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# 2022 Economic Issues Survey of California DVMs and RVTs

California Veterinary Medical Association  
August 2022

# Introduction and Research Goals

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- ▶ The goal of this research is to understand economic conditions and job status among veterinarians and registered veterinary technicians in California, tracking economic and attitudinal shifts in the veterinary profession since 2013.
- ▶ This research will provide information for analysis of the current state of the veterinary profession and insight into business and professional decision-making including hiring, work hours, pay, and benefits.
- ▶ Topics include job satisfaction, job seeking and hiring practices, educational debt, practice ownership diversity, salary differences, and views of the future of the veterinary profession.

- ▶ Online survey of California veterinarians (DVMs) and registered veterinary technicians (RVTs)
  - DVMs: n=923, margin of error of  $\pm 3.23$  percentage points
  - RVTs: n=410, margin of error of  $\pm 4.84$  percentage points
- ▶ Survey conducted July 11 through August 22, 2022
- ▶ Where applicable, results compared with surveys from 2016 and 2019

Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.

# Key Findings – DVM

- ▶ Practice revenue and DVM salaries (both among owners and associates) are up since 2019, the last survey before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ▶ A majority also continue to say they believe they can make a good living in the veterinary profession, and say they are not thinking of considering leaving either the profession or California.
- ▶ While revenue is up and DVMs are generally satisfied with their current roles and work environment, there is more concern about the industry as a whole since before the pandemic: satisfaction with the health of the veterinary industry overall has dropped since 2019, as has optimism for the future of the profession.
- ▶ More than half of DVMs say California's regulatory requirements are a burden on practices and continue to disagree that the growth of corporate practices is good for the industry.
- ▶ Concerns about mental health and student debt continue to be to issues DVMs want the veterinary profession to address.

# Key Findings – RVT

- ▶ As with DVMs, RVT job satisfaction is consistent with 2019, and RVTs also saw an increase in salary and availability of benefits such as 401(k)s and health/dental/vision insurance.
- ▶ RVTs have seen a more significant decline in their satisfaction with the health of the industry -- overall the percent who say they are satisfied has dropped by half since 2019.
- ▶ RVTs are also less optimistic about the future of the veterinary technician profession, and a majority continue to say they would not recommend a veterinary career to a friend or family member.
- ▶ Slightly more RVTs (44%) than DVMs (30%) say they are considering leaving the veterinary profession.
- ▶ RVTs cite low pay as the top concern the CVMA should focus on, followed by mental health and staff retention.



# Profile of DVM Respondents

# Profile of 2022 DVM Respondents



## Practice Type

- 68% Small animal exclusive
- 16% Small animal predominant
- 5% Equine
- 10% Other



## Position

- 30% Owner
- 12% Medical Director
- 51% Associate
- 10% Contract/Relief Worker



## Years in Current Role

- 11% Less than 1 Year
- 37% 1-5 Years
- 18% 6-10 Years
- 9% 11-15 Years
- 6% 16-20 Years
- 20% More than 20 Years

## Hours Worked Per Week

- 17% Less than 30
- 31% 31-40
- 32% 41-50
- 19% 51 or more



## Work Hours

- 85% Full-time
- 15% Part-time

## Location

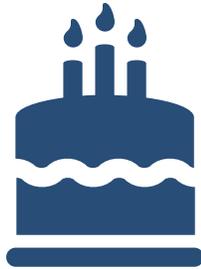
- 15% Sacramento & North
- 27% Bay Area
- 8% Central Valley
- 6% Central Coast
- 16% Los Angeles
- 17% LA Area (excludes LA County)
- 11% San Diego



# Profile of DVM Respondents

## Age

- 5% 18-29
- 22% 30-39
- 24% 40-49
- 35% 50-64
- 14% 65+



## Gender

- 28% Male
- 70% Female
- 2% Other



## Practice Ownership

- 40% Single owner
- 13% Multiple owners
- 35% Corporate owner
- 9% Public/Non-profit
- 3% Other/Prefer not to respond



## School\*

- 38% UC Davis
- 6% Western University
- 37% AVMA-accredited, Outside of CA
- 13% AVMA-accredited, Outside of U.S.
- 5% Non-AVMA accredited



## CVMA Membership (self-reported)

- 73% Member
- 23% Non-member

\*AVMA-accreditation language added in 2022.



# Profile of RVT Respondents

# Profile of 2022 RVT Respondents



## Practice Type

62% Small animal exclusive  
21% Small animal predominant  
1% Equine  
7% Shelter  
9% Other



## Position

35% Lead RVT  
58% RVT  
12% Practice/Office Manager  
2% Relief/Contract Worker  
6% Other



## Years in Current Role

10% Less than 1 Year  
42% 1-5 Years  
22% 6-10 Years  
8% 11-15 Years  
8% 16-20 Years  
10% More than 20 Years

## Hours Worked Per Week

18% Less than 30  
33% 31-40  
44% 41-50  
4% 51 or more



## Work Hours

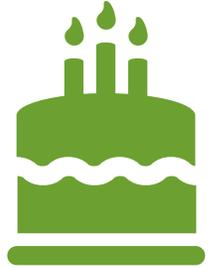
82% Full-time  
18% Part-time

## Location

19% Sacramento & North  
25% Bay Area  
5% Central Valley  
4% Central Coast  
20% Los Angeles  
18% LA Area (excludes LA County)  
10% San Diego

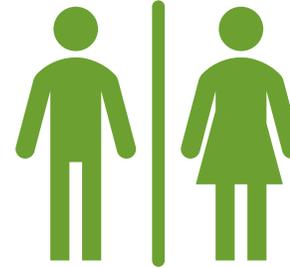


# Profile of RVT Respondents



## Age

11% 18-29  
35% 30-39  
27% 40-49  
24% 50-64  
2% 65+



## Gender

6% Male  
92% Female  
2% Other



## Practice Ownership

30% Single owner  
13% Multiple owners  
38% Corporate owner  
15% Public/Non-profit  
4% Other/Prefer not to respond



## CVMA Membership (self-reported)

49% Member  
40% Non-member  
10% Don't know

# Key Findings – Current Job Sentiment

- ▶ A majority of DVMs and RVTs are satisfied with their current role, consistent with previous years.
- ▶ Older DVMs continue to report higher satisfaction than younger colleagues.
- ▶ Both DVMs and RVTs rate a positive work environment and clinical quality of practice as their most important factors in choosing a job.
  - RVTs put more importance than with DVMs on compensation, hours, and work-life balance.
- ▶ Six-in-ten DVMs say they are “not at all interested” in owning all or part of a practice in the future, continuing an upward trend since 2013 when 34% said they were “not at all interested.”

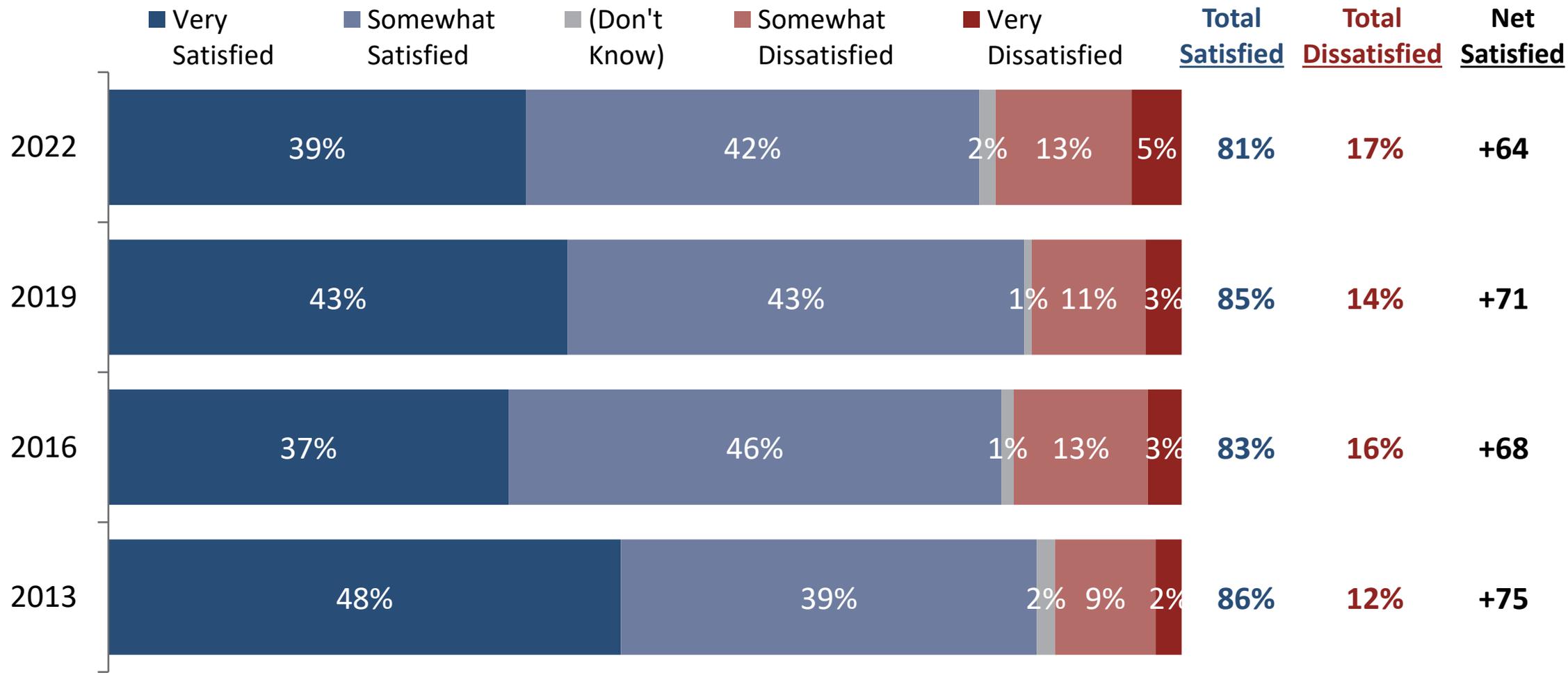


**Current Job Sentiment**  
*Among DVMs*

# Job Satisfaction Over Time Among DVMs



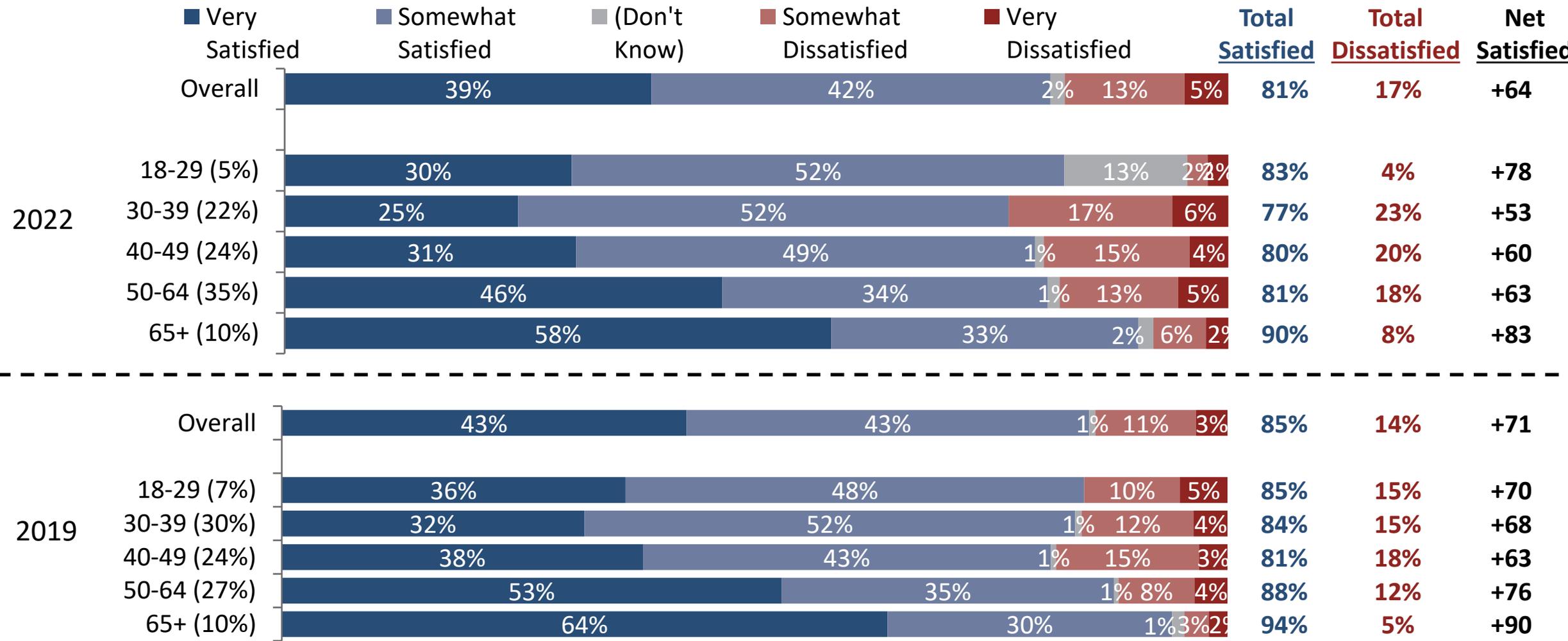
*Overall, the pandemic does not appear to have impacted job satisfaction: Eight-in-ten DVMs report they are satisfied with their jobs, consistent with previous years. The number who report they are “very satisfied” has decreased slightly since 2019.*



# Job Satisfaction by Age Among DVMs

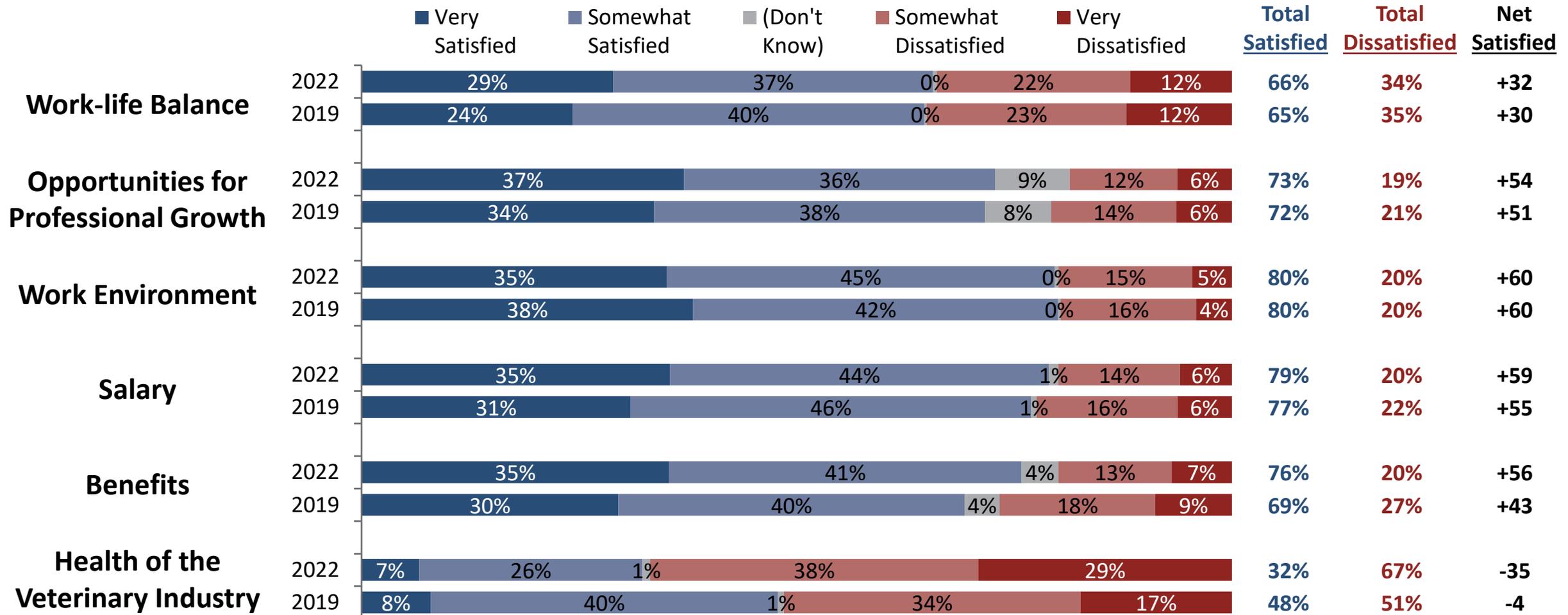


*DVMs over 65 continue to report being more satisfied with their current job than younger DVMs; intensity of satisfaction (those saying “very satisfied”) has also dropped more among DVMs under 65.*



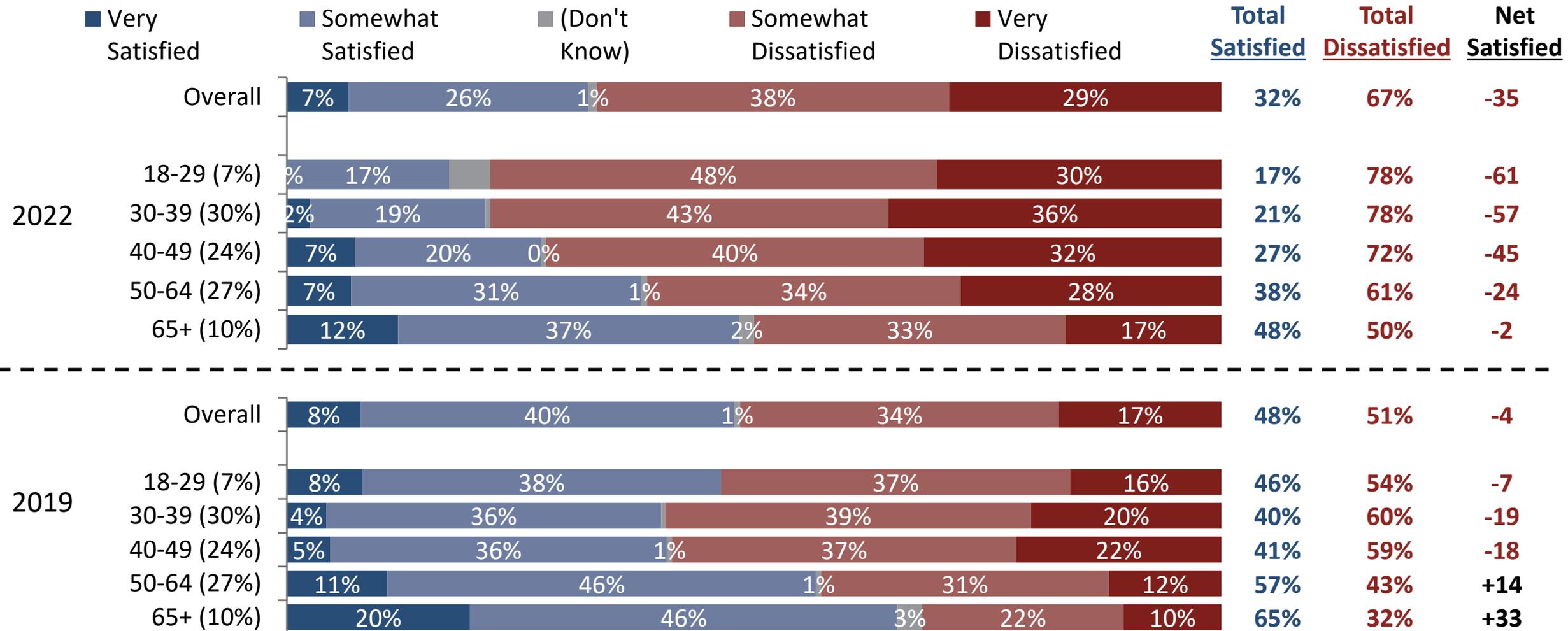
# Important Job Factors Among DVMs

*While satisfaction remained consistent from 2019 across most metrics, DVMs are less satisfied with the health of the veterinary industry in 2022 than they were prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.*



# Industry Health by Age Among DVMs

*Satisfaction with the health of the industry has decreased across the board since 2019.*



# Important Job Factors Among DVMs

The most significant shift in how DVMs rank various job factors since 2019 is the increased importance of whether night or weekend hours are required, and the decreased importance of opportunities for professional growth.



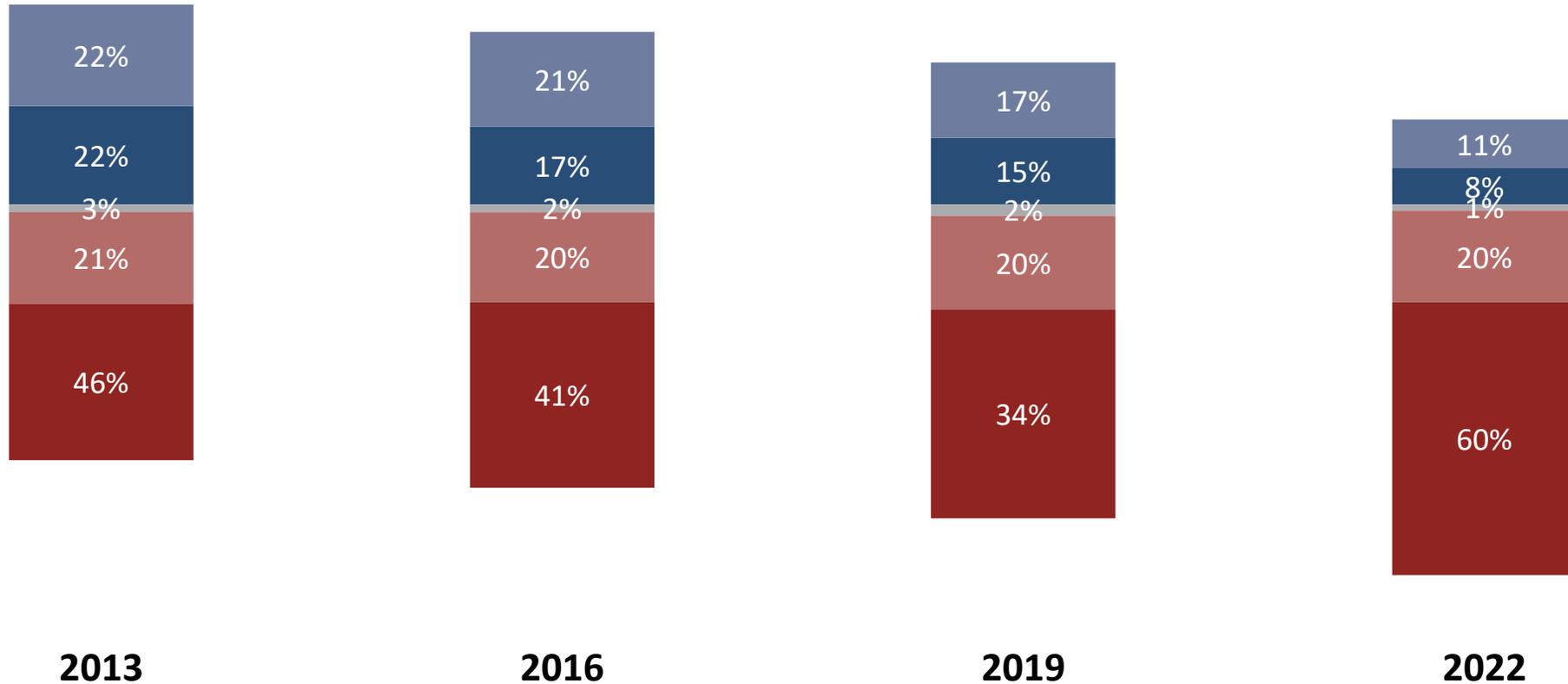
Q22-34. Thinking about your preferred job and work environment, please rate the following factors in choosing a job, regardless of whether you are currently seeking a new position. \*First asked in 2022.

