

Results of the
Community Attitudes Survey
Springfield, MA
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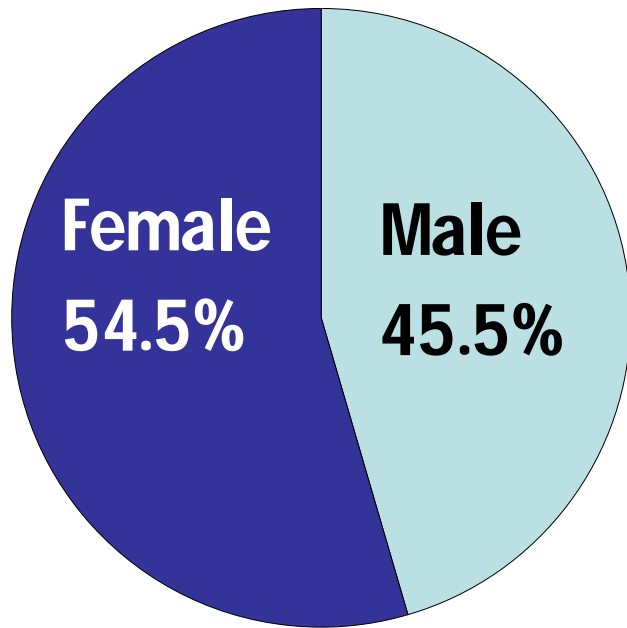
The Community Attitudes study

- Follow-up study to the Syringe Access study (3-site comparison of HIV among IDUs in Springfield, MA, New Haven CT & Hartford CT)
- Higher self-report HIV rates among Springfield IDUs compared to CT IDUs
- Why no NEP in Springfield?

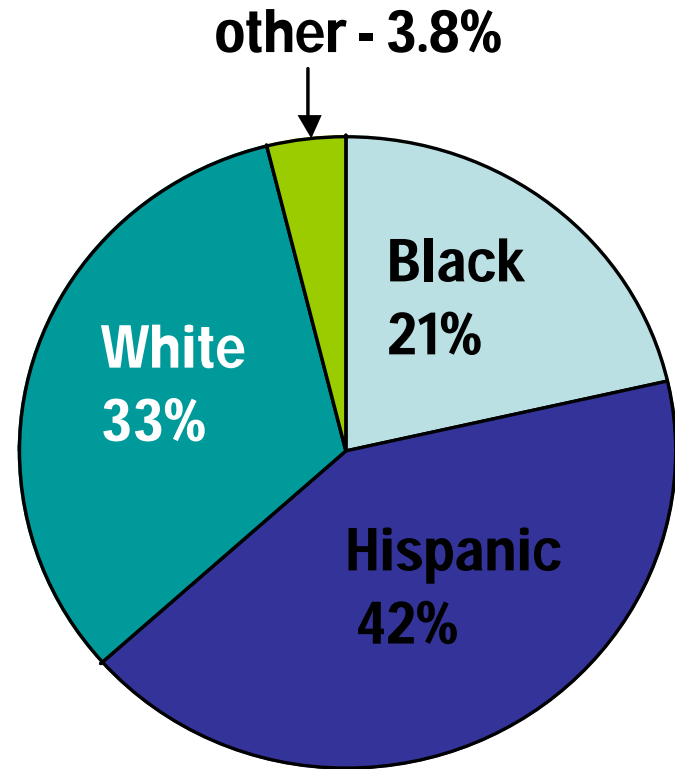
Description of the Sample

- 263 residents of 5 Springfield neighborhoods selected to vary by ethnicity and income
- Random household sample (50/neighborhood)
- Responded in person to an 8-page [10-minute] questionnaire about knowledge and attitudes toward HIV and needle exchange, administered in English or Spanish according to respondent's preference
- Respondents received a \$5 McDonald's gift certificate.

