



COHORT 3
SUMMARY RESULTS OF THE
21-YEAR-OLD SURVEY



Prepared by

The South Carolina NYTD Research Team



INTRODUCTION

In Fiscal Year 2021, the third cohort of the National Youth in Transition Database study turned 21 and completed their second of two follow-up surveys. The survey focused on youths' employment, finances, education, health and well-being. For the 21-year-old follow-up survey, 102 of the 227 eligible youth participated (45% response rate) and 30% declined taking the survey (see Table 1).

Table 1. 21-year-old Follow-Up Survey Status (n=227)

Survey Status	% (n)
Participated	45% (102)
Declined	30% (67)
Incapacitated	<1% (2)
Incarcerated	2% (4)
Missing/Runaway	3% (6)
Unable to locate	19% (43)
Deceased	<1% (2)

Demographically, 56% of Cohort 3 were female and 44% were male. Fifty-two percent of the cohort primarily identified as white and 47% as black, with 3% of the cohort having Hispanic ethnicity.

During this survey period, we had difficulty reaching several youth. We were unable to locate or survey 19% of the youth for multiple reasons including incapacitation, incarceration, and being unable to find accurate contact information. Data for this cohort are somewhat incomplete due to the low response rate; even among those who completed the full survey. In that light, reoccurring themes and trends have been identified, but are not generalizable to the cohort at large, who may have notable challenges and factors which are not captured due to non-participation.

EDUCATION

By the time they reached 21, 83% of respondents had achieved a High School Diploma or GED, up from 71% at 19. However, 10% of youth had not earned any kind of educational degree or certification, and only seven (7%) youth reported having completed a vocational license or degree. No youth reported completing a college or university degree at the time of the survey, but 22% of youth were currently enrolled in some form of educational program.

Of the youth who were enrolled in an educational program at the time of the survey, 10 (45%) reported receiving educational aid (scholarship, grant, stipend, student loan, voucher, or other type of educational financial aid) to help pay for school. In open-ended responses, the COVID 19 pandemic was a common theme for educational challenges; many students experienced having to take classes online, difficulty with completing or continuing school, and negative impacts on their grades. Other challenges that youth identified were family emergencies and needing to find work to pay for school – something also impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCIAL STABILITY

In this survey, youth were asked if they are currently employed full-time and/or part-time for wages and if they've received any on-the-job training. Fifty-four percent of respondents reported having some form of employment, with 29% reporting full-time employment. Among those currently employed full-time, all but two had obtained their high school diploma or GED. Twenty-nine percent of respondents had on the job training in the past year (see Table 2), with 9% of those employed full-time having received some form of on-the-job training. Forty-two youth were not employed at the time of the survey, a small decrease from 54 unemployed youth at 19, with 69% of those youth having a high school diploma or GED. Youth who were currently not employed, or only employed part-time, were more likely than youth employed full-time to be enrolled in school and to have received job training in the past year.

Table 2. Youth Employment compared to education outcomes and job training (n=102)

	Full-Time (n=30)	Part-Time (n=30)	Employed FT & PT (n=5)	Not Employed (n=42)
Has a HS Diploma or GED	93% (28)	96% (29)	100% (5)	69% (29)
Currently Enrolled in School	13% (4)	23% (7)	20% (1)	26% (11)
On the job training in the past year	30% (9)	33% (10)	20% (1)	26% (11)

In addition to the federal questions, we asked open-ended questions about the challenges that they experienced in obtaining employment. Once again, the COVID-19 pandemic was a common theme, with youth citing inability to get hours or positions due to closed businesses or reduced opportunities to work.

Few youth reported receiving some form of financial assistance at the time of the survey. Eleven youth reported receiving Social Security assistance, 10 youth reported receiving public financial assistance, 25 reported receiving public food assistance and only eight were receiving public housing assistance. However, these are all reported increases from youth at 19.

