



**Colorado Evaluation & Action Lab**  
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

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# Alternative Response Pilot Learning Indicators

Select Data from the Pilot's First Six Months of Implementation  
(January 4, 2023 to June 30, 2023)

## DATA CONTEXT:

- The Colorado Department of Human Services partnered with the Colorado Lab to rigorously build evidence on the Alternative Response (AR) pilot.
- Implementation and reach indicators are periodically examined to inform strategic learning and action.
- Data come from the Colorado Adult Protective Services (CAPS) data system.
- Data reported are a snapshot in time of **1,705 cases** that were screened in, investigated, and closed between January 4, 2023 and June 30, 2023 in the AR pilot counties.
- These cases had a total of **2,513 allegations**. Two out of five allegations were assigned to the AR track (**41.8%**).
- Nearly seven in 10 cases had **only one allegation**.
- 411 cases (24.1%) had **only self-neglect** allegations. These self-neglect only cases are described in more detail in Appendix A.
- **Self-neglect** made up over half (54.6%) of AR-tracked allegations.

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## Background

The Colorado Department of Human Services, Adult Protective Services (APS), partnered with the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab (Colorado Lab) to rigorously build evidence on the Alternative Response (AR) pilot, pursuant to [Senate Bill 21-118](#). The Colorado Lab is the independent third-party evaluator for the pilot.<sup>1</sup>

Implementation and reach indicators are periodically examined to inform strategic learning and action. Early data on the pilot support state and county partners in continuous quality improvement and practice growth. Data below are packaged as learning indicators and follow key milestones of the dual-track model, from allegation to track assignment to investigation and case closure. Actionable insights accompany each learning indicator.

**Understanding and Reading Data Visuals**

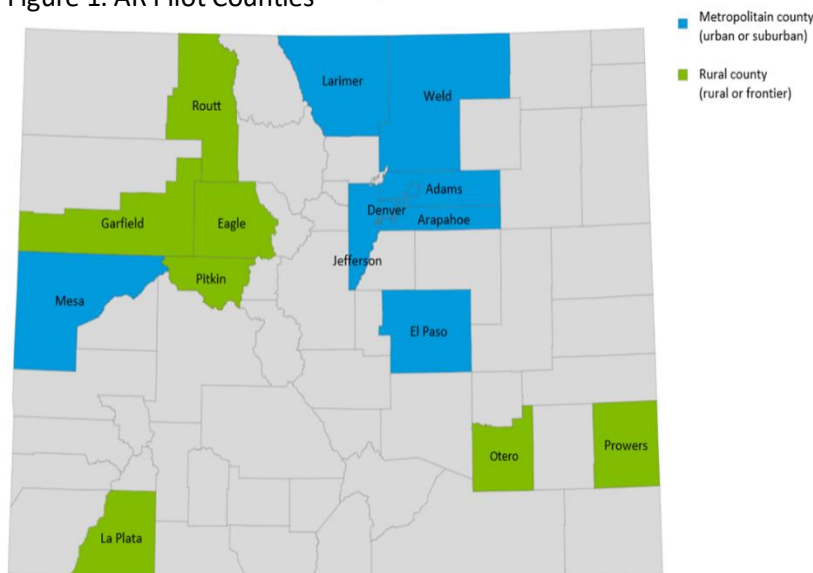
Learning indicators are presented through data visuals, which help to efficiently and effectively synthesize complex data. Each visual uses the same color schema to present data for **cases with:**

- Only Alternative Response tracked allegations (AR-tracked)**
- Only Traditional Response tracked allegations (TR-tracked)**
- A combination of AR- and TR-tracked allegations**

## Defining the Sample

Data are a snapshot in time of cases that were screened in, investigated, and closed between January 4, 2023 and June 30, 2023 in the AR pilot counties (Figure 1). Data come from the Colorado Adult Protective Services (CAPS) data system. For the first six months of implementation, there were 1,705 cases with 2,513 allegations, representing 1,670 unique clients. Two in every five allegations are assigned to the AR track.

