2026 Broker ICHRA Survey Report

How brokers are positioning for ICHRA's next chapter

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Takeaways

Long-term conviction held steady.

92.8% believe ICHRA adoption will increase over the next five years. (And 30.4% say will become a major part of the landscape.)

Nearly half of brokers now sell ICHRA.

47.5% have at least one client on ICHRA. Of those, nearly 1 in 4 have scaled to 11+ ICHRA clients.

Plan quality perception remains the top objection.

Over half (54.3%) cited individual market quality as the most common hesitation they hear from employers.

Brokers trust that employees can choose for themselves.

84.5% agree employees can select the best plan for their needs with the proper tools and support.

Cost control drives adoption.

76.3% say cost control is the #1 benefit clients see from ICHRA. 82.3% say clients will prioritize cost reduction in their next renewal.

AI believers are more bullish on ICHRA.

83.4% believe AI will transform benefits within two years. Those AI believers are 4.6x more likely to expect ICHRA to become mainstream.

About the survey

Six years after its January 2020 launch, ICHRA entered 2026 under a cloud of uncertainty. Enhanced premium tax credits expired at the end of 2025, triggering an average 26% premium increase nationwide and sparking doubts about ICHRA's future.

Meanwhile, employers continued to grapple with double-digit group plan renewals, and brokers faced mounting pressure to find cost-effective alternatives for increasingly budget-constrained clients.

Against this backdrop, we conducted our second annual broker survey in Q1 2026, expanding our sample to over 200 benefits brokers nationwide — double the size of our 2025 survey. Respondents include both active ICHRA advisors and brokers evaluating the model, providing a representative view of how the broader market is responding to ICHRA as it matures.

This report explores how broker sentiment has evolved, what's driving continued optimism despite market headwinds, and what successful brokers are doing differently as ICHRA moves from experimental strategy to proven solution.

Who we heard from

200+
respondents nationwide

Respondents must sell ICHRA
or
Respondents must be familiar with ICHRA

1

The state of adoption

92.8% of brokers

believe ICHRA adoption will increase over the next five years.

This is consistent with last year's survey data (92.6%).

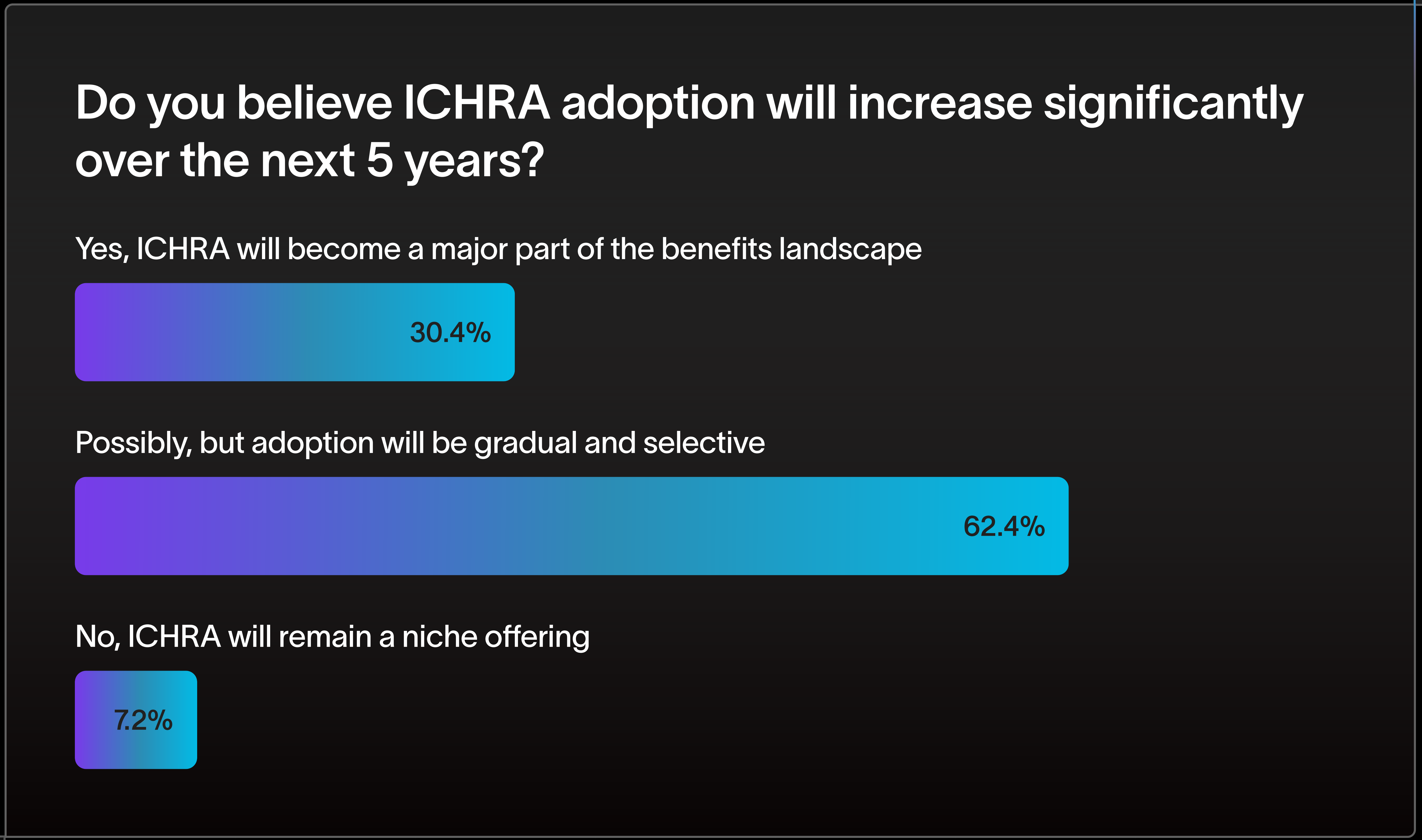
Tax credits expired. Premiums spiked.