Sample Demographics (n=264)

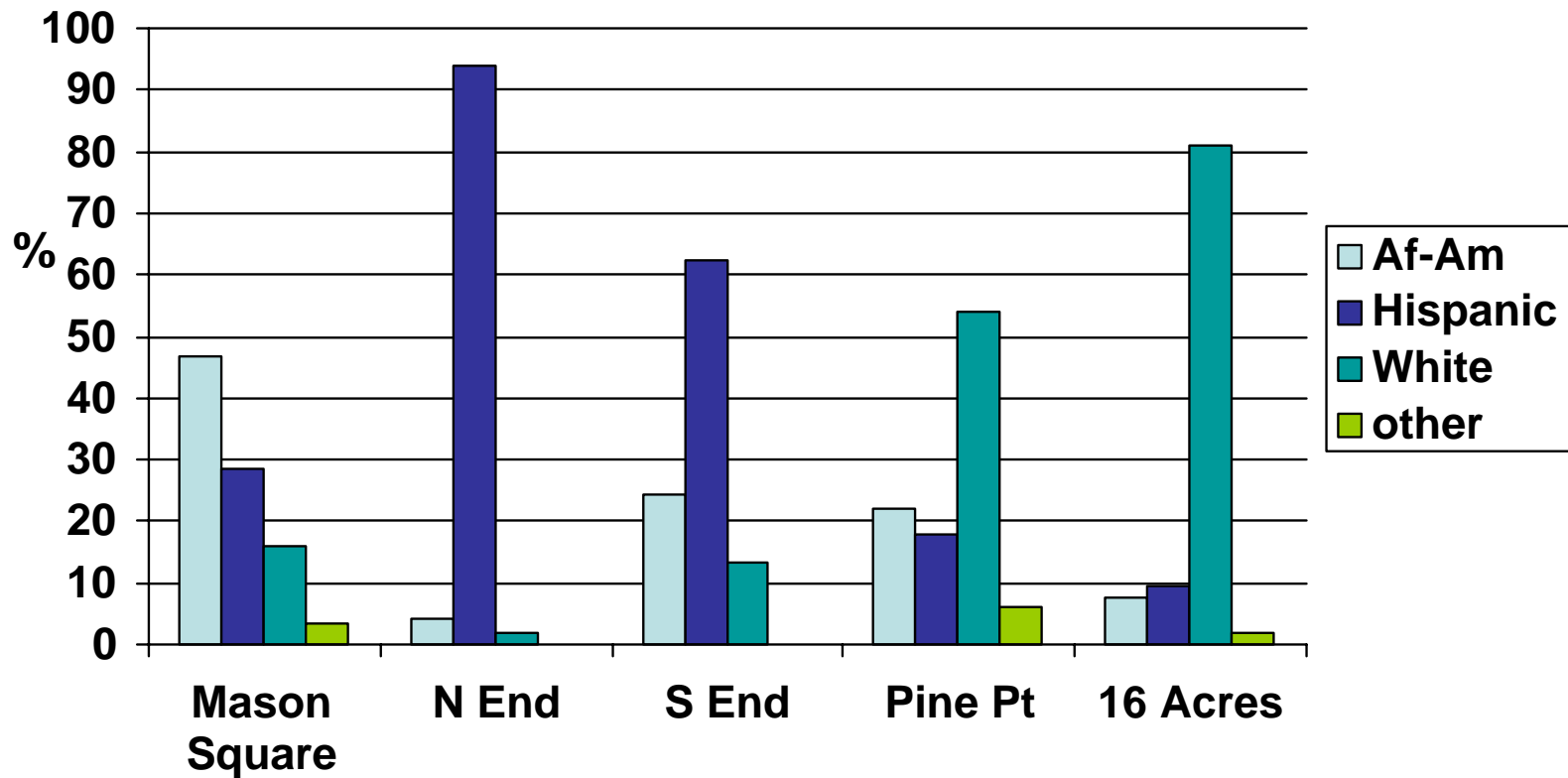