HOUSING STABILITY & FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Housing stability continues to be a challenge for youth after foster care. Twenty-eight youth reported experiencing homelessness (i.e., lived in a car, on the street, or stayed in a homeless or temporary shelter) in the past two years, an increase from youth reports at 19. Among youth who experienced the adverse outcomes of incarceration, substance abuse referrals for assessment or counseling, or childbirth in the past two years, many also experienced homelessness during the same period (see Table 3). However, unlike at 19, where homelessness was seen most often in tandem with self-reports of incarceration, having children, or substance abuse referrals, 2021's respondents had 19 youth report periods of homelessness while not reporting either of the other three high-risk outcomes. This is a marked change from survey respondents at 19, where all but two youth who experienced homelessness also experienced at least one other high-risk outcome, and often multiple high-risk outcomes.

Table 3. Percent of youth experiencing homelessness along with other adverse outcomes

In the past two years, youth who experienced...	Also experienced homelessness:
Incarceration (n=6)	71% (5)
Substance abuse referral (n=7)	43% (3)
Had a child (n=21)	19% (4)

RELATIONAL SUPPORT

Seventy-eight percent of youth reported having at least one person, other than their caseworker, that they could go to for advice or emotional support. This was a decline from 90% at age 19 and 95% at age 17. In this wave, the existence of emotional support did not have as strong a relationship to high-risk outcomes such as incarceration, substance abuse referrals, or homelessness, with most youth who reported these outcomes also reporting having a supportive person in their lives. Identified supports varied significantly, with the most common themes being relatives (biological or foster parents, or siblings), and significant others.

The survey also asked questions regarding the type of support that youth received in general, and educationally. The most common responses fell into the theme of giving advice to succeed in school and work, although some youth mentioned emotional and financial support as well. Many youth had contact with at least one person they identified as a supportive figure in their life every day or every week.

PERSONAL WELL-BEING AND RISK BEHAVIORS

The NYTD survey examined four areas related to well-being and risk behaviors: 1) incarceration, 2) referrals for substance abuse assessment or counseling, 3) children born within the past two years, and 4) current insurance status. For this survey period, six youth had been incarcerated in the past two years, a decline from 16 youth reporting incarceration at 19. Overall, the percentage of youth with substance abuse referrals did decline, from 32% before age 17 to 9% between ages 17 and 19, then finally to 7% between ages 19 and 21. Regarding childbirth, 21% had given birth or fathered a child between the ages of 19 and 21, up from 9% at 19, with only three of the youth being married to the child's other parent.

Lastly, most youth maintained some form of health insurance after leaving care, but the rate of coverage is declining. Seventy-two percent of youth reported having Medicaid coverage, down from 80% percent at age 19, and 97% at age 17. Eleven percent of youth reported having non-Medicaid health insurance, an increase from 7% at 19.

SUMMARY

The follow-up survey for Cohort 3 yielded valuable information on youth as they seek to establish themselves as independent adults during a nationwide pandemic. There were a variety of positive outcomes among respondents, yet many challenges that still need to be addressed. As with previous cohorts, youth are struggling to complete their education and develop economic stability. These

challenges disadvantage youth as they are entering adulthood, putting them on a trajectory of underearning and further disadvantage throughout their lifespan, making it difficult for them to achieve the levels of success to which they might otherwise aspire.

