

Background

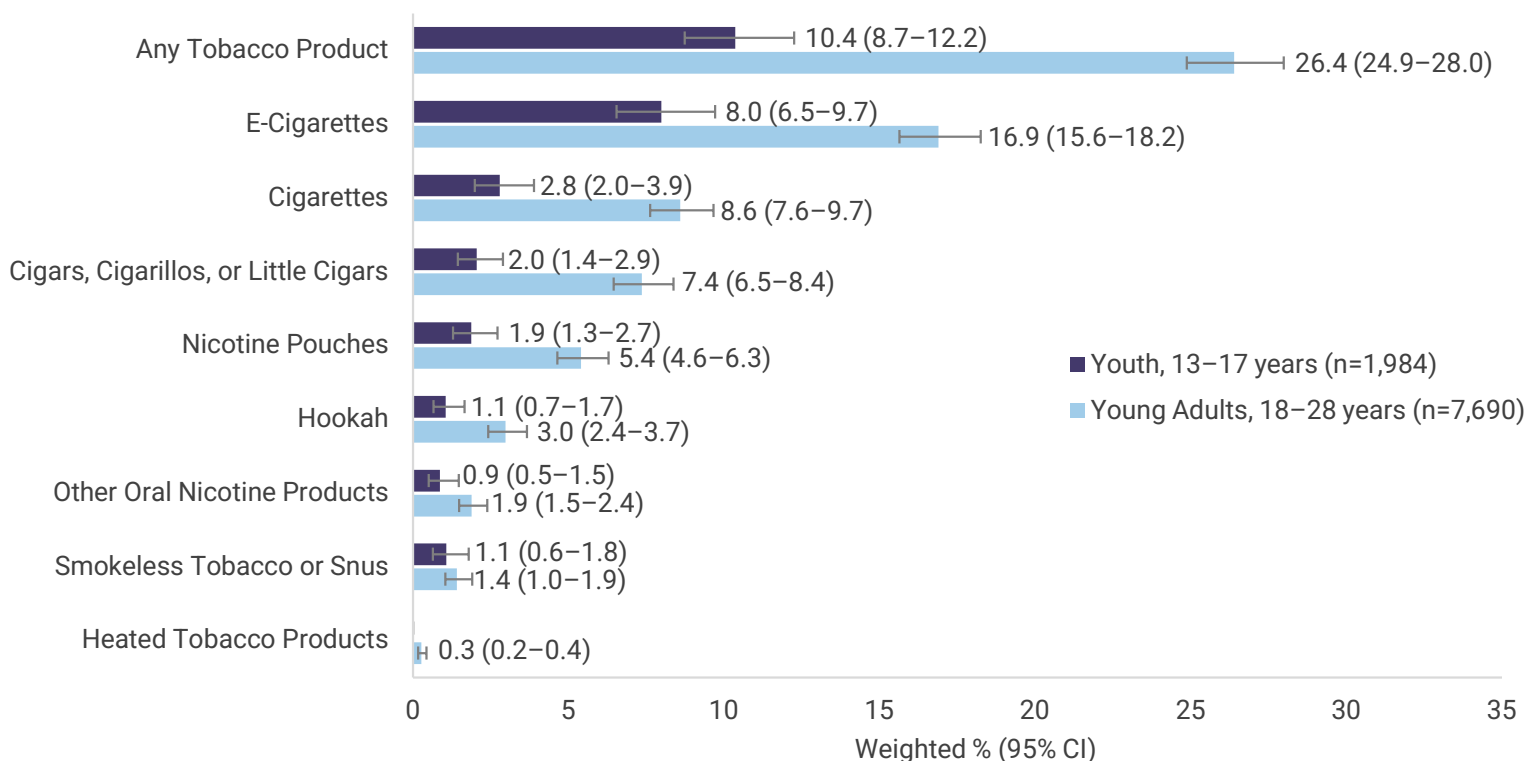
- Tobacco product use among youth and young adults is a public health concern. According to the 2025 National Youth Tobacco Survey, 2.01 million United States (U.S.) middle and high school students used a tobacco product in the past 30 days.¹
- According to the 2024 Report of the Surgeon General:
 - The tobacco industry has historically targeted specific communities, including Black Americans, Hispanic and Latino Americans, LGBTQIA+ youth, rural communities, low-income communities, and individuals with mental health conditions through marketing and outreach efforts, which may make these communities more likely to use tobacco products.²
 - For decades, the tobacco industry has targeted specific communities—especially Black Americans²—with menthol cigarette marketing. Menthol cigarettes are easier to start smoking, more addictive, and harder to quit.²
- This data brief examines the use of tobacco products by demographic groups. Data were collected from a nationally-representative cohort of 9,674 youth and young adults in the U.S. fielded August–December 2025.