Gender

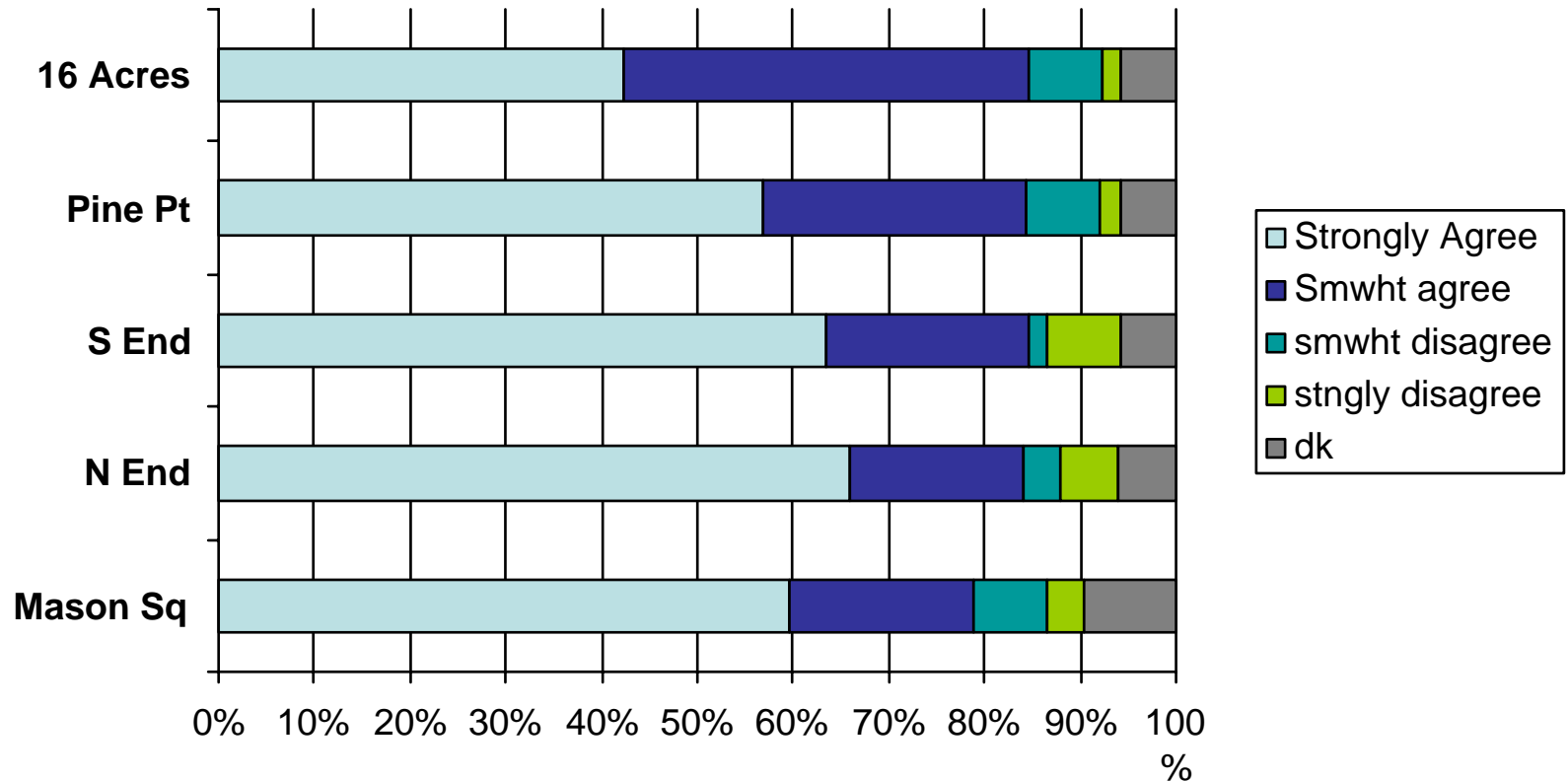


Ethnicity

