somerset

Lowest Exposure to Household Incarceration

- Howard
- Montgomery
- Carroll
- Frederick

Source: 2018-2019 Maryland HS YRBS/YTS

MAP: High School Students Who Reported a Parent or Other Adult in Their Home Regularly Swears at Them, Insults Them, or Puts Them Down



Highest Exposure to Emotional Abuse

- Dorchester
- Kent

Lowest Exposure to Emotional Abuse

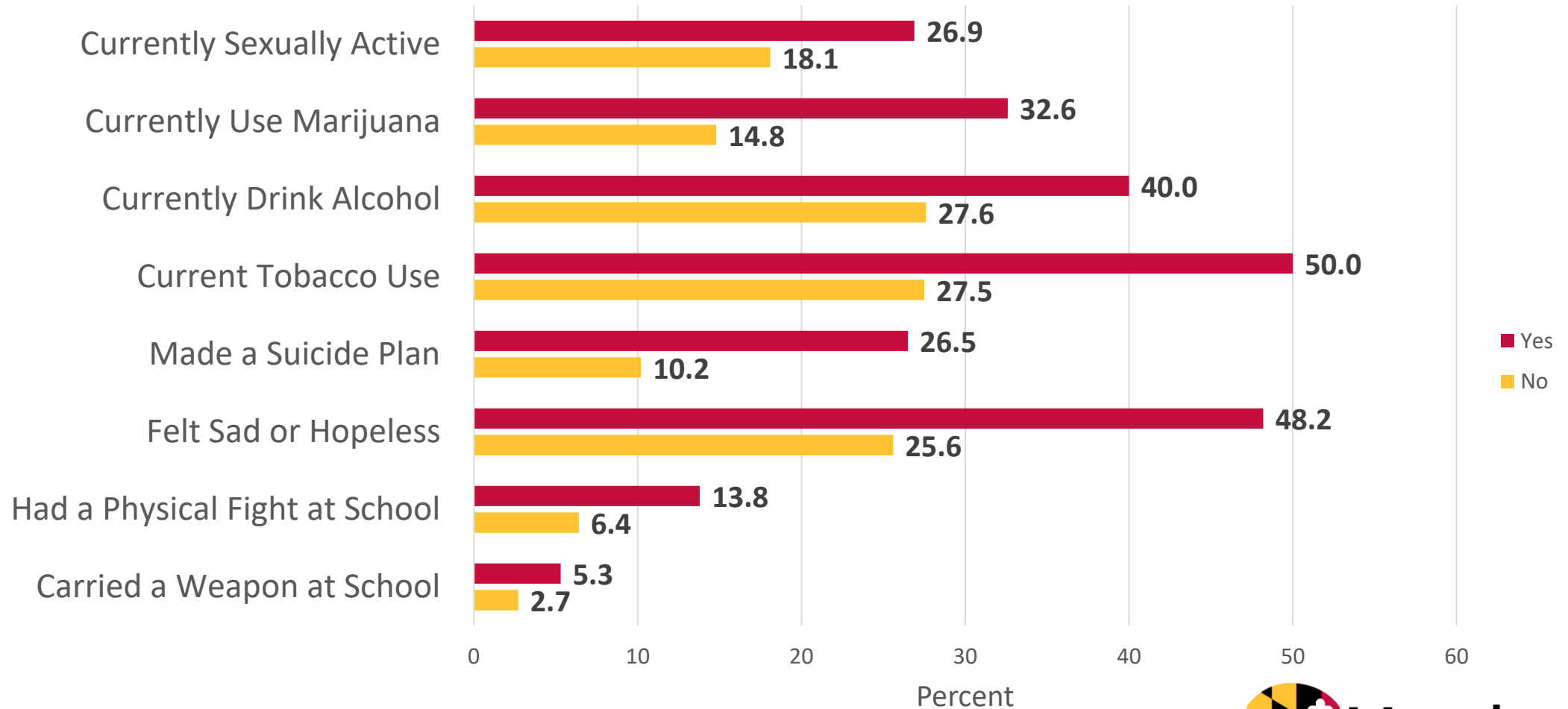
- Howard
- Montgomery

20.6% Statewide Emotional Abuse Exposure

Source: 2018-2019 Maryland HS YRBS/YTS



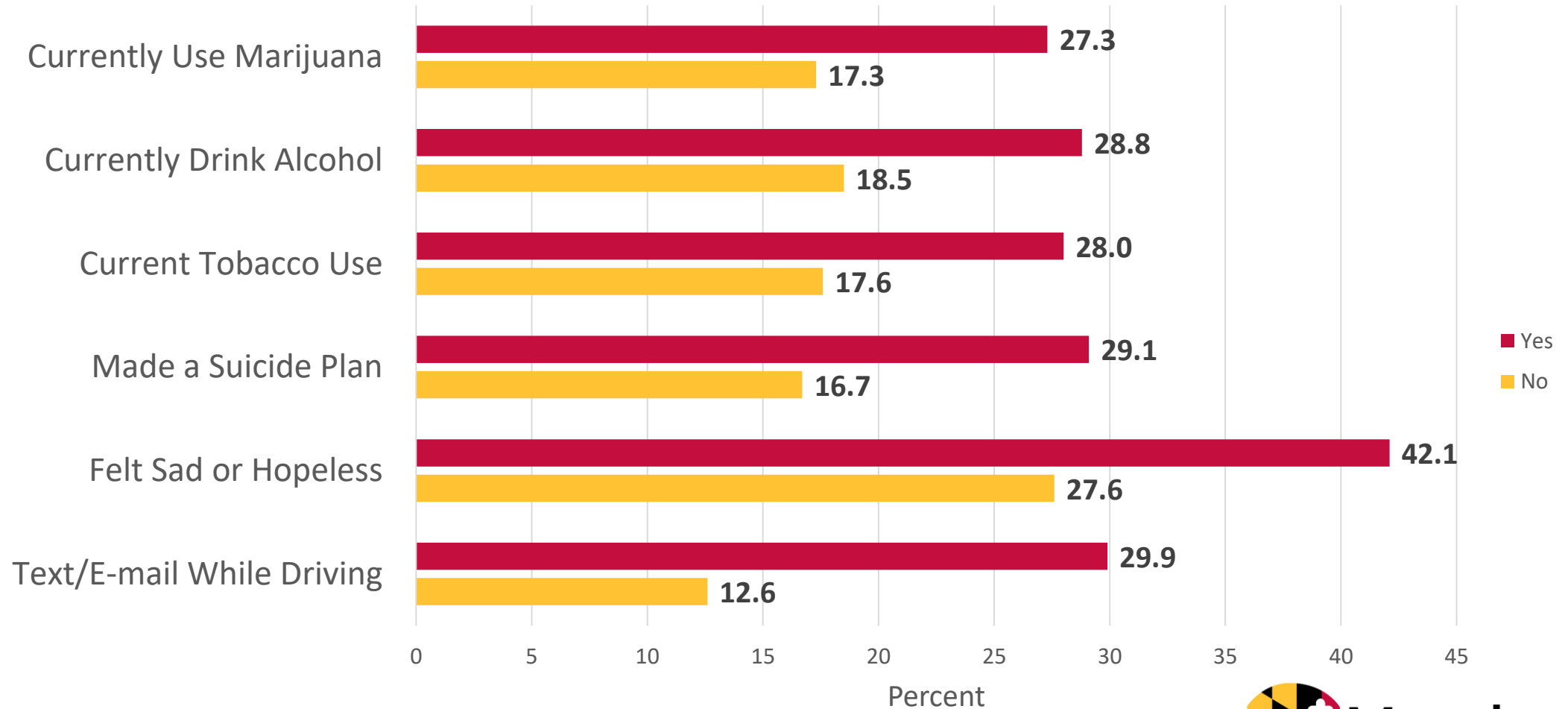
Frederick County HS Students Exposed to Household Substance Abuse