The SC National Youth in Transition Database Research Team

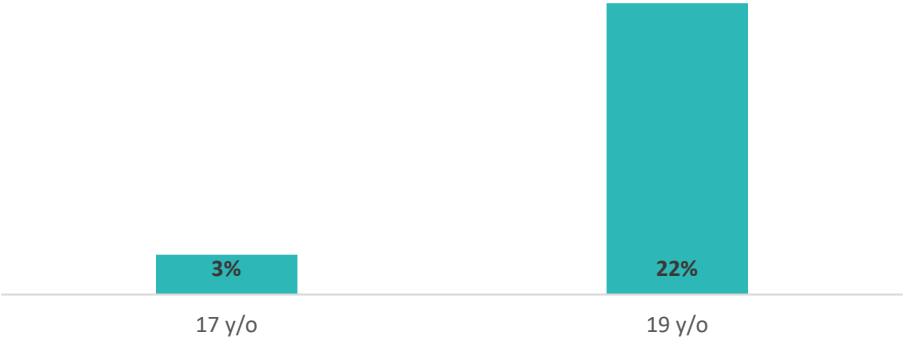
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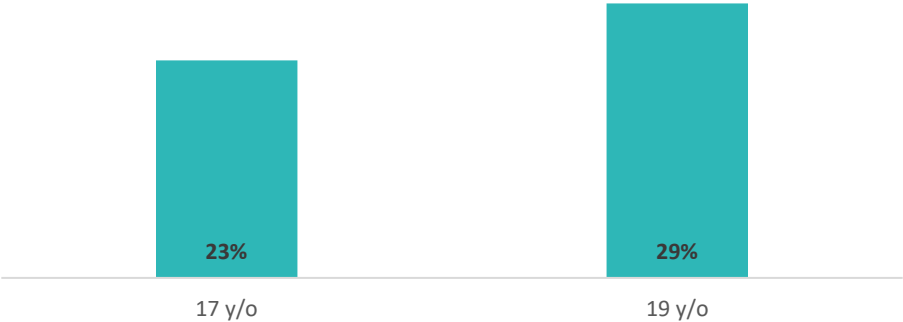
APPENDIX – CHARTS FOR THE FEDERAL NYTD QUESTIONS

In this section, you will find bar graphs for each of the federal NYTD questions answered by youth who took the survey at age 17 **and** at age 19 (n=109).

Question 37: Currently employed full-time



Question 38: Currently employed part-time



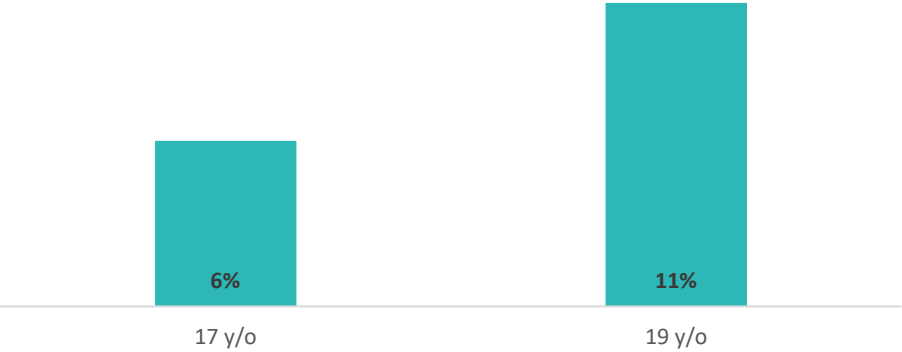
Question 39: In the past year, completed an apprenticeship, internship, or other on-the-job training, either paid or unpaid



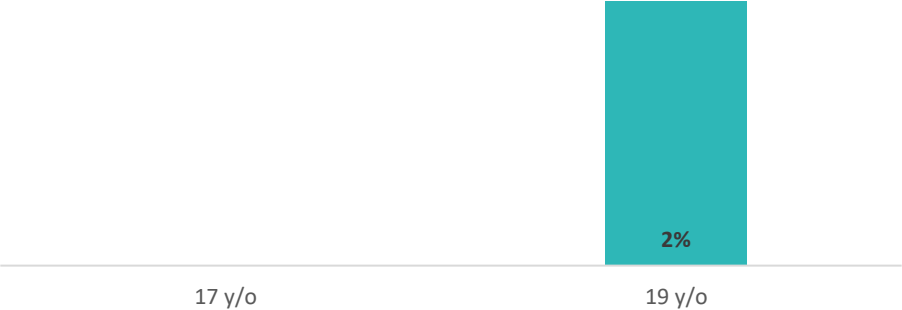
Question 40: Currently receiving Social Security payments



Question 41: Currently using scholarship, grant, stipend, student loan, voucher, or other type of educational financial aid to cover any educational expenses

