

# 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Women

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



***SAMHSA***  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

# National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)

- NSDUH is a comprehensive household interview survey of substance use, substance use disorders, mental health, and the receipt of treatment services for these disorders in the United States.
- NSDUH is collected face-to-face by field interviewers who read less sensitive questions to respondents and transition respondents to audio computer assisted self-interviewing for sensitive items.
- NSDUH covers the civilian, noninstitutionalized population, aged 12 or older:
  - Includes: Households, college dorms, homeless in shelters, civilians on military bases
  - Excludes: Active military, long-term hospital residents, prison populations, homeless not in shelters
- Sample includes all 50 states and DC
- Approximately 67,500 persons are interviewed annually
- Data collected from January to December

# How Do We Use NSDUH?

- Provides a window into the state of substance use and mental health issues in the United States
- Helps to guide policy directions:
  - problem substances
  - prevalence of mental illness
  - intersection of substance use and mental health issues
  - provides insights that can be studied in the context of data from other agencies to help in decision-making about what types of resources are needed and where resources should be directed

# NSDUH 2017 Highlights

- Opioids epidemic:
  - New users of heroin significantly decreased relative to 2016
  - Significant decreases in pain reliever misuse were observed for all ages
  - Downward trend in heroin users
  - Estimated 2.1M with opioid use disorder
- Marijuana:
  - Significant increases in use by young adults (18-25 y.o.): past month and daily/near daily use; with significant increases in use by young adult women
  - Pregnant women using substances in greater numbers including significant increases in daily or near daily marijuana use
  - Frequent marijuana use was associated with opioid misuse, heavy alcohol use, and depression in youth 12-17 and young adults 18-25
- Young adults had increasing rates of serious mental illness, major depression, and suicidality
- Co-occurring substance use and mental disorders are common
- Major gaps in treatment received by affected individuals

# SAMHSA's Response to 2016-17 NSDUH Findings

- **2018: Launch of new approach to technical assistance and training**
- **Previous focus on technical assistance to grantees expanded to national approach**
  - ***Establishment of Clinical Support System for Serious Mental Illness***
    - National practitioner training efforts
    - Focus on appropriate use and monitoring of psychotropic medications
    - Use of clozapine in treatment refractory schizophrenia
    - Assisted outpatient treatment
  - ***Establishment of a regional system of Technology Transfer Centers throughout the U.S.***
    - Substance Abuse Prevention Technology Transfer Centers
    - Addiction Technology Transfer Centers
    - Mental Health Technology Transfer Centers with supplements for school-based services
      - Training and technical assistance tailored to needs of HHS regions
    - Native American/Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latino focus centers
  - ***Establishment of new national training/technical assistance programs***
    - State Targeted Response/State Opioid Response TA/T Program-over 1000 requests met
    - Privacy Technology Transfer Center addressing confidentiality and information sharing related to HIPAA and 42CFR
    - Eating Disorders Technology Transfer Center

# SAMHSA's Response to NSDUH Findings

- Established PCSS-Universities to embed DATA waiver training in pre-graduate education for physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants
- Expanded training and technical assistance on opioids issues in rural America through supplements to USDA Cooperative Extension programs
- Re-established the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN)
- Expanded the Suicide Prevention Lifeline network
- Public targeted messaging based on areas of concern identified in NSDUH: marijuana, methamphetamine, suicide prevention

# Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders among Adult Women Aged 18+

PAST YEAR, 2018 NSDUH, Women 18+

Among women with a substance use disorder:

**2 IN 5 (39.0% or 2.8M)** struggled with illicit drugs  
**3 IN 4 (73.5% or 5.3M)** struggled with alcohol use  
**1 IN 8 (12.5% or 897K)** struggled with illicit drugs and alcohol

Among women with a mental illness:  
**1 IN 4 (25.1% or 7.3M)** had a serious mental illness

**5.6%**  
**(7.2 MILLION)**  
People aged 18  
or older had a  
substance use  
disorder (SUD)

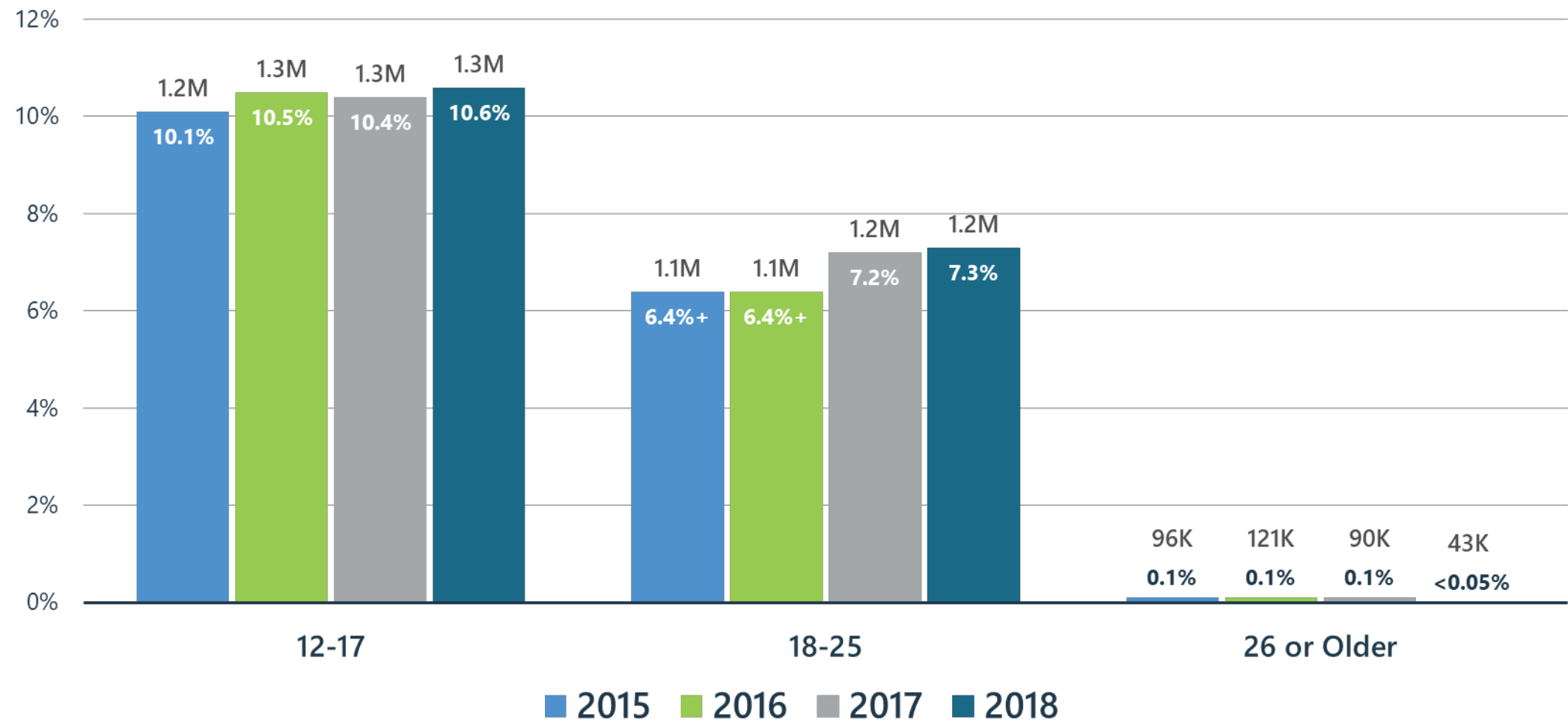
**3.4%**  
**(4.4 MILLION)**  
People 18+ had  
BOTH an SUD and  
a mental illness

**22.8%**  
**(29.3 MILLION)**  
People aged 18  
or older had a  
mental illness

In 2018, **32.1M** adult women had a mental and/or substance use disorder.