Key Takeaways

- About one-in-ten youth and one-in-four young adults currently use tobacco products, most commonly e-cigarettes.
- Use of cigars is highest among Black, non-Hispanic youth and young adults while nicotine pouch use is highest among White, non-Hispanic youth and young adults.
- Current tobacco product use among youth and young adults is similar by LGBTQIA+ identity.
- Current tobacco use among youth and young adults is higher among those who live in rural areas, those who report lower perceived finances, and those with serious psychological distress.
- Menthol cigarette smoking is higher among Black, non-Hispanic youth and young adults than other racial groups, with over three-quarters of Black, non-Hispanic youth and young adults who smoke reporting that they use menthol cigarettes.

One-in-Ten Youth and One-in-Four Young Adults Currently Use Tobacco Products, Most Commonly E-Cigarettes

Current Use of Tobacco Products, By Age
Among Youth and Young Adults, 13–28 years (N=9,674)



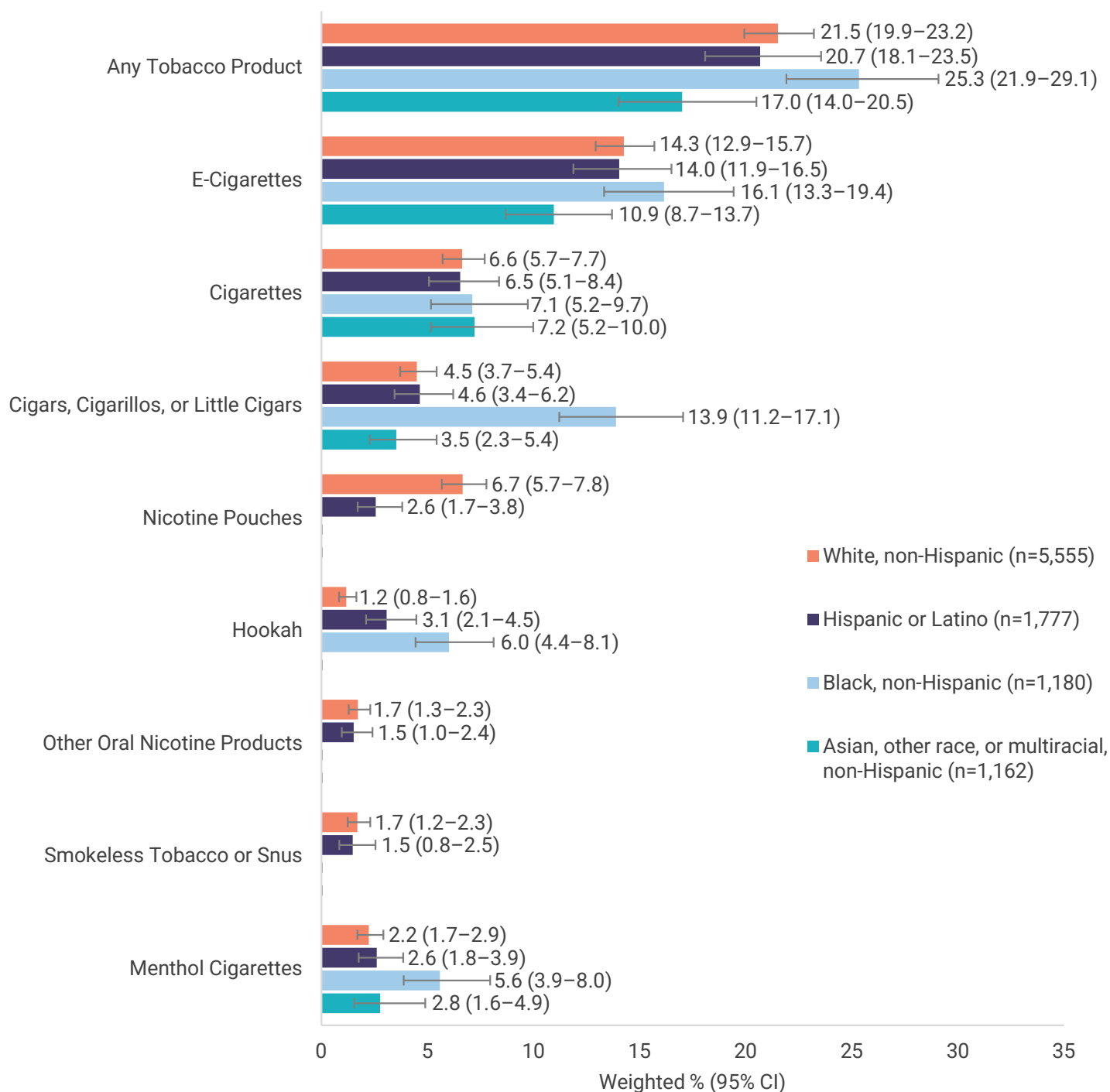
Note: Heated tobacco product use estimate among youth was suppressed according to National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) data presentation standards.