# Ownership Interest Among DVMs

*Interest in practice ownership is at an all-time low since the first economic issues survey, with six-in-ten DVMs now reporting they are “not at all interested.”*

*Among non-practice owners only, n=648*

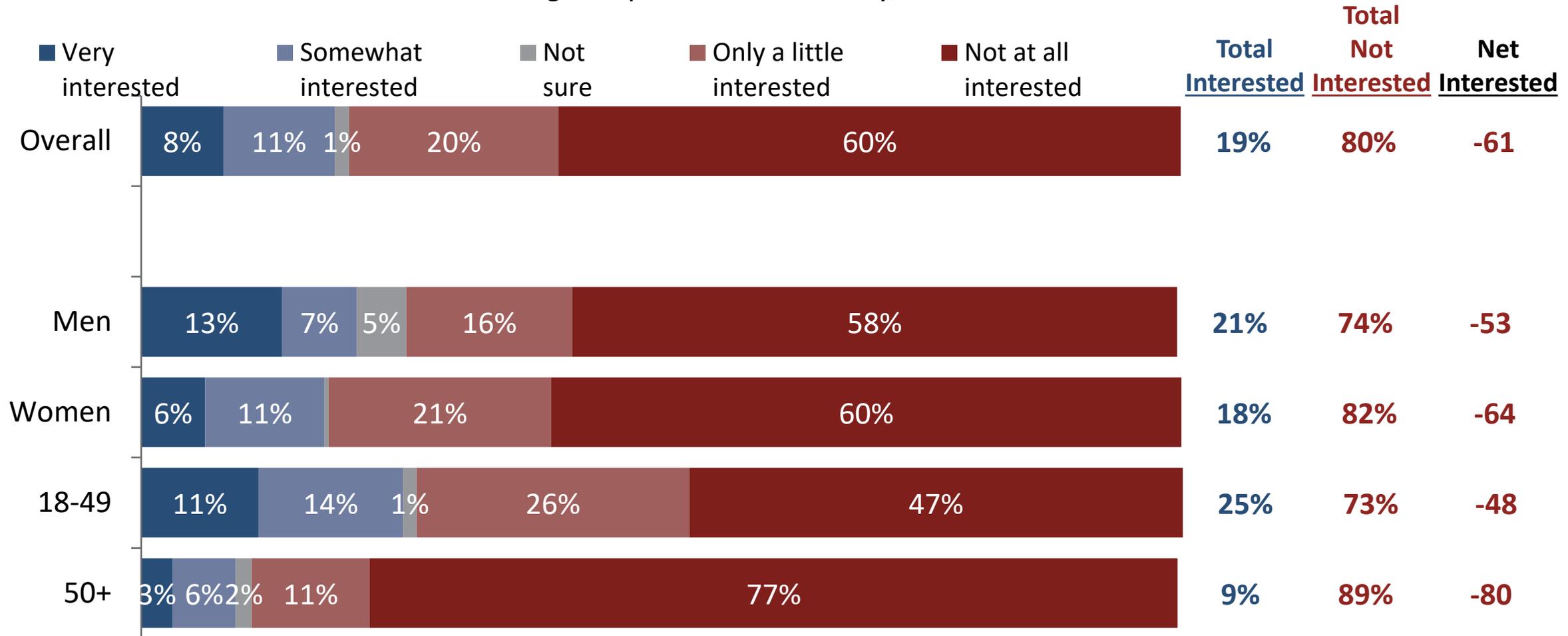
■ Very Interested   ■ Somewhat Interested   ■ Not Sure   ■ Only a Little Interested   ■ Not At All Interested



# Ownership Interest Among DVMs

Lack of interest is consistent regardless of age or gender, but intensity of disinterest is highest among DVMs over 50.

Among non-practice owners only, n=648

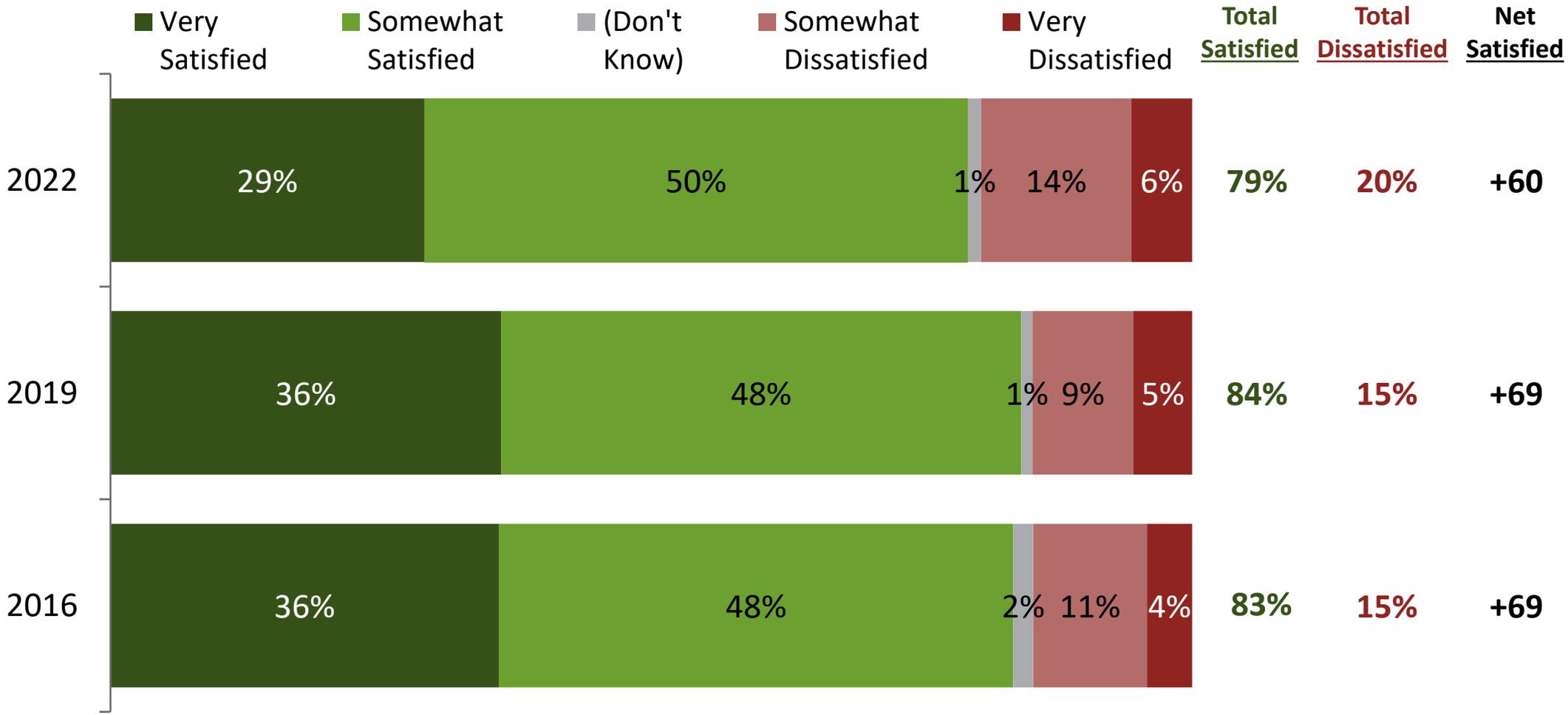




**Current Job Sentiment**  
*Among RVTs*

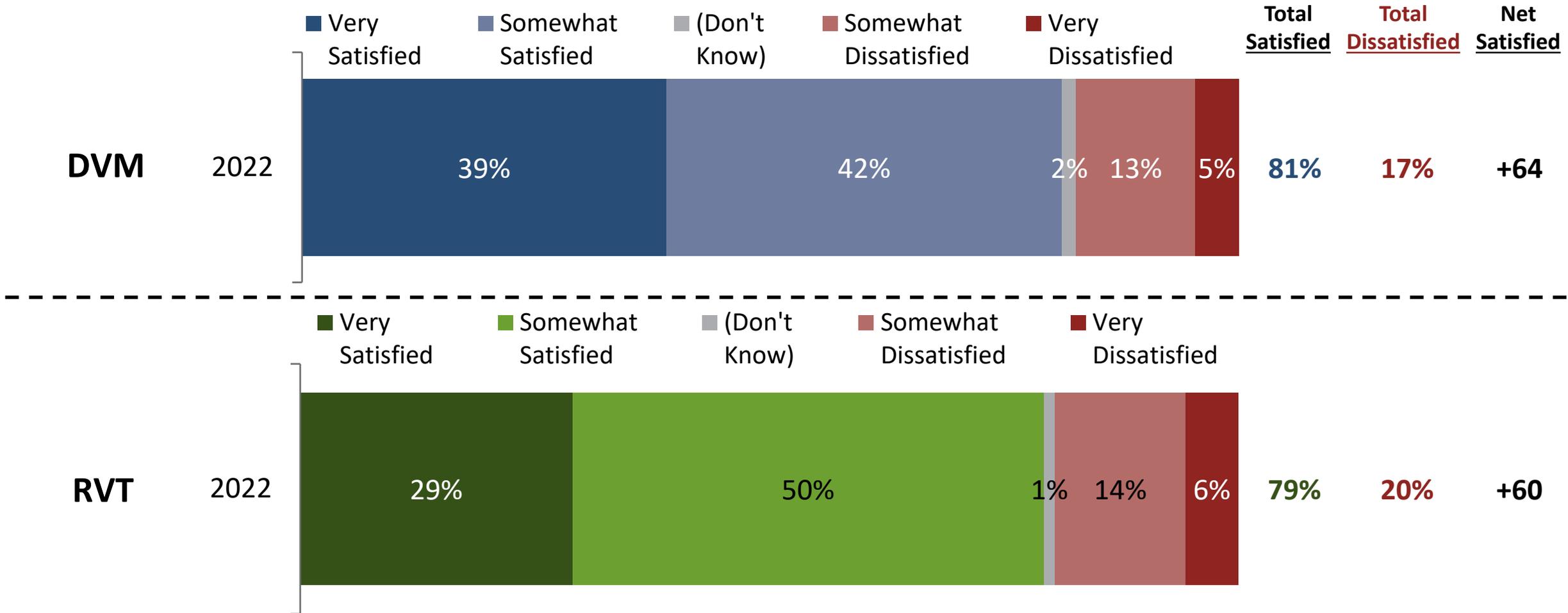
# Job Satisfaction Over Time Among RVTs

*Job satisfaction among RVTs is consistent with previous years.*



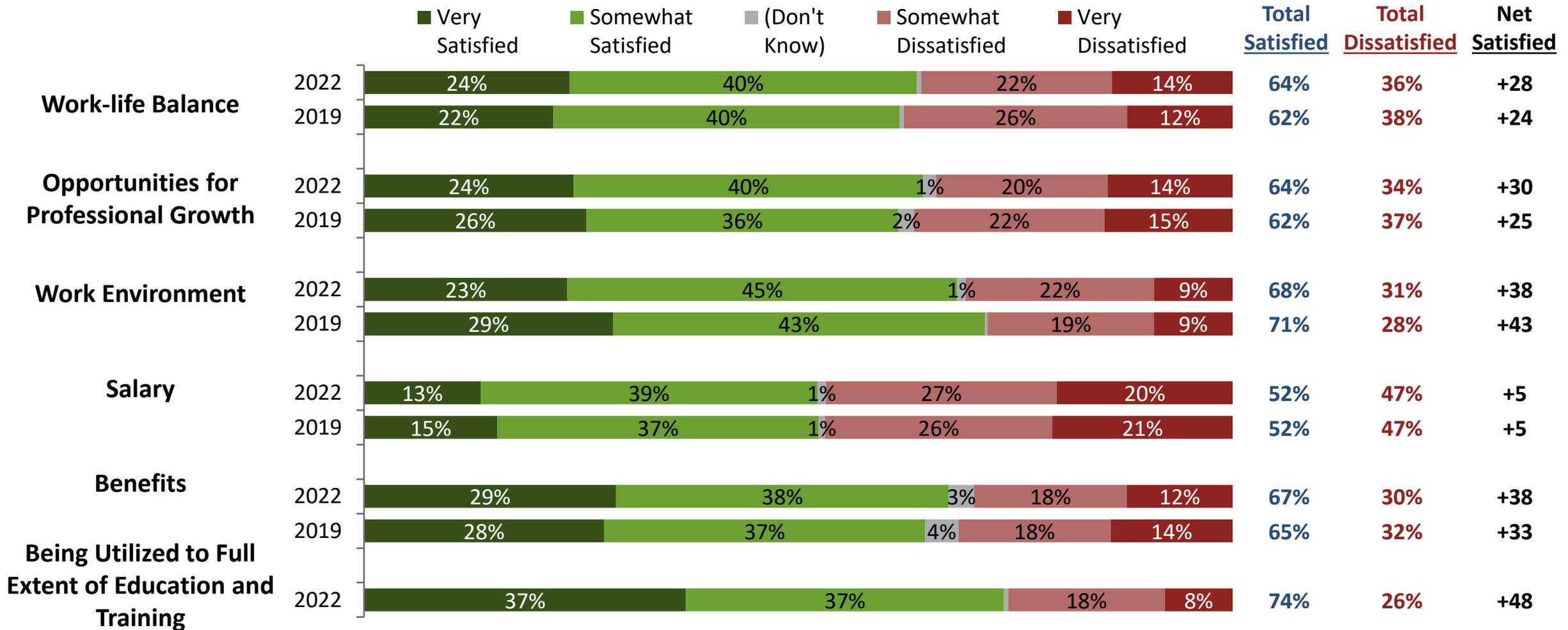
# Job Satisfaction Comparison

*Slightly more DVMs report they are “very satisfied” with their jobs than RVTs, but overall satisfaction is almost identical.*



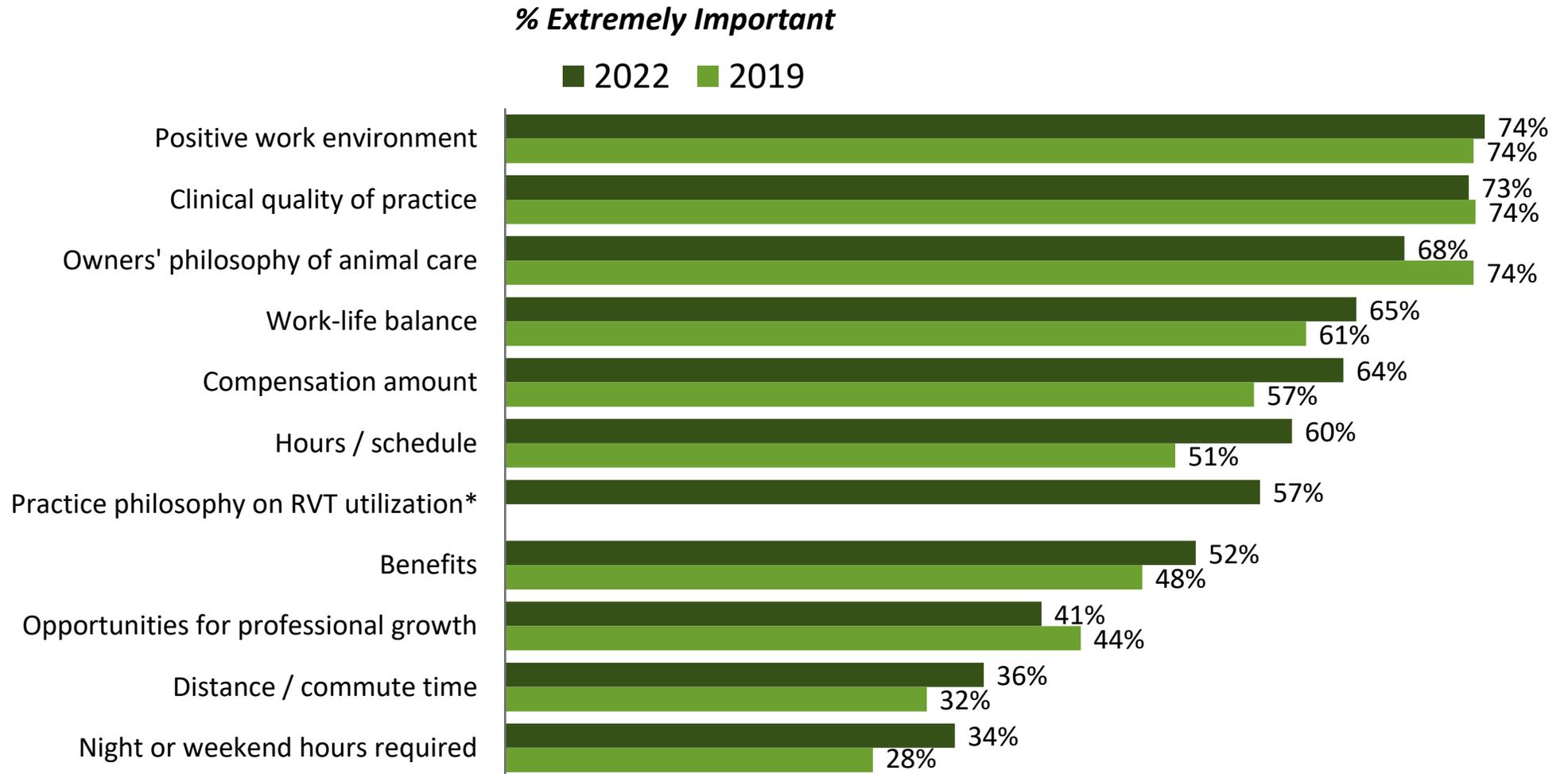
# Important Job Factors Among RVTs

*Satisfaction remains consistent among RVTs across the various factors tested; salary satisfaction remains lower than other aspects such as benefits or work environment.*



# Important Job Factors Among RVTs

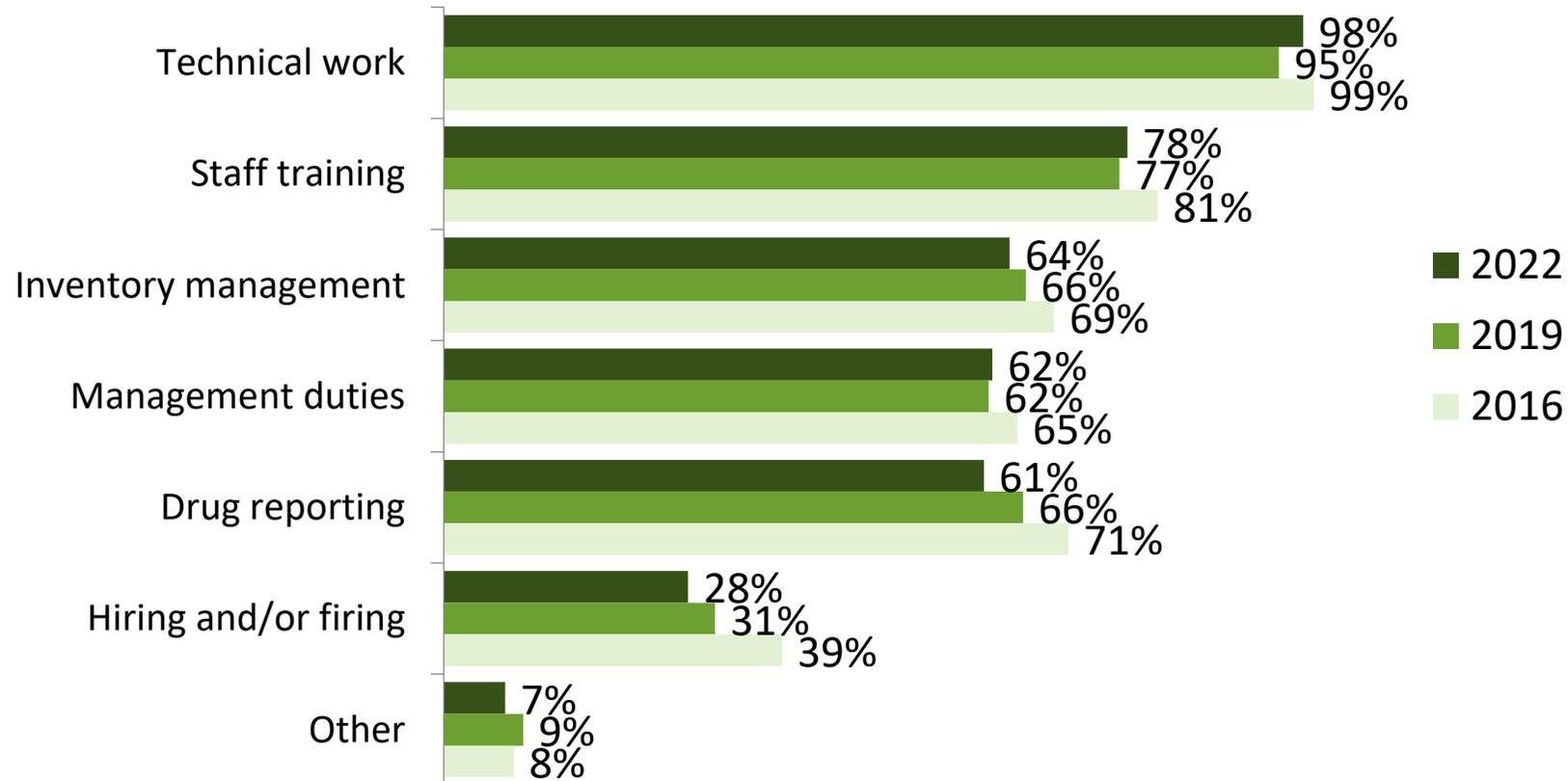
*For the first time, RVTs were asked how important practice philosophy on utilizing RVTs is to choosing a job – six-in-ten said it is extremely important.*



Q22-34. Thinking about your preferred job and work environment, please rate the following factors in choosing a job, regardless of whether you are currently seeking a new position. \*First asked in 2022.