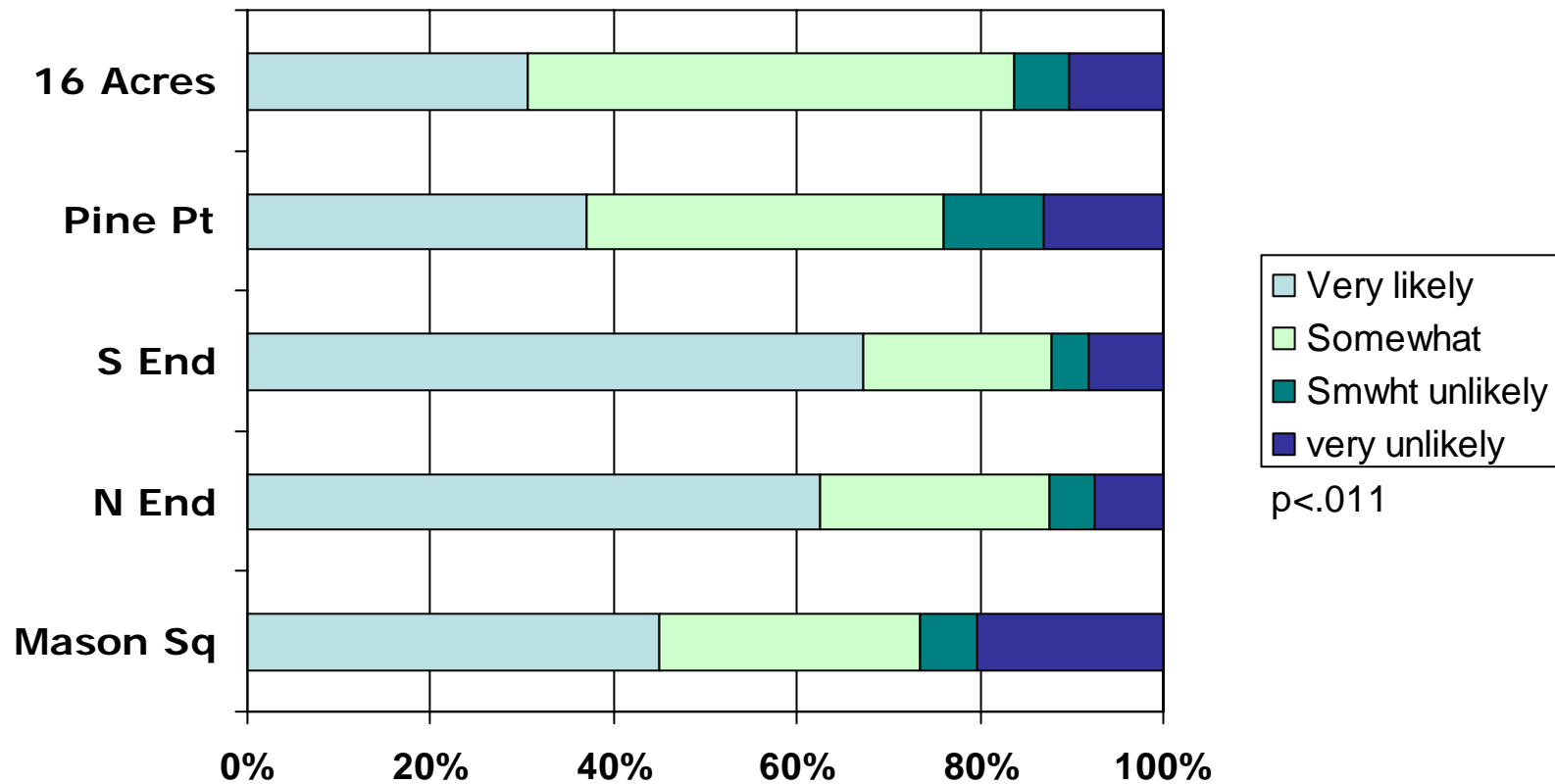
Ethnicity by Neighborhood