# Alcohol Initiates among Women

PAST YEAR, 2015-2018 NSDUH, Women 12+

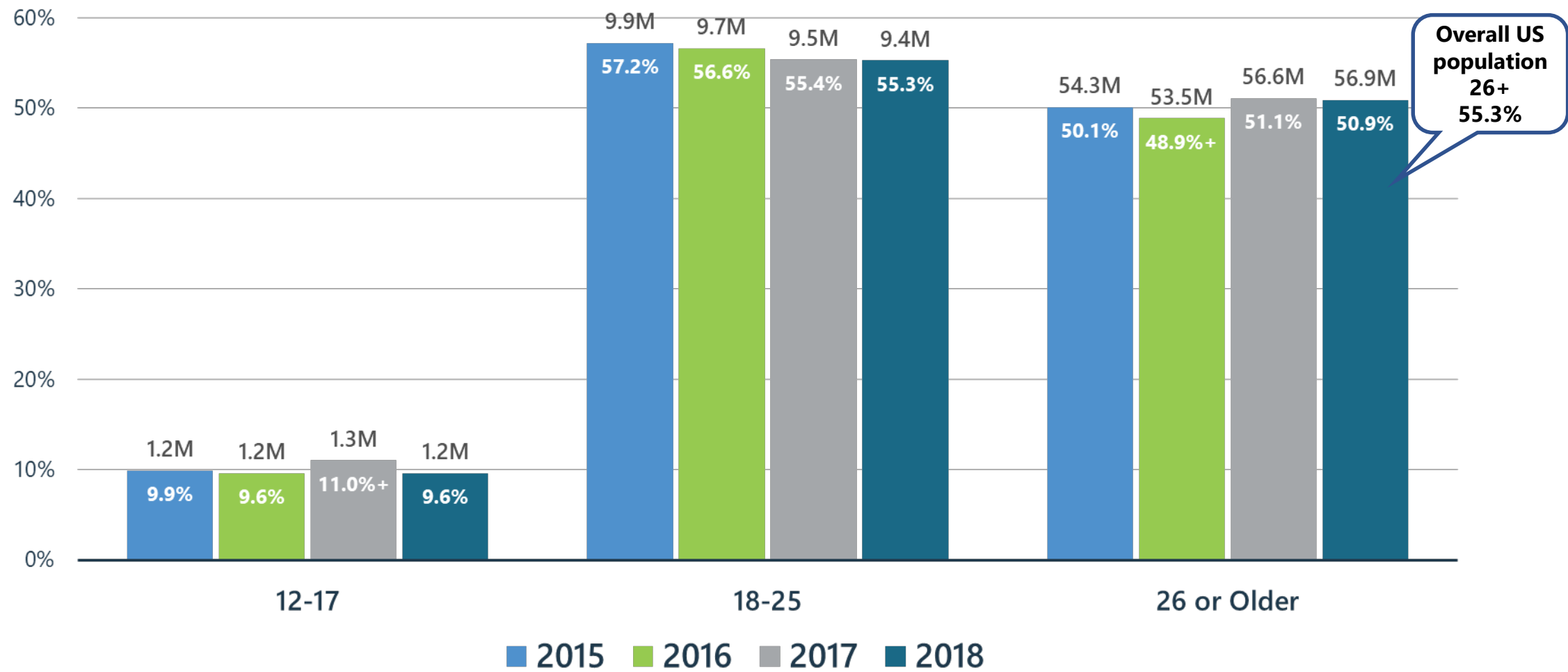


+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.



# Alcohol Use among Women

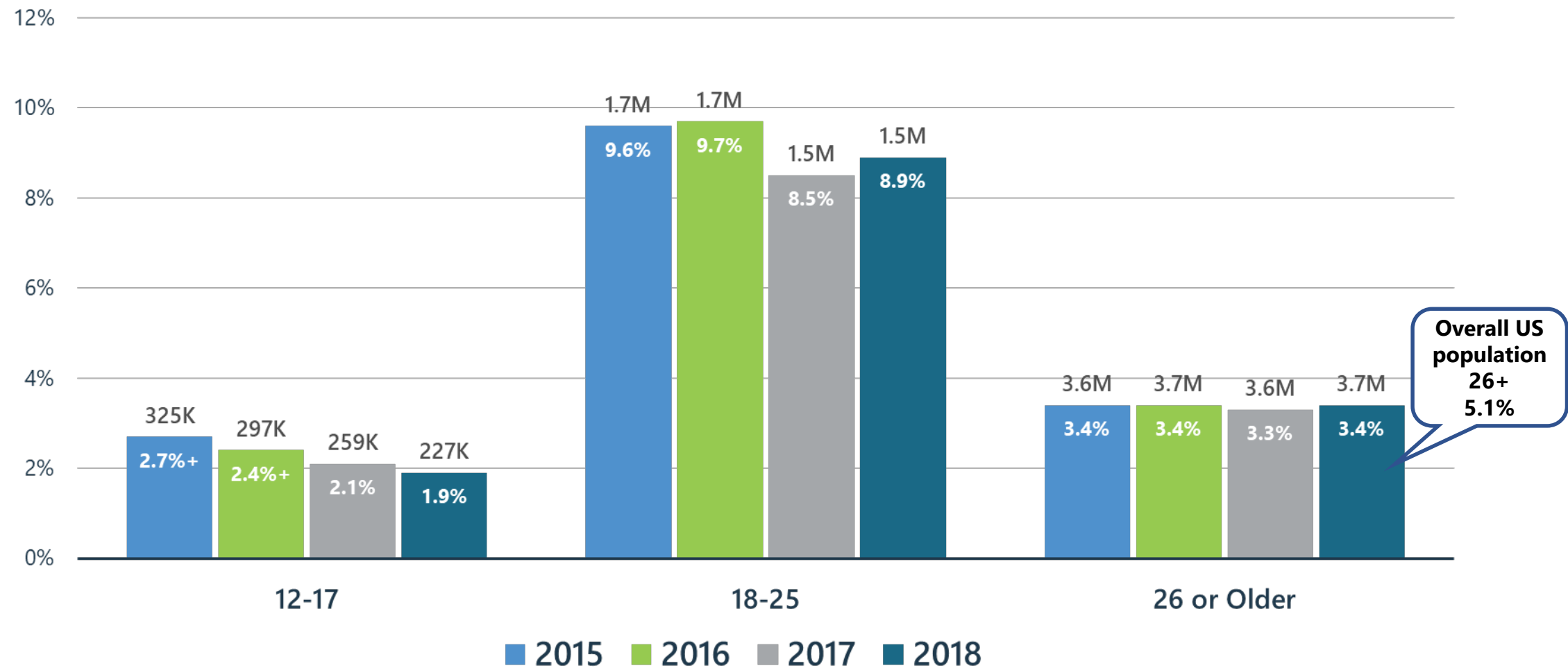
PAST MONTH, 2015-2018 NSDUH, Women 12+



+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Alcohol Use Disorder among Women