But conviction held steady.

The question isn't if. It's how fast.

Brokers aren't doubting ICHRA's viability.

But they are cautiously optimistic about its pace of growth.



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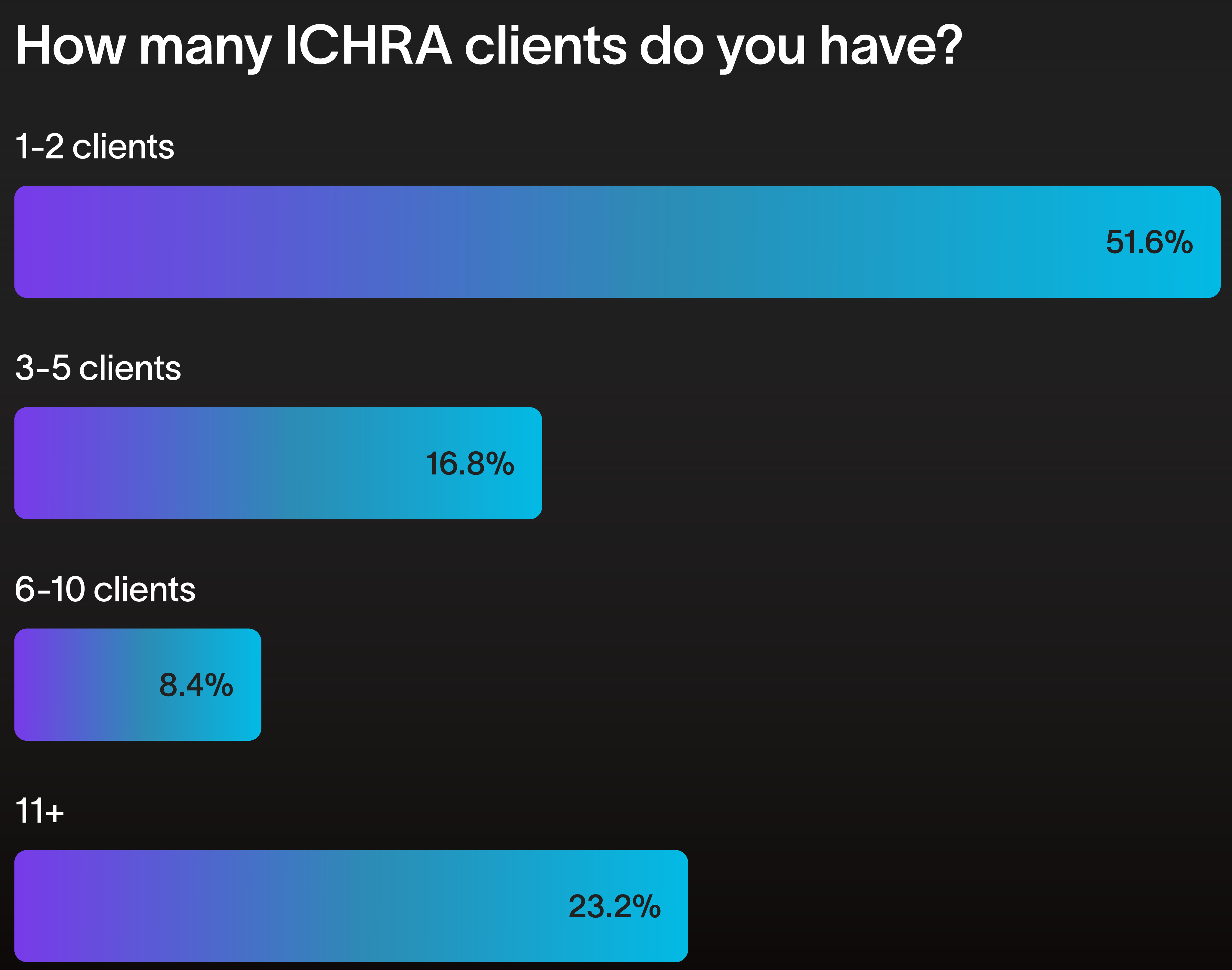
47.5% of brokers are actively selling ICHRA.

Of those, many are still testing the waters.

But nearly a quarter have scaled to 11+ clients on ICHRA.