Figure 1. AR Pilot Counties

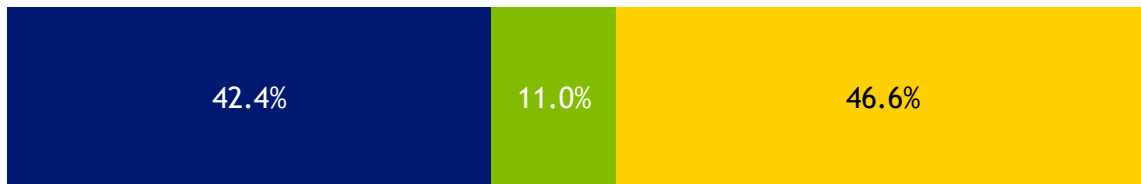


<sup>1</sup> Colorado Department of Human Services branding is used to present data visuals so that the Department can easily use the visuals in presentations and reporting on the AR pilot.

## Learning Indicators: Cases and Allegations

**Insight 1: Nearly Half of APS cases have only AR-tracked allegations, showing robust reach of the AR pilot.**

Among the 1,705 cases, 723 had **only AR-tracked allegations**, 187 had **AR- and TR-tracked allegations**, and 795 had **only TR-tracked allegations**

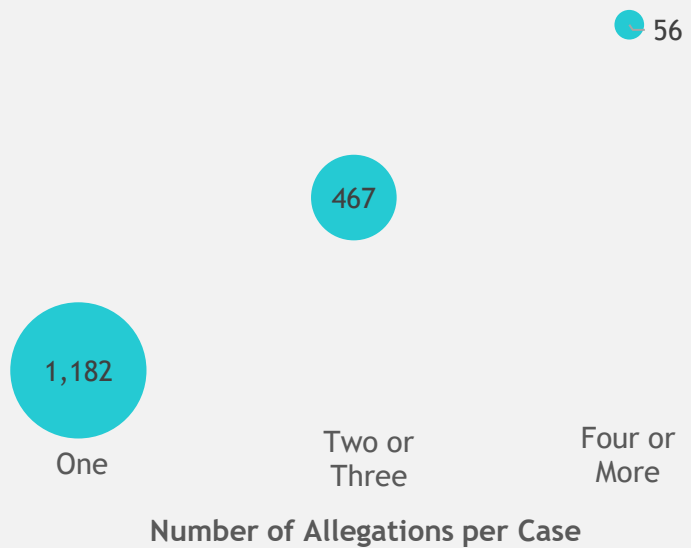


53.4% of cases had at least one AR-tracked allegation

**Insight 2: The majority of cases have only one allegation.**

69.3% of cases had only one allegation. 27.4% of cases had two or three allegations. Only 3.3% of cases had four or more allegations.