Tobacco Product Use by Race and Ethnicity

E-Cigarettes Are the Most Commonly Used Tobacco Product Among Youth and Young Adults Regardless of Race and Ethnicity

Use of Cigars Is Highest Among Black, Non-Hispanic Youth and Young Adults; Nicotine Pouch Use Is Highest Among White, Non-Hispanic Youth and Young Adults

Current Use of Tobacco Products, by Race and Ethnicity
Among Youth and Young Adults, 13–28 years (N=9,674)

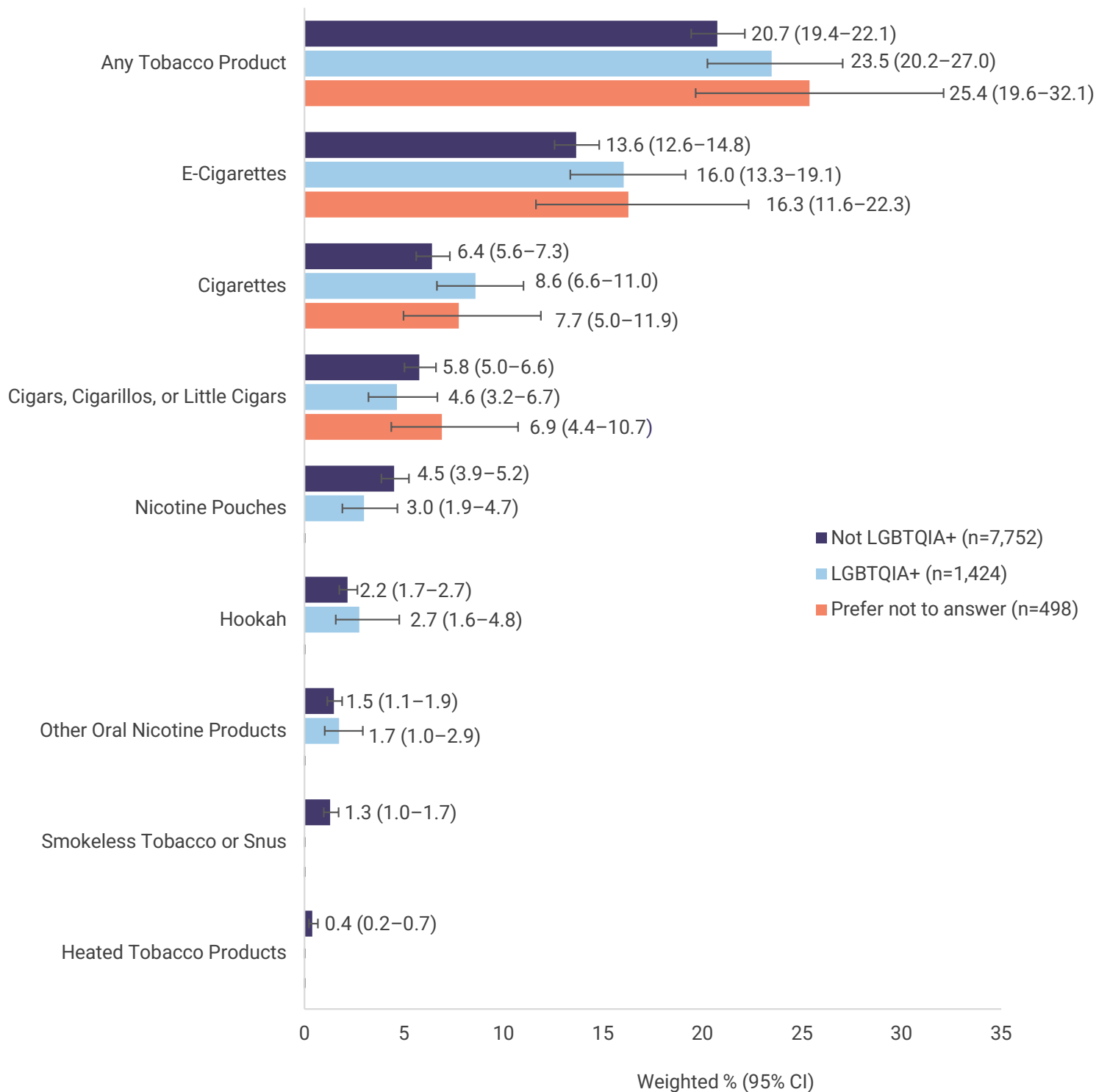


Note: Several estimates were suppressed according to National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) data presentation standards.