PAST YEAR, 2015-2018 NSDUH, Women 12+

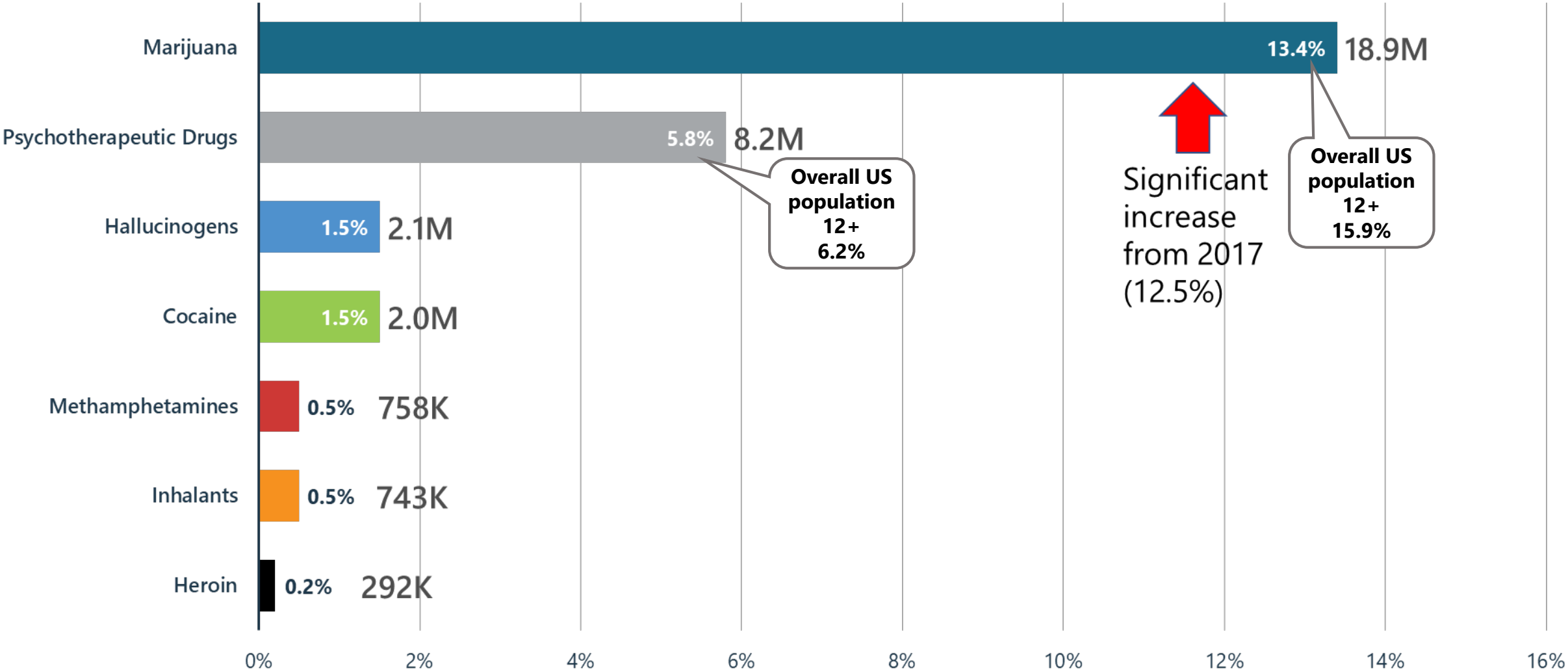


+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Summary: Alcohol Use in 2018

- **No significant change in alcohol initiation rate among female adolescents since 2015**
- **Significant decline in alcohol use among female adolescents between 2017 and 2018**
- **Significant decline in alcohol use disorder among female adolescents during 2015-2018**
- **SAMHSA efforts on reductions in alcohol use in children/youth/transition age youth:**
  - CSAP DFC program prioritizes alcohol use and has reported a 27% reduction in use in middle-school and a 23% reduction in use by high school students
  - SAMHSA Prevention Technology Transfer Centers produce resources and materials related to alcohol misuse prevention
  - CSAP 'Talk They Hear You' focuses on underage drinking
  - CSAP requires Partnerships for Success grantees to emphasize underage drinking prevention
  - CSAT has promoted SBIRT for alcohol use in all programs including CJ, PPW, adolescent treatment, HIV and homeless programs
  - CSAT has funded SBIRT training in medical residencies and other healthcare practitioner programs which screen for hazardous alcohol use and use disorders

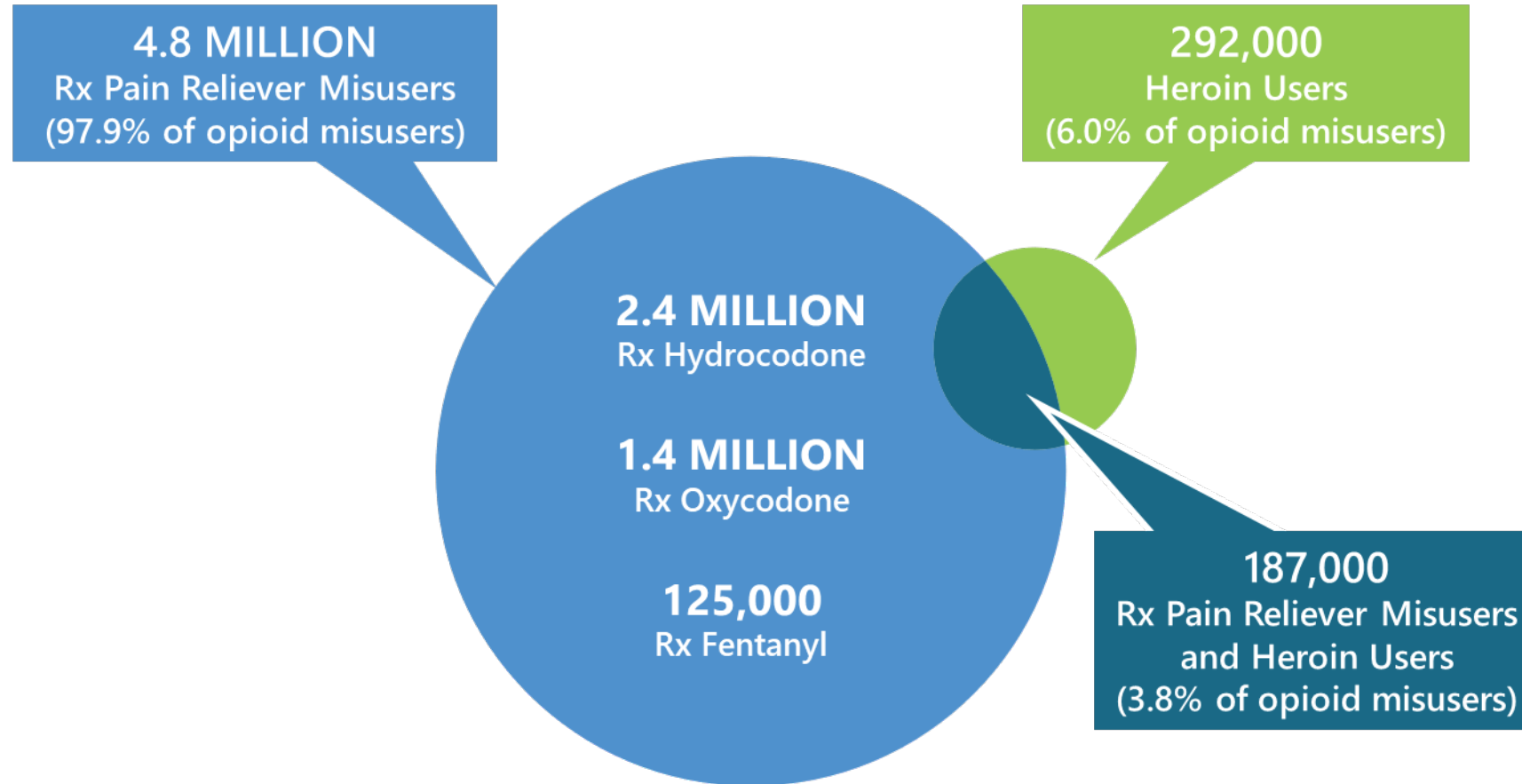
# Illicit Drug Use among Women: Marijuana Most Used Drug