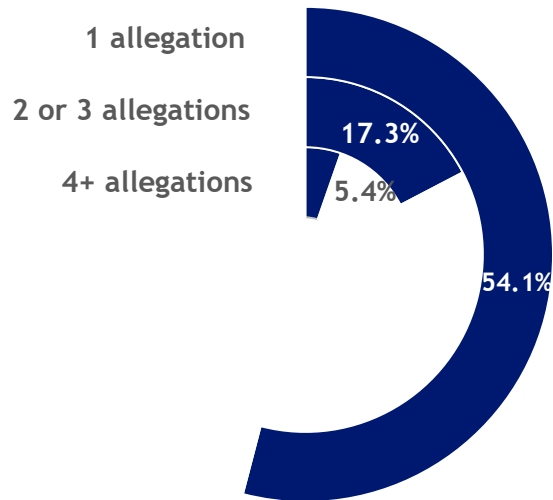
Bubble size indicates number of cases



## Learning Indicators: Track Assignment

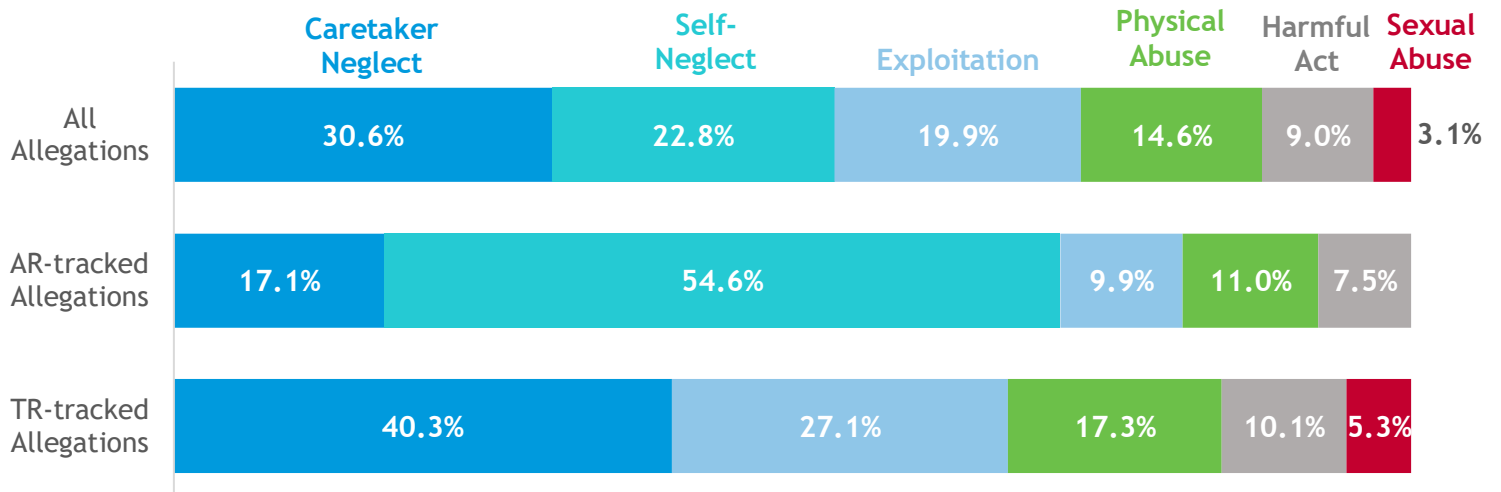
**Insight 3: The more allegations on a case, the less the AR track is used, which reflects increasing case complexity.**

The **AR track** is used at a higher rate when **only one allegation** is involved. As the number of allegations increase, use of the AR track decreases.