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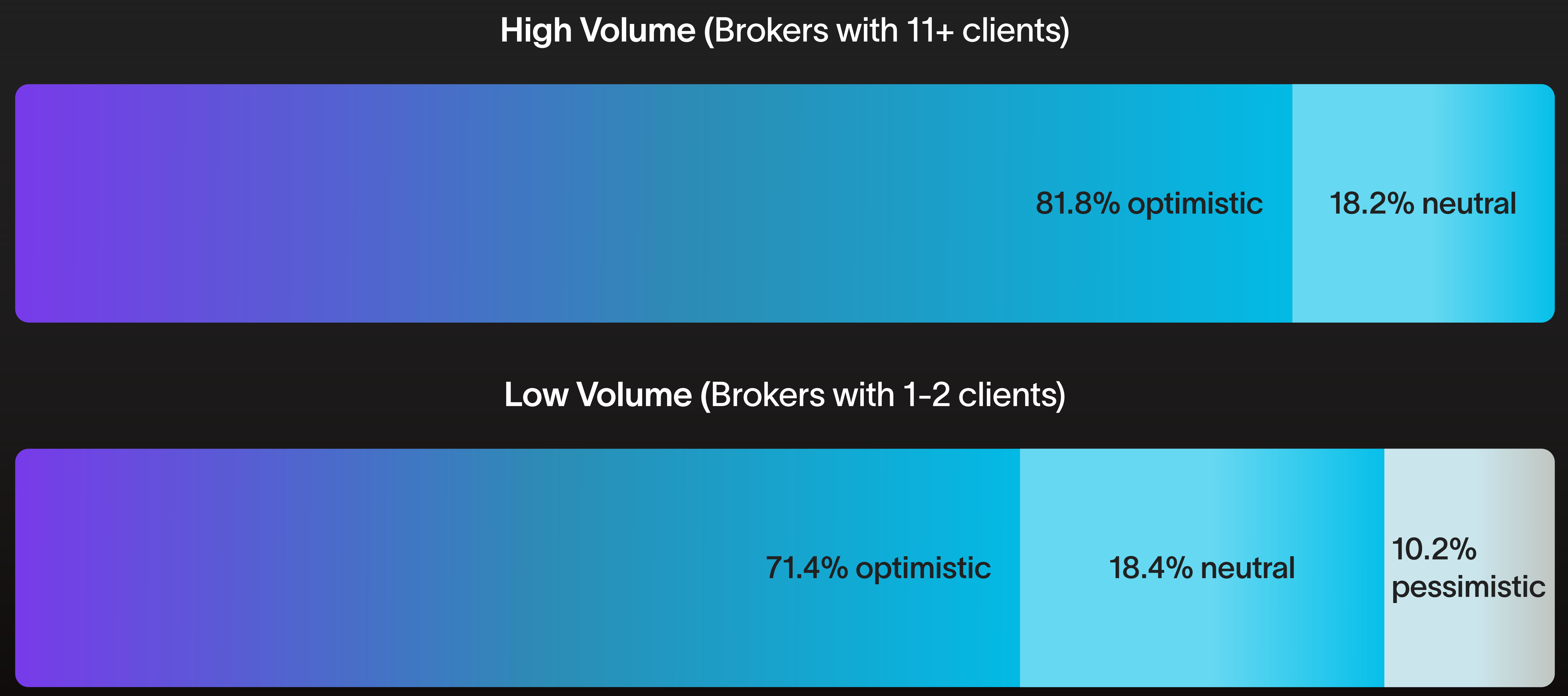
The more ICHRA they sell, the more optimistic they are about ICHRA's future.

This isn't coincidence. These brokers have moved past theoretical concerns into practical experience.

They've seen the model work, overcome client objections, and built repeatable processes.

Which best describes your outlook for your firm's ICHRA business in 2026?



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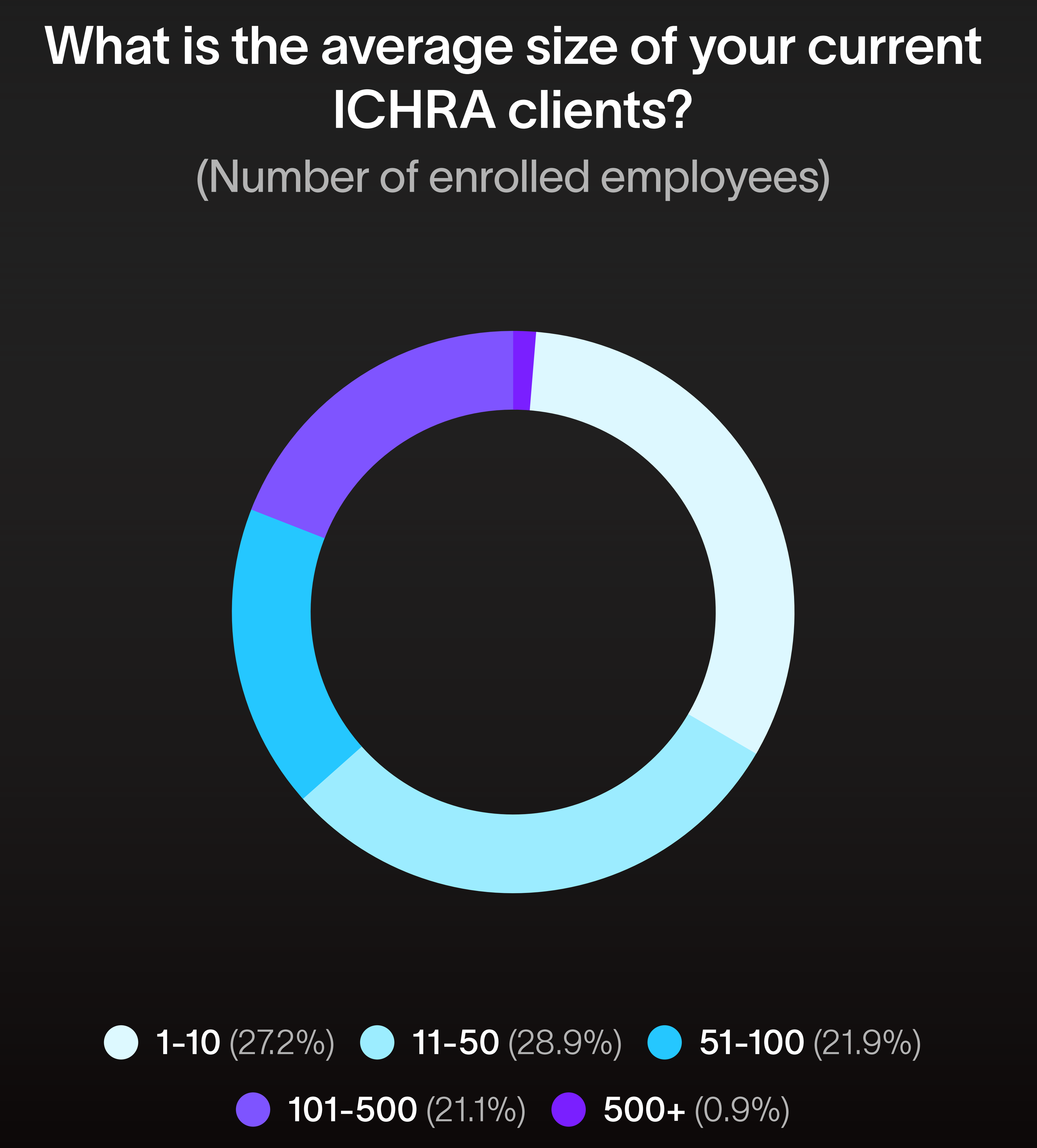
ICHRA continues to find its strongest foothold in the small to mid-market, where traditional group health insurance is most strained.