# Prescription Pain Reliever Misuse among Women

PAST YEAR, 2018 NSDUH, Women 12+

**4.9 MILLION WOMEN WITH OPIOID MISUSE (3.5% OF TOTAL POPULATION)**

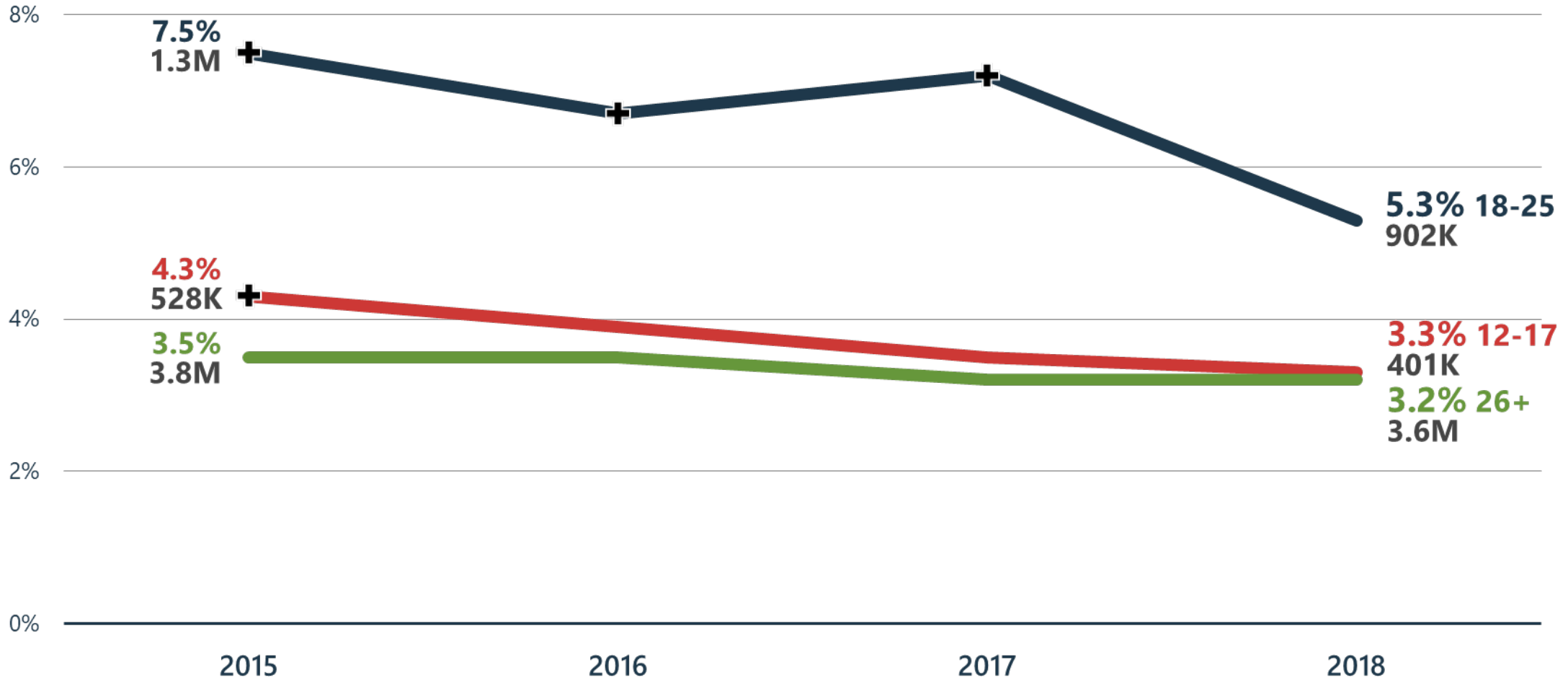


Rx = prescription.

Opioid misuse is defined as heroin use or prescription pain reliever misuse.

# Opioid Misuse among Women

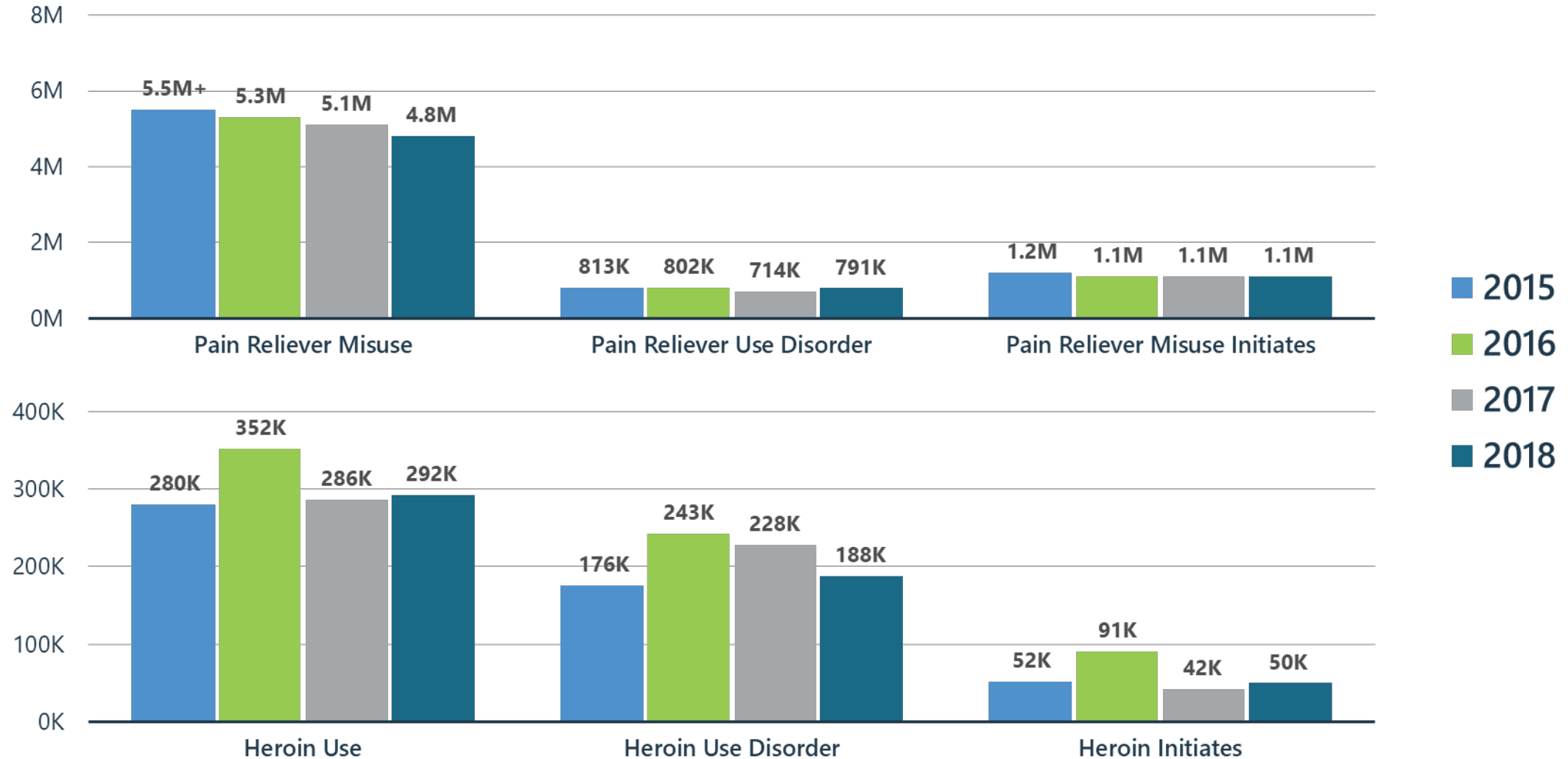
PAST YEAR, 2015-2018 NSDUH, Women 12+



+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Prescription Pain Reliever Misuse and Heroin Use among Women