**Insight 4: Self-neglect makes up over half of all AR-tracked allegations.**

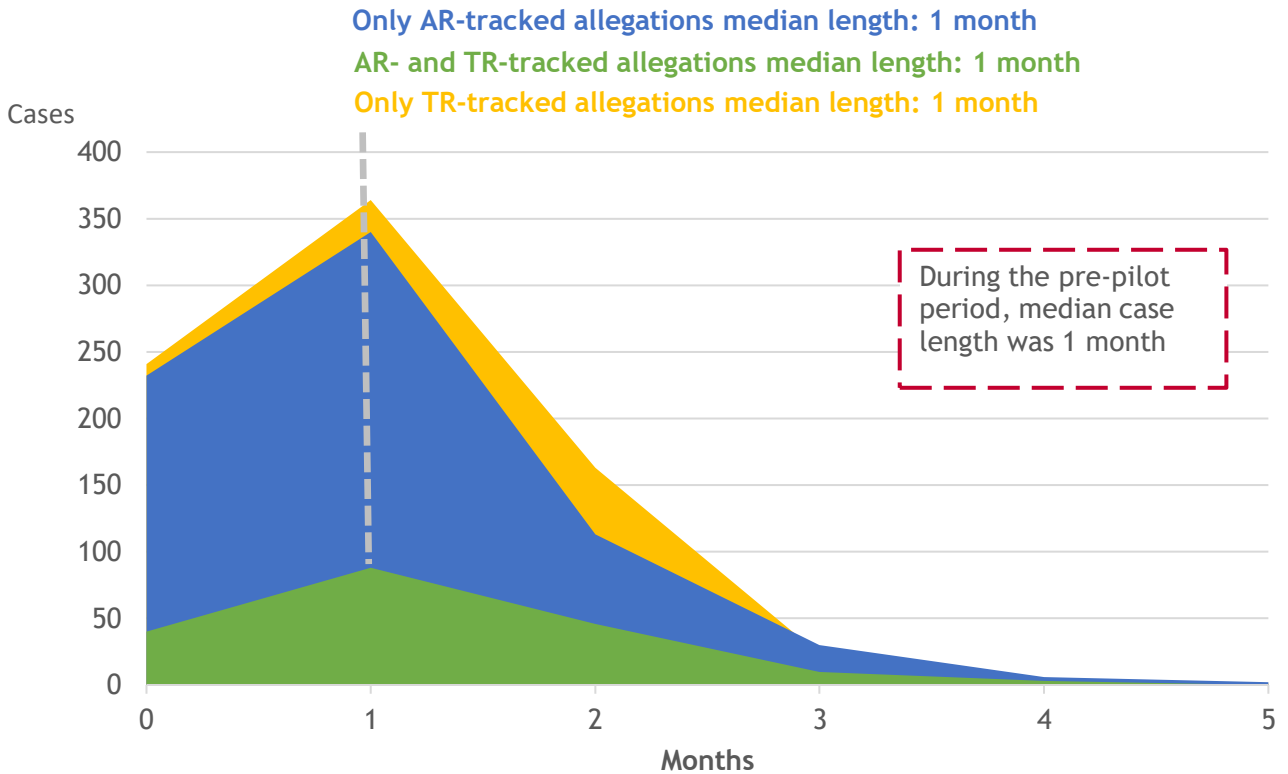
Self-Neglect and Mistreatment Type by Track Assignment



## Learning Indicators: Case Closure

**Insight 5: Case length has not significantly differed with the introduction of a dual-track model.**

Frequency of case length by track assignment



### Median Case Length by Days

- Only AR-tracked allegations median length: 41 days
- AR- and TR-tracked allegations median length: 51 days
- Only TR-tracked allegations median length: 42 days
- Pre-pilot period median length: 51 days

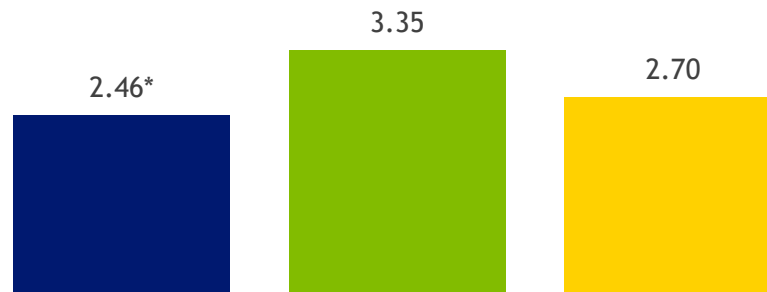
## Learning Indicators: Client Characteristics (Reach)

**Insight 6: Support networks are significantly lower for clients with only AR-tracked allegations and they are more likely to live in community.**

### Living Situation and Support Networks

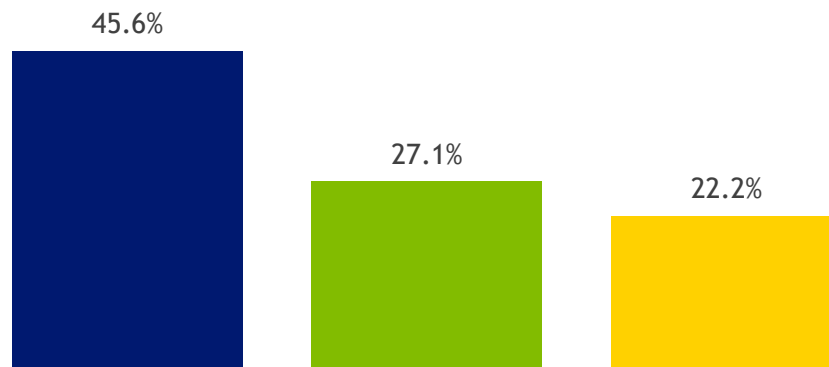
Clients with **only AR-tracked allegations** on their case were significantly more likely to live in community at intake than clients with **only TR-tracked allegations** (85.9% vs. 54.3%).