Compared with last year's survey responses, the 101-500 segment grew by 13.4 percentage points, while the 11-50 "sweet spot" declined significantly (-20.3 percentage points).

The growth in 101-500 signals that brokers are successfully implementing ICHRA with larger employers — and we expect this trend to continue up-market as ICHRA successes become more mainstream.

In other words, ICHRA isn't just for small employers. Different employer sizes find different value in the model, and this growth confirms brokers are matching the solution to the need.



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Why employers are choosing ICHRA

Employer priorities have shifted.
Cost control, reduced risk, and employee choice aren't "nice-to-haves" anymore. And ICHRA checks every box.

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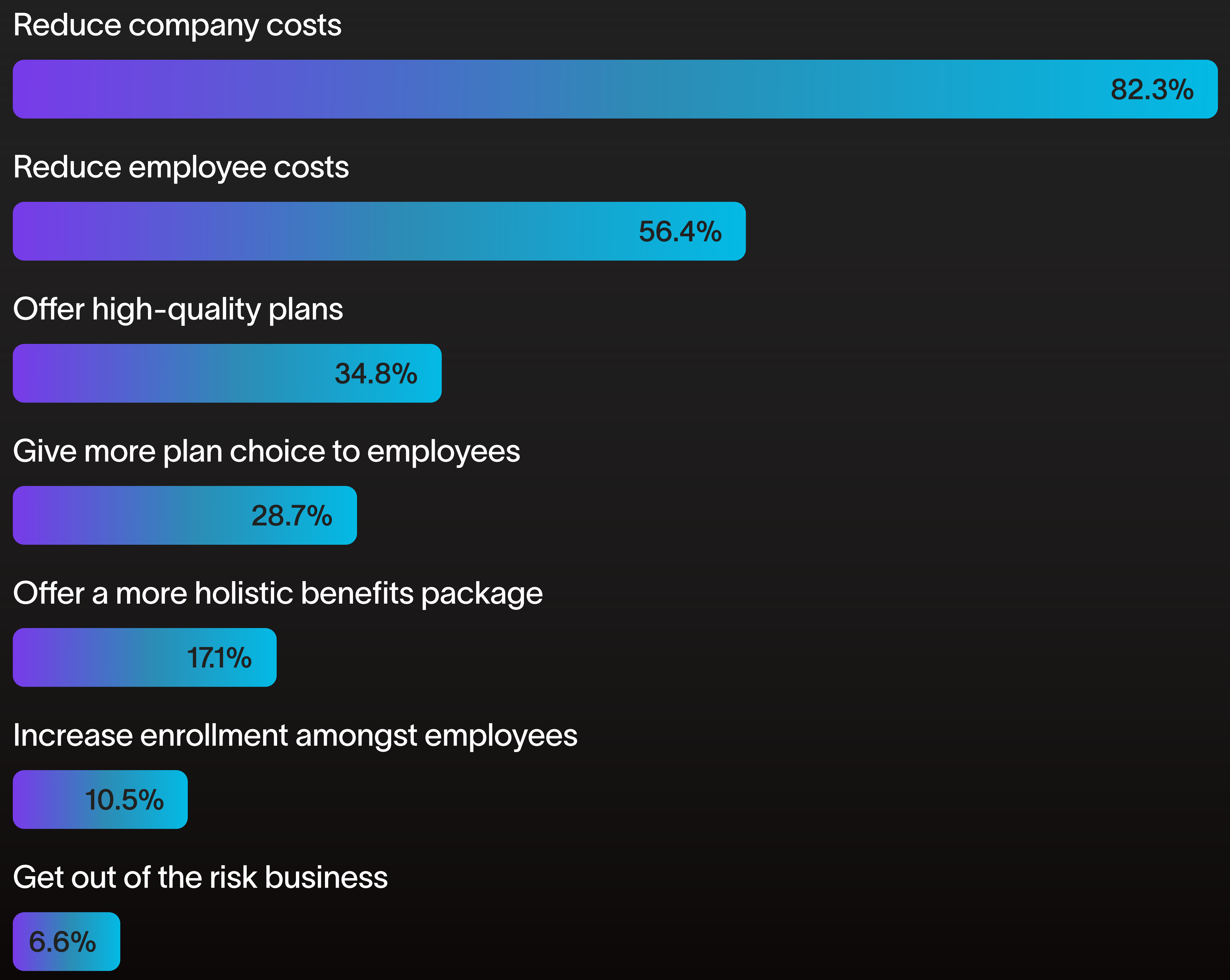
No one wants to choose between the health of their employees and the health of their business.