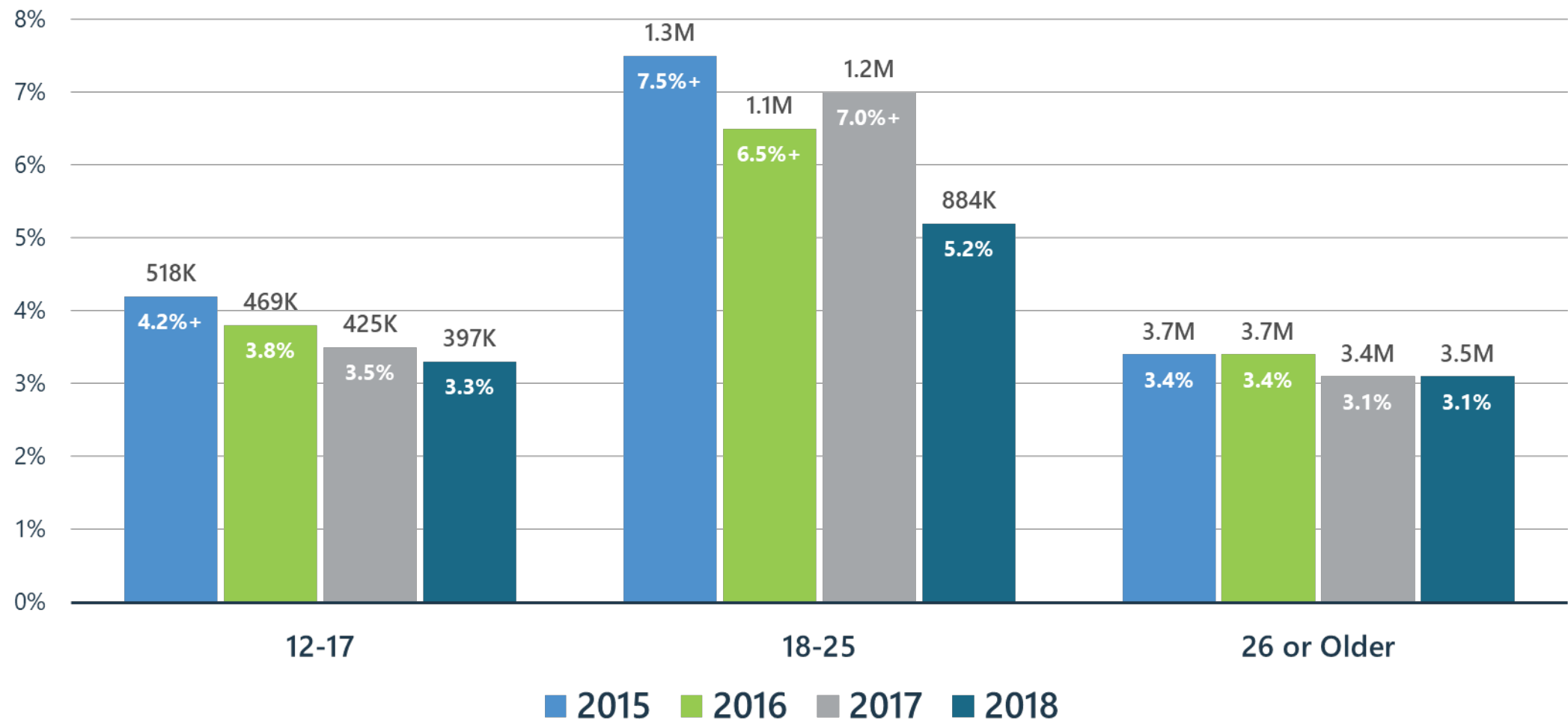
PAST YEAR, 2015-2018 NSDUH, Women 12+



+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Prescription Pain Reliever Misuse among Women

PAST YEAR, 2015-2018 NSDUH, Women 12+

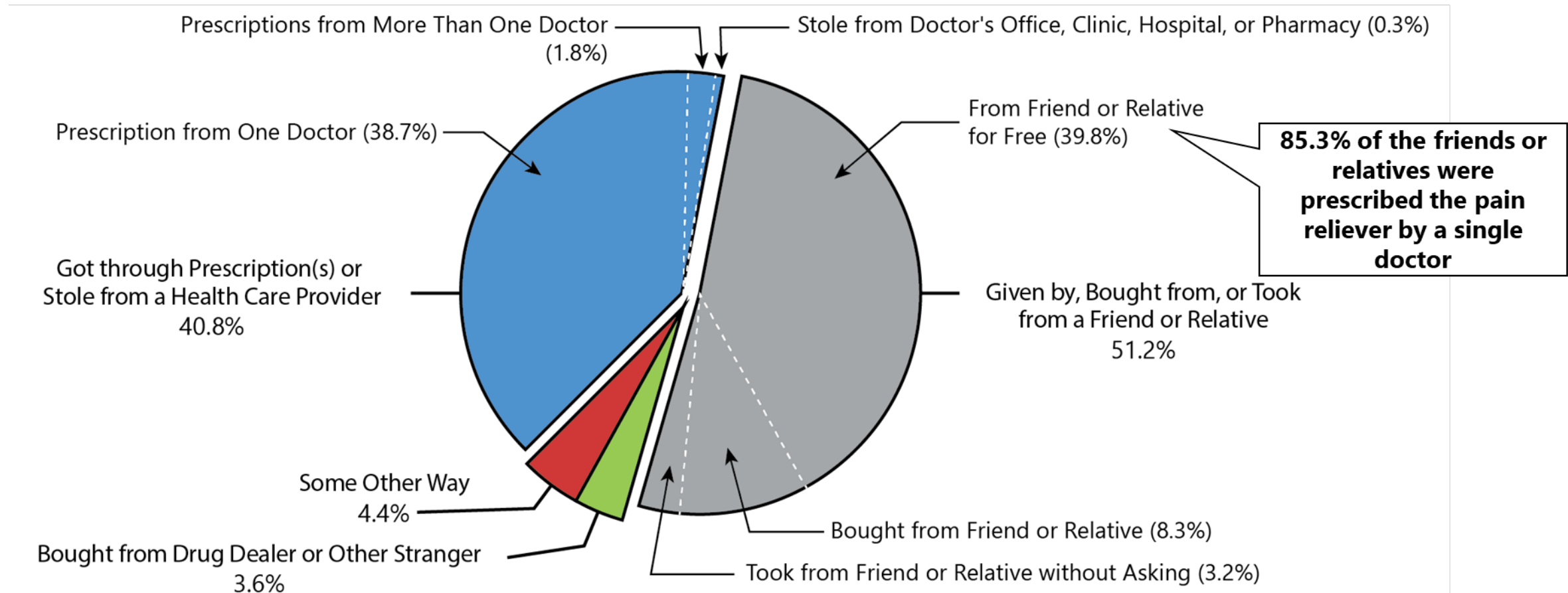


+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.