Source: 2018-2019 Maryland HS YRBS/YTS

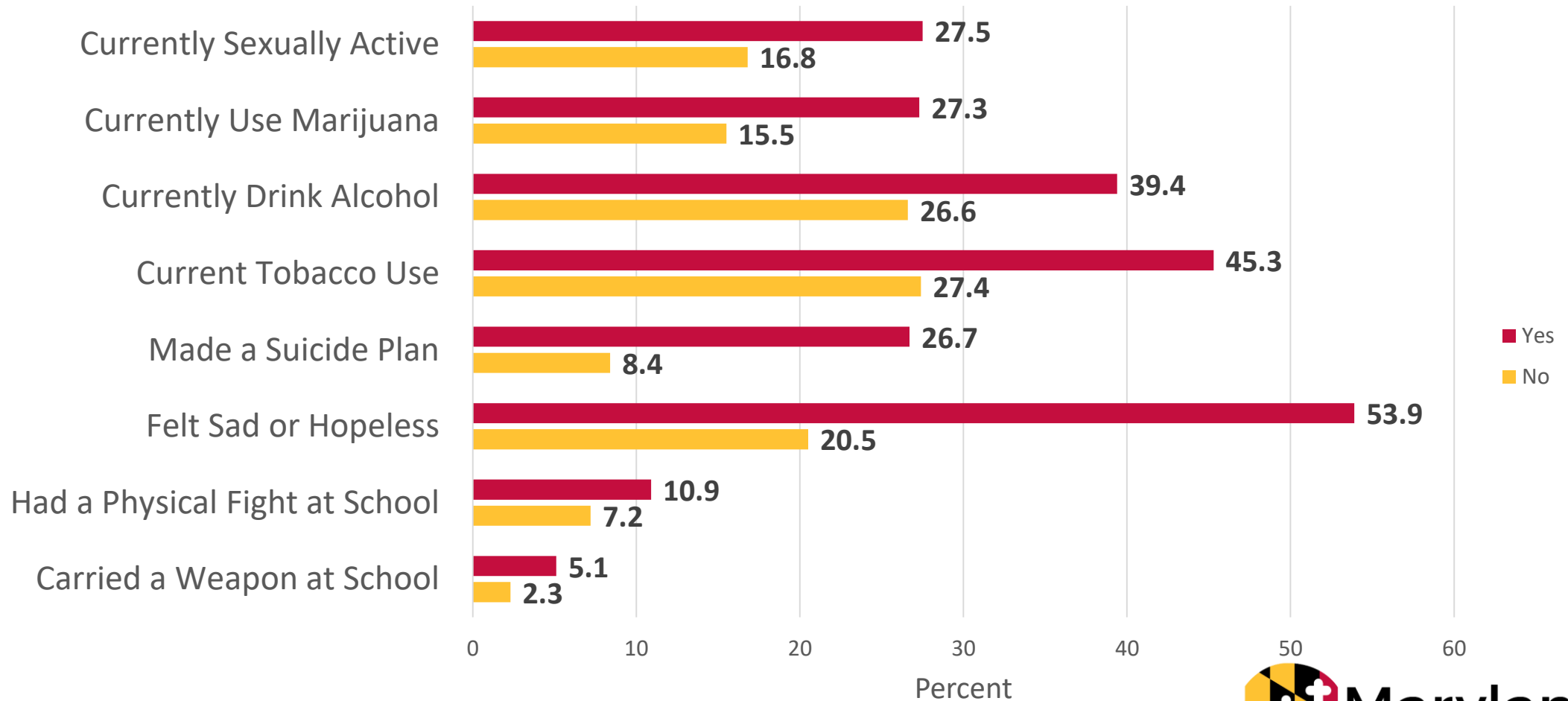


Baltimore City HS Students Exposed to Household Substance Abuse



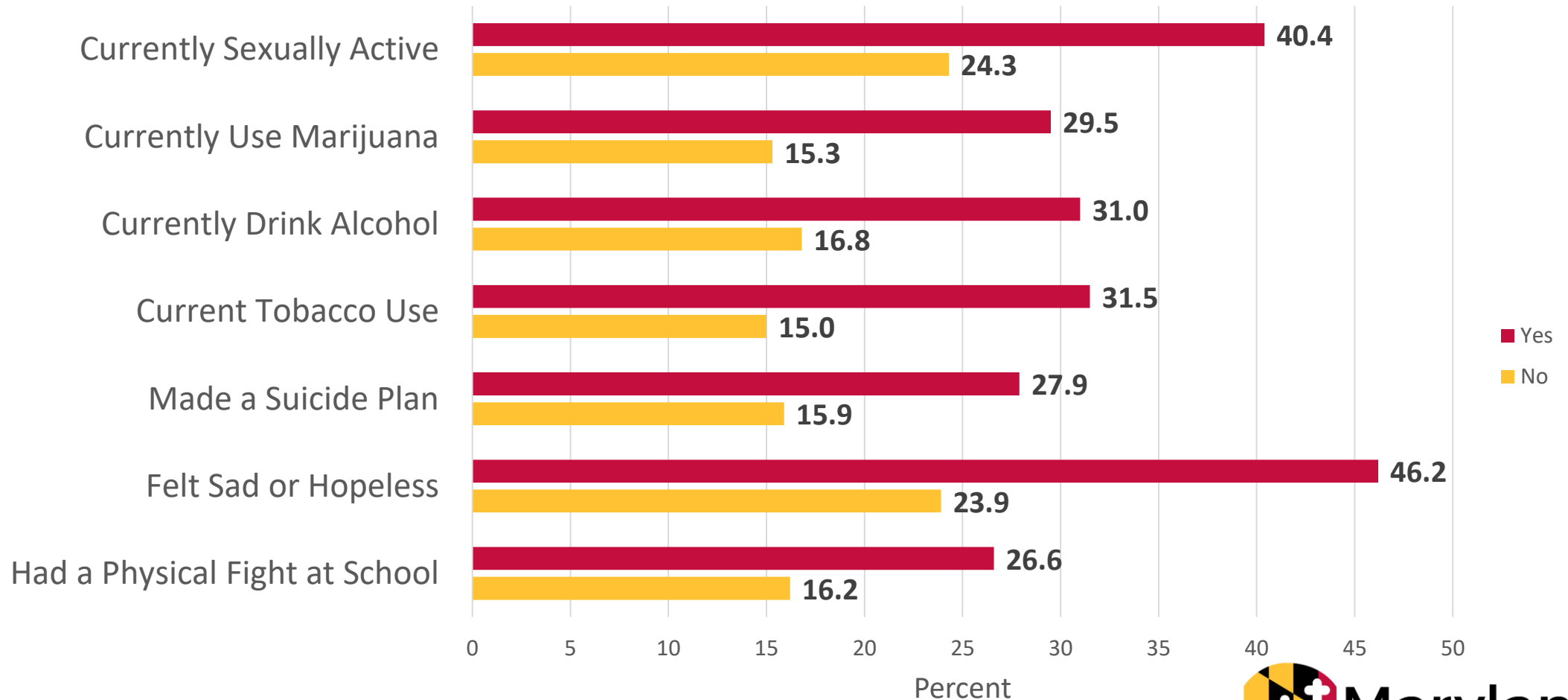
Source: 2018-2019 Maryland HS YRBS/YTS