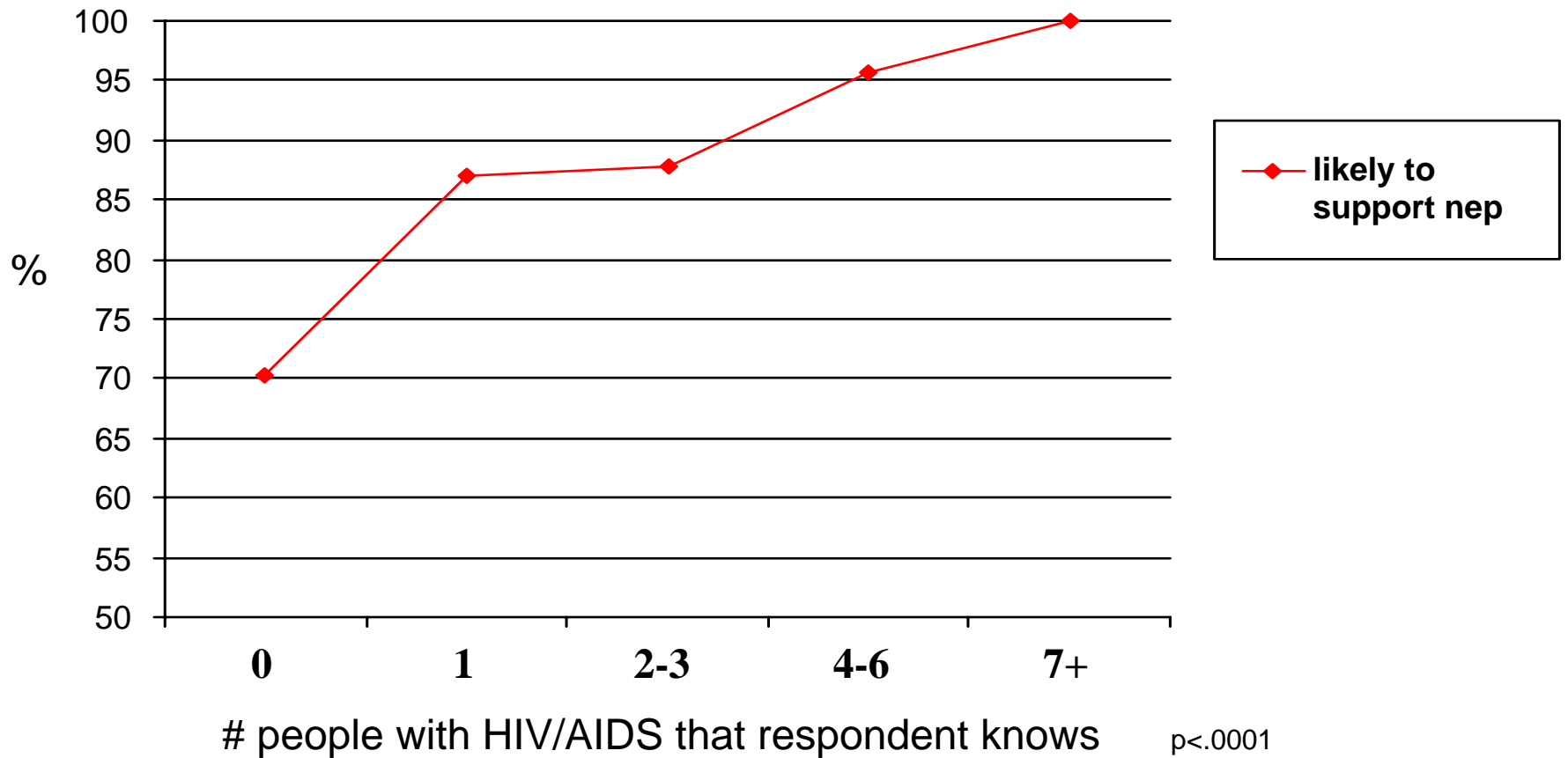
“AIDS is a big problem in my community”