But with average family group plan costs rising 26% since 2020, many employers are looking for solutions.

What do you believe your clients will prioritize during their next renewal?

Select all that apply



Some employers want control. Others want cost savings.
And others want their HR team's time back.

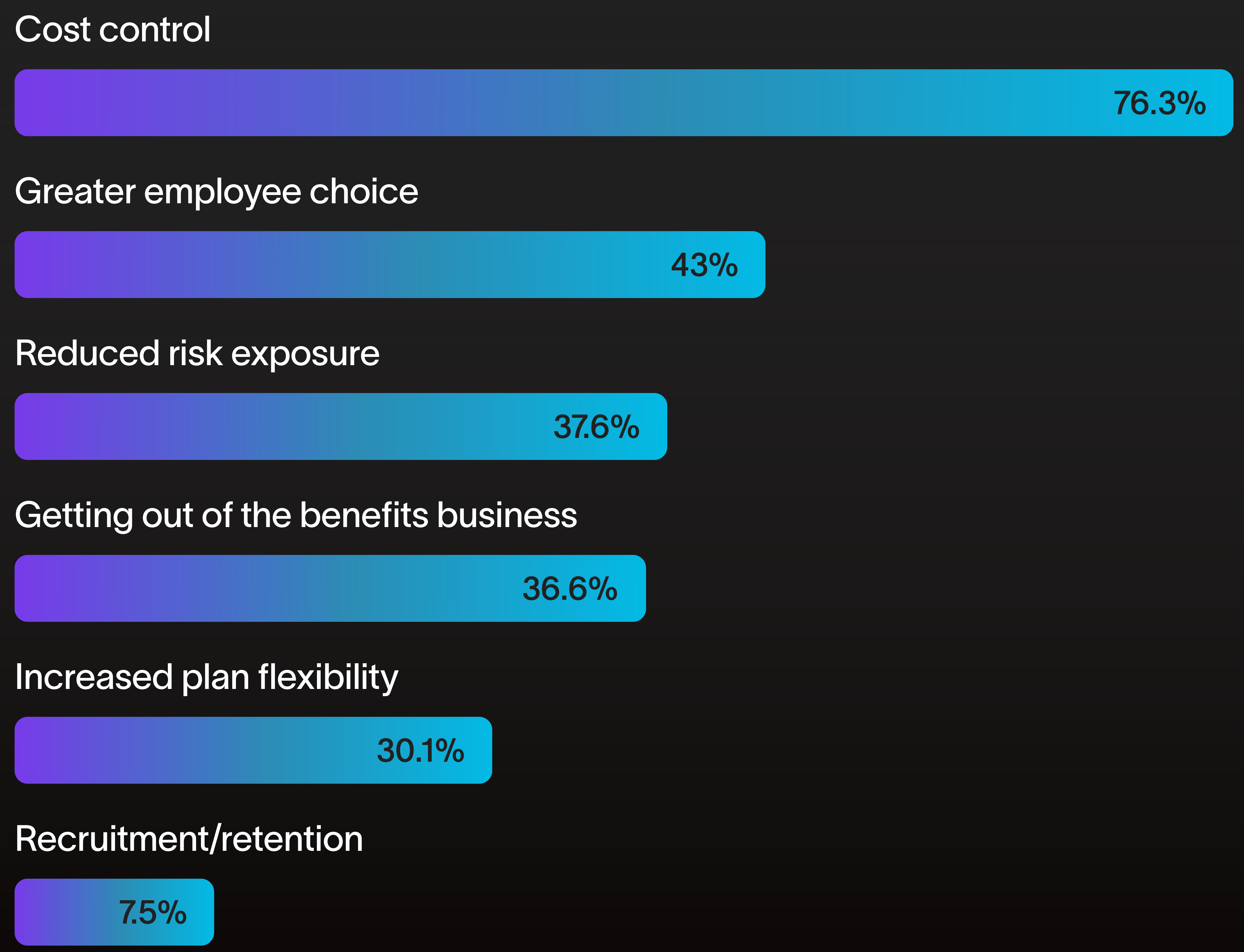
ICHRA's strength is that it solves different problems for different employers.

A 50-person startup escaping unaffordable group rates has different priorities than a 500-person company tired of playing benefits administrator.

The model adapts. That's why it's working across such a wide range of use cases.

What are the biggest benefits your clients are seeing when they turn to ICHRA?

Select all that apply



82% agree that cost reduction is a priority for employers.

76% agree that cost control is one of ICHRA's biggest benefits.

They get to set their own budget. They don't have to worry about being hit with a surprise double-digit renewal increase. And they can feel confident that their employees are getting coverage that fits their needs.