Tobacco Product Use by LGBTQIA+ Identity

Current Tobacco Product Use Among Youth and Young Adults Is Similar by LGBTQIA+ Identity

Current Use of Tobacco Products by LGBTQIA+ Identity,
Among Youth and Young Adults 13–28 Years (N=9,674)

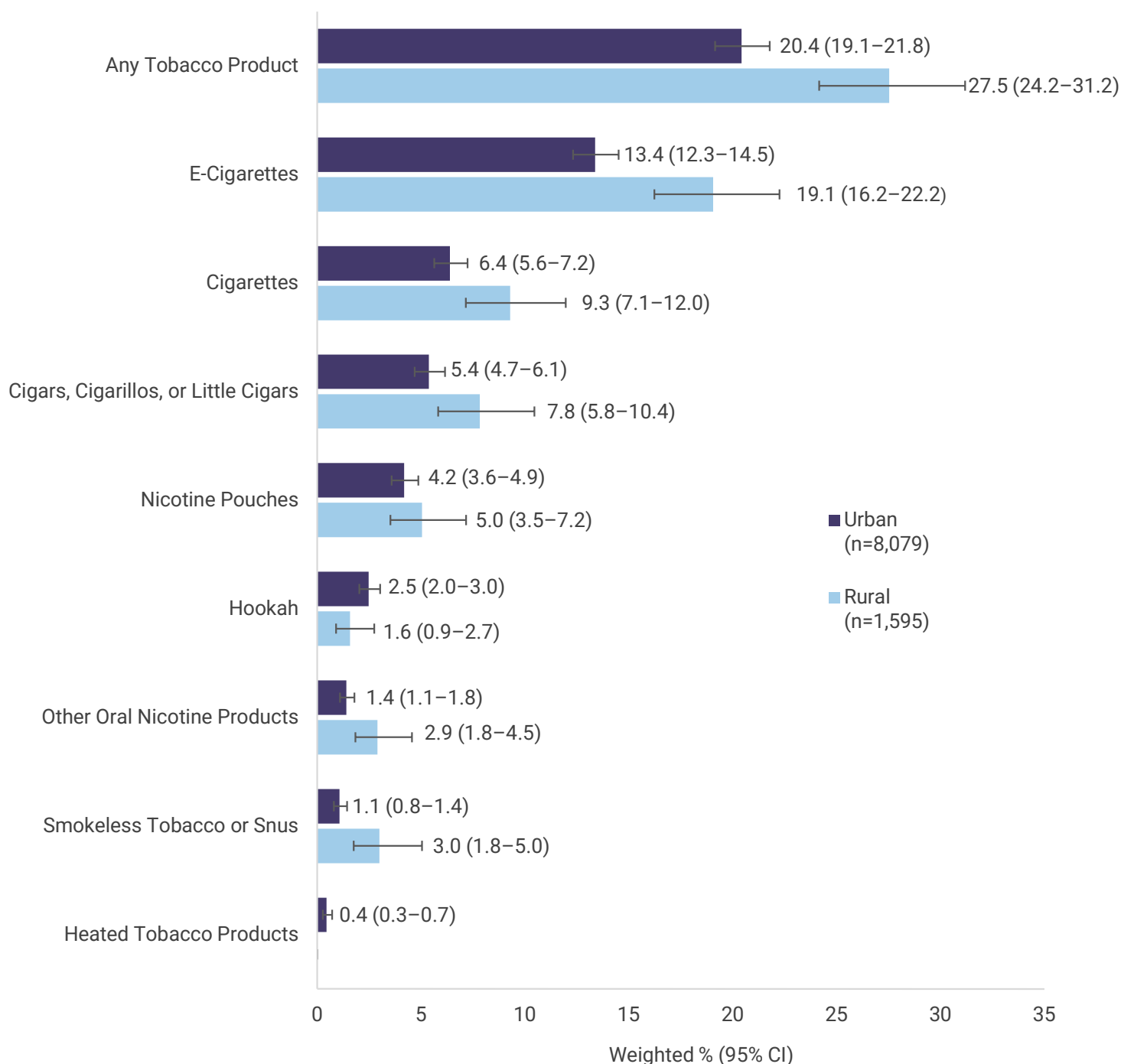


Note: Several estimates were suppressed according to National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) data presentation standards