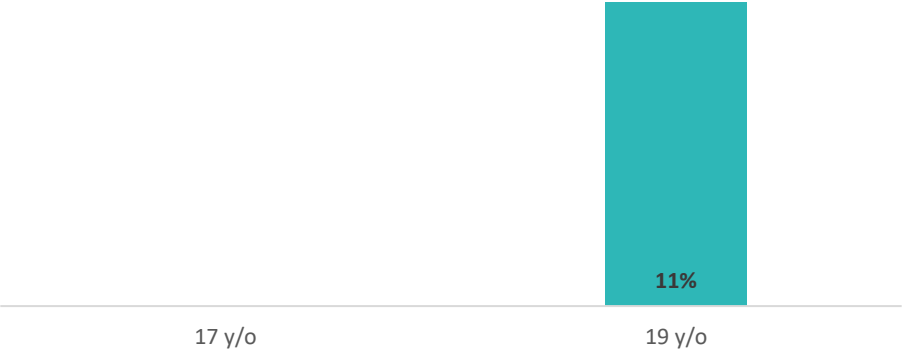


Question 42: Currently receiving ongoing welfare payments from the government to support basic needs*



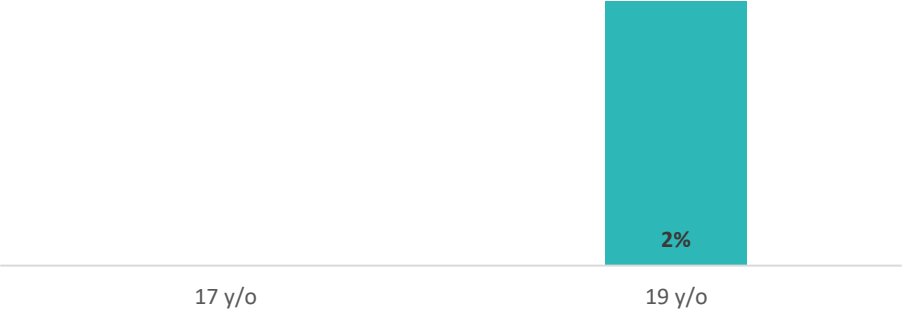
*Youth are not asked this item at age 17.

Question 43: Currently receiving public food assistance*



*Youth are not asked this item at age 17.

Question 44: Currently receiving any sort of housing assistance from the government, such as living in public housing or receiving a housing voucher*

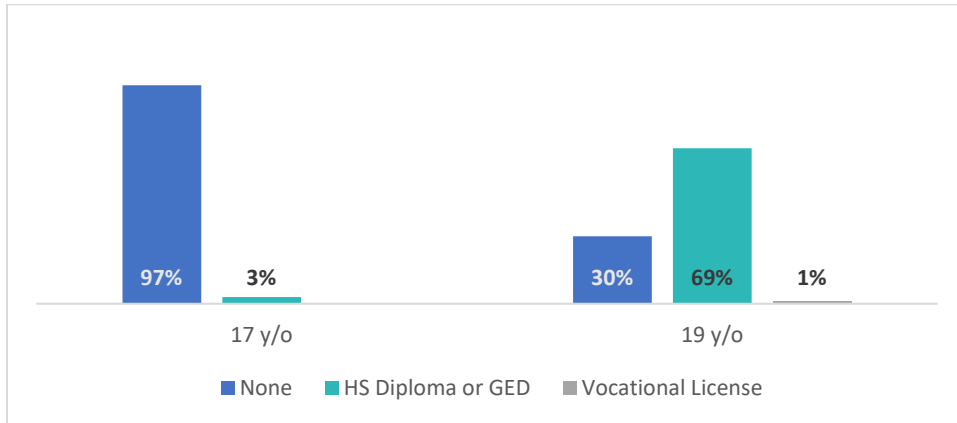


*Youth are not asked this item at age 17.