*Reported utilization of RVTs has remained fairly consistent from 2019.*

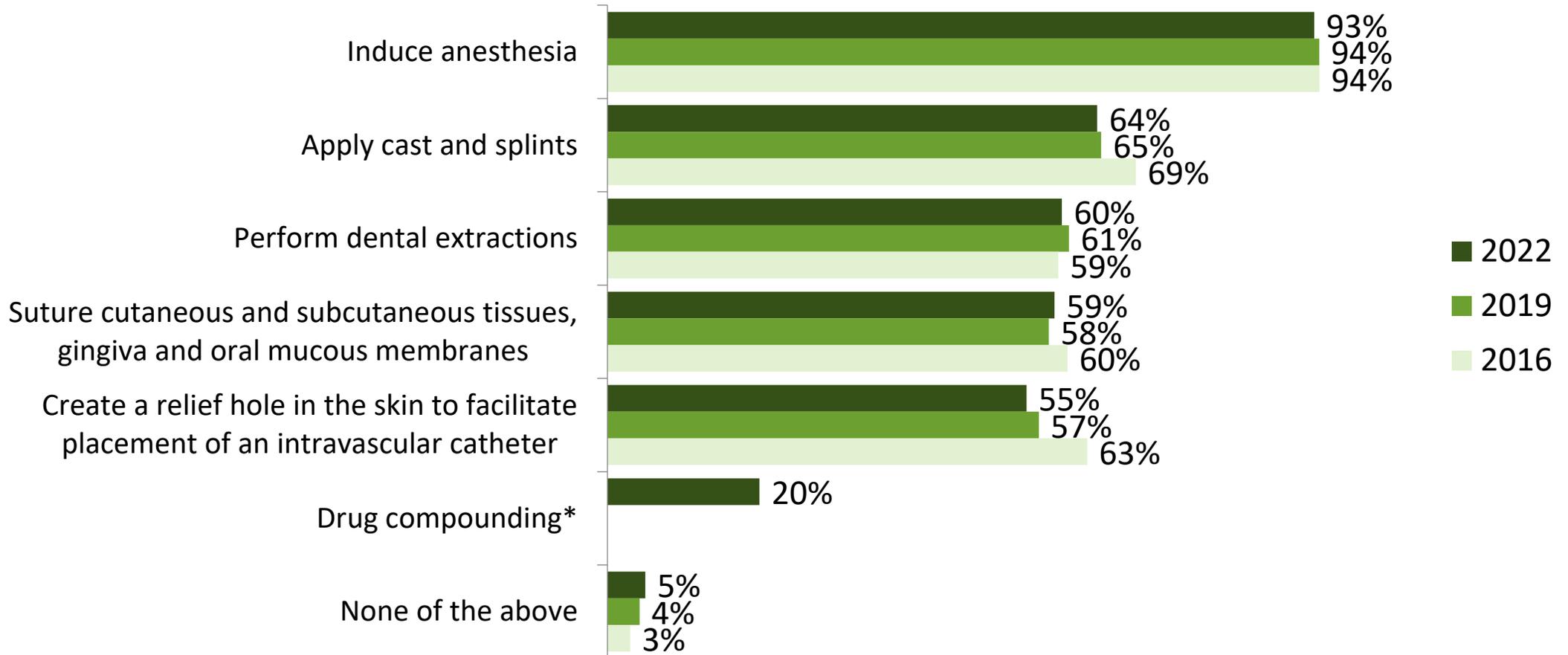
## How are RVTs utilized in your practice?



# RVT Tasks

*RVT-only tasks have also remained consistent. In 2022 RVTs were also asked about drug compounding; only one-in-five reported this as an RVT-only task.*

## Which of the following RVT-only tasks do RVTs in your practice perform?



Q13. Which of the following RVT-only tasks do RVTs in your practice perform? Please select all that apply.

\*First asked in 2022.

# Key Findings – Pay and Benefits

- ▶ Salaries continue to trend upward for DVMs, with both owners and non-owners seeing increases since 2019.
  - Type of pay – flat or production-based – remains consistent with 2019.
- ▶ There has also been an increase in salary for RVTs, with the number of RVTs reporting salaries over \$60,000 annually nearly doubling.
- ▶ Benefit offerings for RVTs and DVMs remained fairly consistent since 2019, but more than ever report receiving benefits like health, vision, or dental insurance or retirement options such as a 401(k).
- ▶ This year’s survey also asked about professional liability insurance for DVMs, with three-quarters reporting receiving it as a benefit.



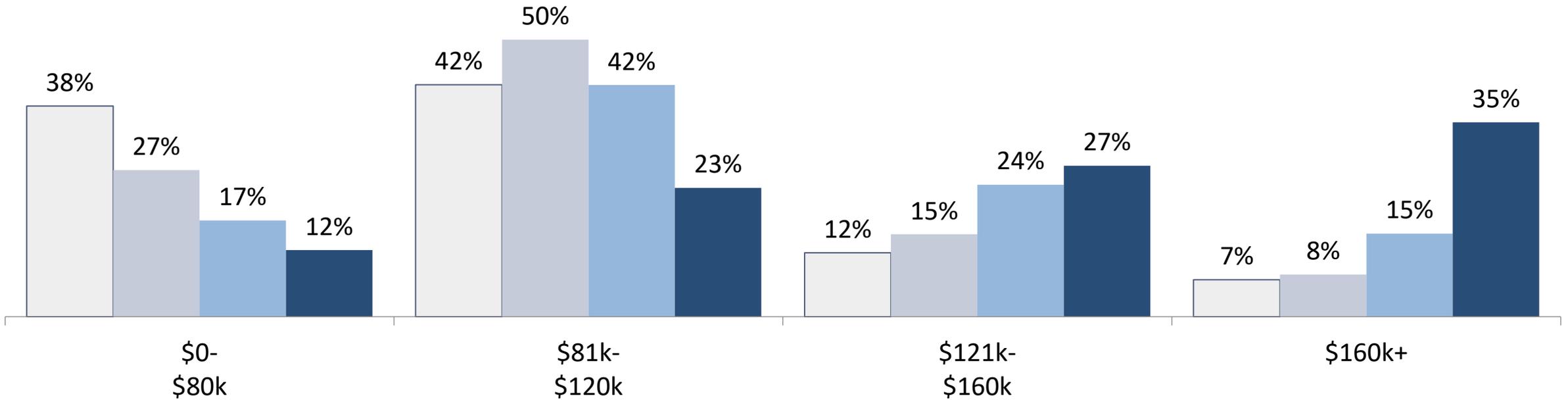
**Pay and Benefits**  
*Among DVMs*

# Non-Owner Salary Among DVMs

Salaries among non-owners continue to trend upwards; the number of DVM associates reporting a salary over \$160k has more than doubled since 2019.

Among non-practice owners only, n=648

2013 2016 2019 2022



# Non-Owner Salary Among DVMs by Hours

Part time associates also saw salary increases in 2022 compared to 2019.

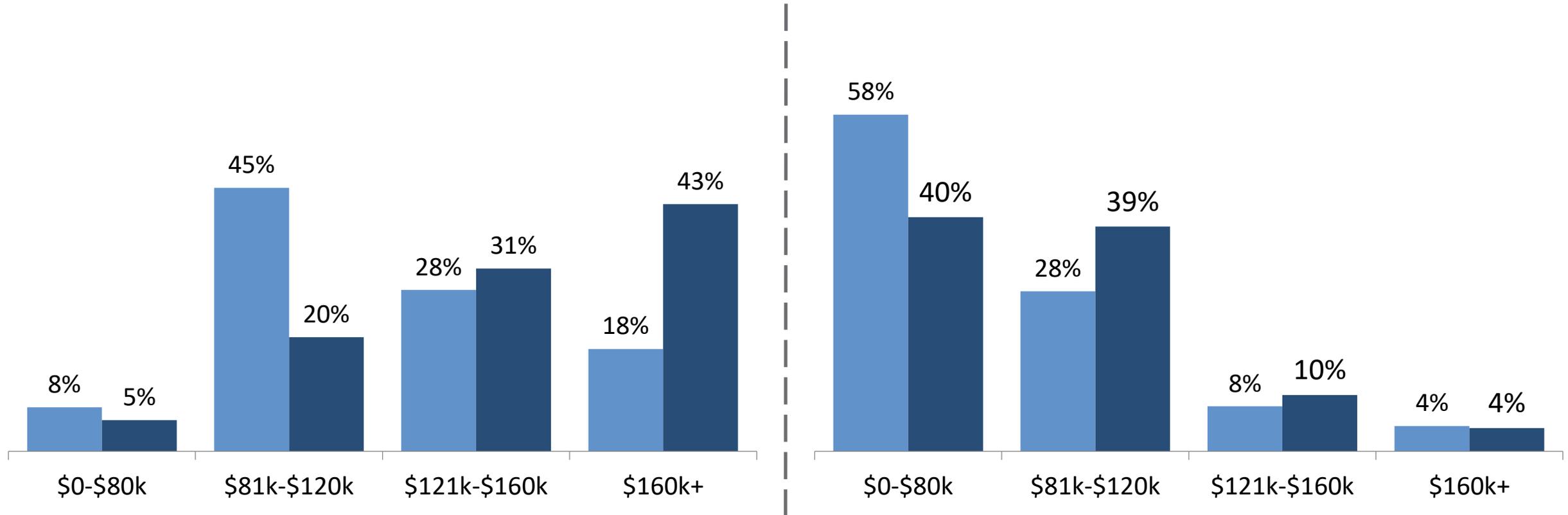
## Full-time (56%)

Among non-practice owners only,  
total n=648

## Part-time (13%)

■ 2019 ■ 2022

■ 2019 ■ 2022

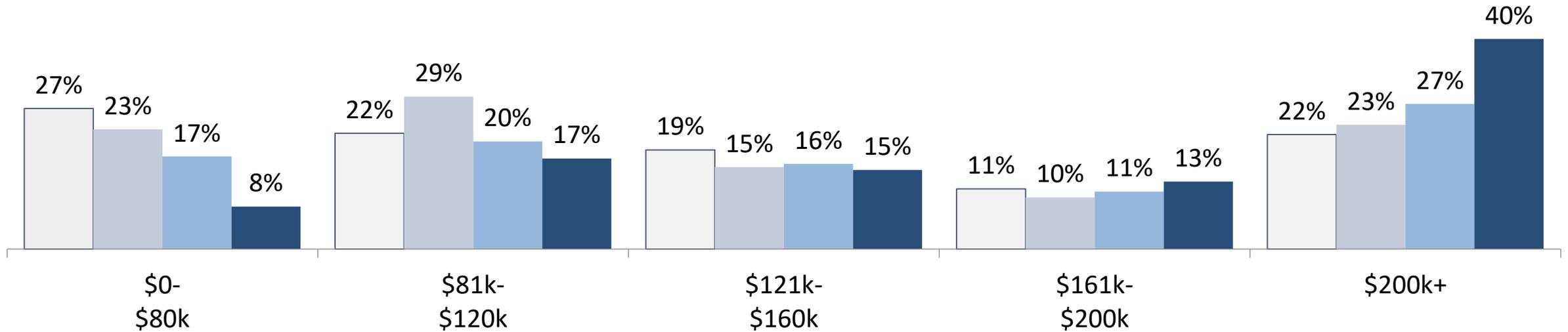


# Owner Salary Among DVMs

*Owner salaries have also increased since 2019; four-in-ten report earning more than \$200k per year, while the number reporting making under \$80k has dropped by half.*

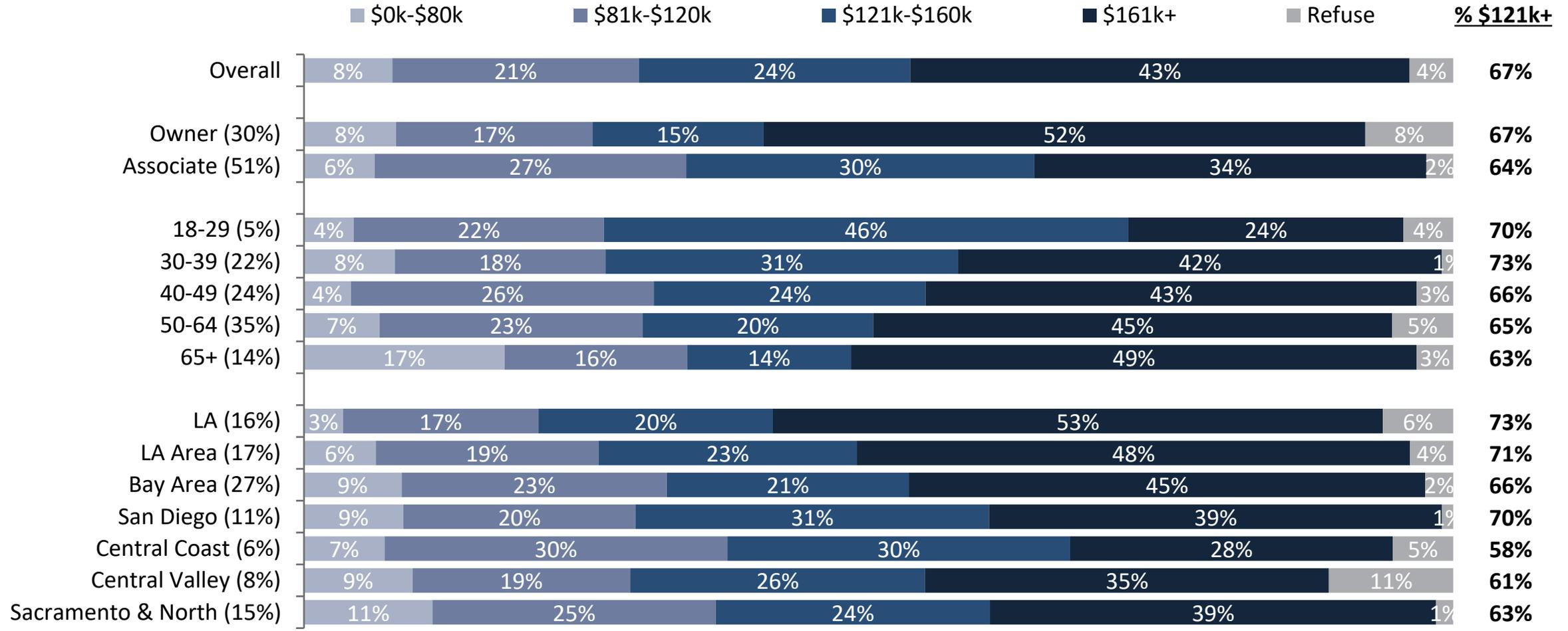
Among practice owners only, n=275

2013 2016 2019 2022



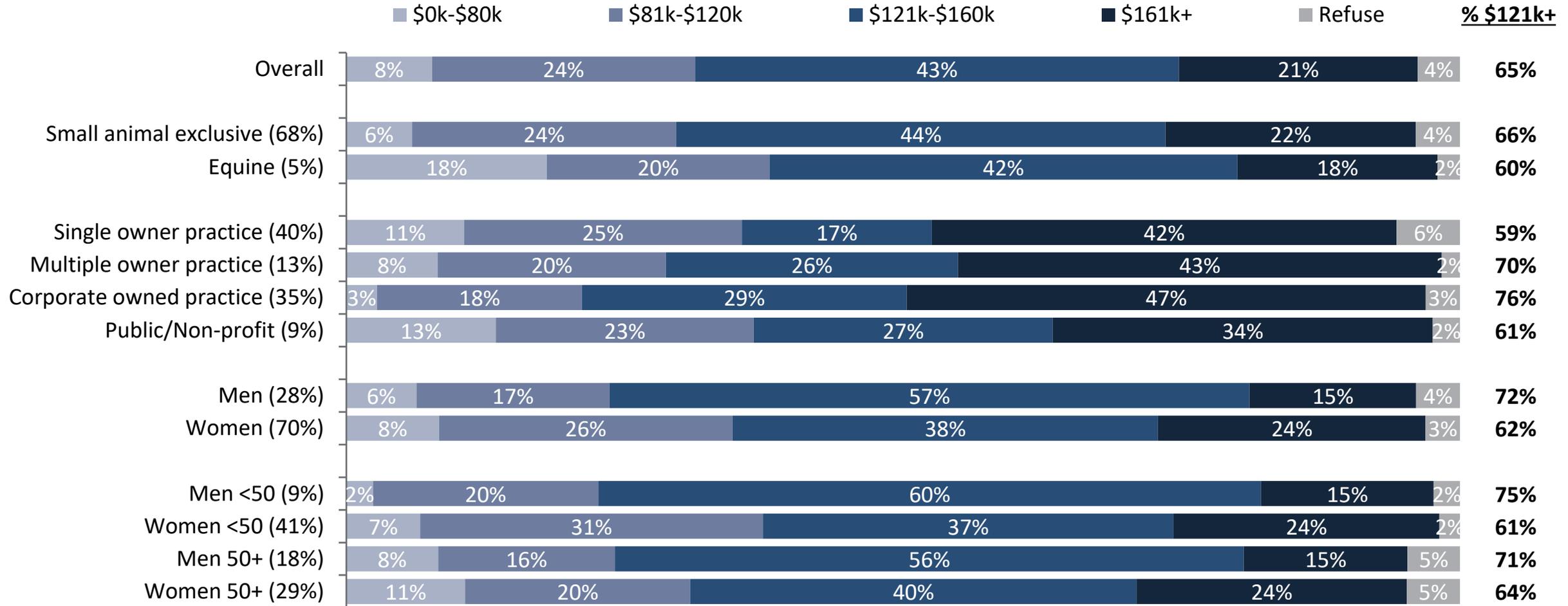
# DVM Salary (Owner/Non-Owner Questions Combined)

*While a slightly higher percent of DVMs under 40 report making more than \$121k per year, DVMs over 40 are more likely to make more than \$161k. Salaries are higher among DVMs in LA.*



# DVM Salary (Owner/Non-Owner Questions Combined)

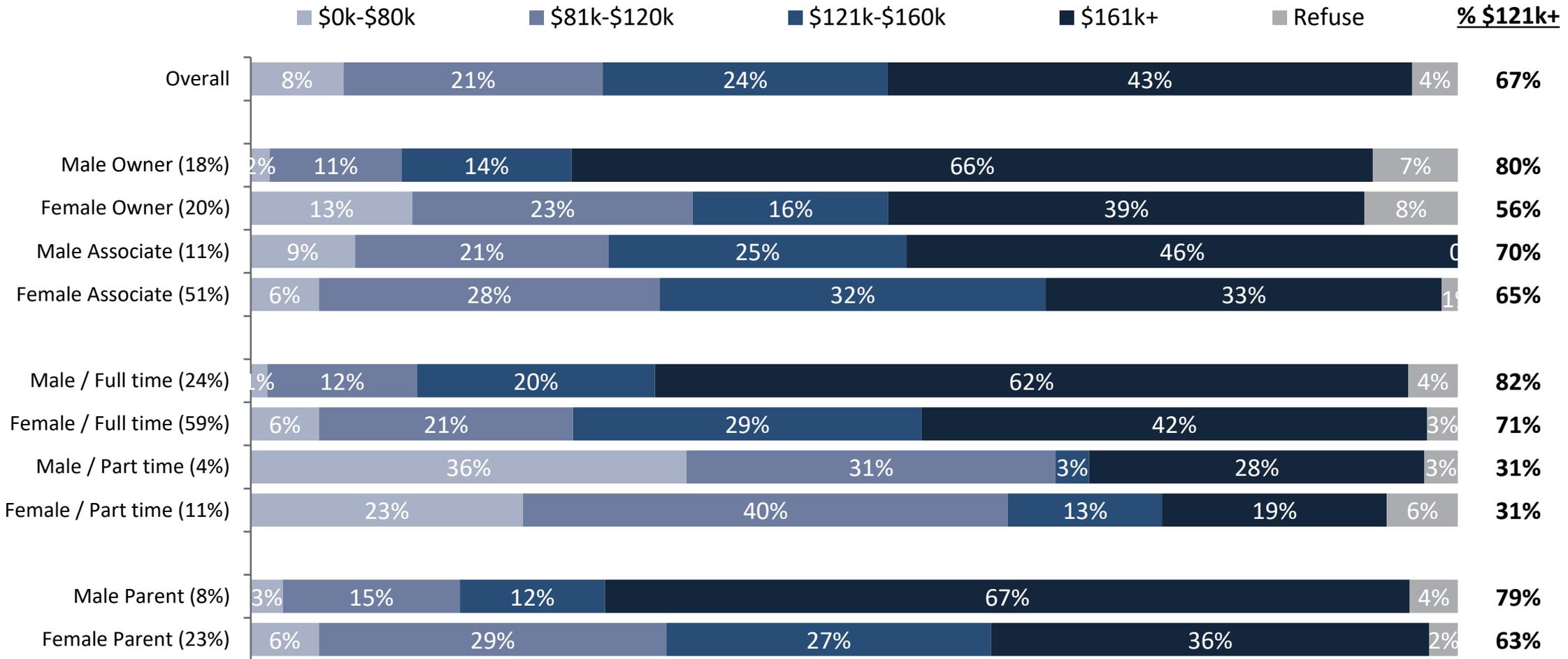
*Men still report higher salaries than women overall, though women are more likely to make more than \$161k.*



# DVM Salary (Owner/Non-Owner Questions Combined)



*Men and women working part time are closer to pay parity than full time employees; the pay disparity is most significant among parents.*

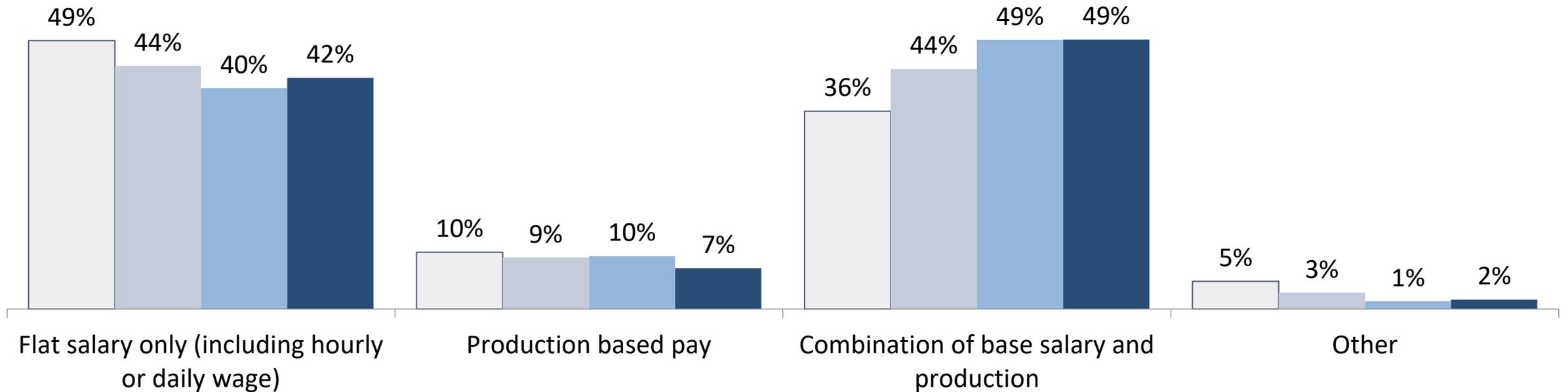


# Associate Pay Type Among DVMs

*Reporting of pay types among DVM associates has remained stable since 2019.*

*Among non-practice owners only, n=648*

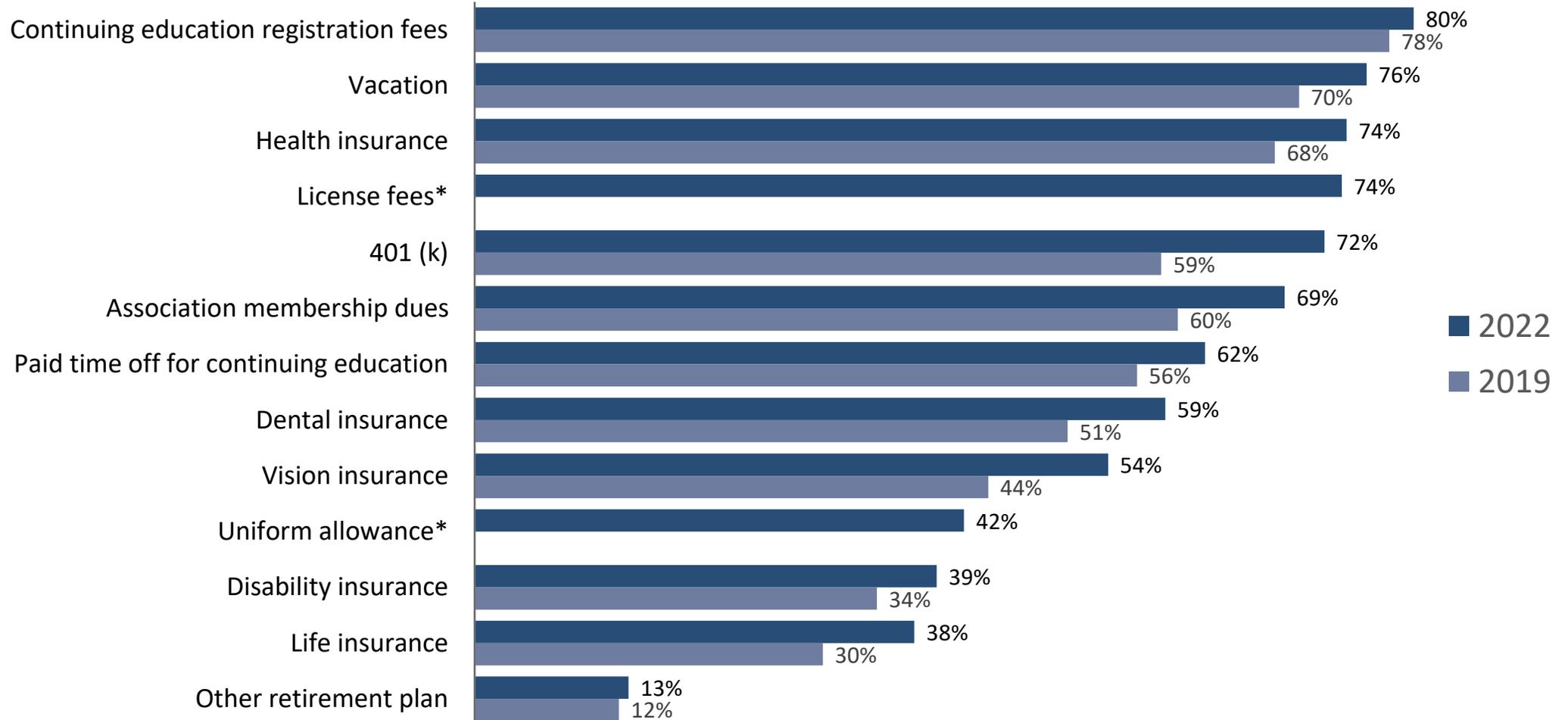
2013
  2016
  2019
  2022



# Benefits Among DVMs – Associates

*Benefits also appear to have increased as well; more Associates reported a number of benefits such as paid vacation, various insurance, retirement funds, and professional benefits such as dues payments and time off for continuing education.*