Tobacco Product Use by Urban and Rural Residence

Any Tobacco Product, E-Cigarette, and Smokeless Tobacco Use Are Higher Among Rural Youth and Young Adults Than Urban Youth and Young Adults

Current Use of Tobacco Products by Urban/Rural Residence,
Among Youth and Young Adults 13–28 Years (N=9,674)



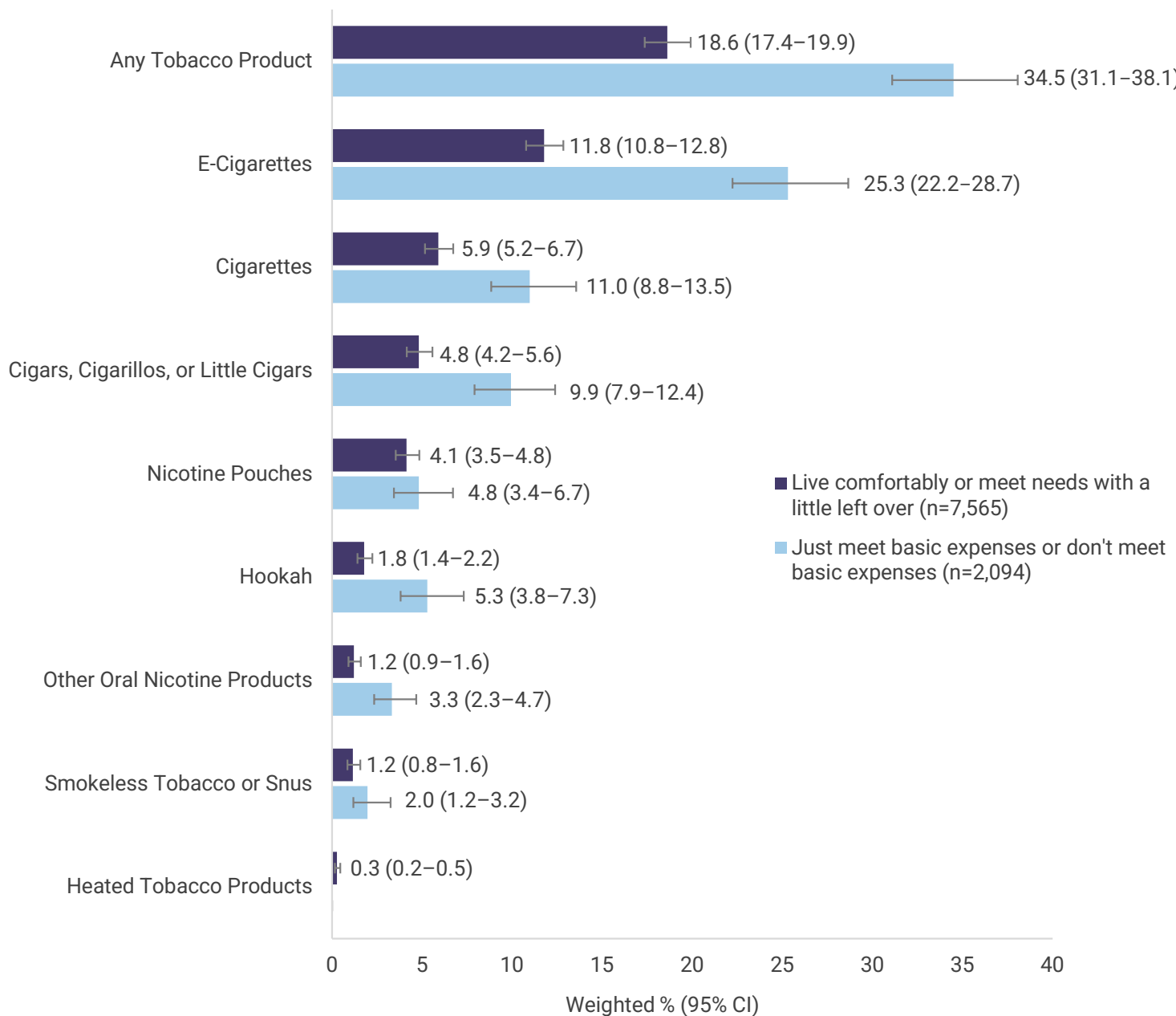
Urban and rural areas were assessed using the United States Census Bureau's definitions of Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas.

Note: Heated tobacco product use estimate among youth and young adults who reside in a rural area was suppressed according to National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) data presentation standards.