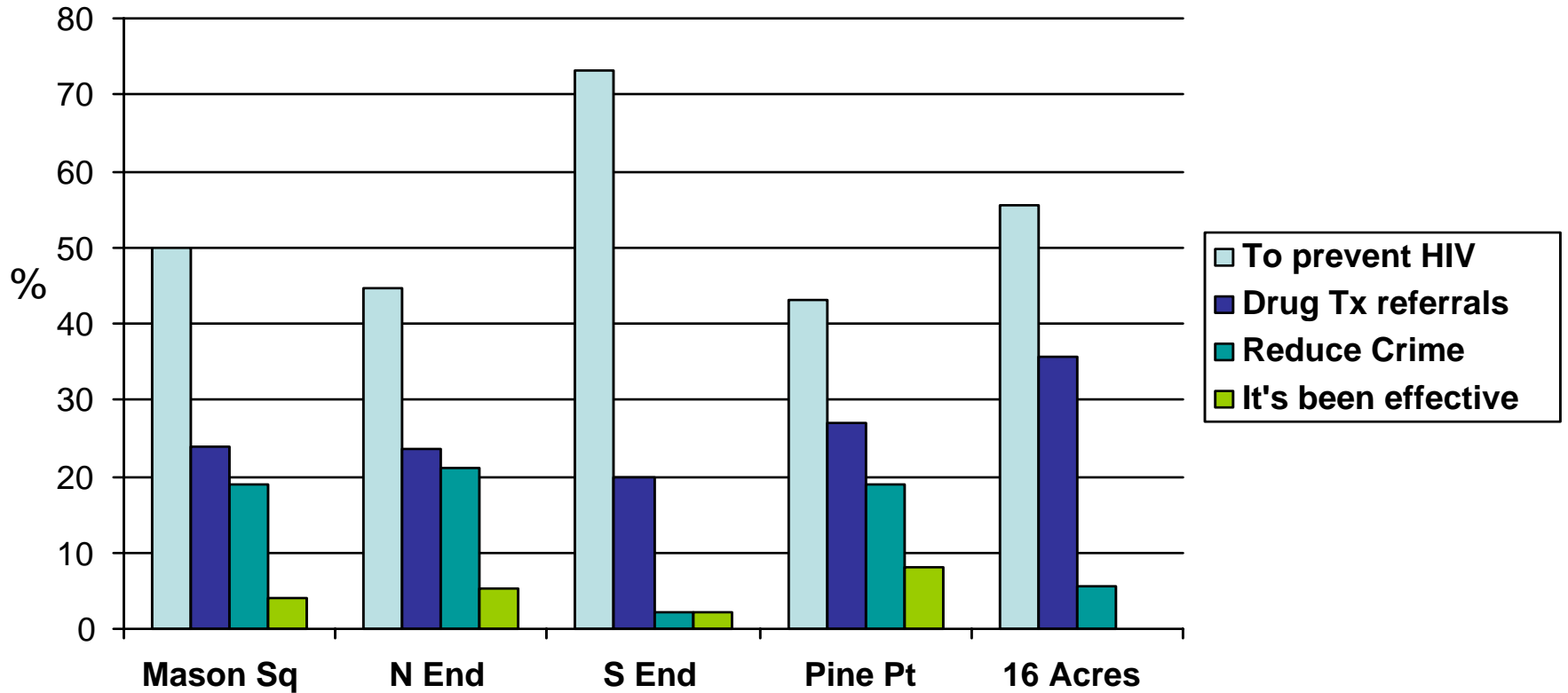
Support for Needle Exchange



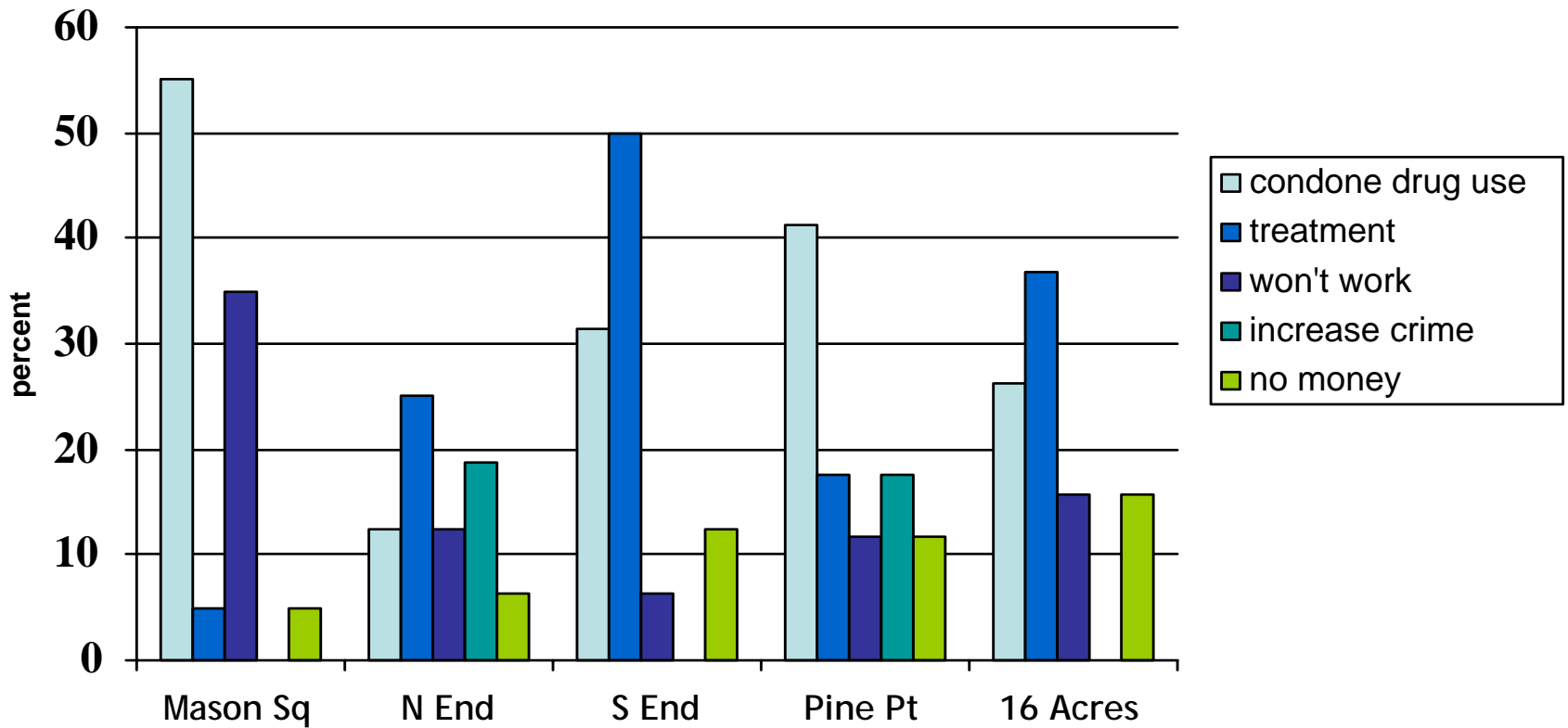
Support by # of people known with HIV



Why support NEP



Why oppose NEP



IDU Focus Groups

- We conducted 5 focus groups with current users in Mason Square, the North End & the South End/6 Cnrs.
- Many people reported receiving HIV prevention messages **only** from other users
- People were well connected with services, but received HIV testing/prevention info only once they were at an agency/clinic - few people encountered outreach workers around town

User Focus Groups, cont.

- Avg # uses per syringe = **6** (conservative)
 - repeated syringe use increases the risk of HIV and hepatitis infection
- People had between 1-3 syringe sources
- People chose a van over an office 19-12
 - Confidentiality is an issue, plus convenience/ accessibility

Summary of Findings

- The majority of Springfield residents express clear support for NEP
- Support is strongest among Hispanics and weakest among whites
- The more people you know with HIV, the more likely you are to support NEP
- CBO utilization is associated with support

Recommendations for advocates

- Emphasize **evidence of effectiveness** when speaking to BOTH opponents AND supporters
- **Recognize** differing concerns of community members (e.g., crack cocaine)
- Highlight **links to drug treatment** and form coalitions with treatment providers