ICHRA isn't a universal solution. But for those prioritizing cost control and budget predictability, it's a conversation worth having.

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43% agree that greater employee choice is a defining benefit of ICHRA.

But that only matters if employees can choose the best plans for their needs.

Open enrollment can be confusing enough in a traditional group setup with 3-4 plan choices. But choosing between 50-100 plans?

That's why employee education and support are non-negotiable. With them, employees make informed decisions that meet their needs.

With proper education and support, employees are capable of selecting the best health insurance for themselves.

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Barriers & objections

ICHRA has proven itself effective to thousands of employers.
Conviction is high. Scale is possible.
So what’s holding brokers back?

Most objections boil down to three themes:

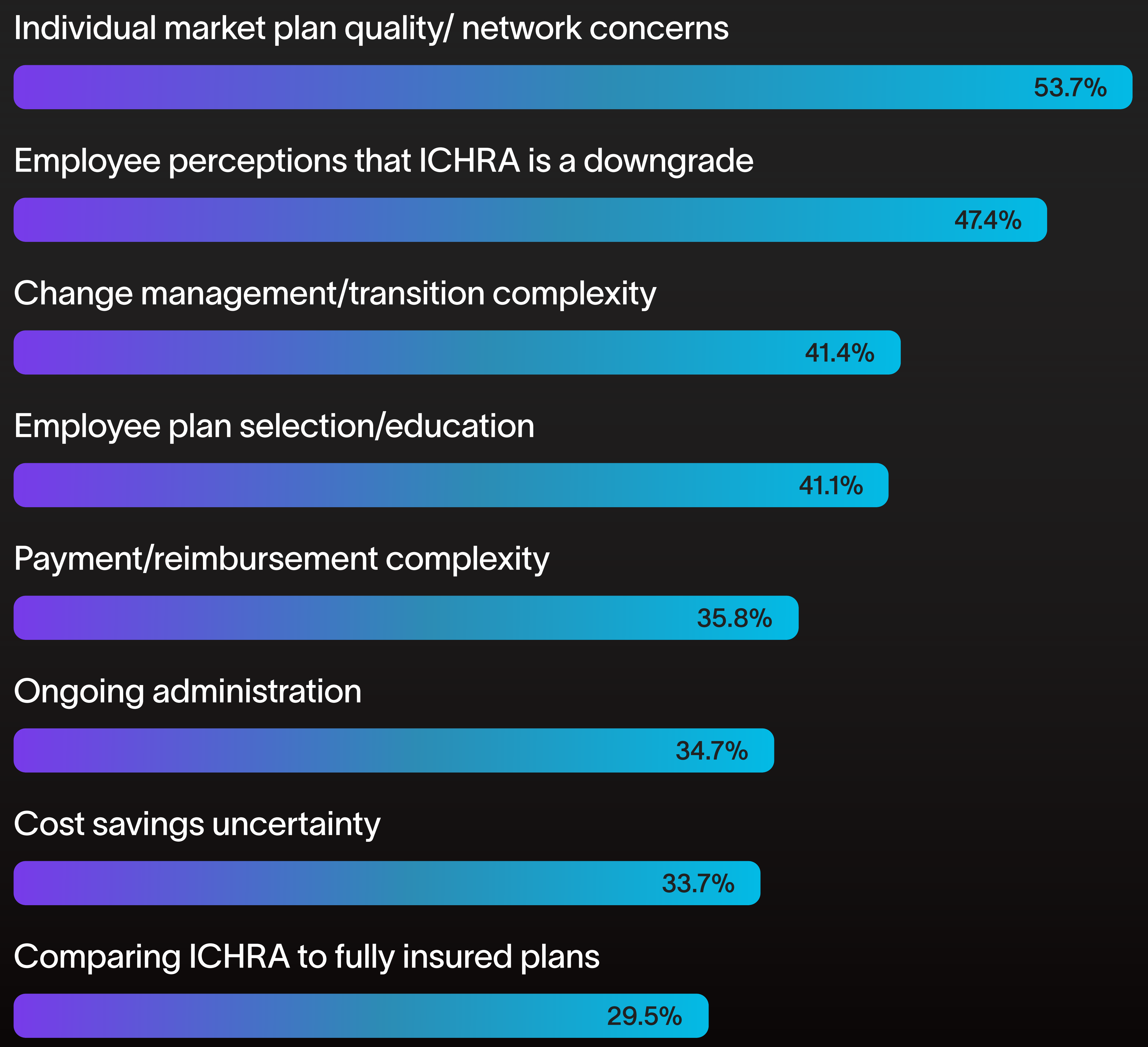
- Confidence in the individual market
- Confidence in employees' ability to choose
- Confidence in the transition process

But none of these objections reflect the performance of ICHRA itself — they reflect outdated assumptions and fear of moving away from the status quo.

Brokers who address these concerns head-on, bring clarity to networks and change management, and provide strong employee education see those objections fade quickly.

When it comes to considering ICHRA, which objections do you hear most from clients?

Select all that apply



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54% cite individual market plan quality as one of the most common objections.

Concerns about individual market quality come from comparing the ICHRA ecosystem to traditional group plans. It's an apples-to-oranges comparison that makes the individual market seem unfamiliar... but not necessarily inferior.

The reality is that the individual market has evolved faster in the last five years than group plans in the last fifteen. Carriers like Oscar and Ambetter are investing heavily in crucial aspects of ICHRA: network design, chronic-condition programs, and improved member experience.