Among clients living in community, those with **only AR-tracked allegations** have significantly fewer support networks.



*The support network analysis is restricted to clients living in community, n = 1,208 (excludes 497 clients living in a facility). \*The average number of support networks among clients living in community at intake is statistically lower for clients with only AR-tracked allegations compared to clients with AR- and TR-tracked allegations (2.46 vs. 3.35) and compared to clients with only TR-tracked allegations (2.46 vs. 2.70). T-test p<0.05.*

Among clients living in community, those with **only AR-tracked allegations** are significantly more likely to live alone.



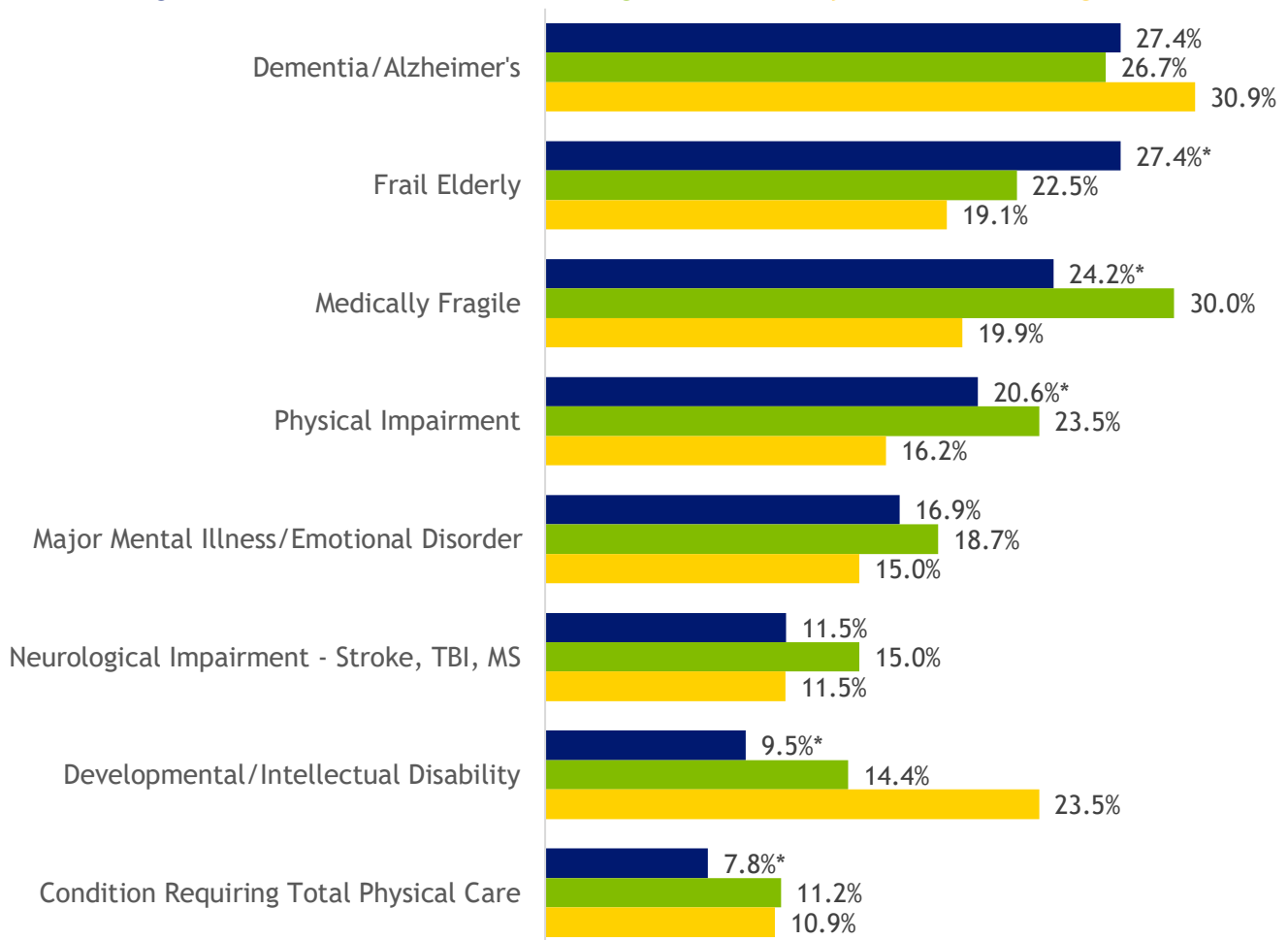
*The living situation analysis is restricted to clients living in community, n = 1,208 (excludes 497 clients living in a facility). \*The proportion of clients living in community and alone at intake is statistically significantly higher for clients with only AR-tracked allegations compared to clients with AR- and TR-tracked allegations (45.6% vs. 27.1%) and compared to clients with only TR-tracked allegations (45.6% vs. 22.2%). Proportion test p<0.05.*