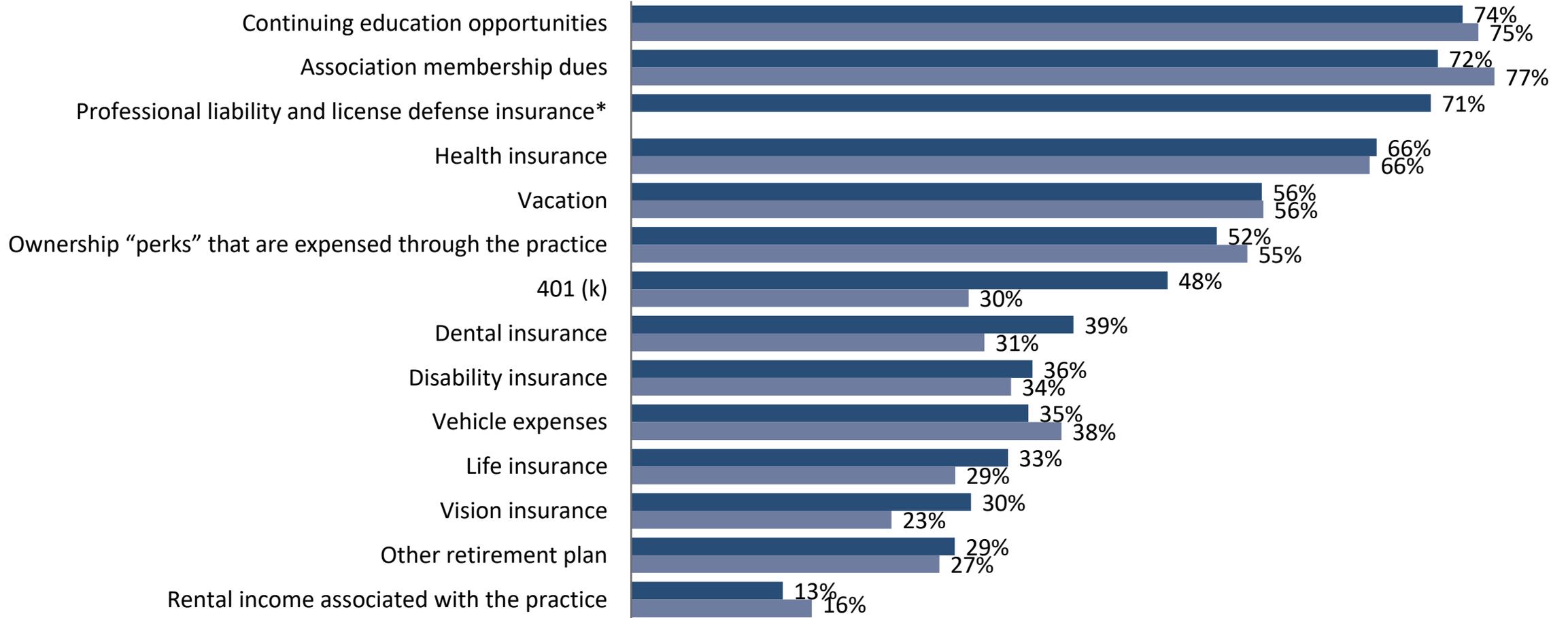
Among non-practice owners only, n=648



# Benefits Among DVMs – Owners

Owners also reported an increase in 401(k) offerings. This year’s survey also asked about liability and license defense insurance; three-quarters of owners reported receiving this benefit.

Among practice owners only, n=275



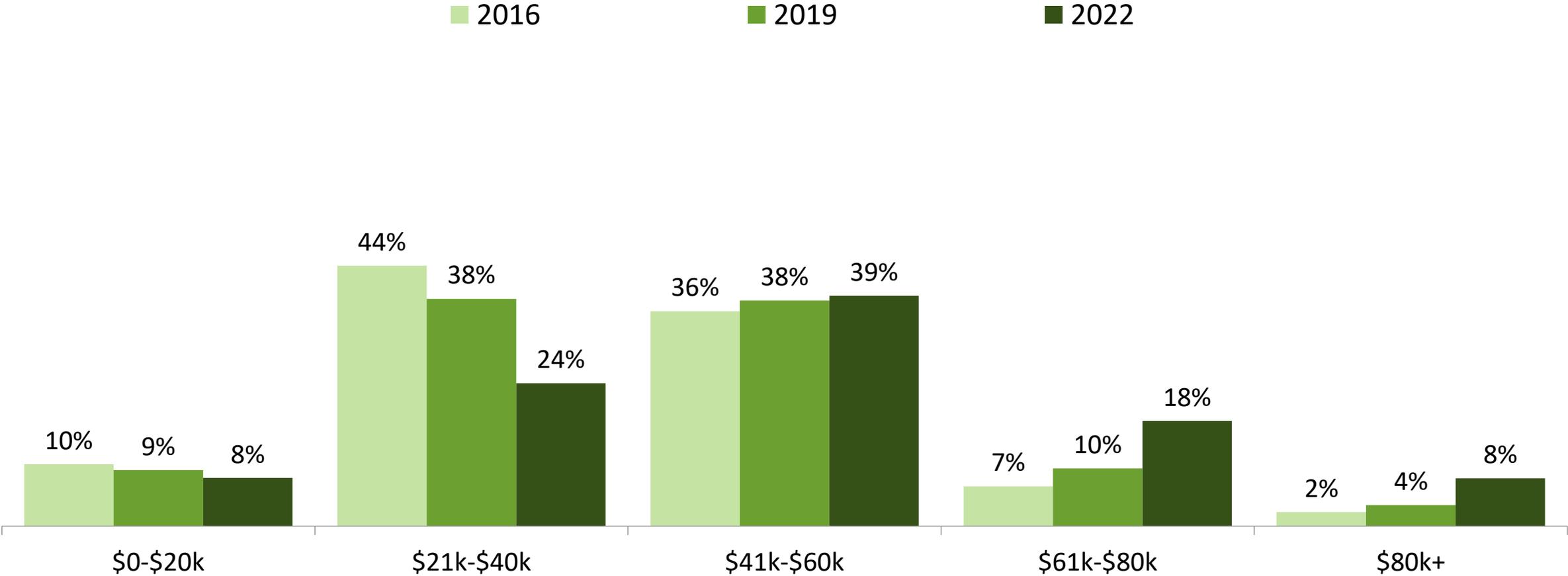
Q53. What additional forms of compensation and benefits do you receive through your practice? Select all that apply. (MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED) \*Asked for the first time in 2022.



**Pay and Benefits**  
*Among RVTs*

# Salary Among RVTs

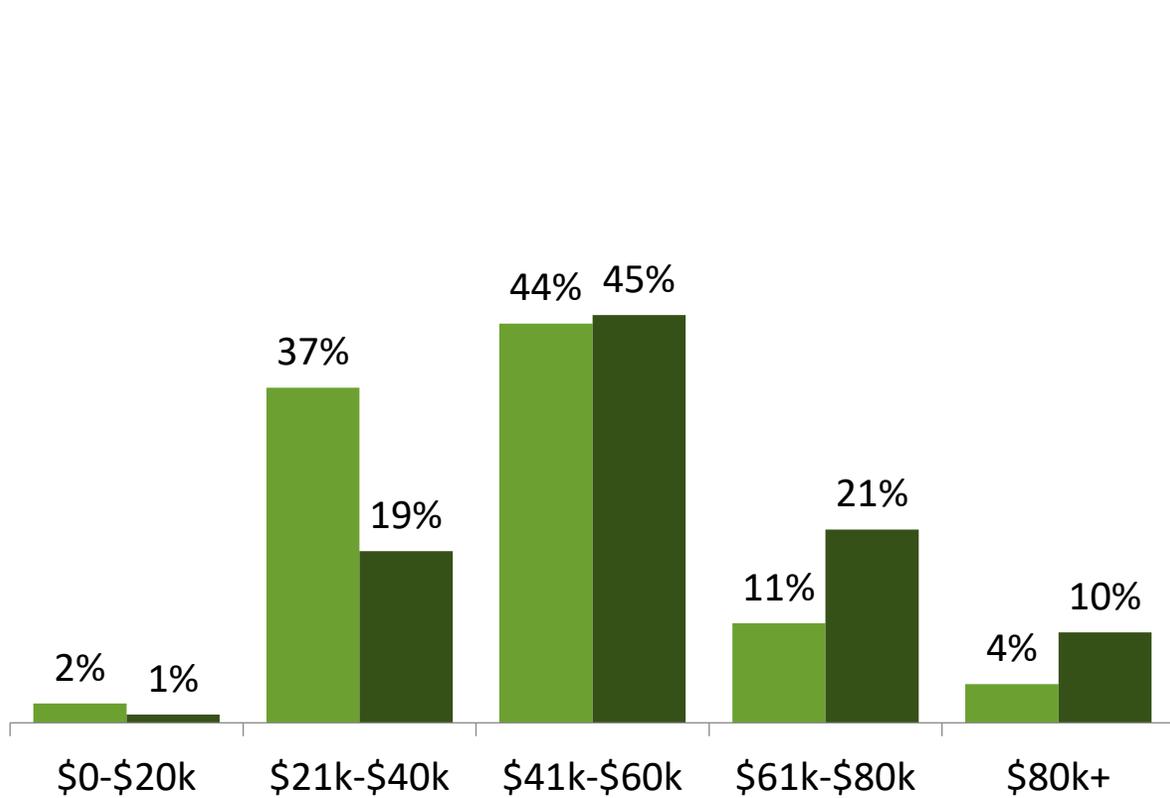
*RVTs have also seen an increase in salary since 2019, with the percent of RVTs reporting salaries in the \$61k-\$80k range and the \$80k+ range nearly doubling.*



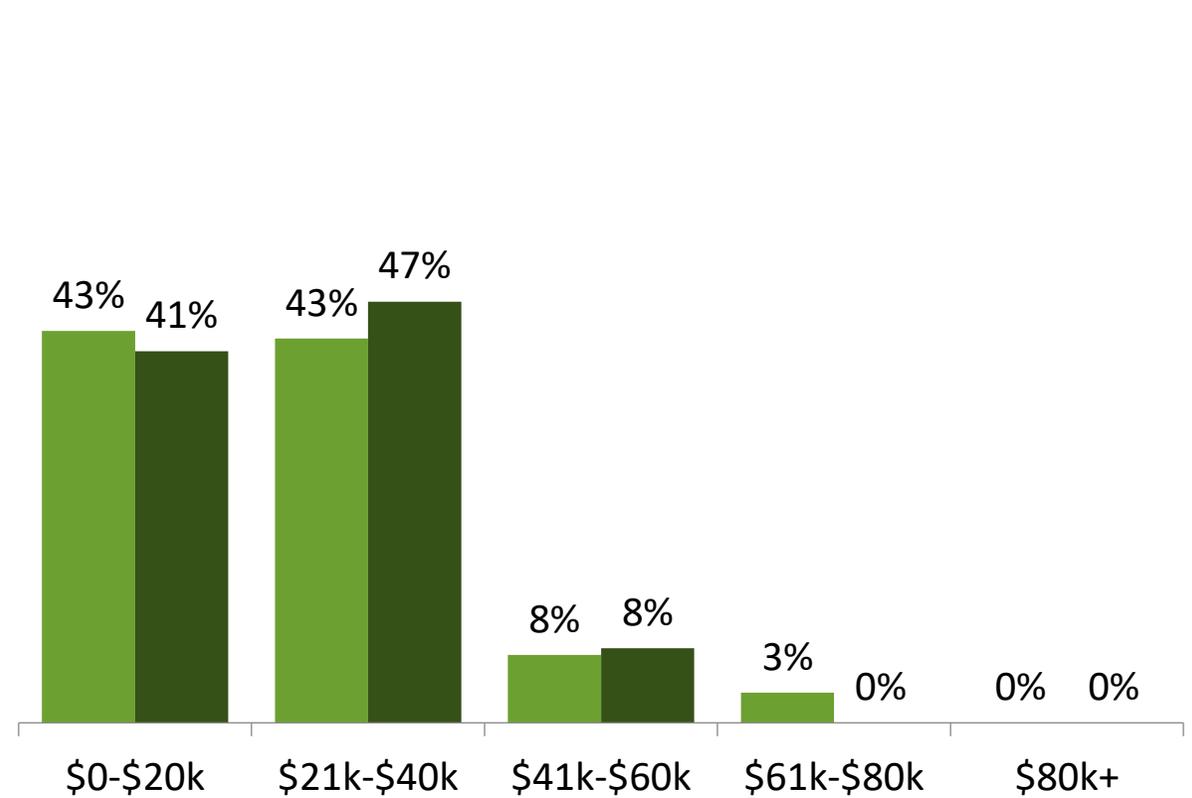
# Salary Among RVTs by Hours

*Part-time salaries have stayed more consistent than full time salaries; no part-time RVTs reported making more than \$60k in 2022.*

## Full-time (82%)

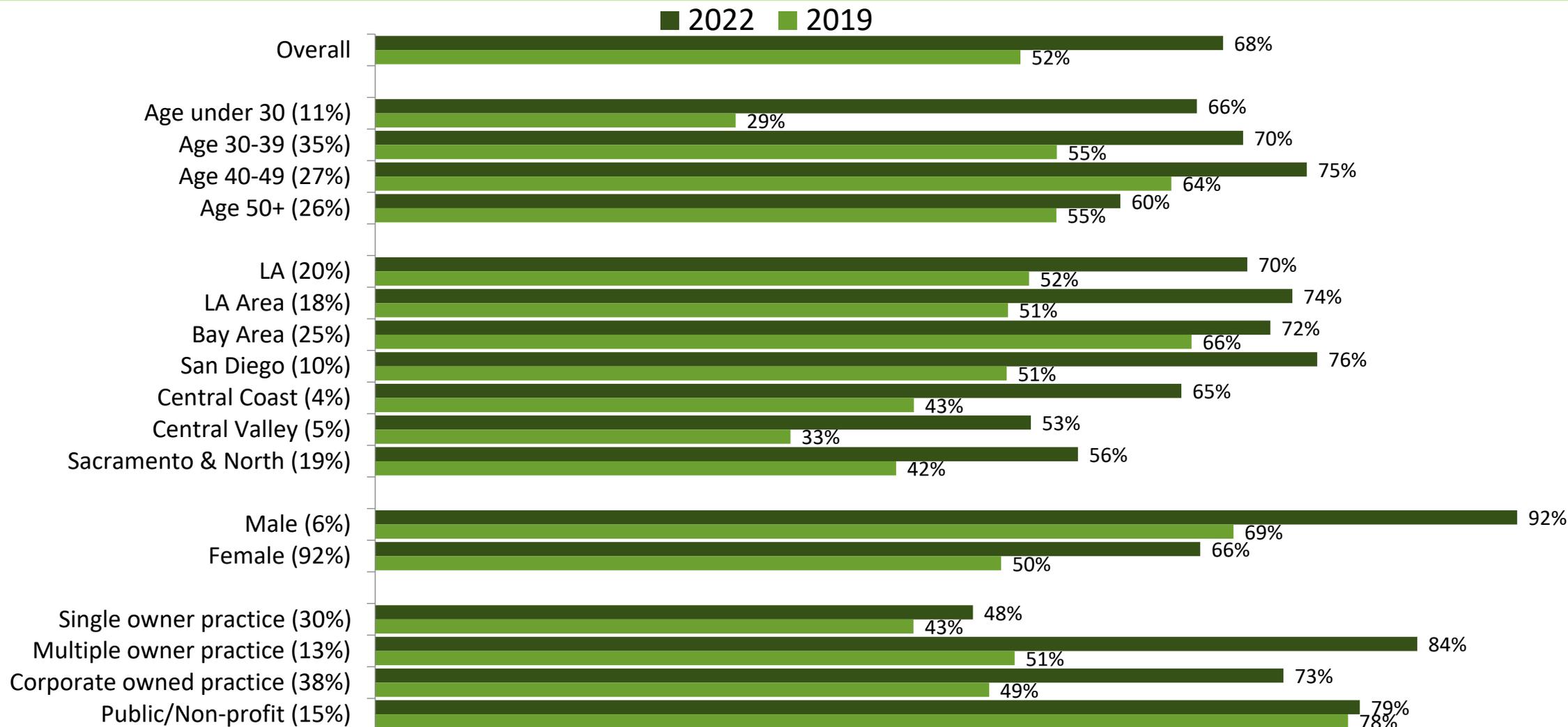


## Part-time (18%)



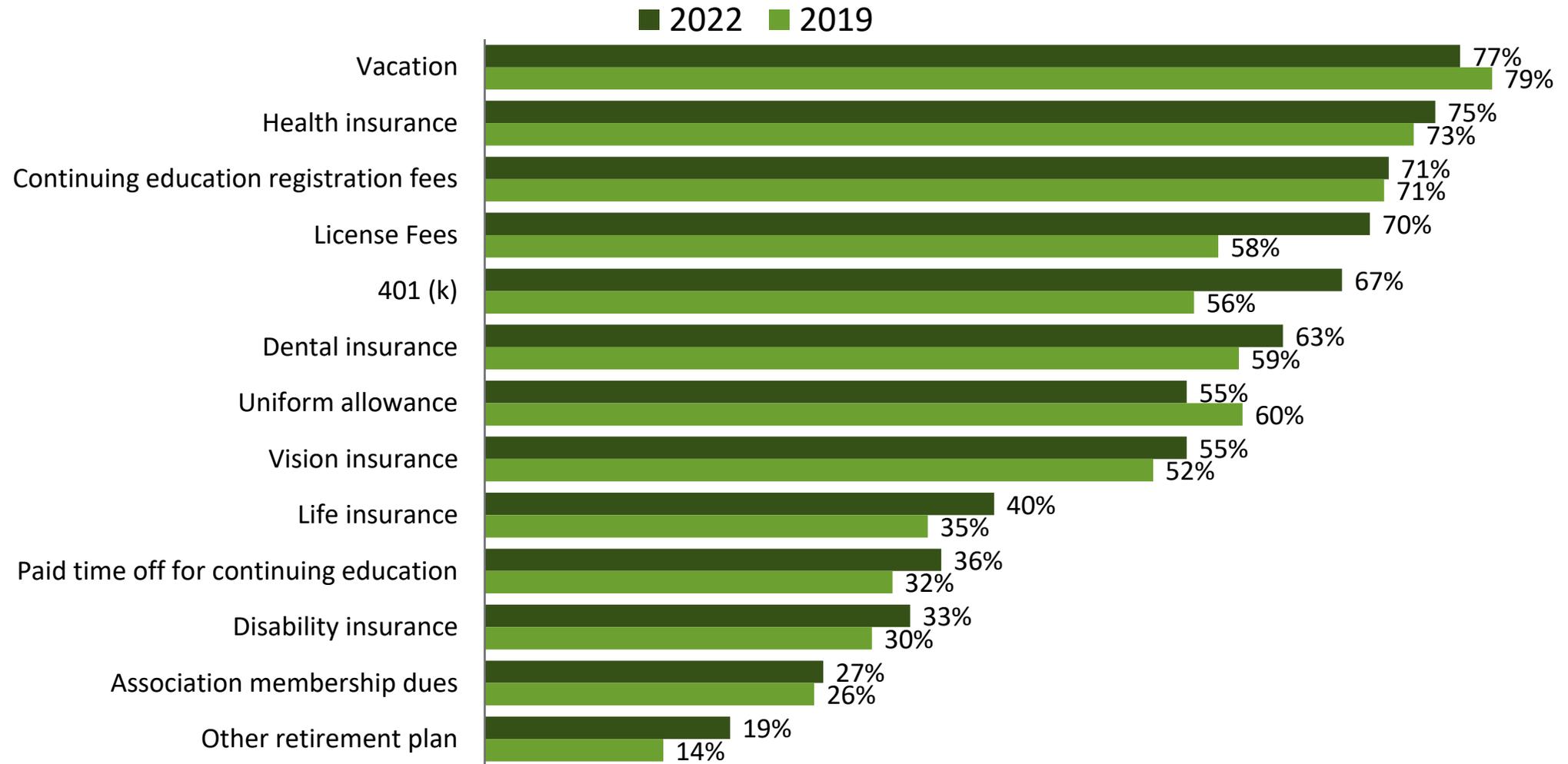
# Salaries Over \$40k Among RVTs

*While more RVTs overall are reporting salaries over \$40k than in 2019, the increases are most notable among men and multiple owner and corporate-owned practices.*



# Benefits Among RVTs

*The percentage of RVTs reporting license fees and retirement funds such as 401(k)s as part of their benefits increased in 2022.*



# Key Findings – Student Debt

- ▶ The percentage of DVMs and RVTs who say student loan debt is a burden to them has decreased, while the percent reporting they have no current outstanding debt continues to increase.
- ▶ DVMs under 40 and RVTs under 30 are more likely to say student loan debt continues to be a burden.
- ▶ The amount of debt DVMs and RVTs reported graduating with has remained fairly consistent with previous years.