Frederick County HS Students Exposed to Household Mental Illness



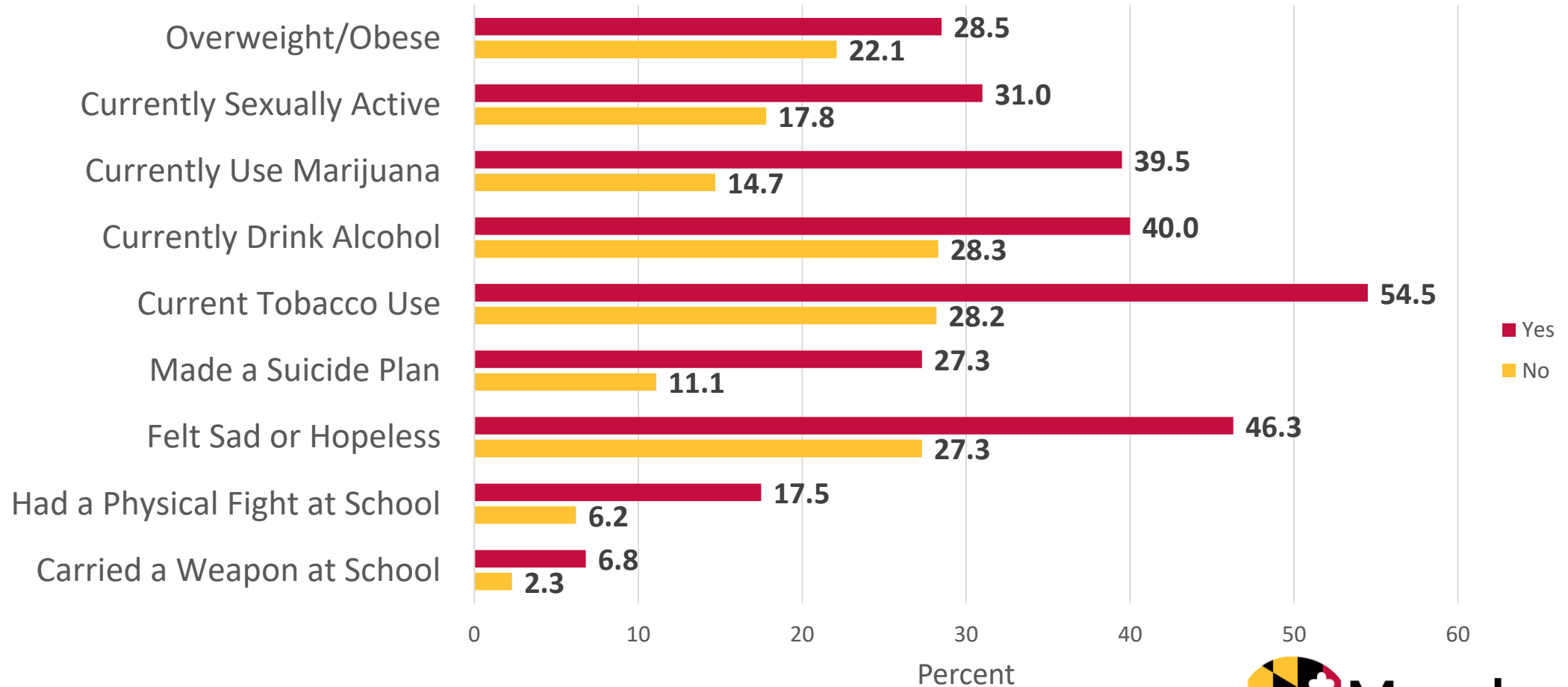
Source: 2018-2019 Maryland HS YRBS/YTS

Baltimore City HS Students Exposed to Household Mental Illness



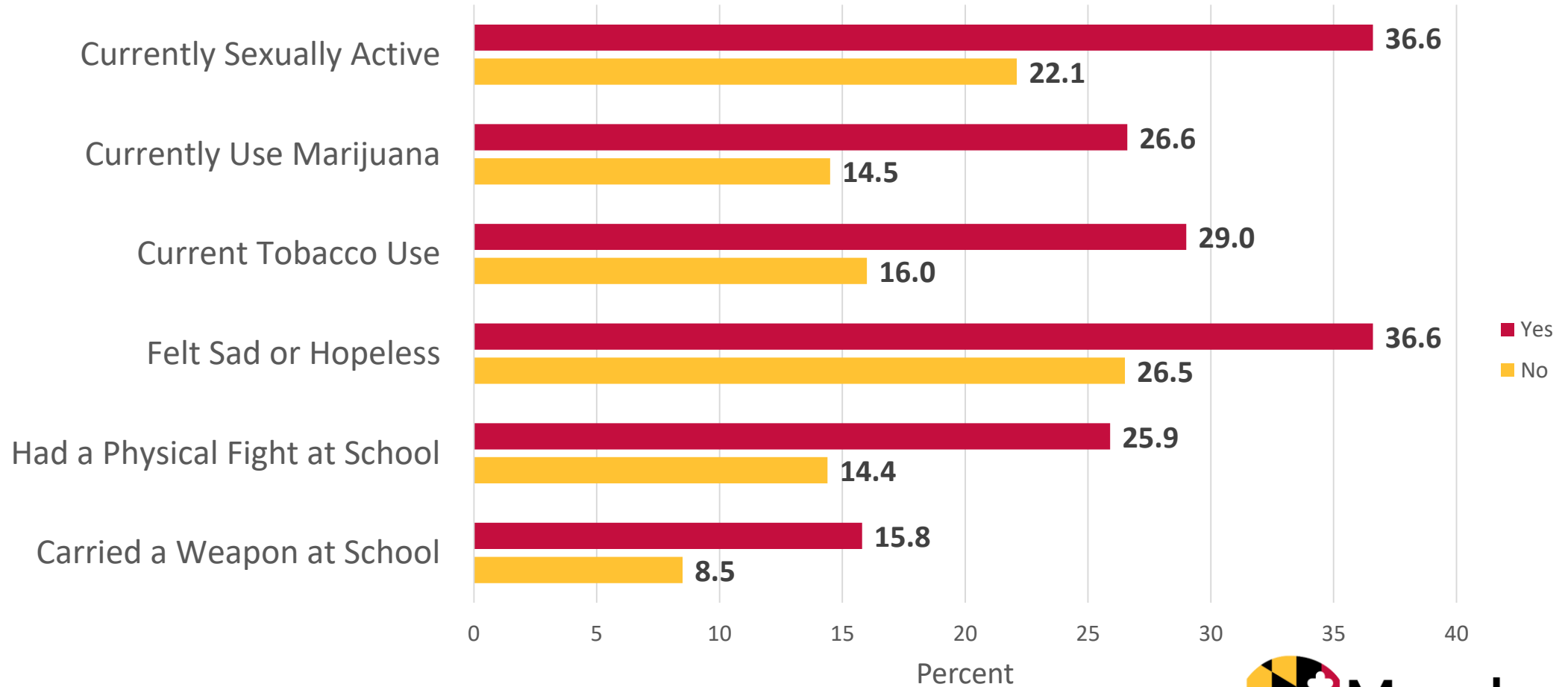