### Insight 7: Cases with only AR-tracked allegations have higher rates of clients who are frail elderly, medically fragile, and/or physically impaired.

- Top two at-risk conditions among clients with **only AR-tracked allegations** were **Dementia or Alzheimer's** (27.4%) and **Frail Elderly** (27.4%).
- Top two at-risk conditions among clients with **AR- and TR-tracked allegations** were **Medically Fragile** (30.0%) and **Dementia or Alzheimer's** (26.7%).
- Top two at-risk conditions among clients with **only TR-tracked allegations** were **Dementia or Alzheimer's** (30.9%) and **Developmental / Intellectual Disability** (23.5%).

Frail elderly, medically fragile, and physical impairment were represented in cases with **AR-tracked allegations** at a significantly higher rate, while **developmental or intellectual disability** and **conditions requiring total physical care** were represented at a significantly lower rate.

Percentage of At-Risk Conditions Among Clients with **Only AR-tracked Allegations**, **AR- and TR-tracked Allegations**, or **Only TR-tracked Allegations**



\* Indicates that conditions at intake were represented in cases with only AR-tracked allegations at a significantly higher or lower rate than in cases with only TR-tracked allegations. Only AR-tracked allegations were more likely to be Frail Elderly (27.4% vs. 19.1%), Medically Fragile (24.2% vs. 19.9%), or Physical Impairment (20.6% vs. 16.2%). Only AR-tracked allegations were less likely to have a Developmental or Intellectual Disability (9.5% vs. 23.5%) or a Condition Requiring Total Physical Care (7.8% vs. 10.9%). Proportion test  $p < 0.05$ .

## Appendix A: Spotlight on Self-Neglect in Alternative Response

Self-neglect is an important topic within adult protective services, as self-neglect is categorically different than mistreatment and may warrant a different case approach. Data below are for **411 cases with only a self-neglect allegation**. By rule, self-neglect cases are always considered low risk and thus tracked to alternative responsive. These self-neglect cases make up about **one in four** cases (24.1%) during the first six months of the AR pilot. None had track changes.



The median case length was **38 days**. This is 3 days shorter than the median case length for all cases with only AR-tracked allegations.



Nearly all clients were **living in community** at intake (94.6%)



Clients living in **community** had an average of 2.2 support networks.



Three out of five clients living in community were **living alone** at intake.