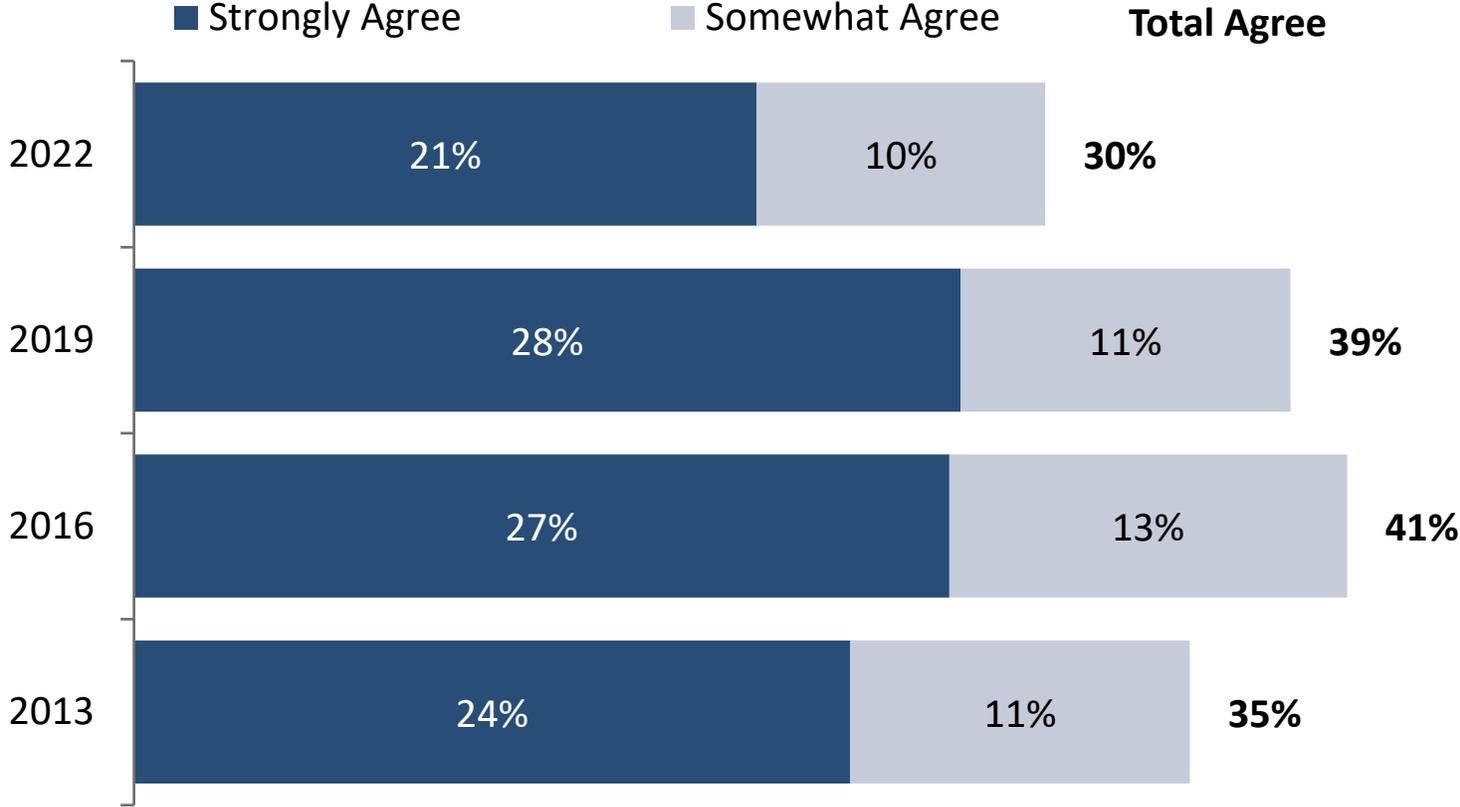


**Student Debt**  
*Among DVMs*

# Student Loan Burden Among RVTs

*Fewer DVMs report that student loan debt is a major burden to them.*

## Student loan payments are a major burden for me

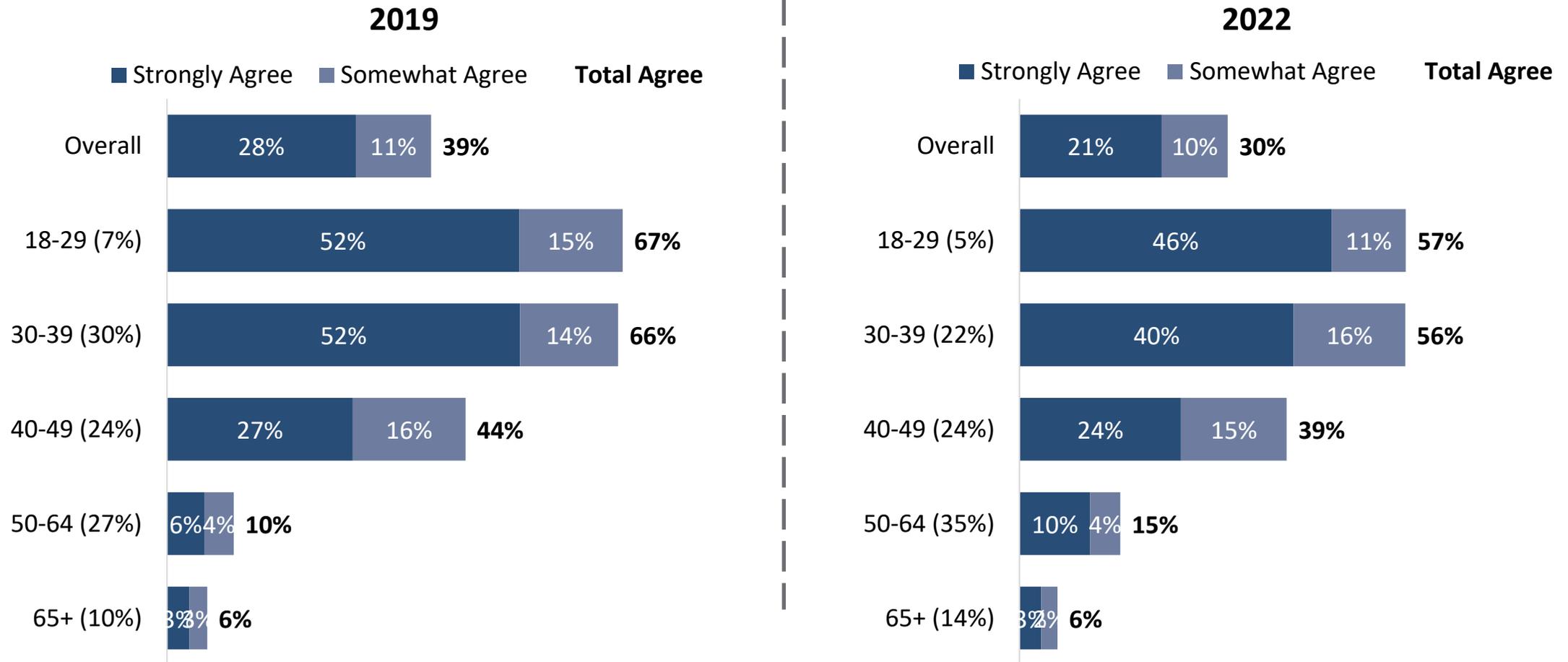


Q54. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements...Student loan payments are a major burden for me

# Student Loan Burden by Age Among DVMs

*Student loan debt continues to be more of a burden for DVMs under 40 than for older DVMs.*

## Student loan payments are a major burden for me

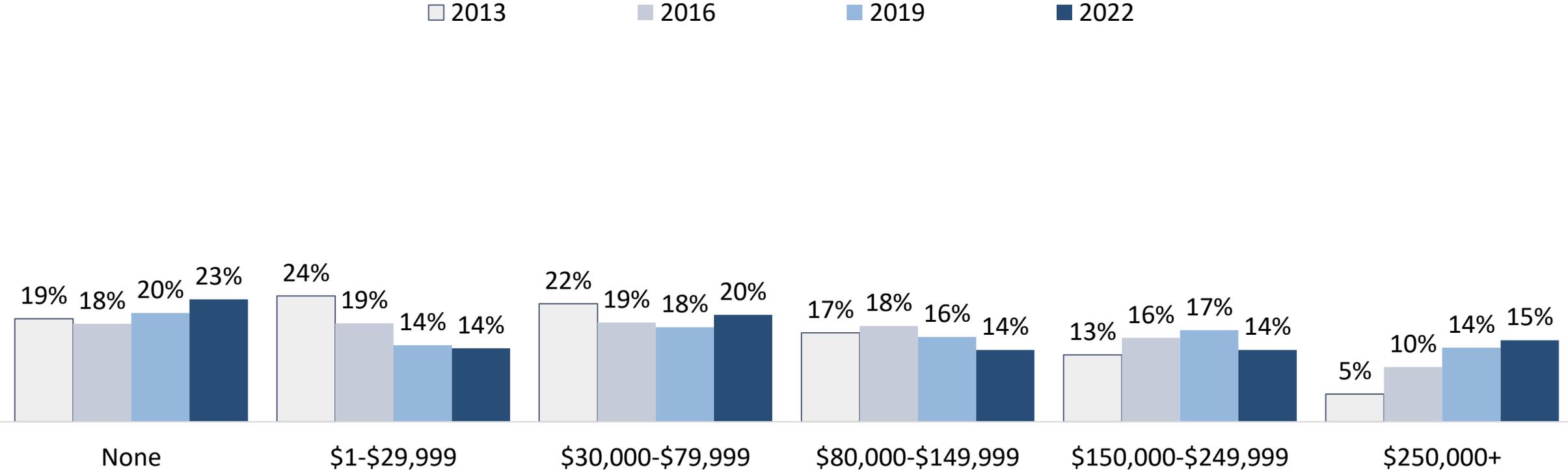


Q54. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements...Student loan payments are a major burden for me

# Student Debt Among DVMs

The amount of student debt after veterinary school reported by DVMs has remained consistent since 2019.

## What was your total educational debt (including debt from undergraduate school) upon completing veterinary school?



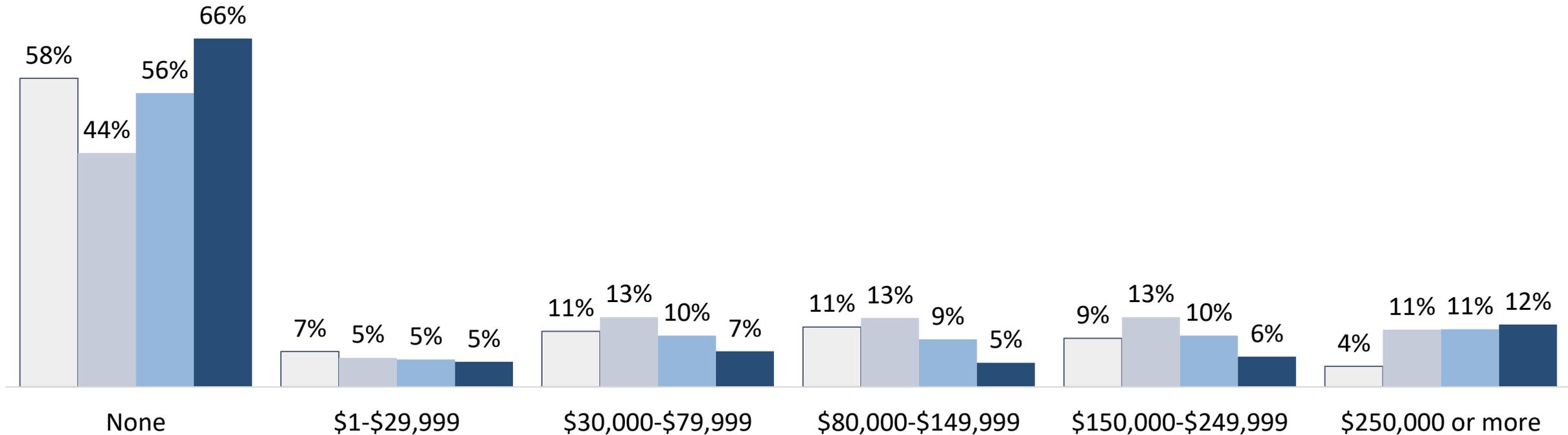
Q39. What was your total educational debt (including debt from undergraduate school) upon completing veterinary school?

# Remaining Student Debt Among DVMs

The percent of DVMs reporting they have no remaining education debt has increased by 10%.

What is your total remaining balance of educational debt (including debt from undergraduate school) today?

2013 2016 2019 2022



Q40. What is your total remaining balance of educational debt (including debt from undergraduate school) today?

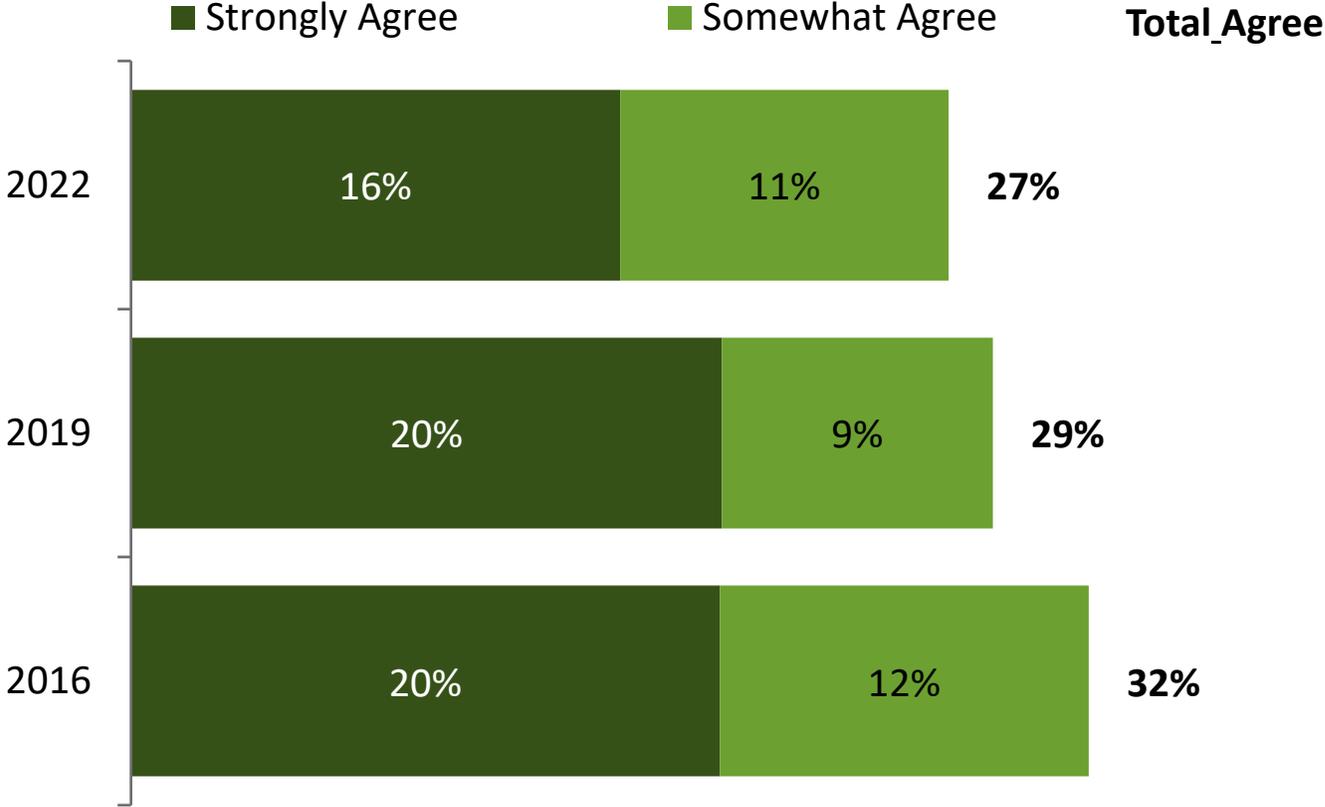


**Student Debt**  
*Among RVTs*

# Student Loan Burden Among RVTs

The percent of RVTs who report student loan debt is a major burden to them continues to decrease.

## Student loan payments are a major burden for me

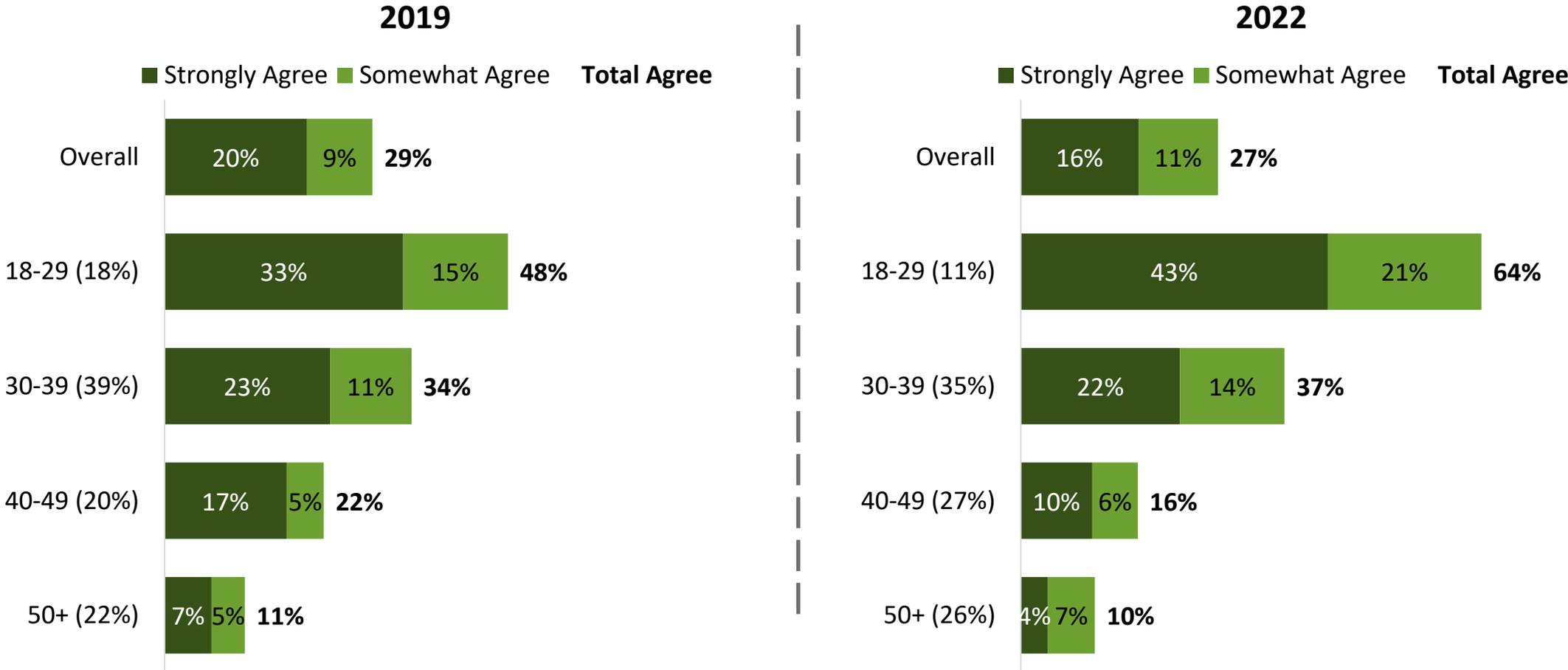


Q41. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements...Student loan payments are a major burden for me

# Student Loan Burden by Age Among RVTs

*While the overall number of RVTs who say student debt is a burden has decreased, the number of RVTs between 18-29 who say it is a burden has increased since 2019.*

## Student loan payments are a major burden for me



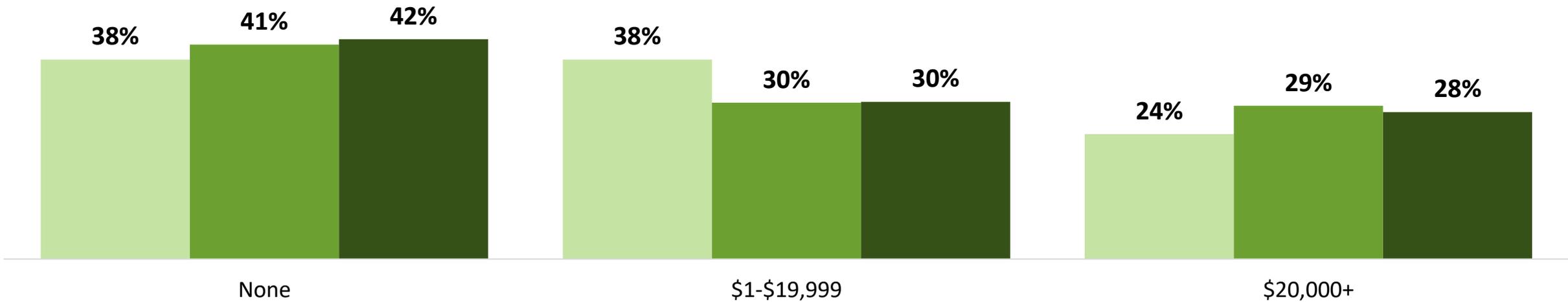
Q41. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements...Student loan payments are a major burden for me

# Student Debt Among RVTs

*Four-in-ten RVTs report leaving veterinary technician school with no debt, and the amount of debt reported by other RVTs remains consistent with previous years.*

## What was your total educational debt (including debt from undergraduate school) upon completing veterinary technician school?

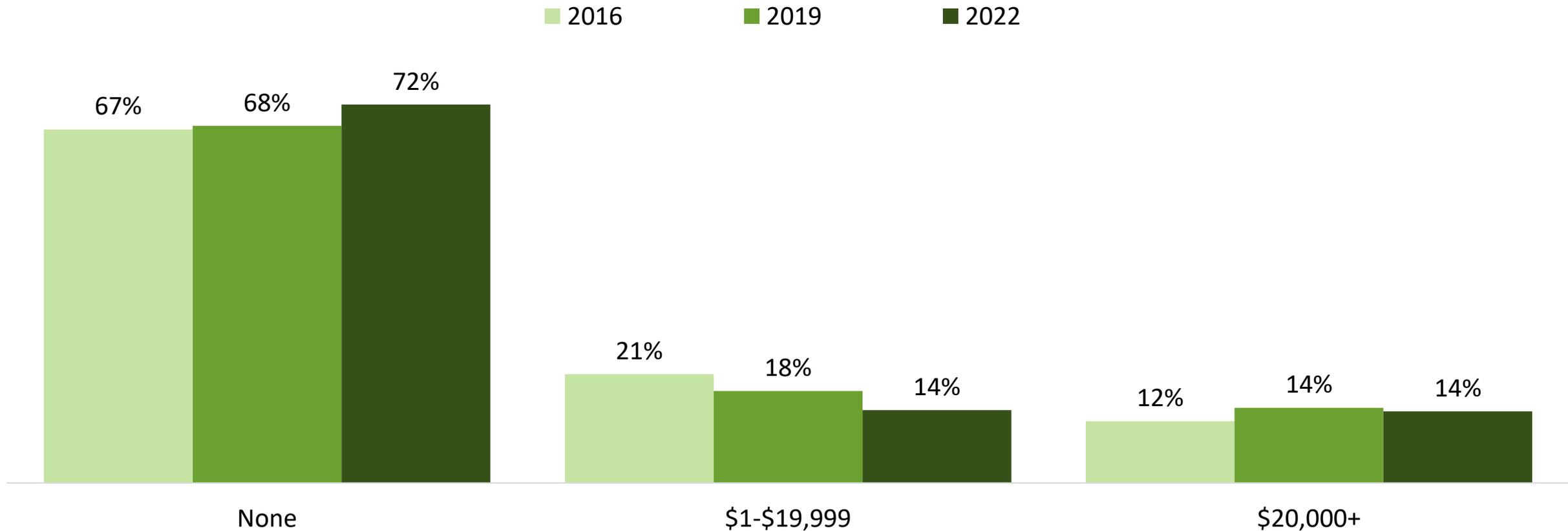
2016 2019 2022



# Remaining Student Debt Among RVTs

Nearly three quarters of RVTs report having no current educational debt, a small increase from 2019.