# Sources Where Pain Relievers Were Obtained for Most Recent Misuse among Women Who Misused Prescription Pain Relievers

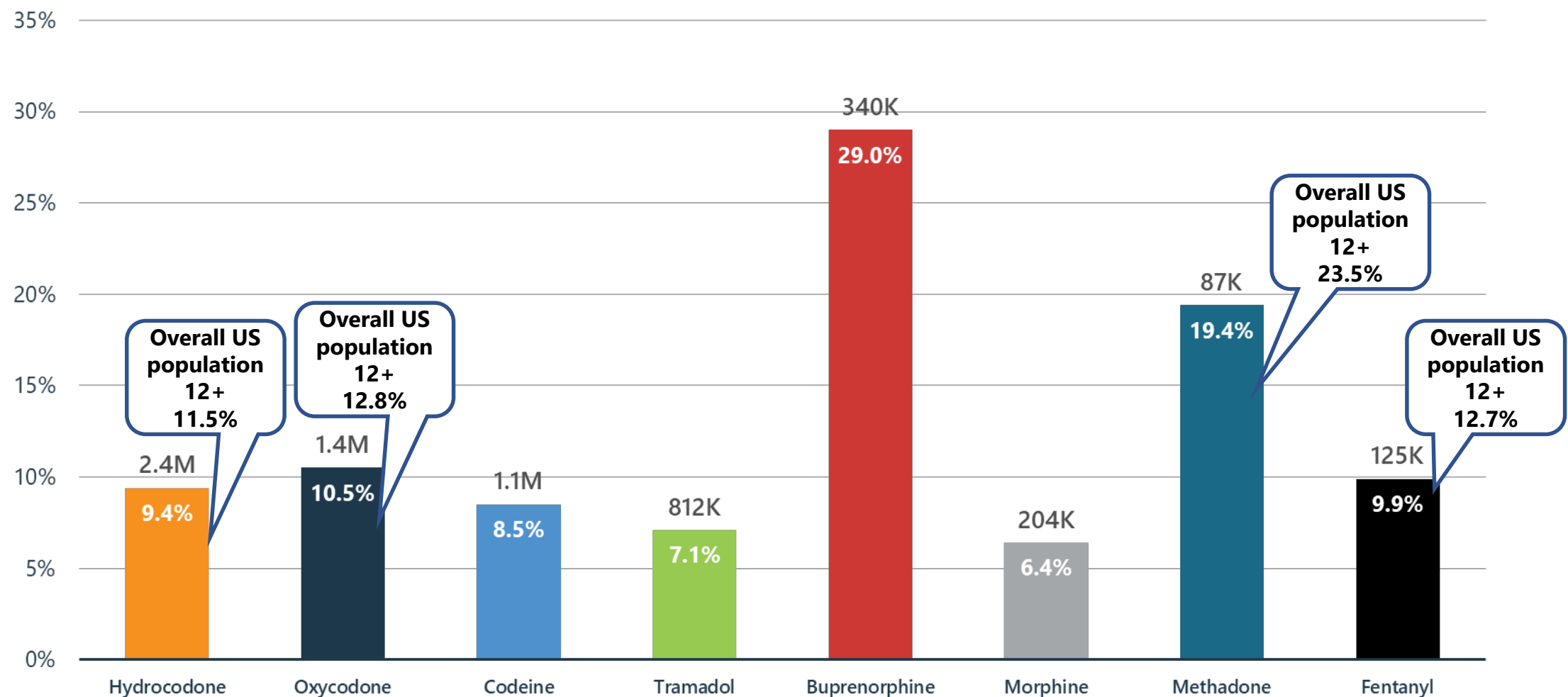
PAST YEAR, 2018 NSDUH, Women 12+



4.8 Million Women Aged 12 or Older Who Misused Prescription Pain Relievers in the Past Year

# Misuse of Prescription Opioid Subtypes among Women

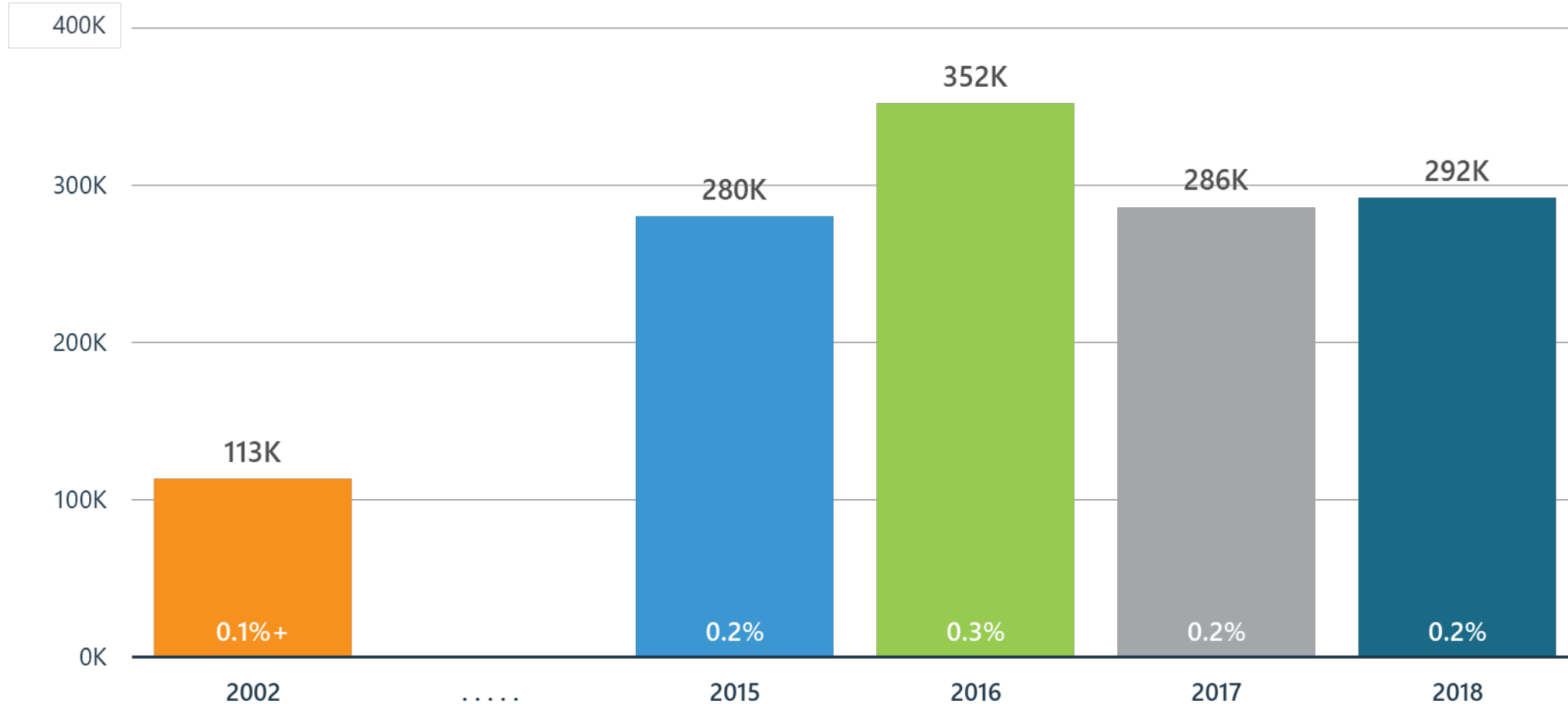
PAST YEAR, 2018 NSDUH, Women 12+ SUBTYPE USERS



Note: This table shows misuse among users. For example, 9.4 percent of women hydrocodone past year users have misused hydrocodone in the past year.

# Heroin Use among Women Climbed Through 2016: Now Declining

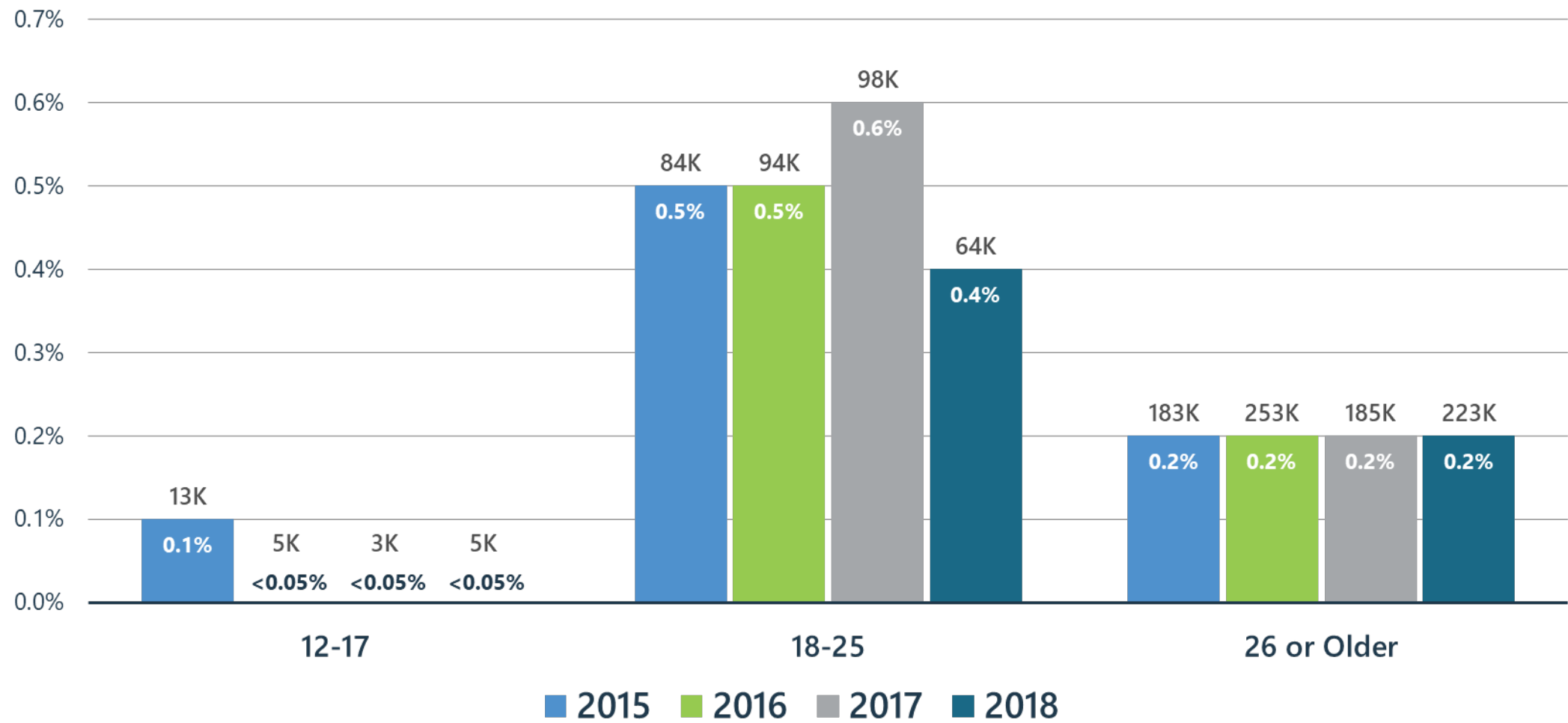
PAST YEAR, 2002 AND 2015-2018 NSDUH, Women 12+