The solution is a mindset shift: evaluate these plans based on whether or not they fit your people — not whether they look like the group plans you've always known.

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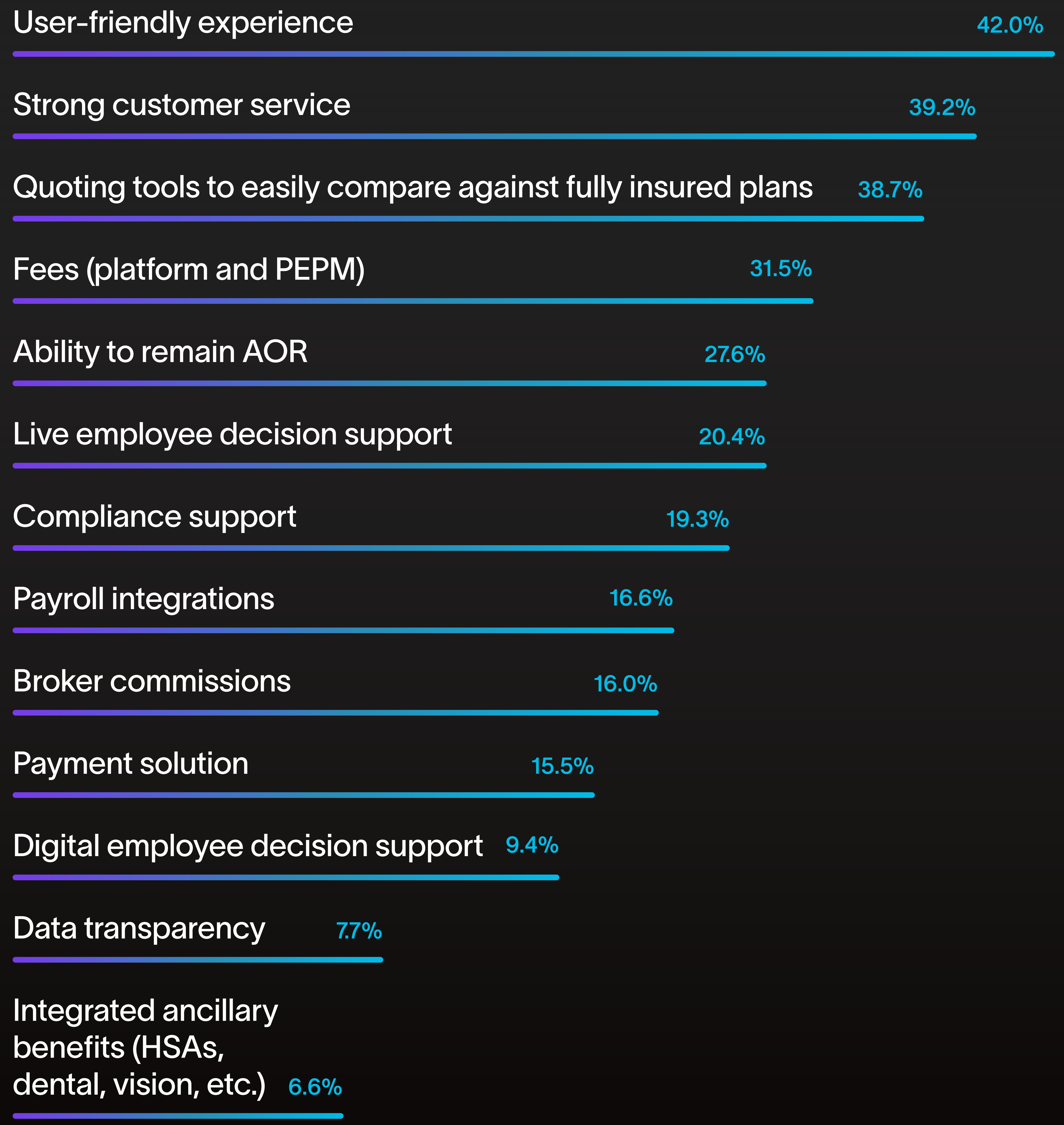
Of the top challenges brokers face with ICHRA, most aren't issues with the model. They are issues with the partner.

All ICHRA partners do not provide the same level of support, technology, or service.

Choosing the right partner is a make-or-break moment — not only when it comes to providing the best experience for employers and employees, but also in terms of broker support.

What do you prioritize when it comes to selecting an ICHRA provider?