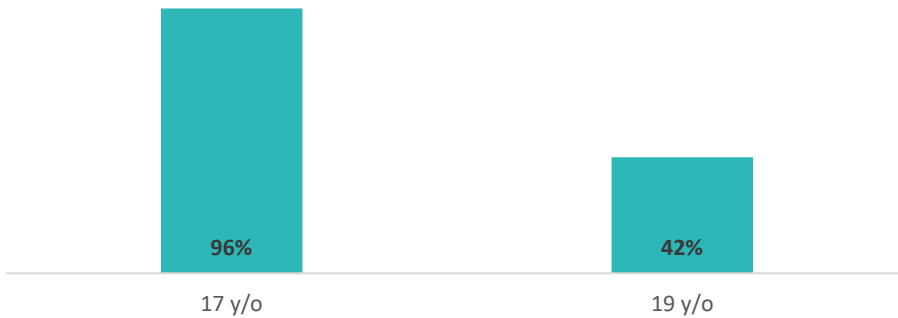
Question 45: Currently receiving any periodic and/or significant financial resources or support from another source not previously indicated and excluding paid employment



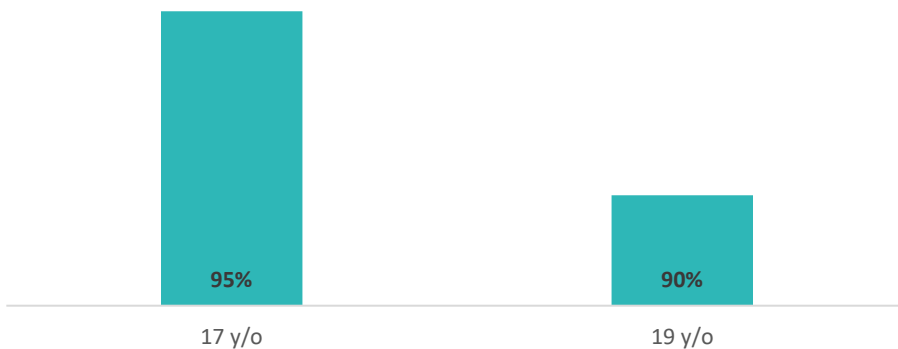
Question 46: Highest education degree or certification you have received



Question 47: Currently enrolled in and attending high school, GED classes, post-high school vocational training, or college



Question 48: Youth currently has at least one adult in their life, other than a caseworker, to whom they can go for advice or emotional support