Tobacco Product Use by Perceived Finances

Tobacco Use Is Higher Among Youth and Young Adults Who Report Lower Perceived Finances Than Youth and Young Adults Who Report Higher Perceived Finances

Current Use of Tobacco Products by Perceived Finances,
Among Youth and Young Adults 13–28 Years (N=9,659)



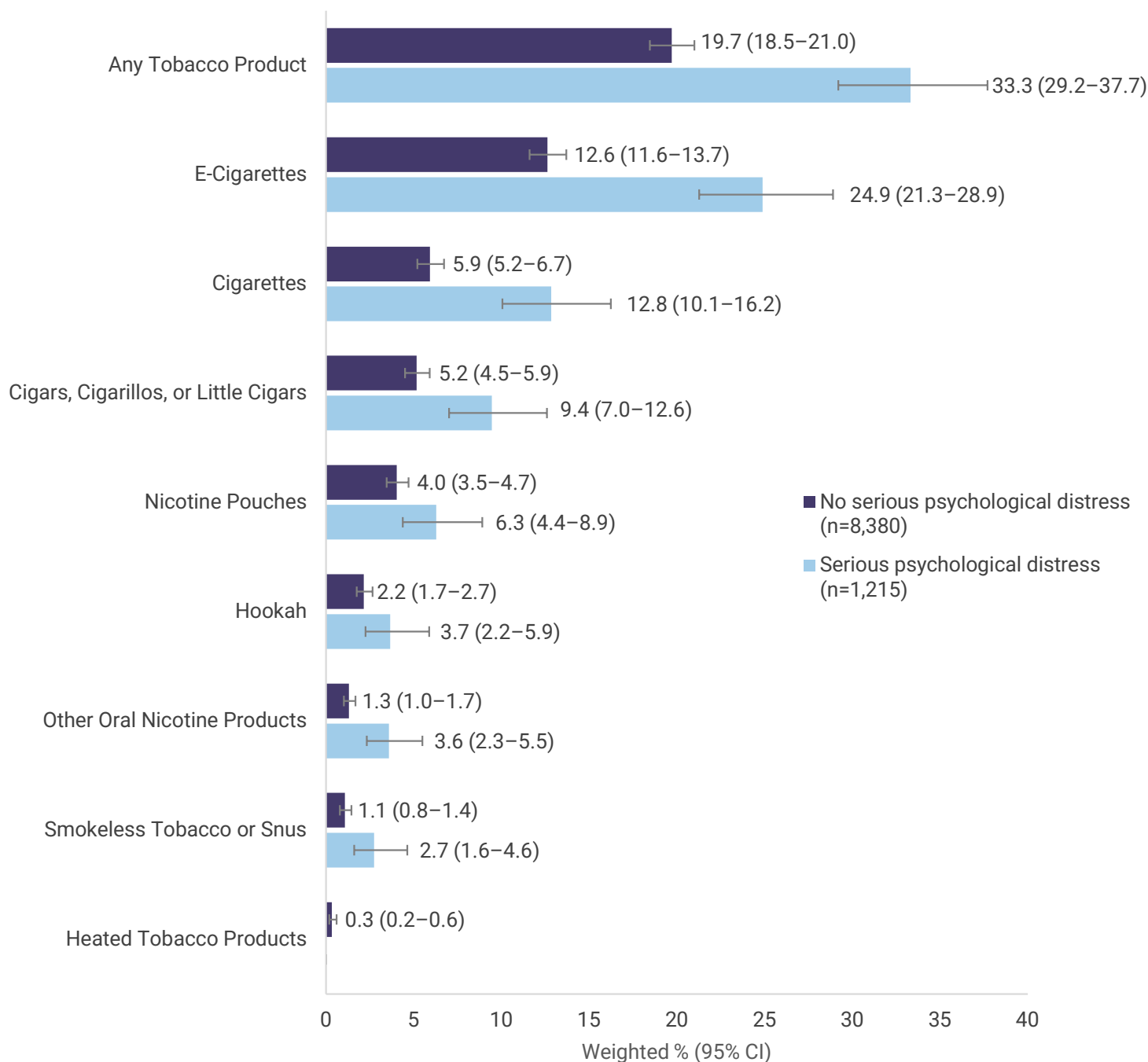
Youth and young adults were asked: "Considering all income earners in your family, how would you describe your family's overall financial situation, would you say you..." with answer choices: Live comfortably; Meet needs with a little left over; Just meet basic expenses with nothing left over; and Don't meet basic expenses. Answers were collapsed into two categories. This measure has been validated³ previously and shows strong associations with other commonly-used measures of socioeconomic status.

Note: Several (n=15) respondents did not provide data for perceived finances and have been excluded from this figure. Heated tobacco product use estimate among youth and young adults reporting they "just meet basic expenses or don't meet basic expenses" was suppressed according to National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) data presentation standards.