+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Heroin Use among Women

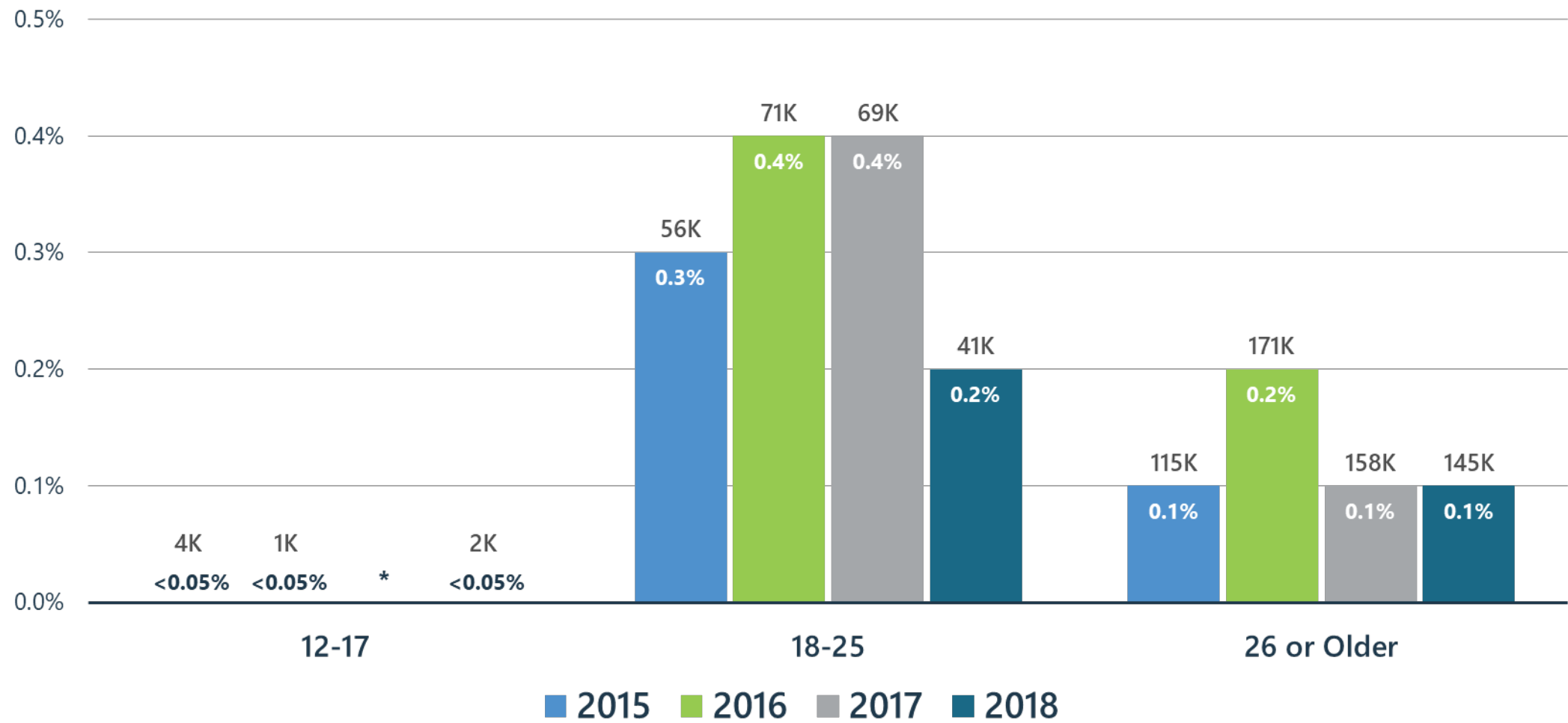
PAST YEAR, 2015-2018 NSDUH, Women 12+



No differences between prior year estimates and the 2018 estimates are statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Heroin-Related Opioid Use Disorder among Women