Source: 2018-2019 Maryland HS YRBS/YTS

Frederick County HS Students Exposed to Household Incarceration



Source: 2018-2019 Maryland HS YRBS/YTS

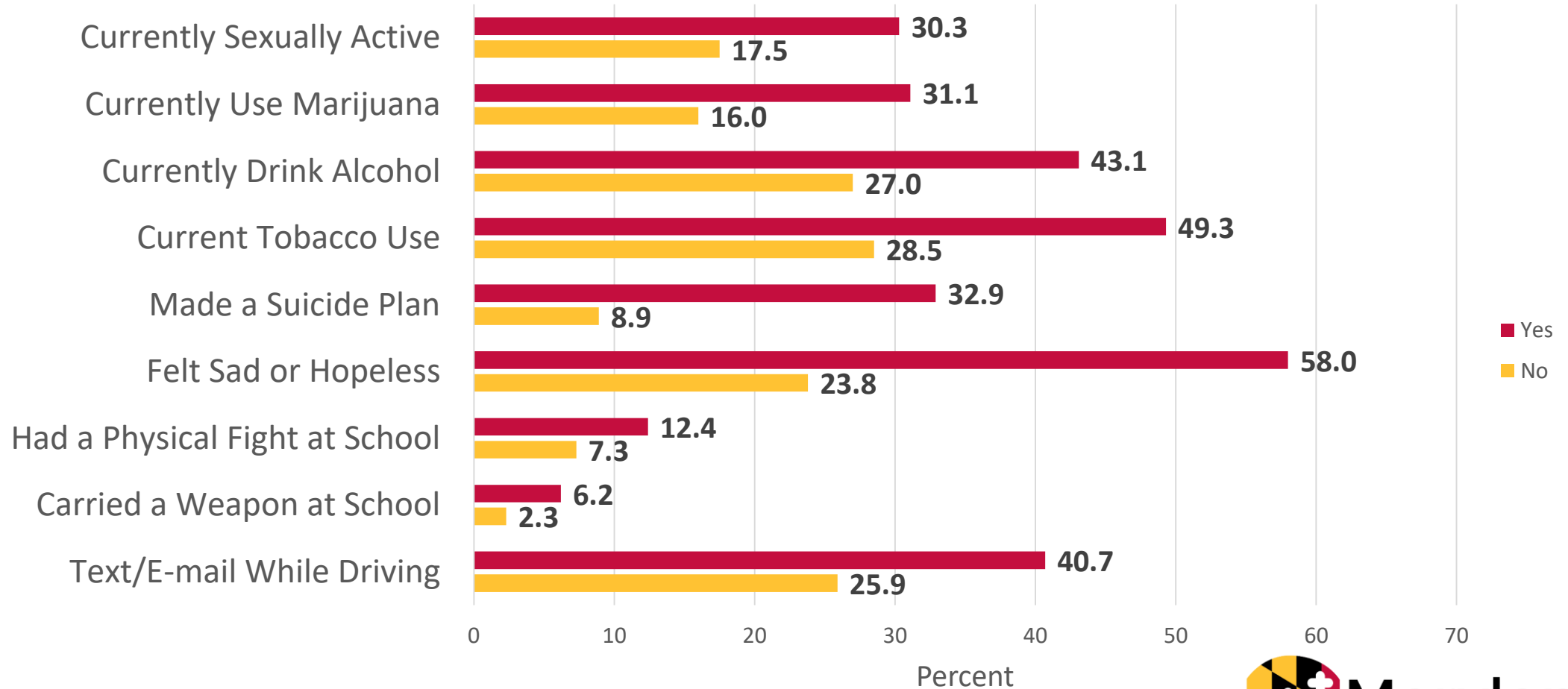
Baltimore City HS Students Exposed to Household Incarceration