Tobacco Product Use by Mental Health

Tobacco Use Is Higher Among Youth and Young Adults With Serious Psychological Distress Than Youth and Young Adults Without Serious Psychological Distress

Current Use of Tobacco Products by Serious Psychological Distress (K6),
Among Youth and Young Adults 13–28 Years (N=9,595)



The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6)⁴ is a screening tool used to measure non-specific psychological distress. Scores range from 0 to 24. Scores of 0-12 reflect no serious psychological distress and scores of 13-24 reflect serious psychological distress.

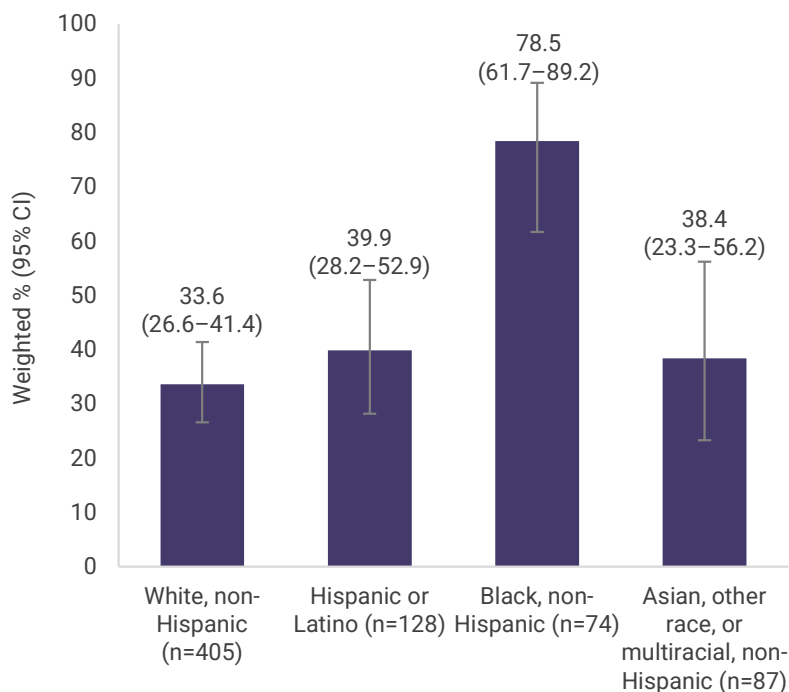
Note: Several respondents (n=79) did not provide data for the K6 and have been excluded from this figure. Heated tobacco product use estimate among youth and young adults reporting “no serious psychological distress” was suppressed according to National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) data presentation standards.

Menthol Cigarette Use by All Demographic Characteristics

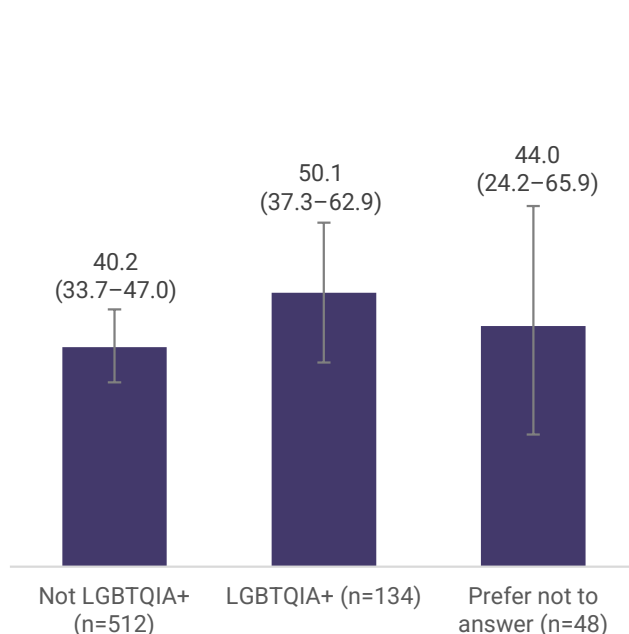
Menthol Cigarette Use Among Those Who Use Cigarettes Is Higher Among Black, Non-Hispanic Youth and Young Adults Than Other Racial Groups

Current Use of Menthol Cigarettes Among Youth and Young Adults 13–28 Years Who Currently Smoke Cigarettes, by Demographic Factors