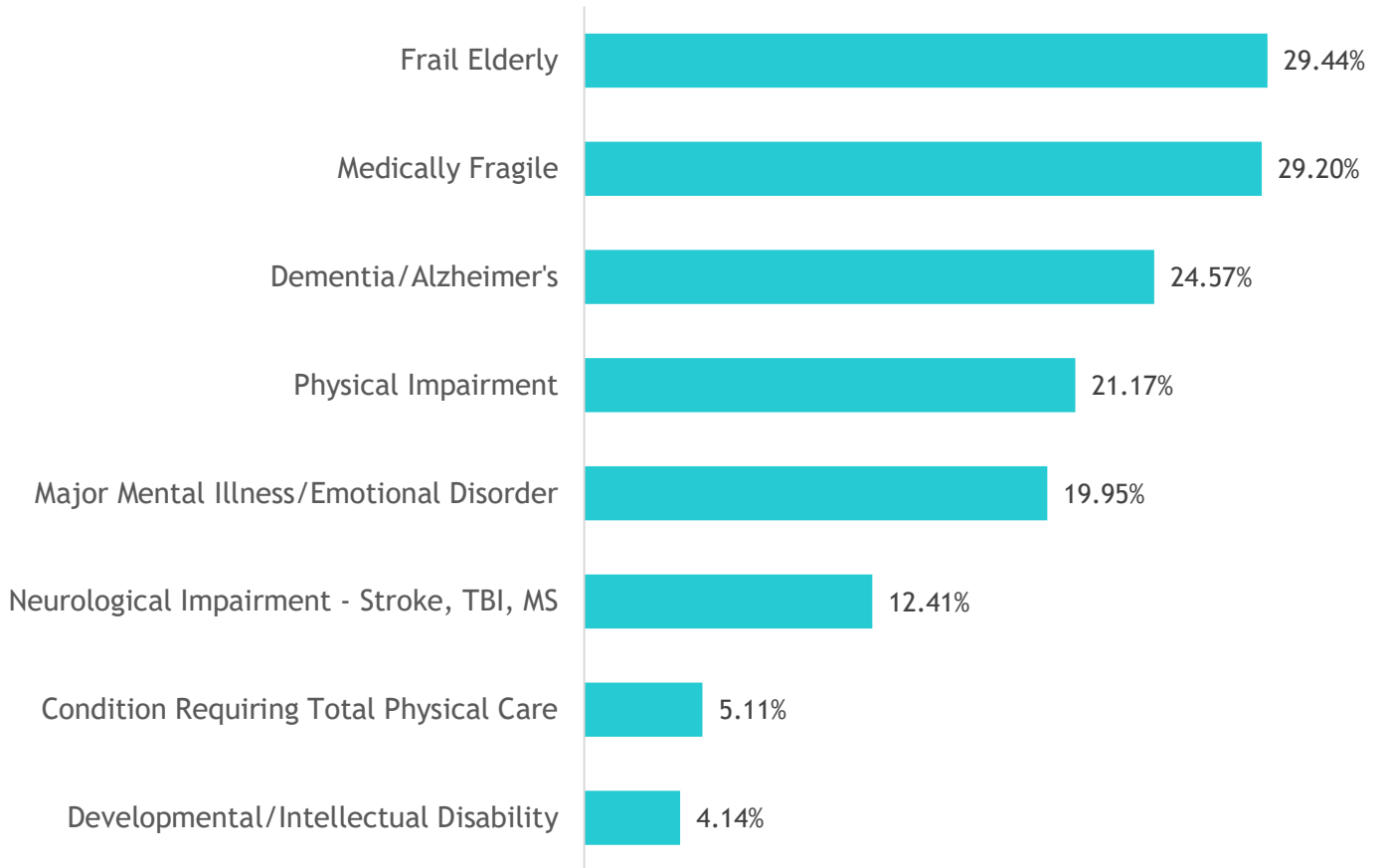
Top two at-risk conditions were **Frail Elderly (29.4%)** and **Medically Fragile (29.2%)**. This mirrors trends seen for all cases with only AR-tracked allegations. (see next page for additional details on all conditions)



Nearly **one-third (31.9%)** of the self-neglect allegations **appeared true**. This mirrors trends seen for all allegations tracked to AR. (see next page for additional details on conclusion categories)



### Percentage of At-Risk Conditions Among Clients with Only a Self-Neglect Allegation



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