Source: 2018-2019 Maryland HS YRBS/YTS

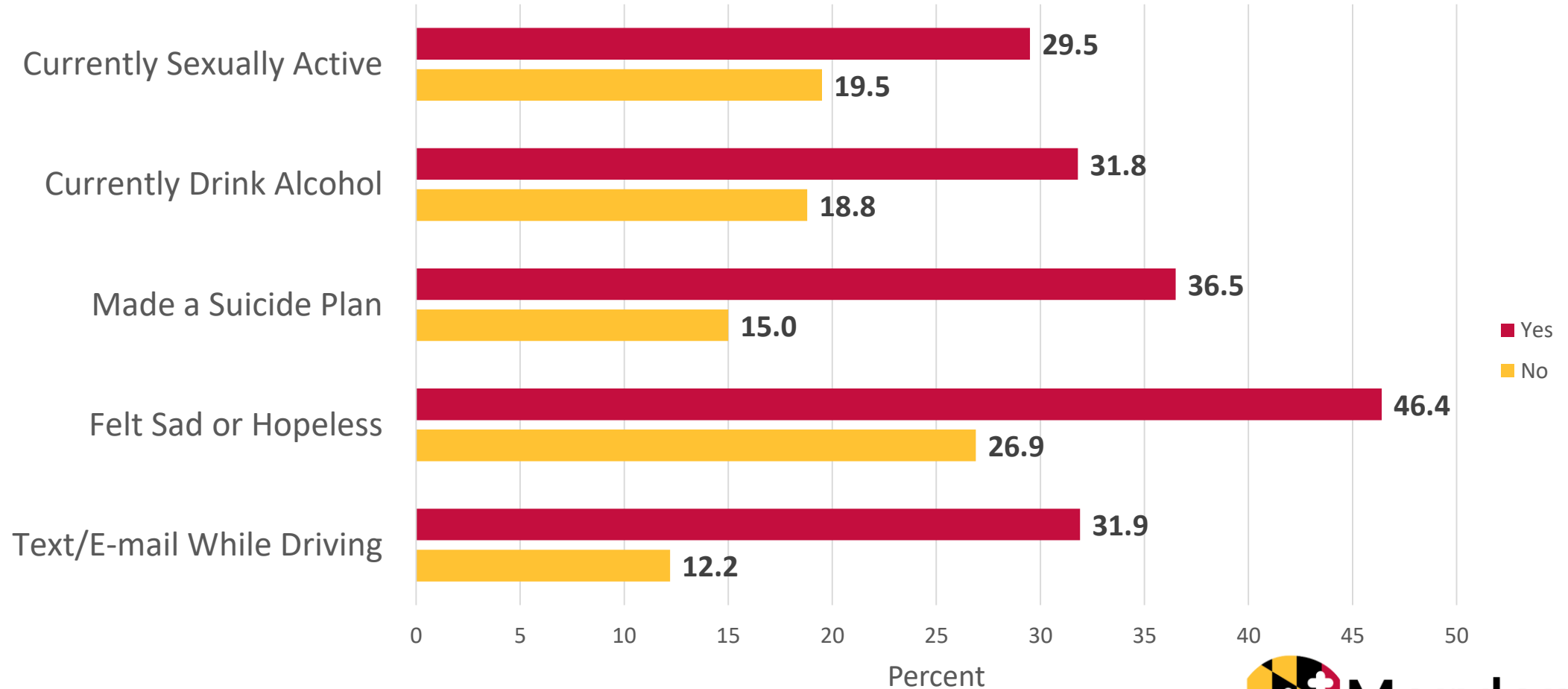


Frederick County HS Students Exposed to Emotional Abuse



Source: 2018-2019 Maryland HS YRBS/YTS

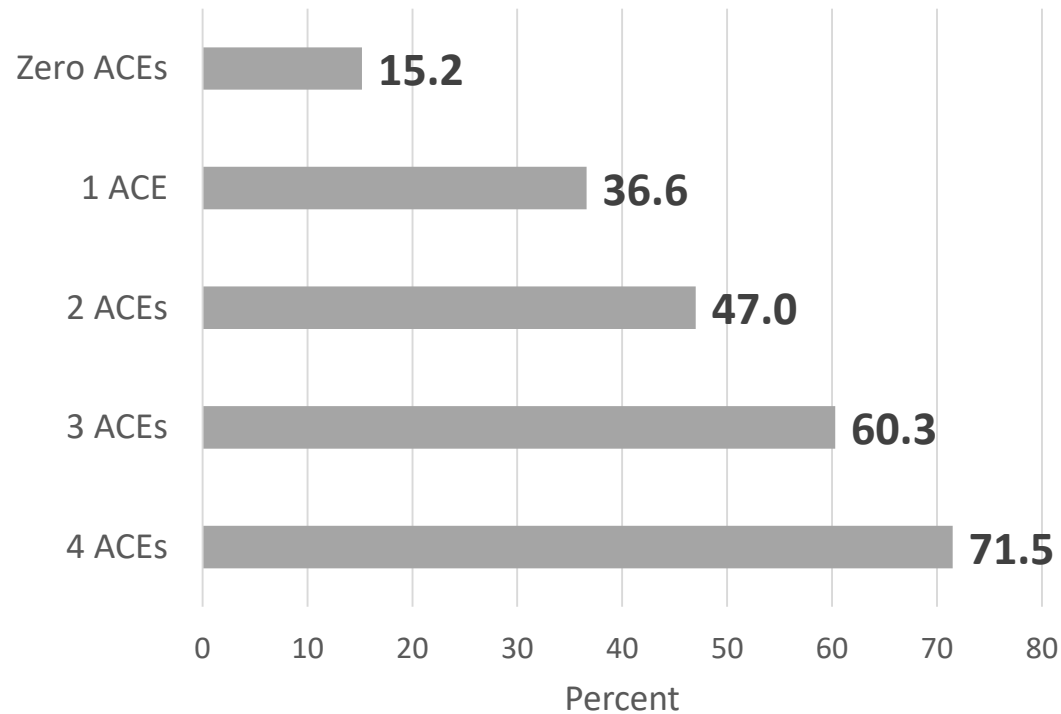
Baltimore City HS Students Exposed to Emotional Abuse



Source: 2018-2019 Maryland HS YRBS/YTS

Dose-Response Relationship- Frederick County (3)