Select your top 3



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4 Future outlook

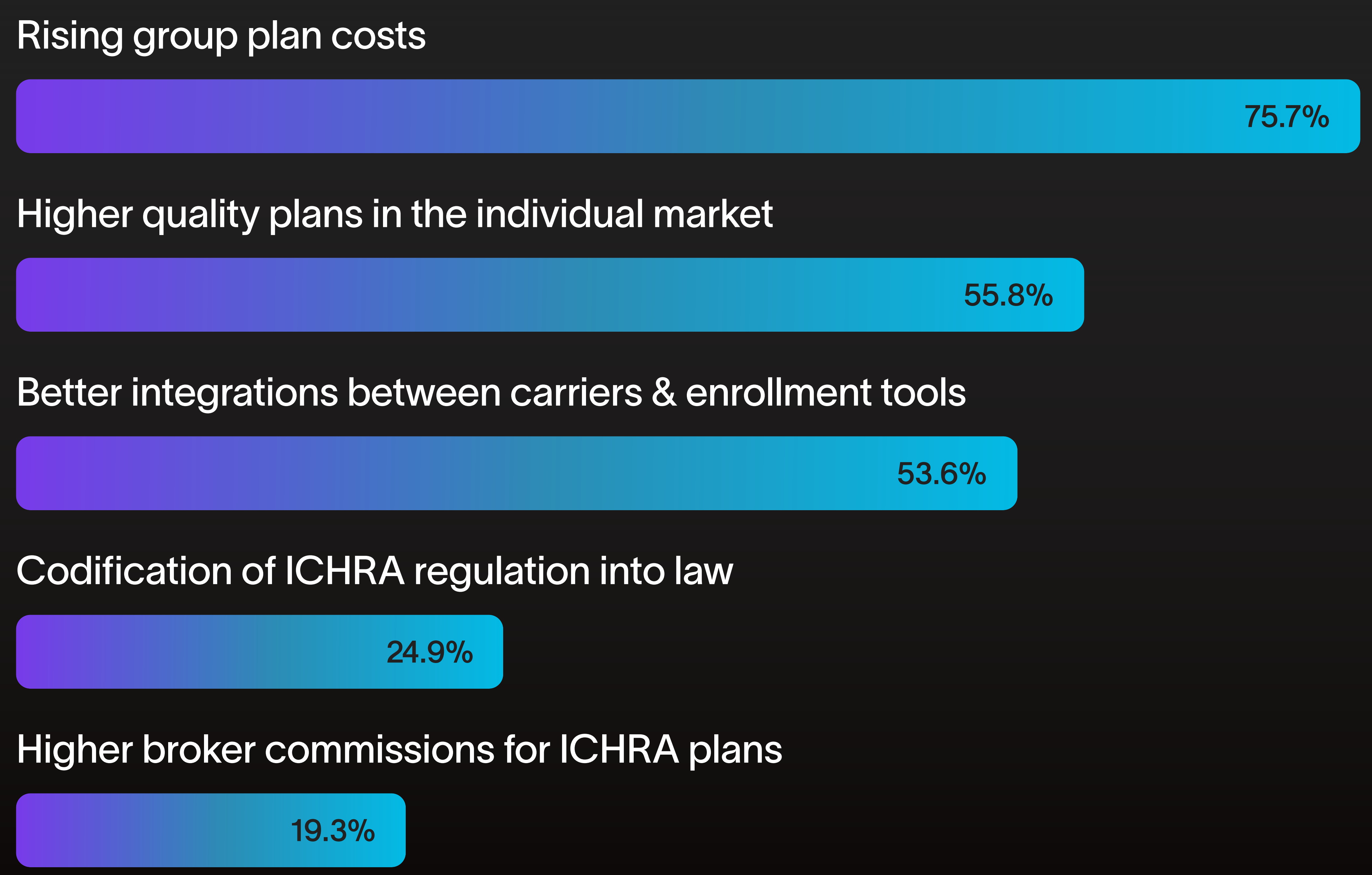
Market dynamics, tech innovation, and broker behavior all point in the same direction: ICHRA adoption is set to rise.

Rising costs.
Improving technology.
Significant industry investment.
Evolving policy.

It's all creating a window of opportunity for ICHRA adoption.

What industry drivers do you believe will most directly accelerate ICHRA adoption?

Select all that apply.



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83% agree that AI & automation will play a significant role in benefits advising within the next two years.

These AI believers are also 4.6x more likely to have a more positive outlook on ICHRA's growth.

AI is transforming benefits. And ICHRA is uniquely positioned to benefit.

Why? Because the barriers holding ICHRA back — employee education, plan comparison, ongoing administration — are the same problems AI can solve easily.

The brokers who embrace this tech aren't just more optimistic about AI — they're more optimistic about ICHRA.

By choosing partners that combine AI + ICHRA, brokers are rewriting what's possible in benefits delivery.

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23% of brokers selling ICHRA have scaled to 11+ clients on ICHRA.

Top performers aren't just selling ICHRA — they're building businesses around it:

- They're 17 percentage points more likely to prioritize user-friendly experience when selecting an ICHRA provider (50% vs 32.9%)
- They prioritize broker commissions nearly twice as often (31.8% vs 16.3%)
- They're 3x more likely to prioritize integrated ancillary benefits (18.2% vs 6.1%)
- They're 22 points less likely to prioritize quoting tools (13.6% vs 36.4%)

They prioritize operational efficiency over quoting tools, sustainable economics over platform fees, and comprehensive benefits over medical-only solutions. They've identified what scales and choose partners who enable it.

Six years in, the question has shifted from "Will ICHRA work?" to "How fast will it scale?"

The data tells a clear story:

- Heavy headwinds (including tax credit expiration) didn't hold ICHRA back.
- Nearly half of brokers now sell ICHRA, with 1 in 5 selling to 11+ clients — proving the model scales.
- Cost control dominates as the value proposition — perfectly timed as 82% of clients prioritize cost reduction.
- And technology is removing the barriers that once held adoption back.

ICHRA is no longer experimental; it's proven.
With cost pressures mounting and technology enabling better experiences, ICHRA is positioned for steady, sustainable growth.

Zorro is a cutting-edge ICHRA administration platform leveraging technology to transform the way employee benefits are purchased and delivered. We give companies greater control over plan cost and quality, while empowering individuals with autonomy on their healthcare decisions.

Through advanced technology and data-driven insights, we make it easy for brokers to sell, employers to buy, and employees to engage with more affordable, predictable, and customized healthcare benefits.

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