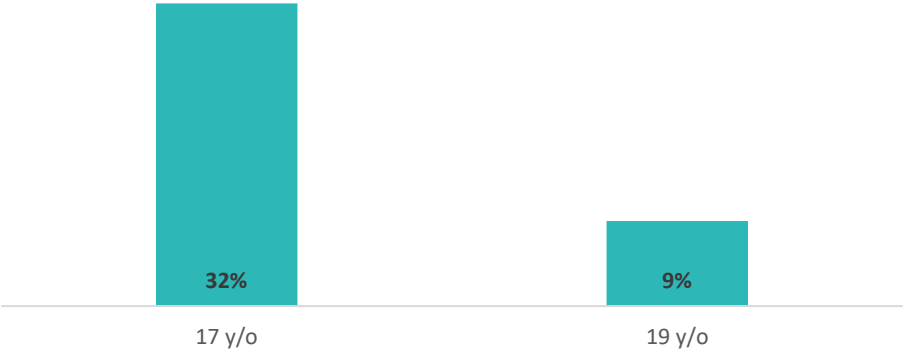


Question 49: Homeless at any time in the past two 2 years*



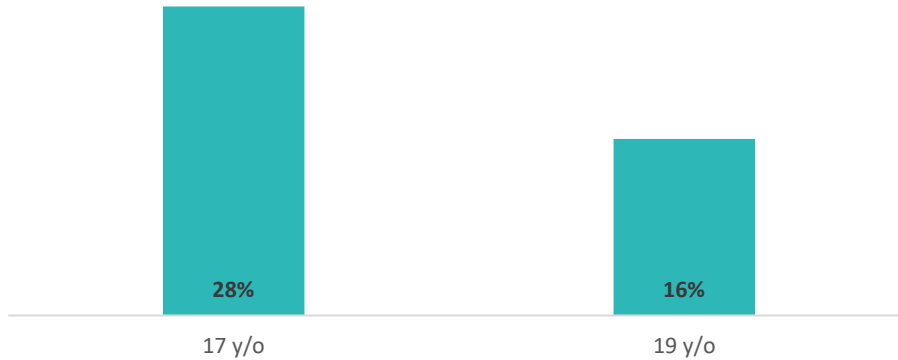
*At 17, youth are asked if they were ever homeless at any time prior to the survey date.

Question 50: In the past two years, referred for an alcohol or drug abuse assessment for counseling by self or someone else*



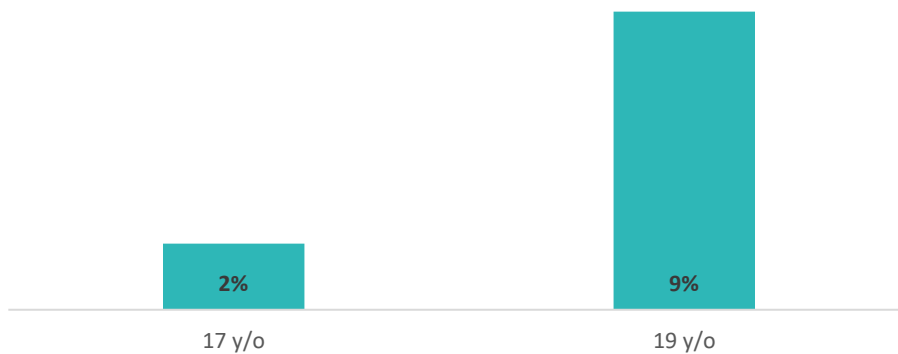
*At 17, youth are asked if they were referred at any time prior to the survey date.

Question 51: In the past two years, confined to jail, prison, correctional facility, or juvenile or community detention facility in connection with allegedly committing a crime*



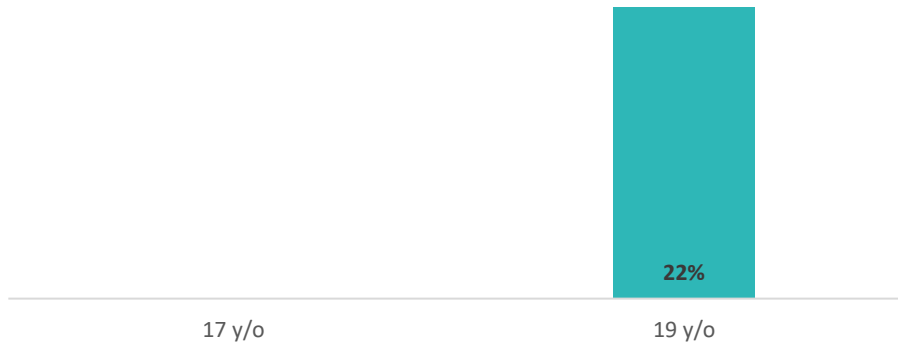
*At 17, youth are asked if they were incarcerated at any time prior to the survey date.

Question 52: In the past two years, gave birth or fathered a child*

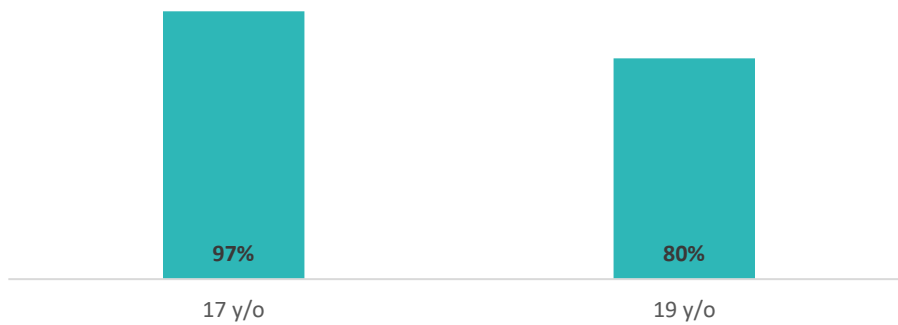


*At 17, youth are asked if they gave birth or fathered a child any time prior to the survey date.