Felt Sad or Hopeless



Odds of Feeling Sad or Hopeless By ACE Score

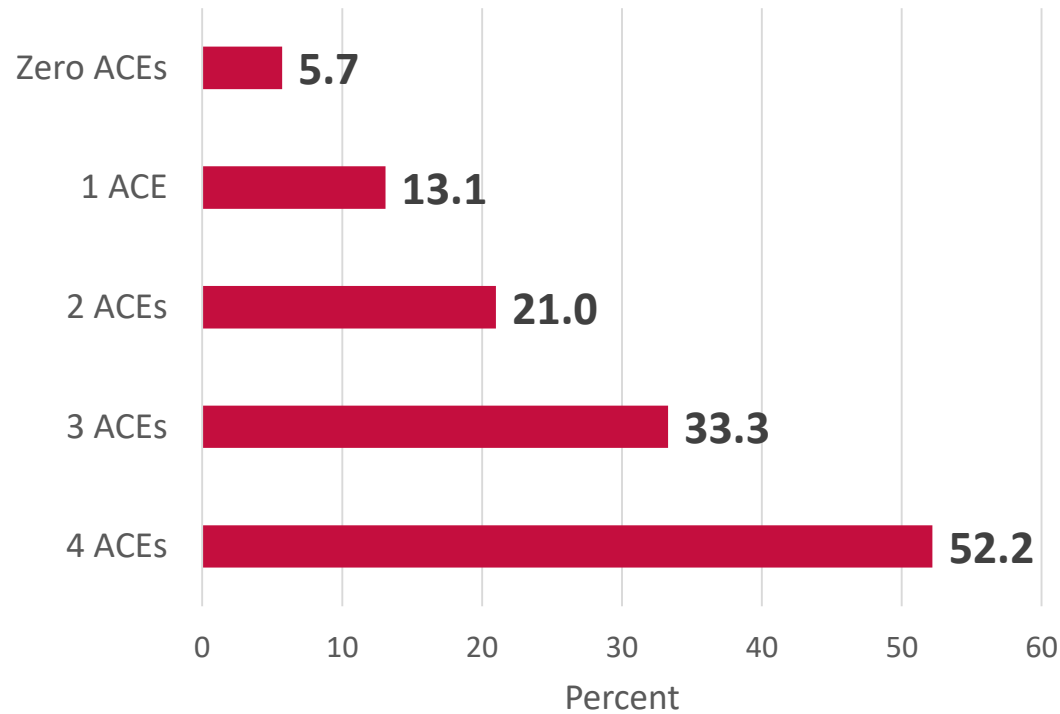
ACE Number	Odds Ratio (ORa)
Zero ACEs	1.0
1 ACE	3.1
2 ACEs	5.0
3 ACEs	8.2
4 ACEs	13.9

*Adjusted OR: race, age, and sex

Source: 2018-2019 Maryland HS YRBS/YTS

Dose-Response Relationship- Frederick County (4)

Made a Suicide Plan



Odds of Making a Suicide Plan By ACE Score

ACE Number	Odds Ratio (ORa)
Zero ACEs	1.0
1 ACE	2.4
2 ACEs	4.5
3 ACEs	7.8
4 ACEs	17.4

*Adjusted OR: race, age, and sex

Source: 2018-2019 Maryland HS YRBS/YTS

Dose-Response Relationship - Baltimore City (8)

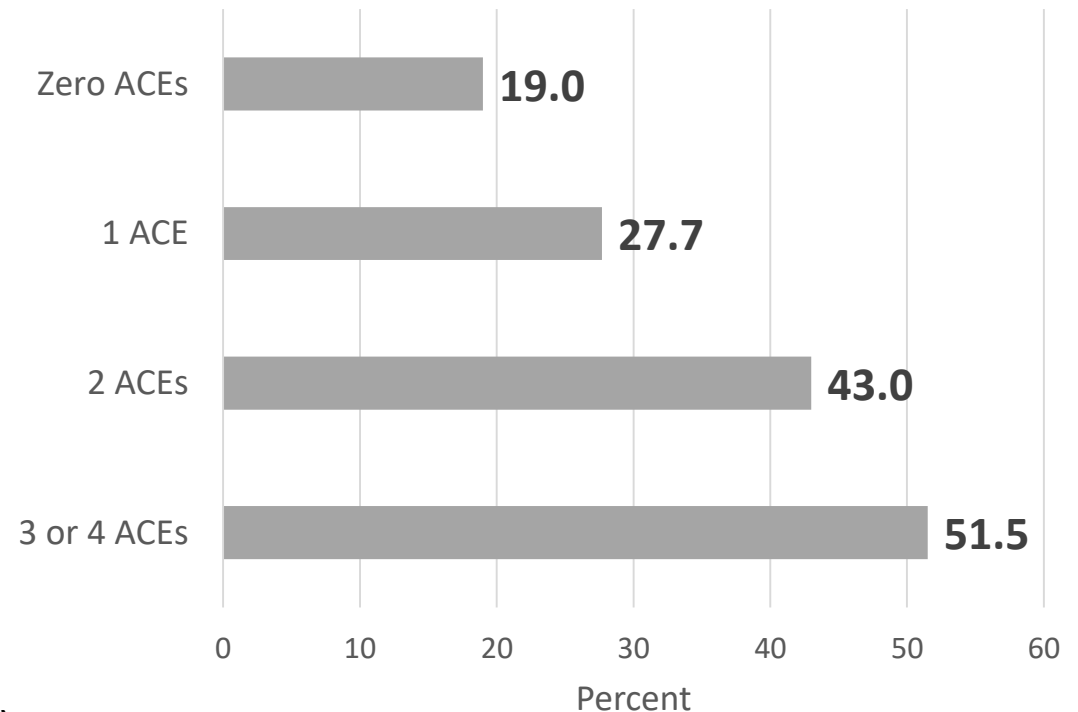
Odds of Feeling Sad or Hopeless By ACE Score

ACE Number	Odds Ratio (ORa)
Zero ACEs	1.0
1 ACE	1.7*
2 ACEs	3.6*
3 or 4 ACEs	5.0*

Adjusted OR: race, age, and sex

*Significant difference from reference group (zero ACEs)

Felt Sad or Hopeless



Dose-Response Relationship - Baltimore City (9)