What is your total remaining balance of educational debt (including debt from undergraduate school) today?





# Practice Ownership and Revenue

# Key Findings – Practice Ownership

## ▶ *Among DVMs*

- A plurality of DVMs still report working under a firm with a single owner, and the percentage who say they work in a corporate-owned practice increased to 35% in 2022 from 29% in 2019.
- While only 22% of DVMs say whether a practice is corporate or independently owned is an “extremely important” personal factor that they consider when choosing a job, three-quarters disagree that the growth of corporate practices is good for the industry at large.
  - Practice owners are most likely to say they disagree, with 56% saying they “strongly disagree” with the statement that growth of corporate practices is good for the industry.

## ▶ *Among RVTs*

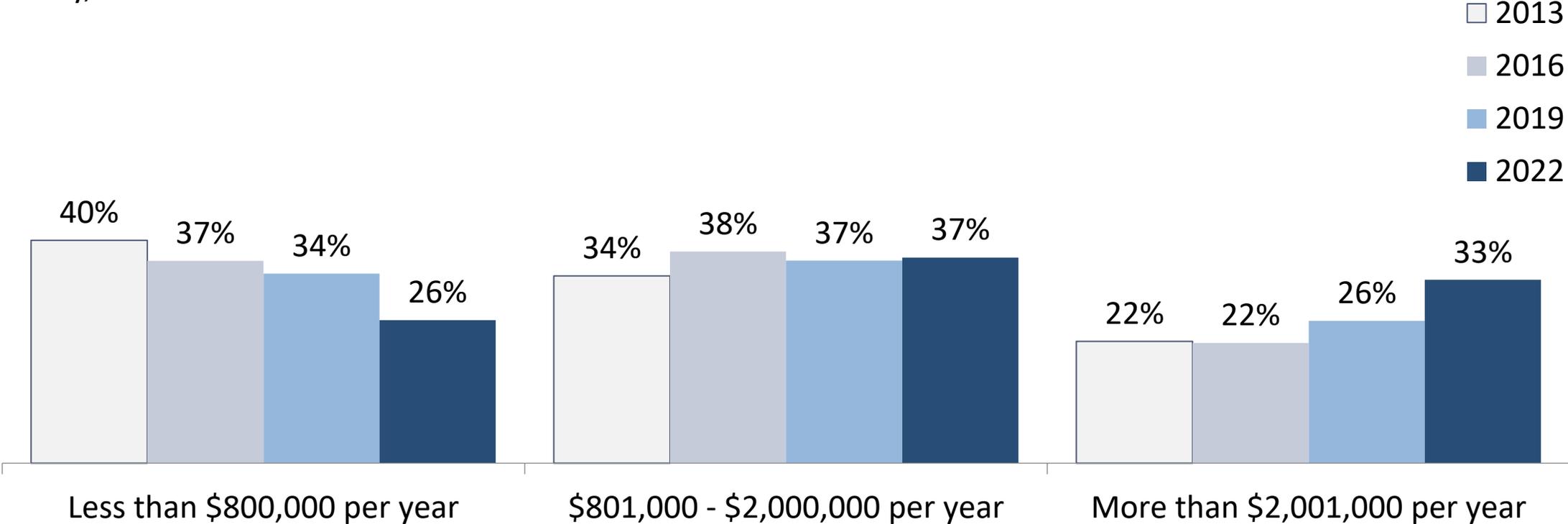
- A plurality of RVTs report working in a corporate-owned practice (38%) while a third (30%) still say they work in a single-owner practice.
  - Full time RVTs work more in corporate practices, while half of part-time RVTs say they work in single owner practices.
- Six-in-ten RVTs disagree that the growth of corporate practices is good for the industry.

# Total Practice Gross Revenue Among Owners



*Practice revenue has increased since 2019 with the highest number of owners to date reporting more than \$2 million in annual revenue.*

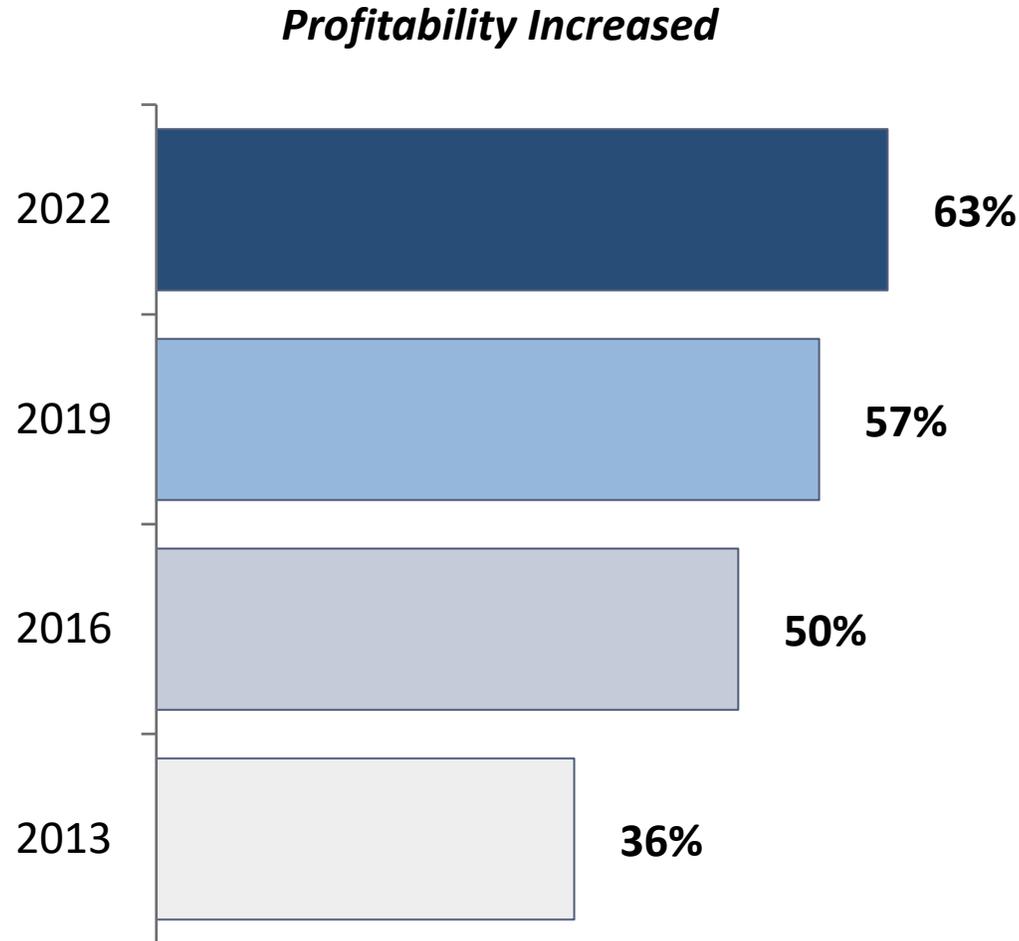
Among practice owners only, n=275



# Profitability Among Practice Owners

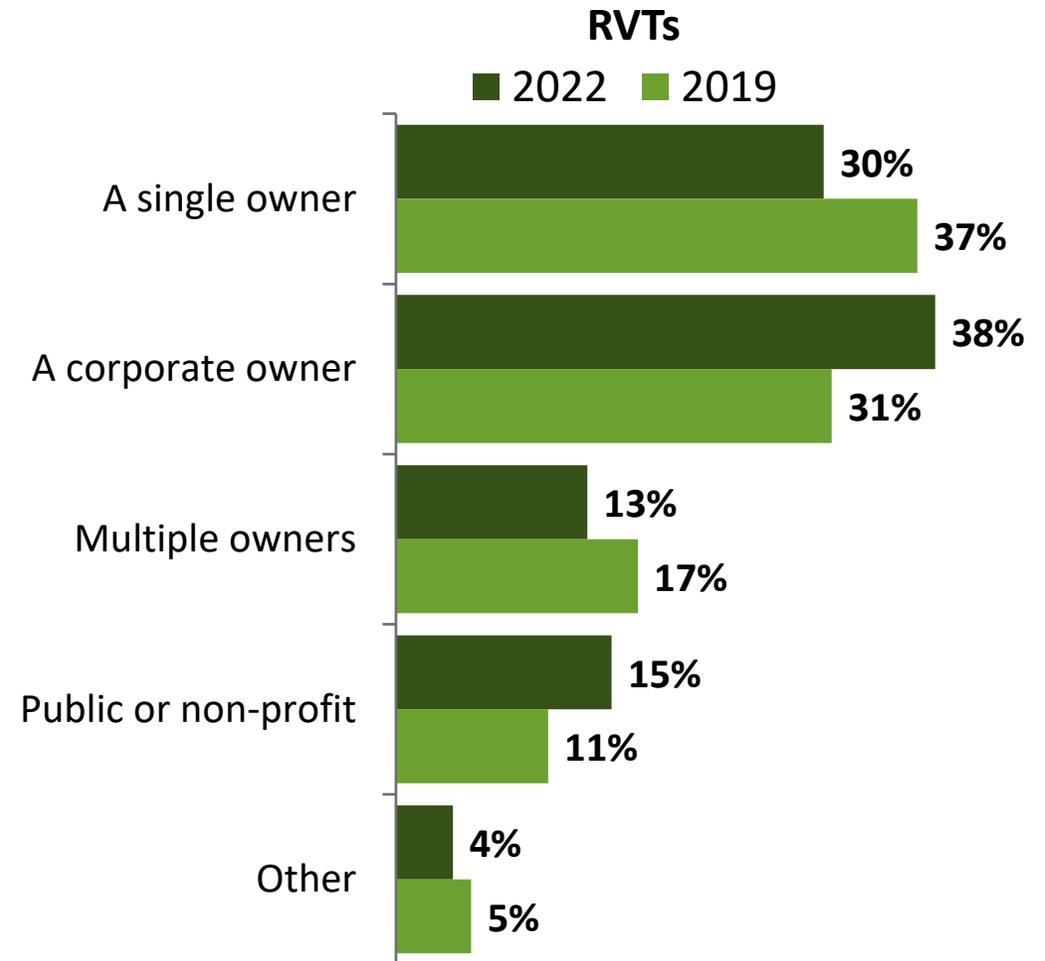
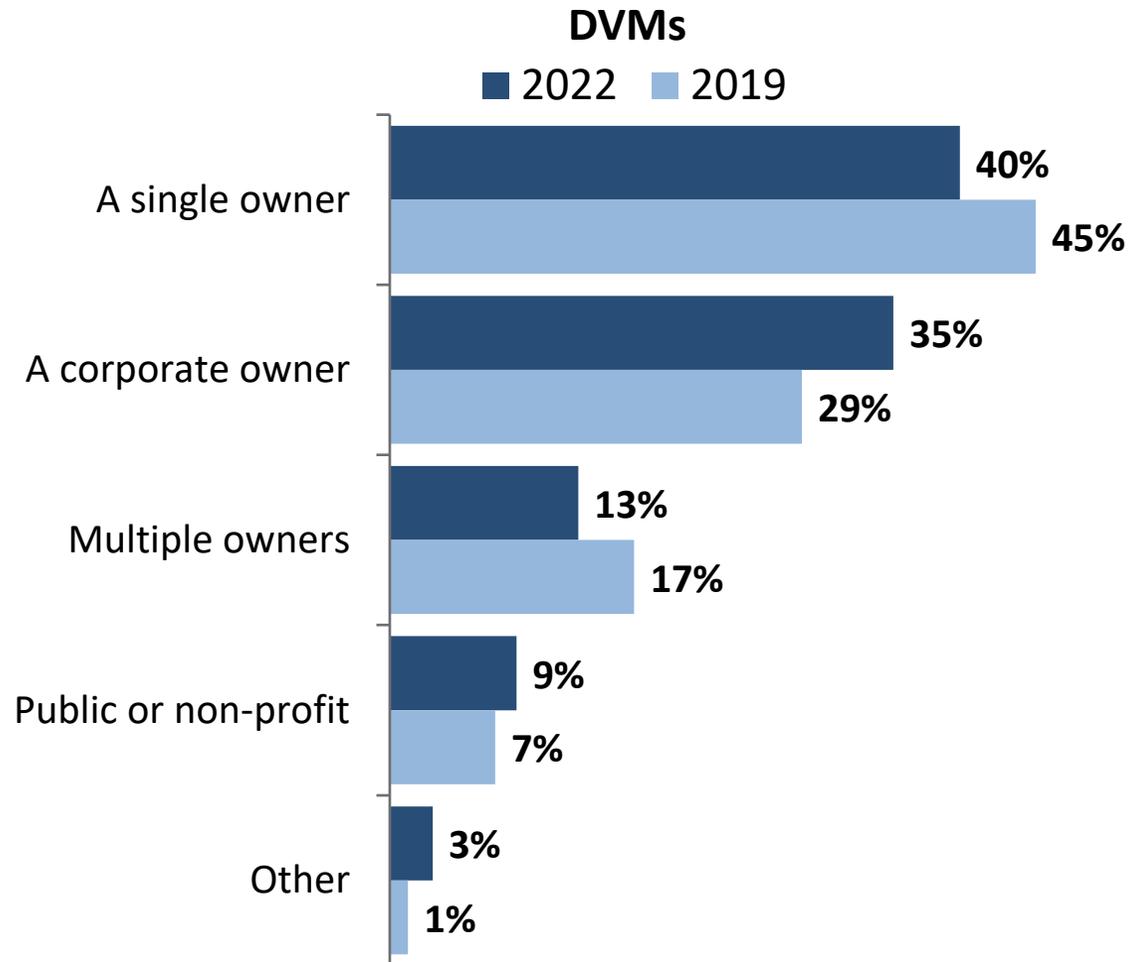
*Two-thirds of owners say their profitability increased over the last year, up from just over half in 2019.*

Among practice owners only, n=275



# Practice Ownership

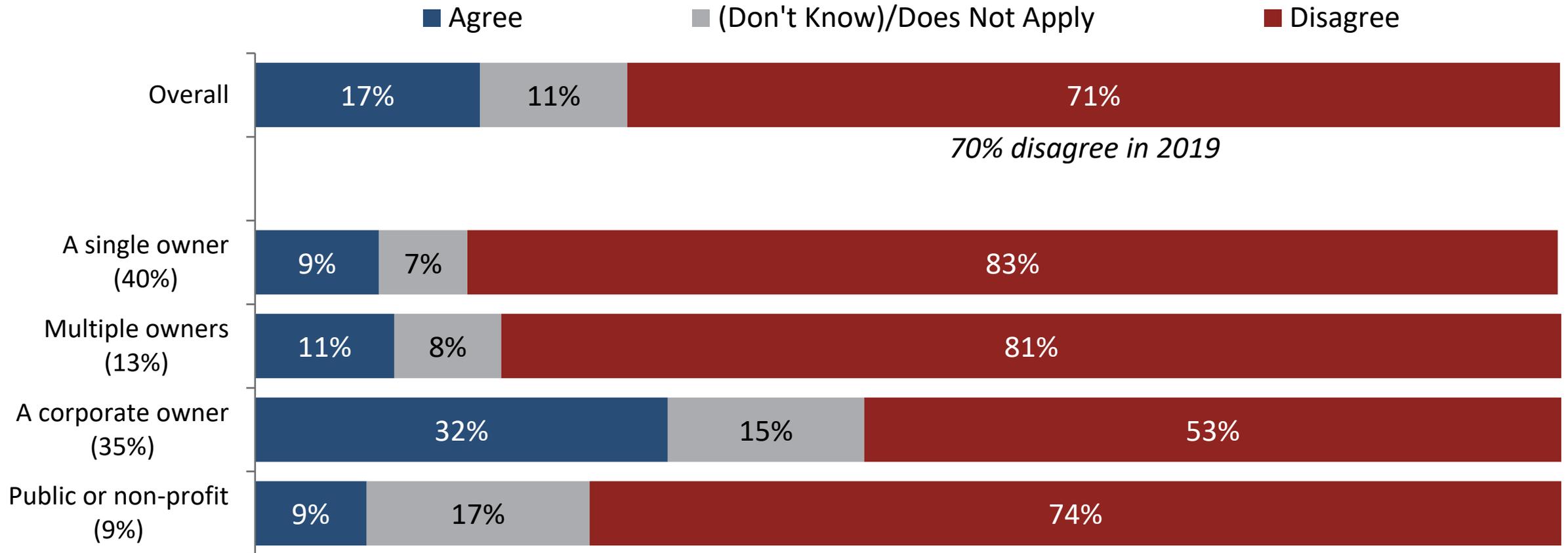
*The percentage of DVMs and RVTs who work in corporate-owned practices has increased since 2019. A plurality of RVTs now say they work in corporate owned practices, while single owner is still the predominant practice type for DVMs.*



# Corporate Ownership Attitudes Among DVMs

*Even among those who work at corporate owned practices, 53% disagree that the growth of corporate practices is good for the industry.*

## The growth of corporate veterinary practices is good for the veterinary industry

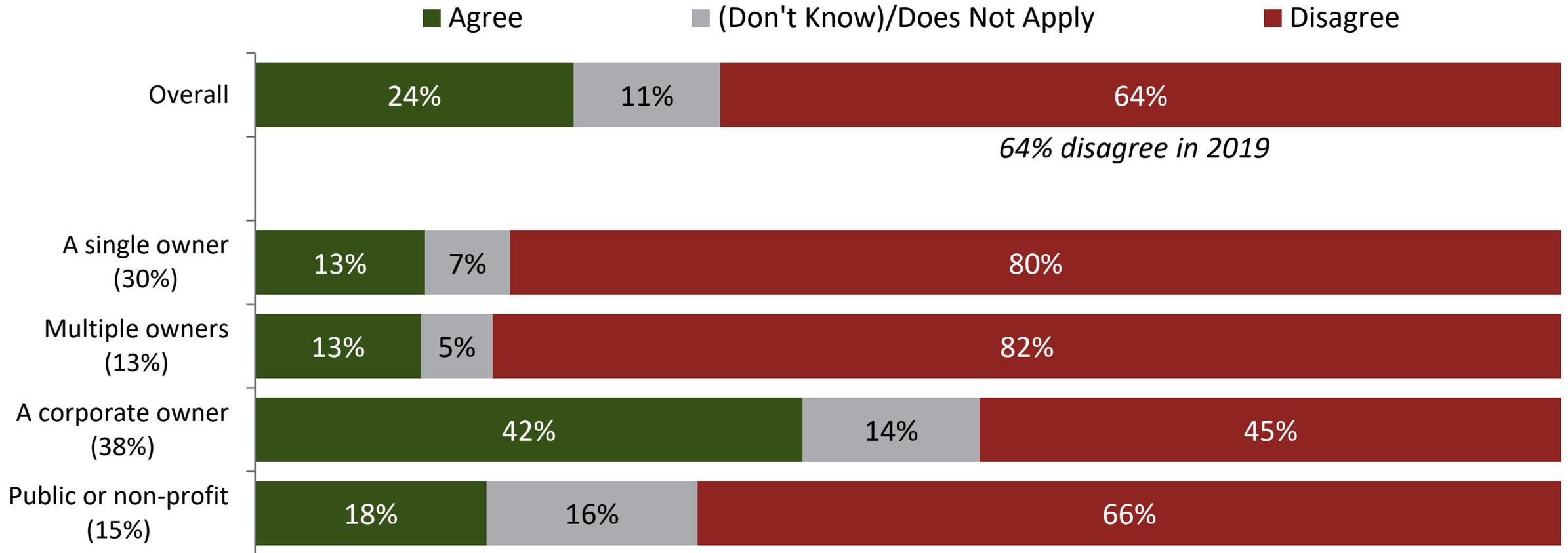


*70% disagree in 2019*

# Corporate Ownership Attitudes Among RVTs

*Single-owner practice RVTs are more likely than other RVTs to say they disagree corporate owned practice growth is good for the industry.*

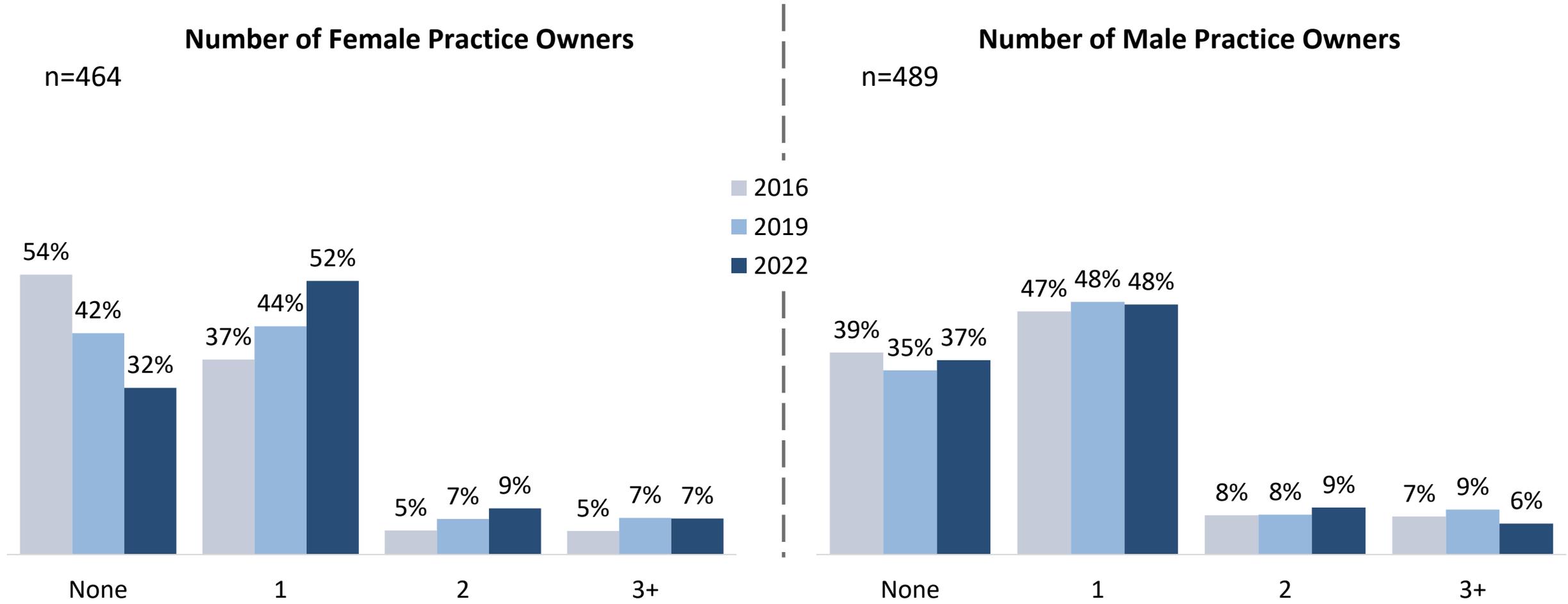
## The growth of corporate veterinary practices is good for the veterinary industry



Q48. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: The growth of corporate veterinary practices is good for the veterinary industry. *\*In 2022 respondents could select "does not apply."*

# Ownership Among DVMs in Private Practice

*The number of women owners continues to increase, with half of DVMs now reporting at least one female owner in their practice.*



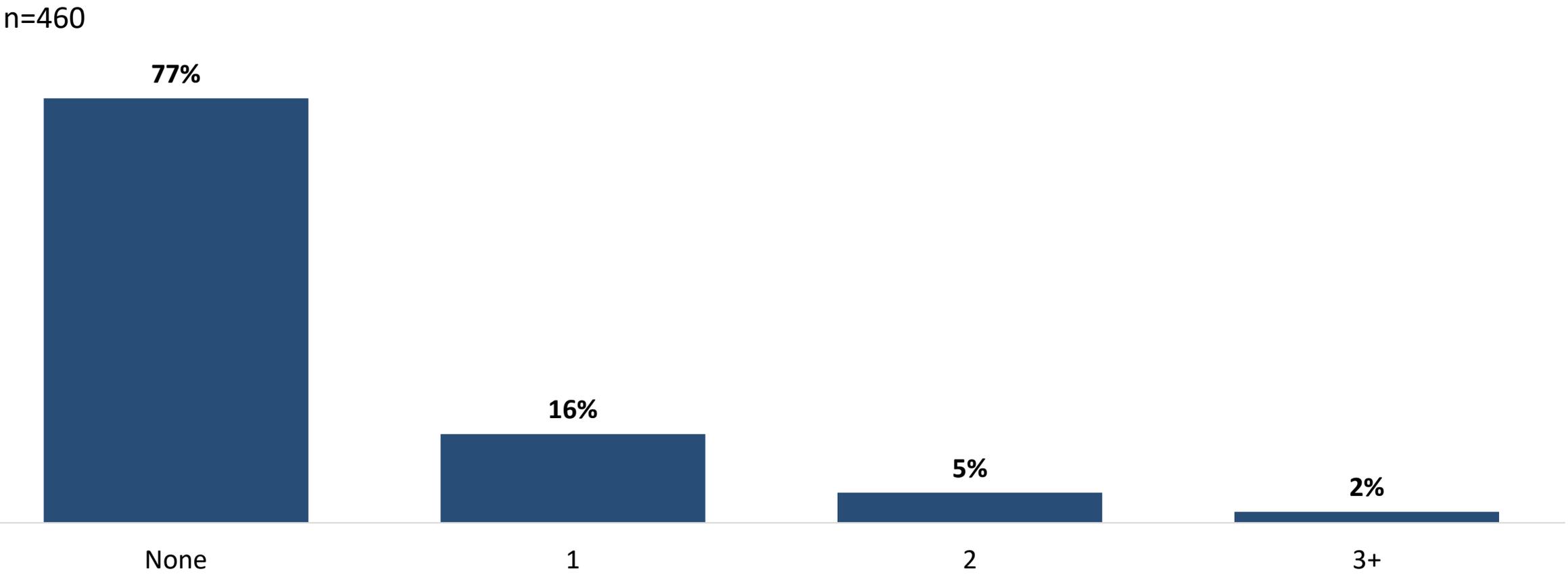
Q47. How many of the owners in your practice are women?  
Q48. How many of the owners in your practice are men?