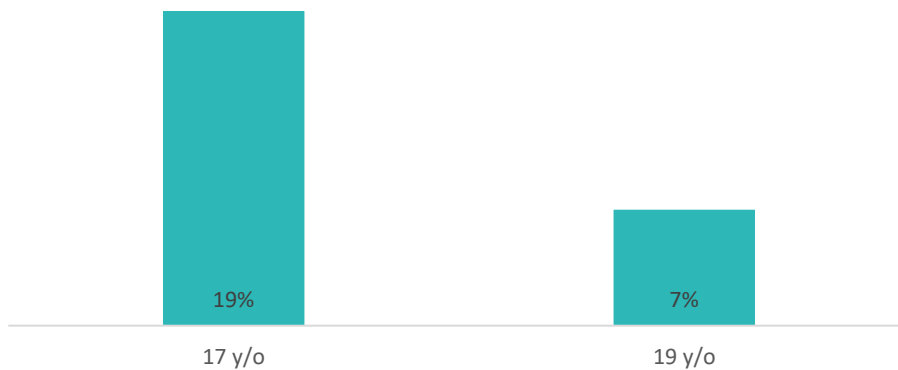
Question 53: Married to the child's other parent at the time each child was born (if yes to question 52)



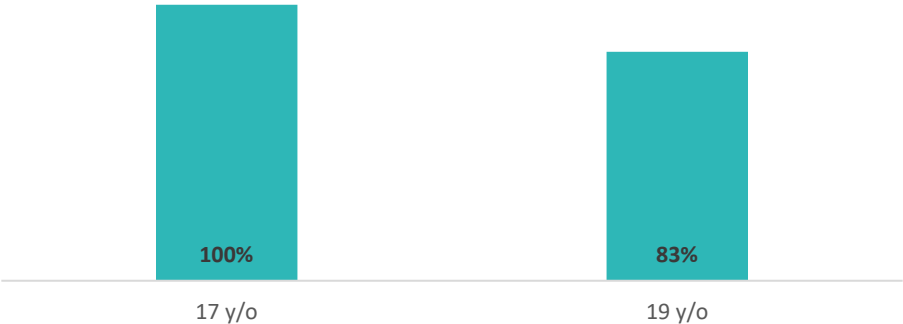
Question 54: Currently on Medicaid



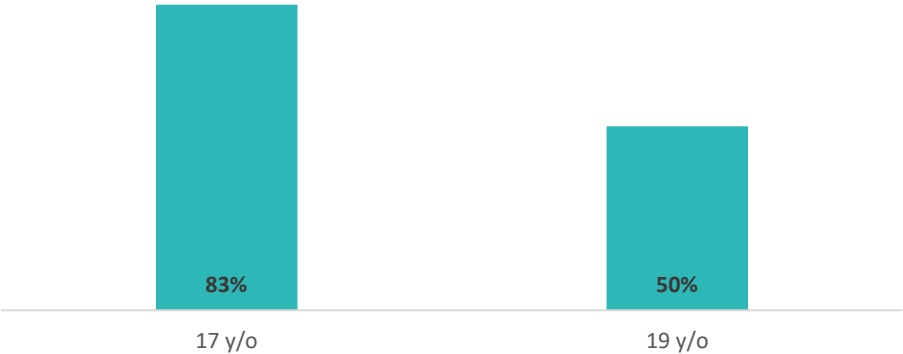
Question 55: Has insurance other than Medicaid



Question 56: Insurance covers medical services (if yes to question 55)



Question 57: Insurance covers mental health services (if yes to question 55)



Question 58: Insurance covers prescription drugs (if yes to question 55)