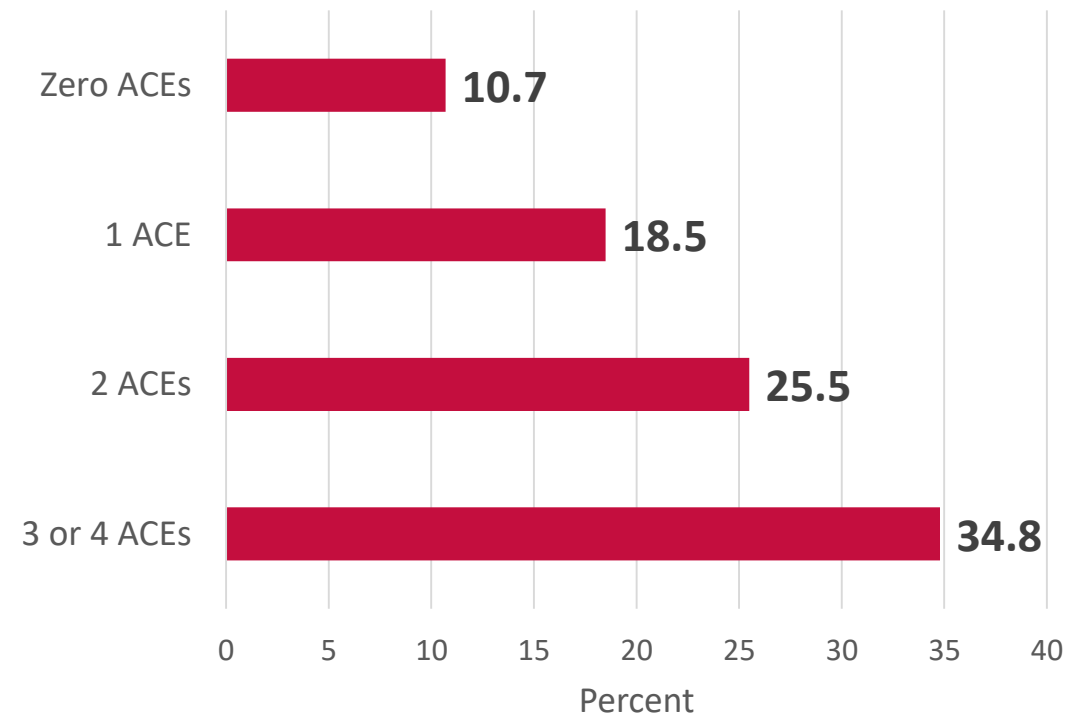
Odds of Making a Suicide Plan By ACE Score

ACE Number	Odds Ratio (ORa)
Zero ACEs	1.0
1 ACE	2.0*
2 ACEs	3.2*
3 or 4 ACEs	4.1*

Adjusted OR: race, age, and sex

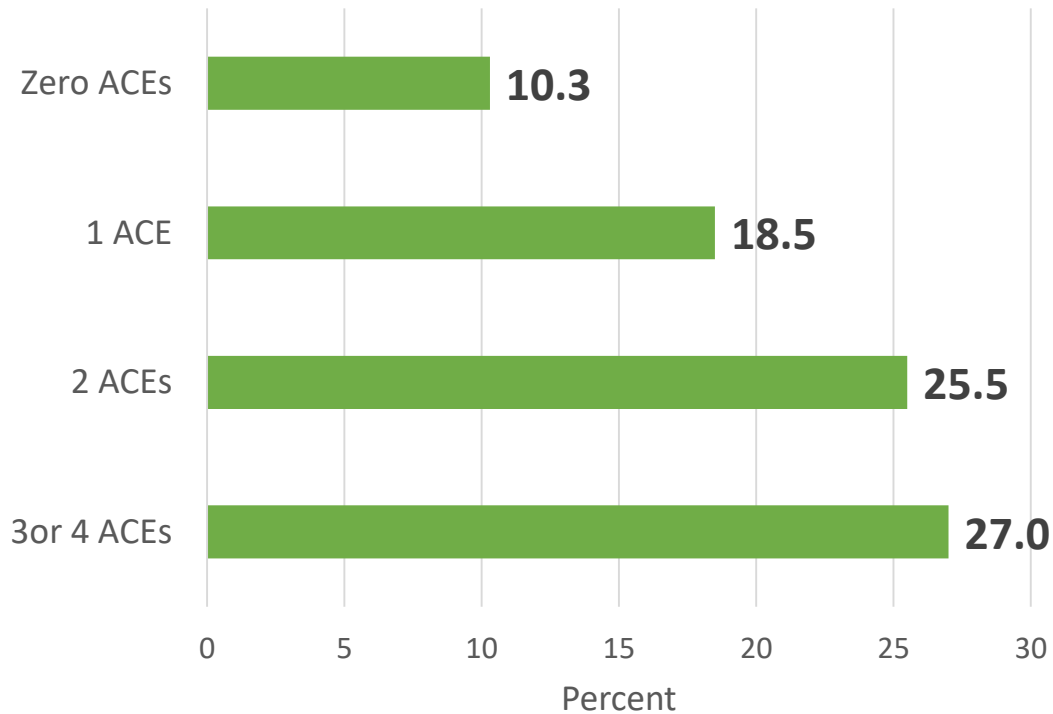
*Significant difference from reference group (zero ACEs)

Made a Suicide Plan



Dose-Response Relationship - Baltimore City (11)

Physical Fight on School Property



Physical Fight on School Property By ACE Score

ACE Number	Odds Ratio (ORa)
Zero ACEs	1.0
1 ACE	1.9*
2 ACEs	2.9*
3 or 4 ACEs	3.2*

Adjusted OR: race, age, and sex

*Significant difference from reference group (zero ACEs)