# Ownership Among DVMs in Private Practice



Three quarters of DVMs say their practices do not have any owners who are not white.

Number of Non-White Owners





# Hiring and Job Seeking

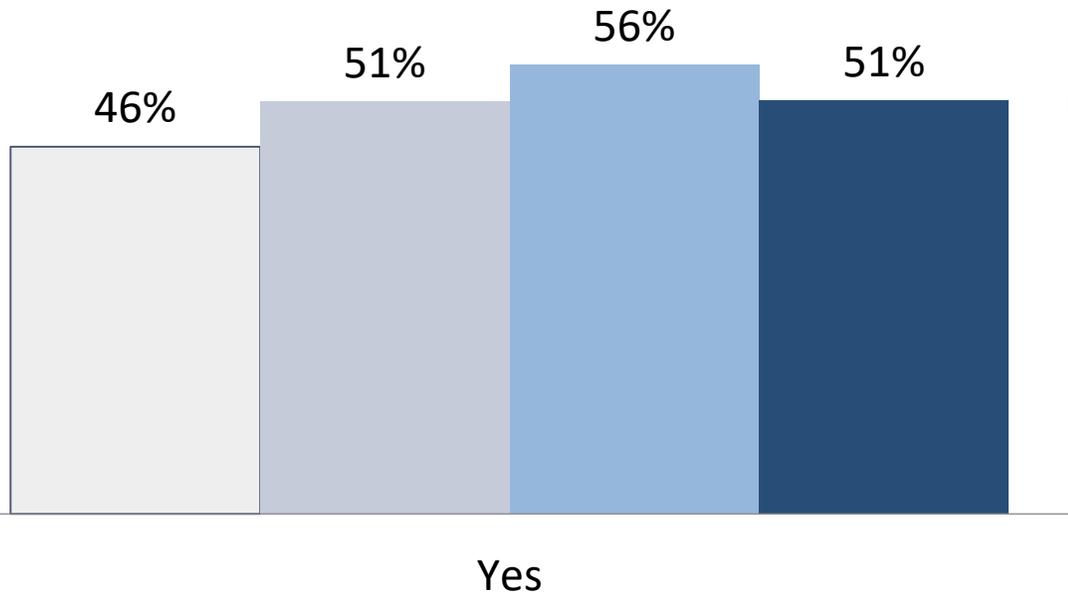
# Key Findings – Hiring and Job Seeking

- ▶ Half of DVMs say their practice has hired in the last twelve months, and is looking to hire a veterinarian in the next twelve months.
- ▶ Three quarters of RVTs say their practice has hired or is looking to hire a veterinary technician or assistant in the last/next twelve months.
- ▶ Eight-in-ten DVMs and nine-in-ten RVTs say they have had difficulty finding candidates for open positions, an increase from 2019.

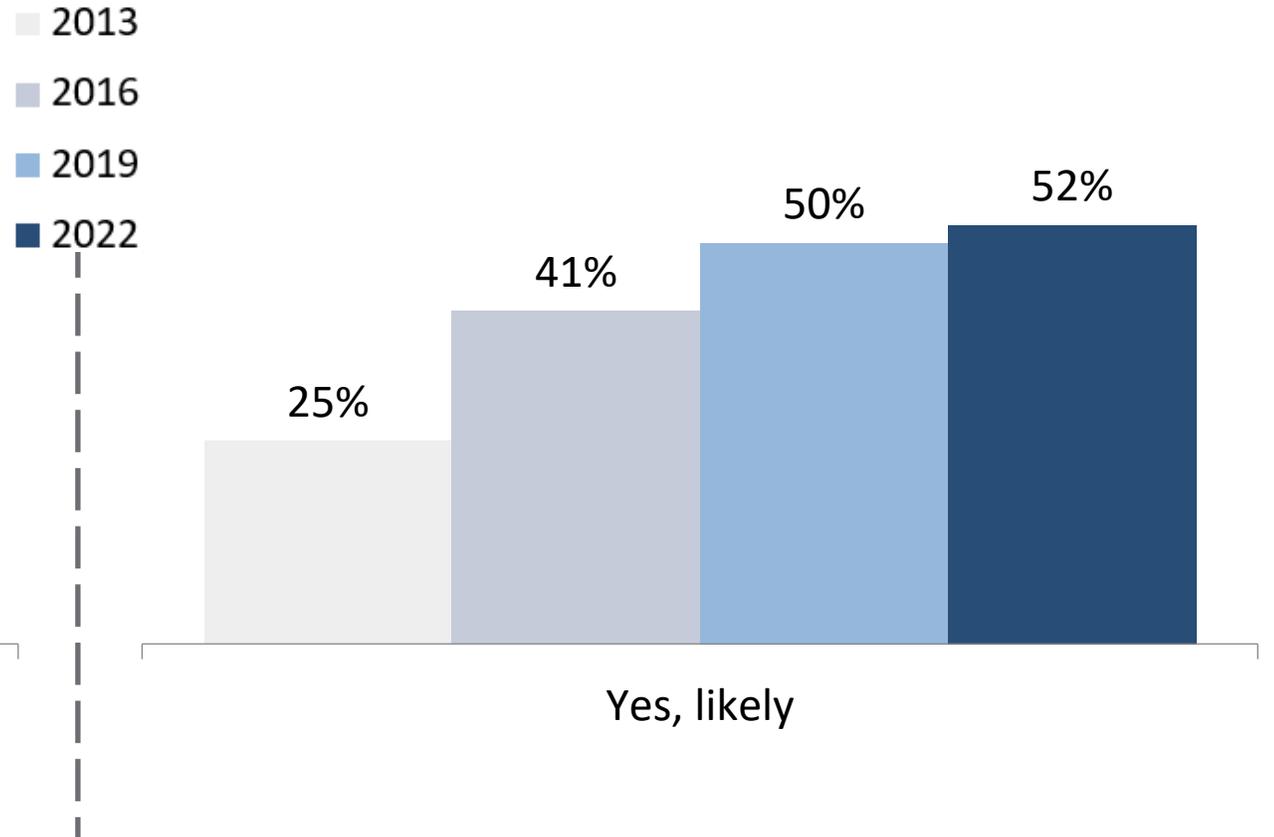
# Hiring Among DVMs

Half of DVMs report their practice has hired in the last year or is looking to hire in the next twelve months.

Has your practice hired a veterinarian within the past 12 months?



Is your practice looking to hire a veterinarian in the next 12 months?

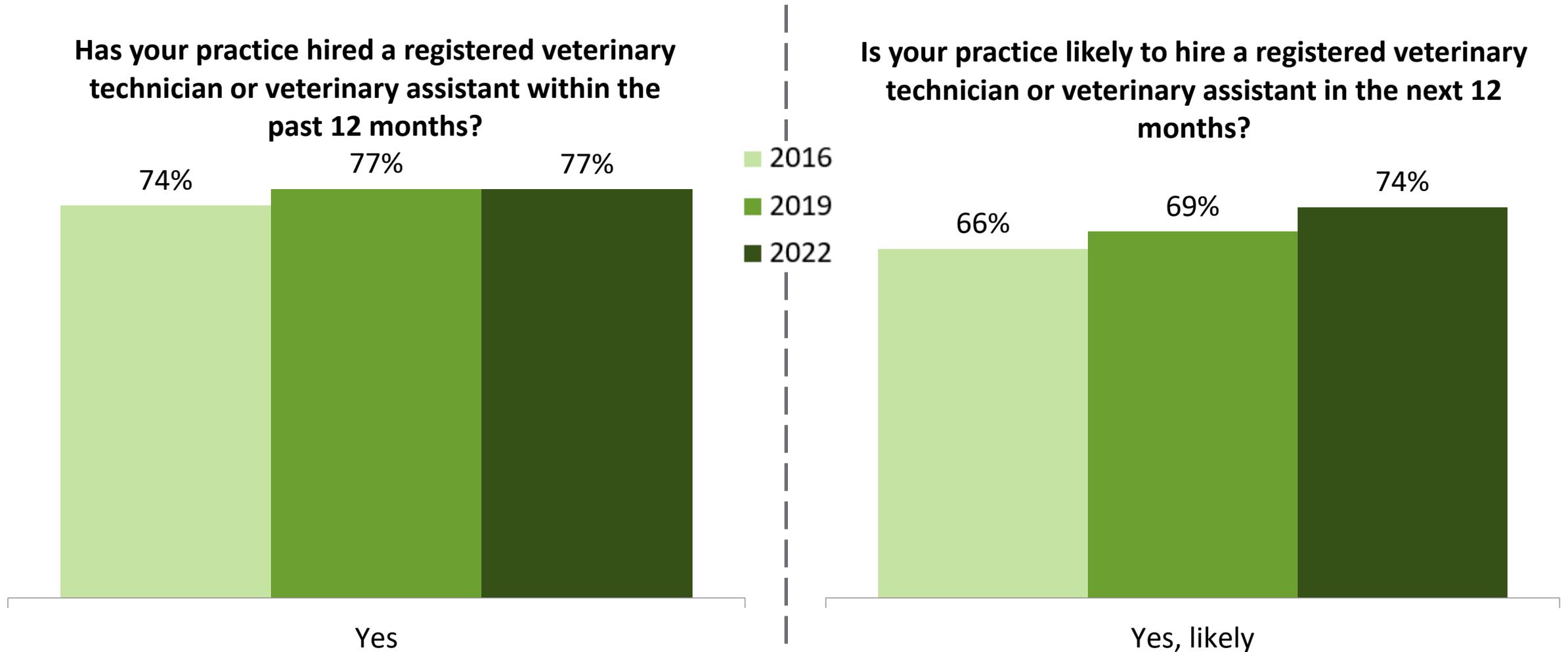


Q42. Has your practice hired a veterinarian within the past 12 months?

Q43. Is your practice looking to hire a veterinarian in the next 12 months?

# Hiring Among RVTs

Three quarters of RVTs say their practice has hired a veterinary technician or assistant in the past year.



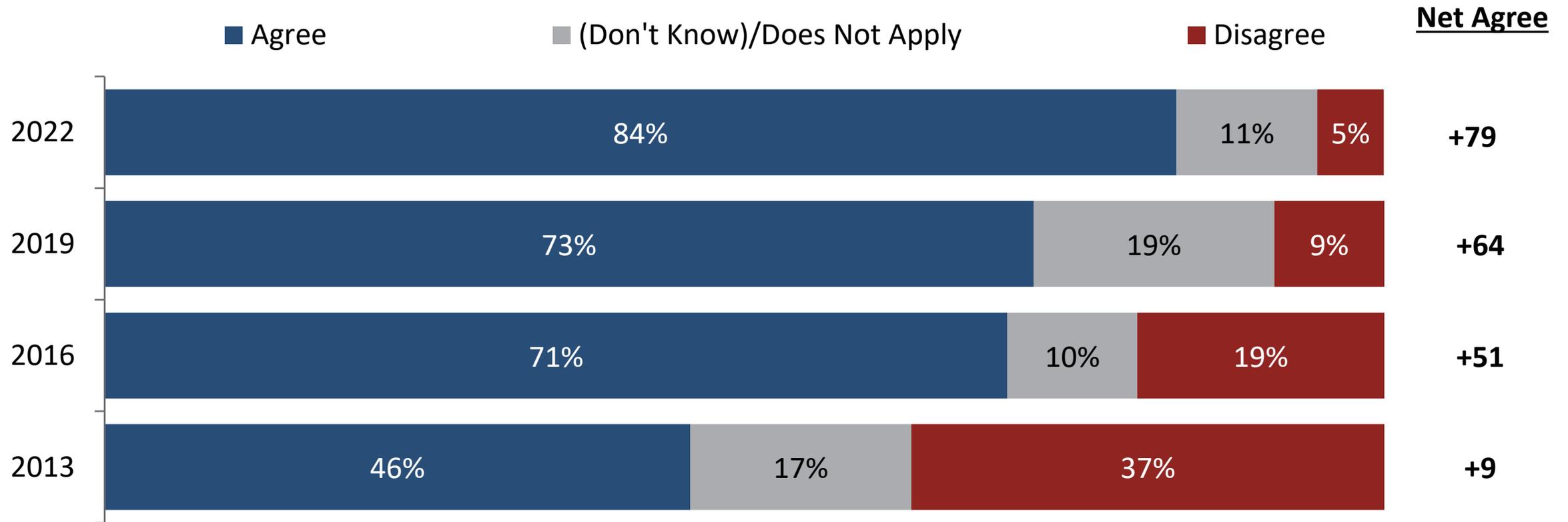
Q39. Has your practice hired a registered veterinary technician or veterinary assistant within the past 12 months?

Q40. Is your practice likely to hire a registered veterinary technician or veterinary assistant in the next 12 months?

# Hiring Difficulty Among DVMs

The percentage of DVMs reporting difficulty finding qualified candidates for open positions has increased since 2019.

In recent hiring decisions, our practice has had difficulty finding an adequate number of qualified candidates interested in our open positions.

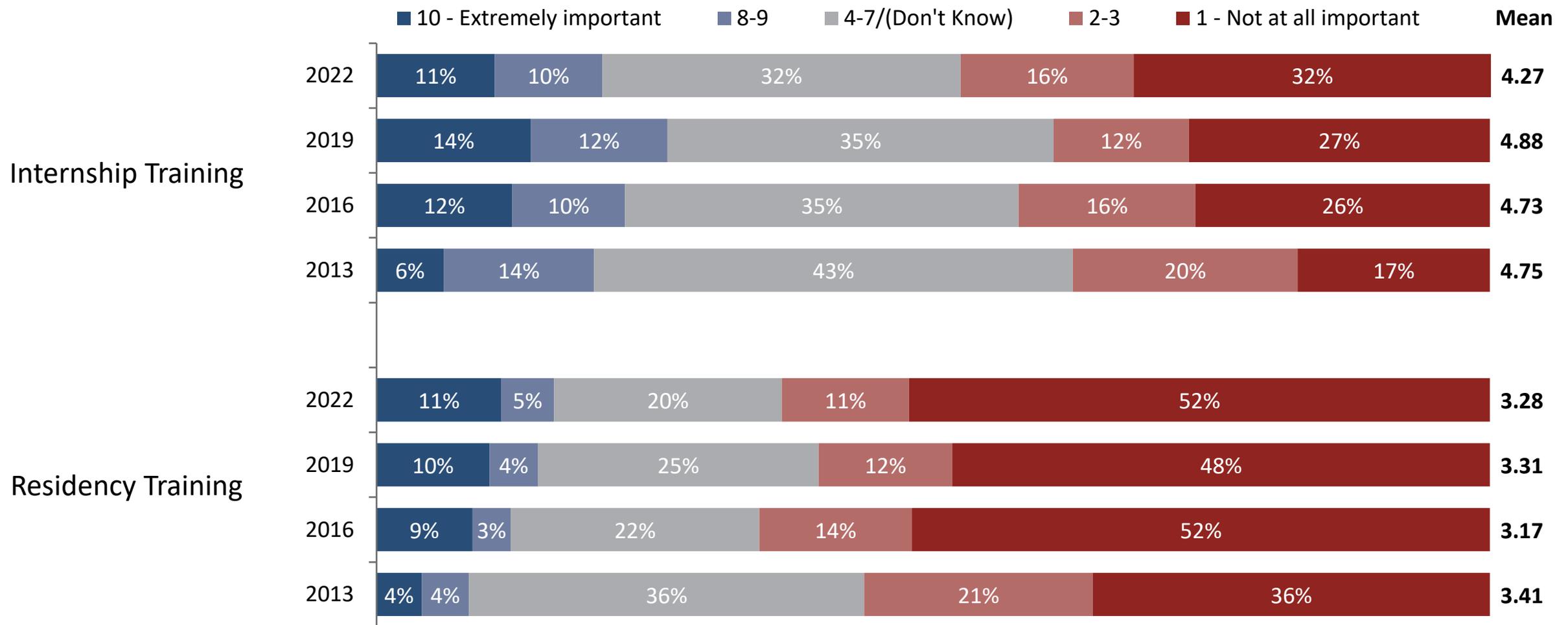


Q57. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements...In recent hiring decisions, our practice has had difficulty finding an adequate number of qualified candidates interested in our open positions.

*\*In 2022, respondents could select "does not apply."*

# Importance Factors When Hiring

*Views of internship or residency training as important in hiring are consistent with previous years, with less than a third saying they consider it important.*

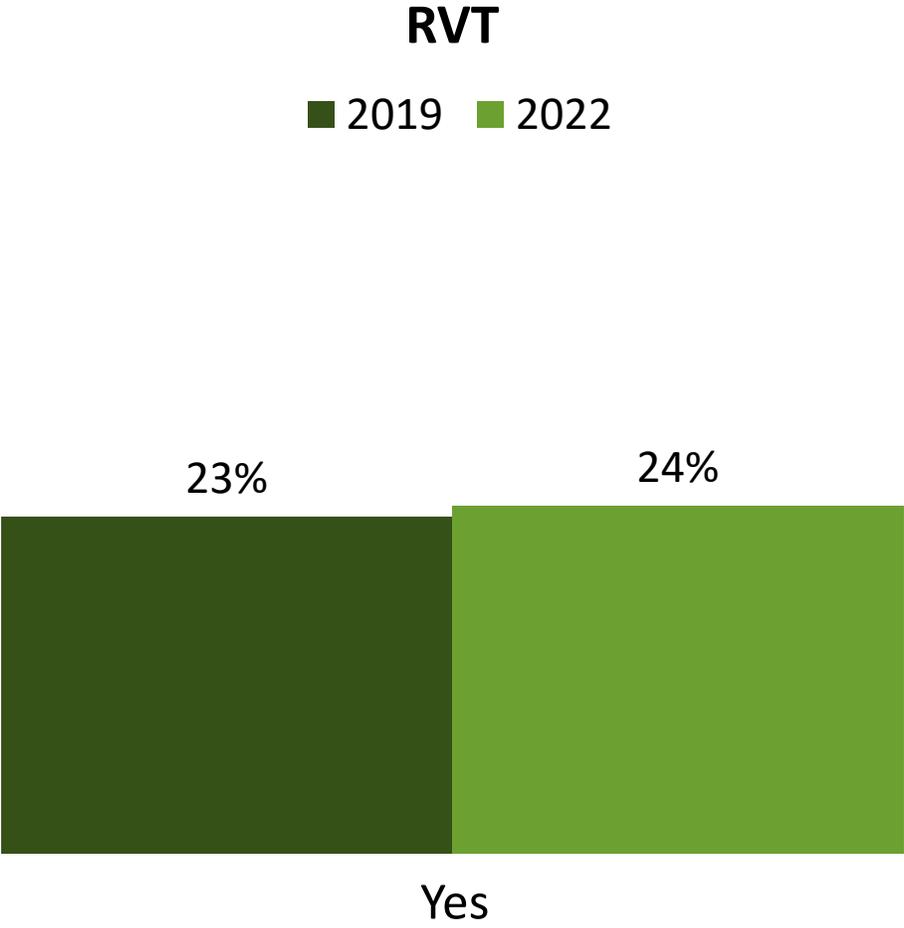
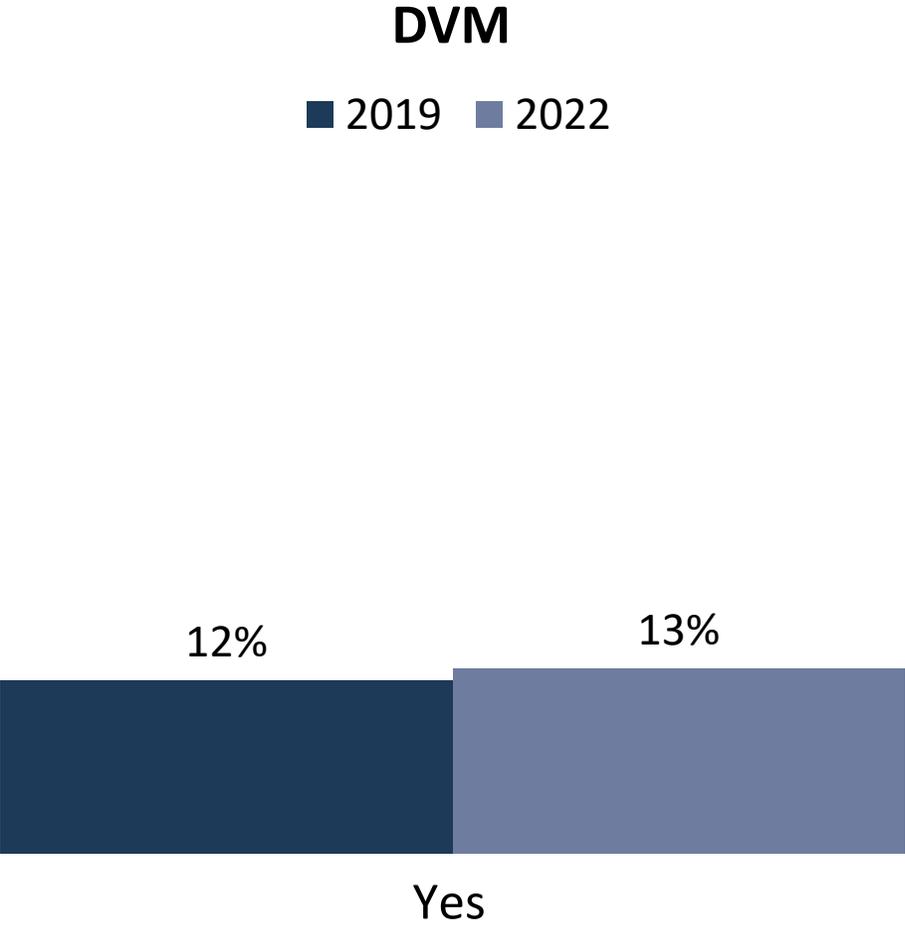


Q44-45. Thinking about hiring, how much importance do you place on applicants having the following skills or characteristics?