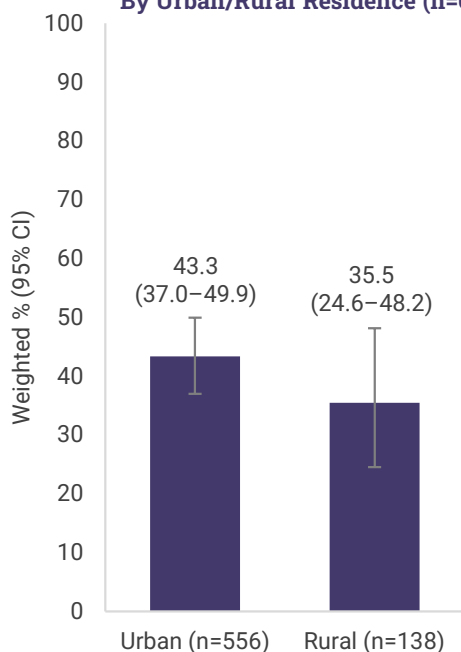
By Race and Ethnicity (n=694)



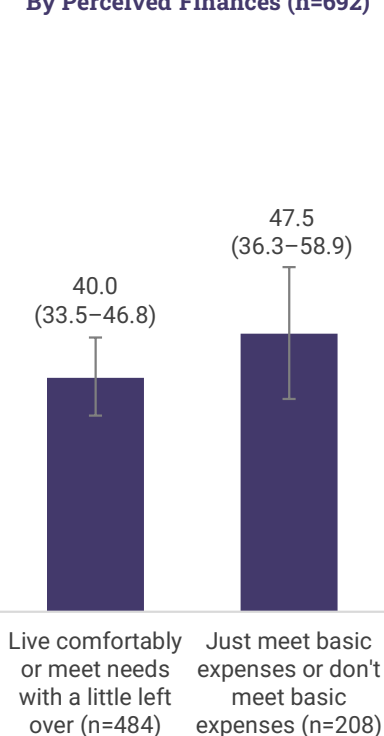
By LGBTQIA+ Identity (n=694)



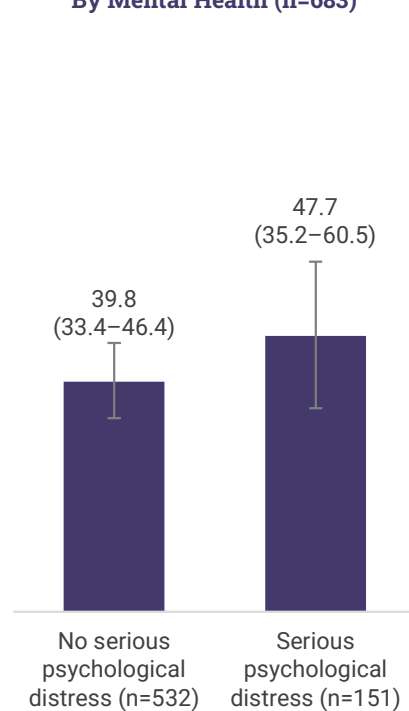
By Urban/Rural Residence (n=694)



By Perceived Finances (n=692)



By Mental Health (n=683)



TEEN+ Methods and Notes

The Tobacco Epidemic Evaluation Network (TEEN+) Study is a nationally-representative, address-based, longitudinal cohort of youth and young adults fielded semiannually since July 2022. TEEN+ enables the collection of timely estimates to evaluate behavior and perceptions of tobacco products among youth and young adults in the context of a rapidly changing policy and product landscape. Sampling design allows for the calculation of pseudo-cross-sectional nationally representative estimates at each wave.

Additional information about the TEEN+ Design is available [here](#).

References:

1. Park-Lee, E., Dutra, L. M., Cowan, H., Levine, B., Sawdey, M. D., Cooper, M., Merson, B., Valverde, R., Bradfield, B., Lennon, J., Freedman, N. D., Ambrose, B. K., & Cullen, K. A. (2026). Tobacco product use among middle and high school students in the United States: National Youth Tobacco Survey, 2025. *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ntr/ntag116>.
2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2024). Eliminating Tobacco-Related Disease and Death: Addressing Disparities: A Report of the Surgeon General. <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/2024-sgr-tobacco-related-health-disparities-full-report.pdf>
3. Williams, V. F., Smith, A. A., Villanti, A. C., Rath, J. M., Hair, E. C., Cantrell, J., Teplitskaya, L., & Vallone, D. M. (2017). Validity of a Subjective Financial Situation Measure to Assess Socioeconomic Status in US Young Adults. *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*, 23(5), 487–495. <https://doi.org/10.1097/PHH.0000000000000468>.
4. Ferro, M. A. (2019). The Psychometric Properties of the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6) in an Epidemiological Sample of Canadian Youth. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 64(9), 647–657. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0706743718818414>.

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Disclaimer: The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the CDC Foundation.

Notice: The data in this brief are preliminary and subject to revision.