# Job Seeking Behavior

*A quarter of RVTs say they are seeking a new position, nearly double the percentage of DVMs.*

## Have you been actively seeking a new position?





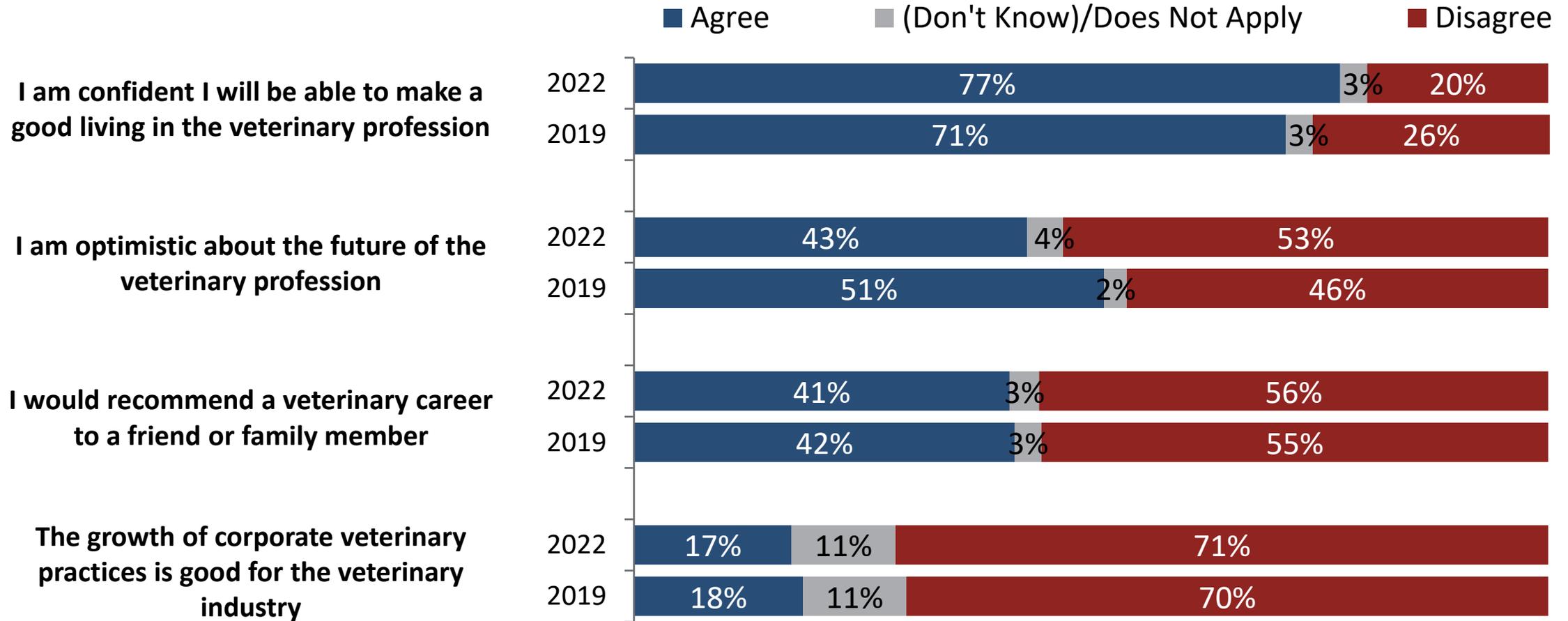
**Industry Outlook**  
*Attitudes*

# Key Findings – Industry Outlook

- ▶ DVMs remain confident about their ability to make a good living in the veterinary profession, while two-thirds of RVTs continue to disagree.
- ▶ Optimism about the future of the veterinary profession as a whole is at an all-time low among both DVMs and RVTs.
  - Practice owners are more satisfied with the health of the industry than those in other positions.
- ▶ Staff shortages are now the top concern DVMs say needs to be addressed, with mental health second.
- ▶ A third of RVTs say low wages are the top concern the industry should address, followed by mental health.
- ▶ More than eighty percent of DVMs and ninety percent of RVTs say the industry should do more to address mental health issues.
- ▶ The importance of veterinary and preventative care, and budgeting for animal care, are the top two things both DVMs and RVTs want to see the public educated on.

# Outlook Attitudes Among DVMs

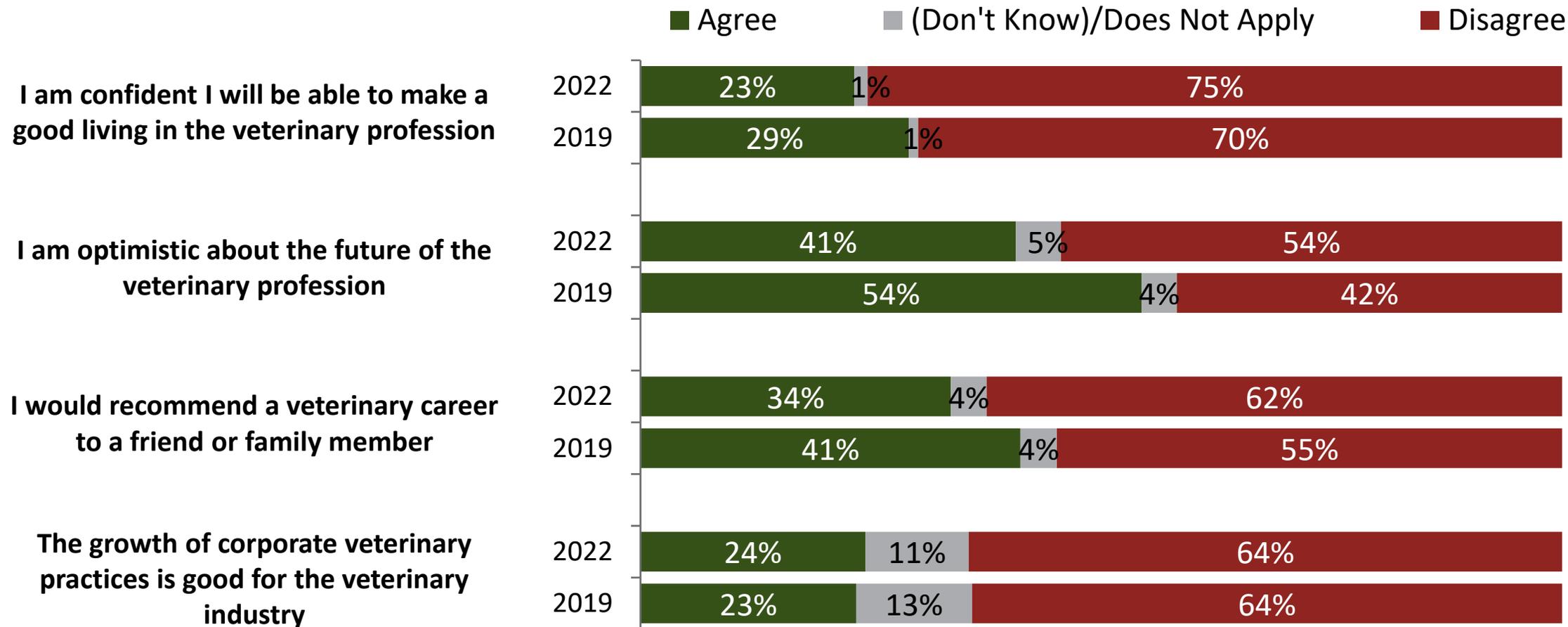
*While more DVMs are confident they personally will be able to make a good living in the veterinary profession, they are slightly less optimistic about the future of the profession overall than they were in 2019.*



Q56-65. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. *\*In 2022 respondents could select "does not apply."*

# Outlook Attitudes Among RVTs

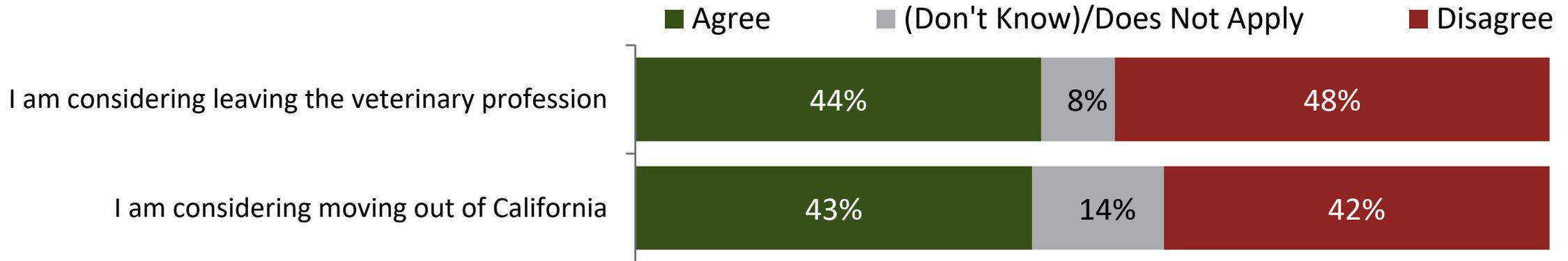
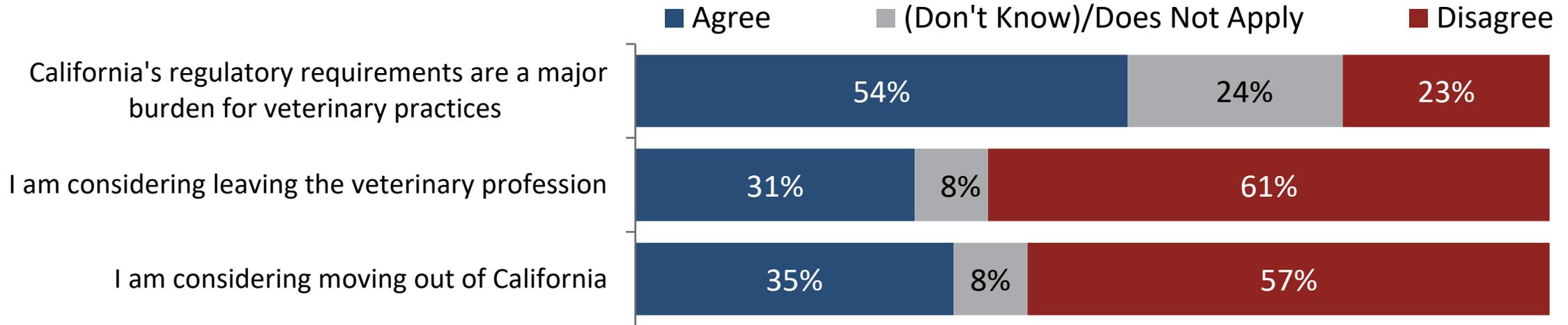
*RVTs are generally less optimistic about the industry, and their ability to make a good living; only a third would recommend the career to a friend or family member.*



Q45-48. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. *\*In 2022 respondents could select "does not apply."*

# Outlook Attitudes Among DVMs and RVTs

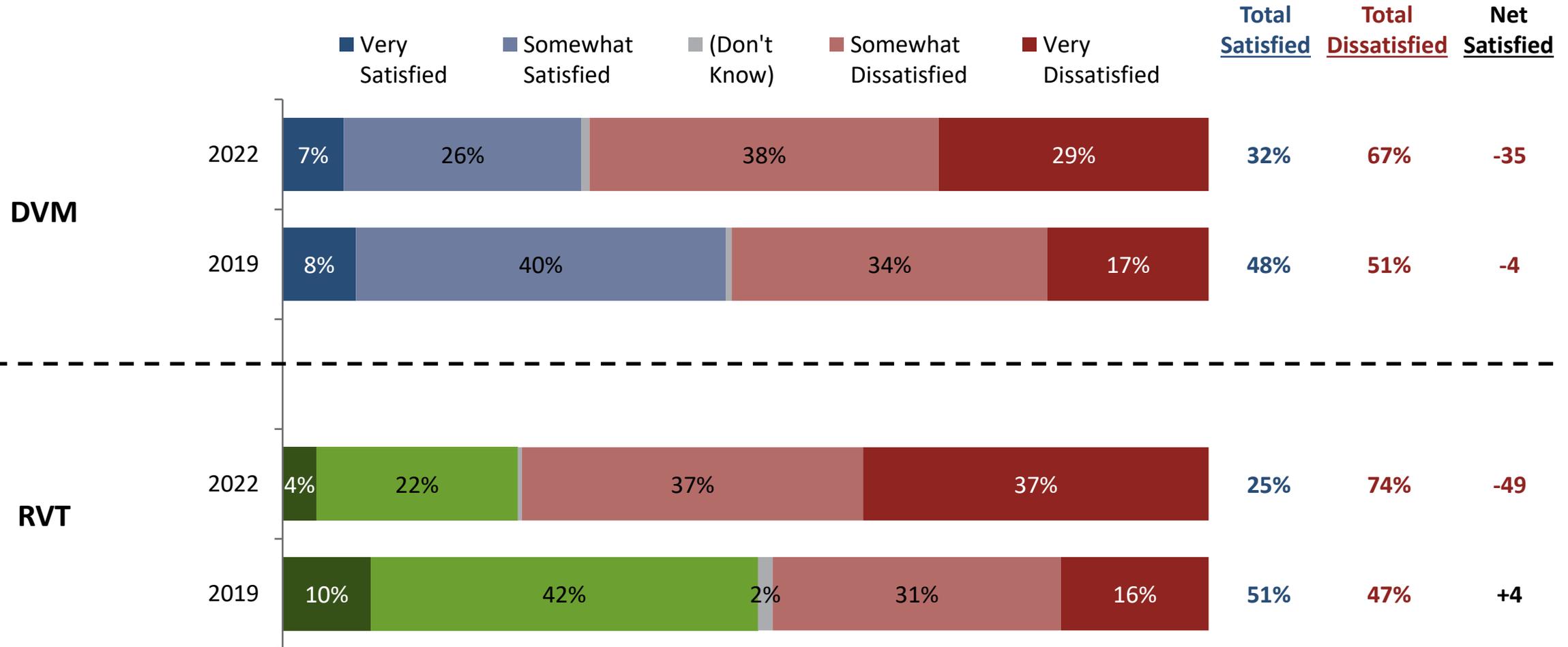
Half of DVMs say California's regulatory requirements are a burden for practices. RVTs are more likely than DVMs to say they are considering leaving the industry, or moving out of California.



DVM Q63-65/RVT Q50-51. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. \*In 2022 respondents could select "does not apply."

# Industry Health View Comparison

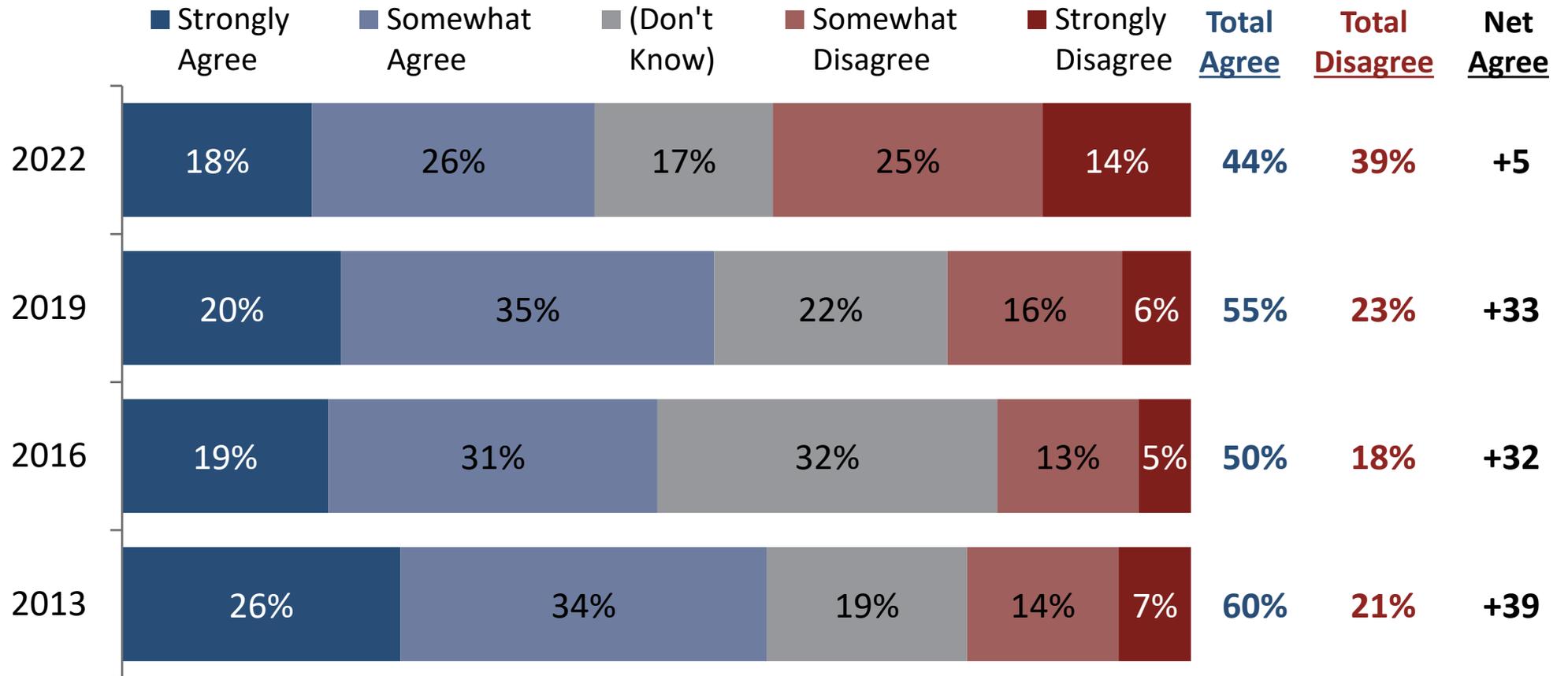
*Views of industry health are more pessimistic among both DVMs and RVTs than in 2019; RVT views of industry health have dropped by half.*



# Competition Over Time Among DVMs

The number of DVMs who say competition has increased over the last two years is down slightly from 2019.

## The amount of competition among veterinary practices in my area has increased in the past 2 years



Q56. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements... The amount of competition among veterinary practices in my area has increased in the past 2 years



# Industry Outlook

## *Concerns*

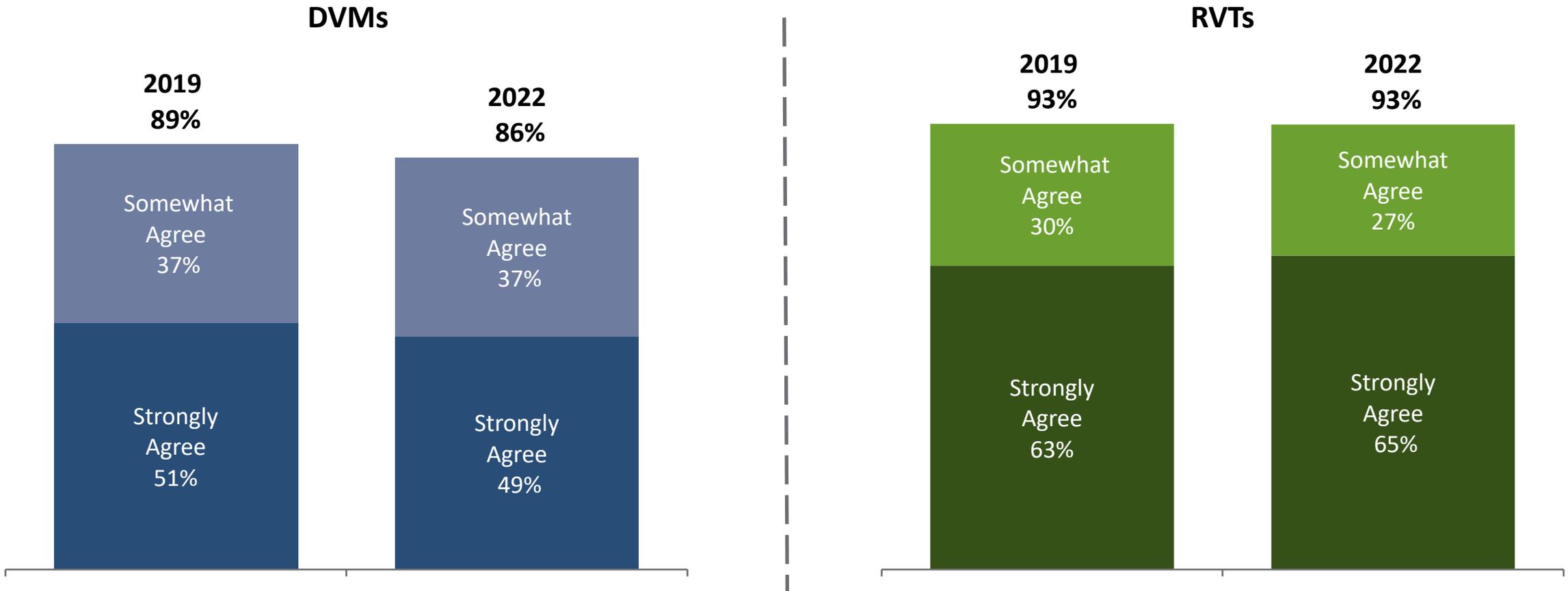




# Mental Health Concern

*DVMs and RVTs almost universally say the veterinary profession should do more to address mental health.*

## The veterinary profession should do more to address stress and mental health issues



DVM Q62/RVT Q49. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements...  
The veterinary profession should do more to address stress and mental health issues







Molly O'Shaughnessy  
Molly@EMCresearch.com  
614.827.9670

Kit Kuzma  
Kit@EMCresearch.com

Quinn Hansen  
Quinn@EMCresearch.com