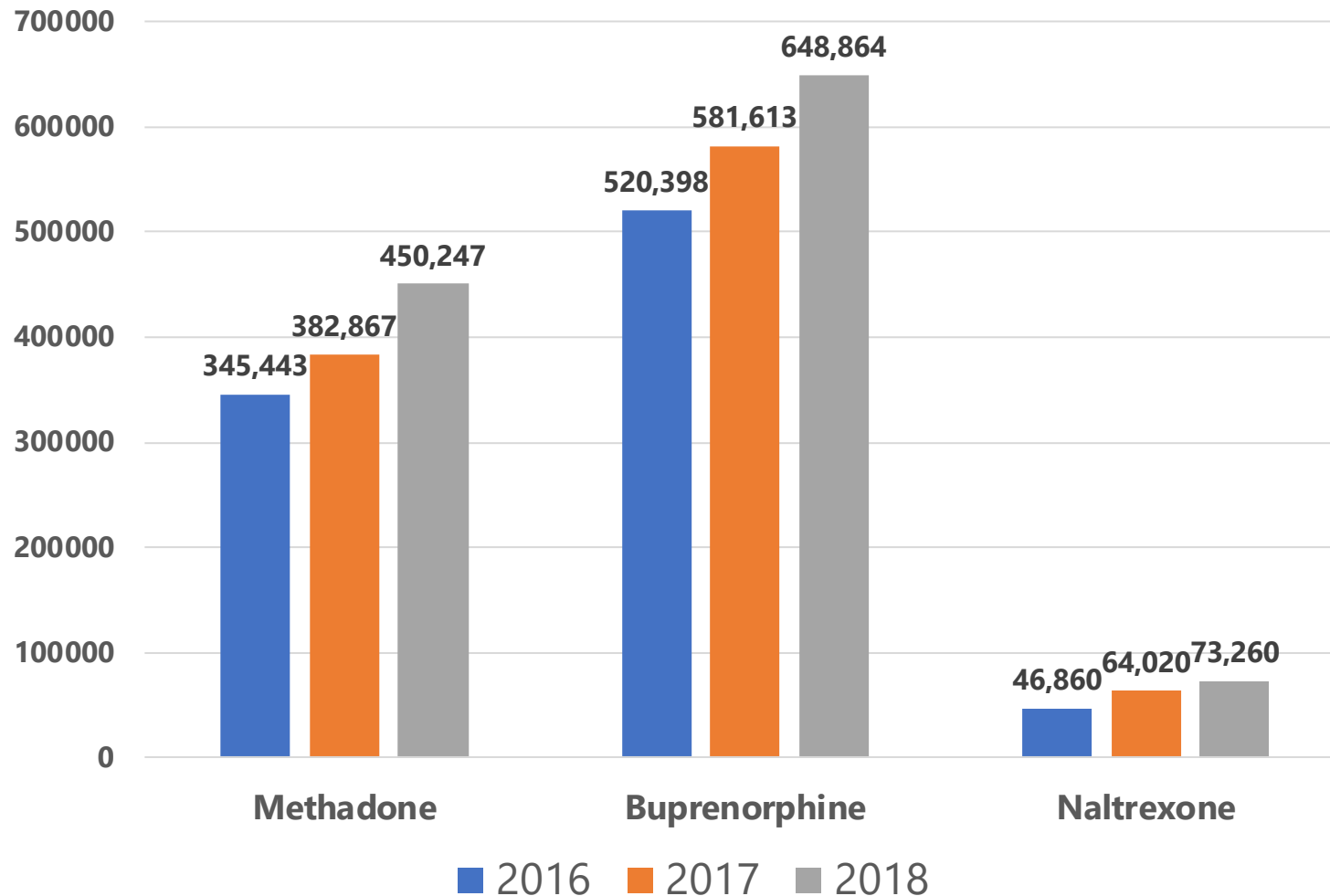
PAST YEAR, 2015-2018 NSDUH, Women 12+



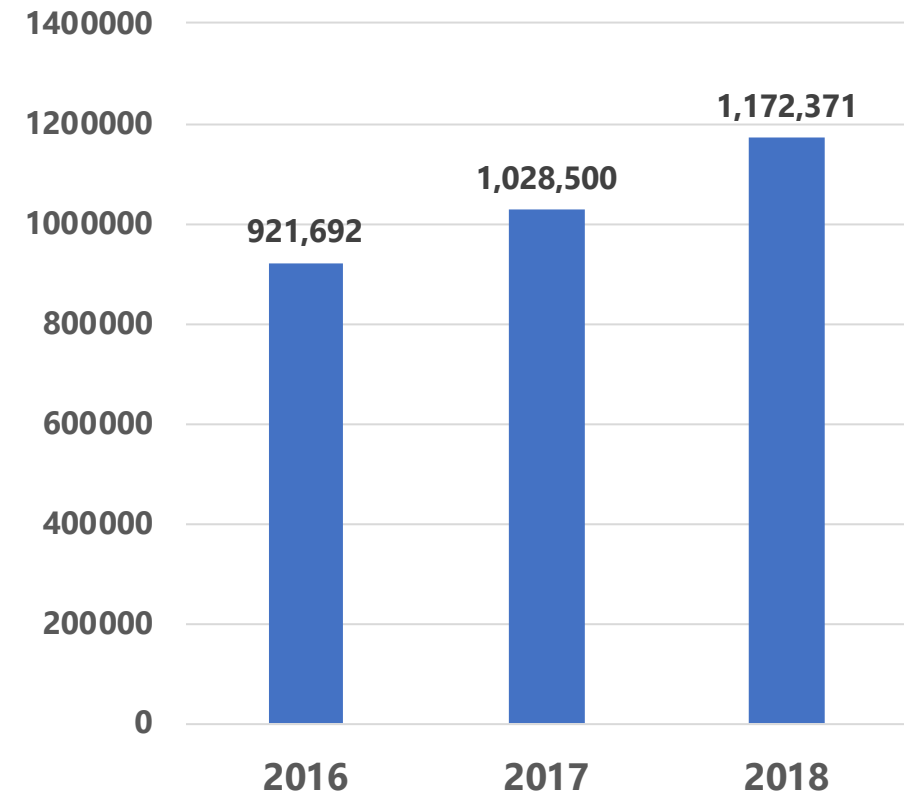
\* Estimate not shown due to low precision.

No differences between prior year estimates and the 2018 estimates are statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Treatment Gains: Number of Individuals Receiving Pharmacotherapy for Opioid Use Disorder (MAT)



Total Number receiving MAT  
(all types)



Note: Estimates do not represent women and are not based on NSDUH.

# Summary: Opioid Misuse in the United States in 2018

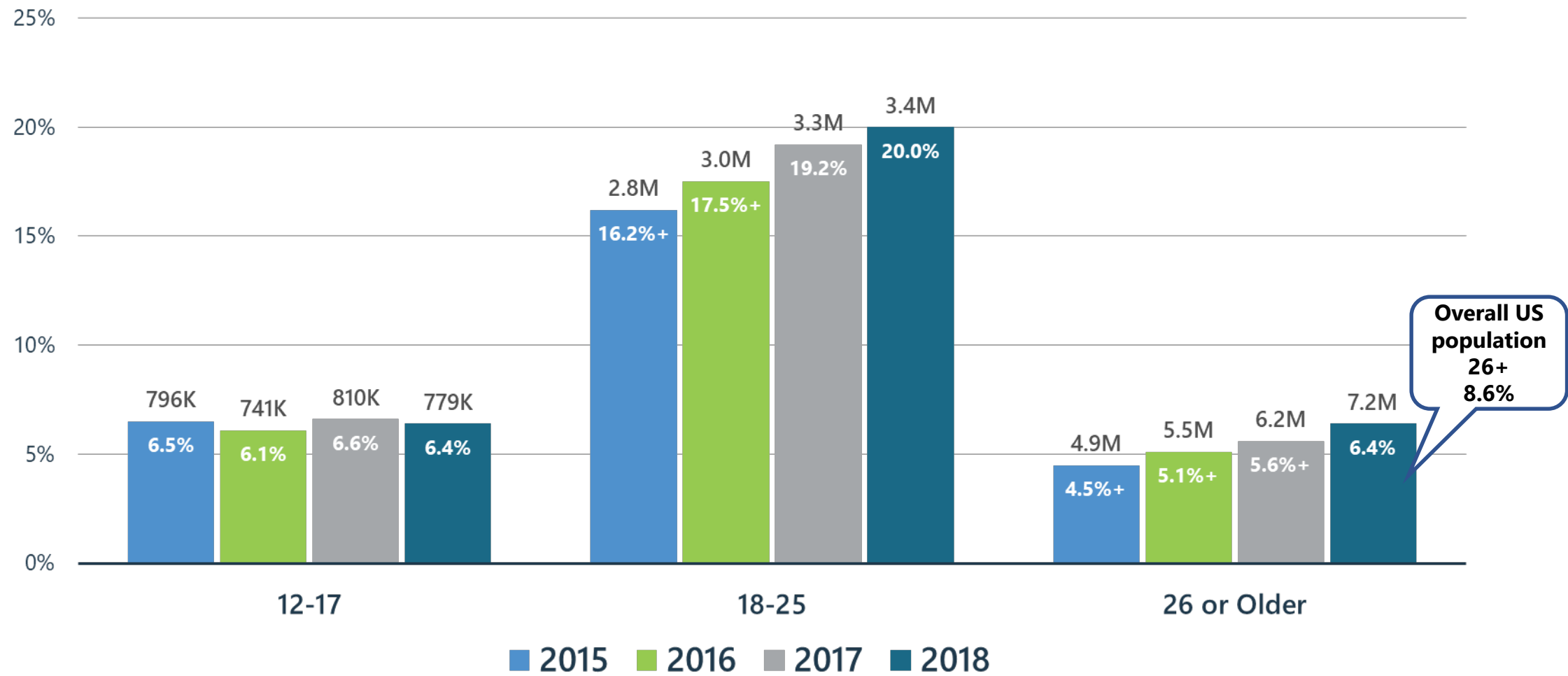
- **Significant decrease in prescription opioid misuse among female adolescents and young adults during 2015-2018**
  - Majority of women continue to obtain from friends/relatives and from healthcare provider/prescriber underscoring the need for ongoing education of practitioners, appropriate pain management, and partnership with states to monitor opioid analgesic prescribing
- Among women aged 12+ using prescription opioids, buprenorphine is most likely to be misused.
- No significant changes in heroin use and use disorder among women across age groups during 2015-2018

# Other Illicit Substances



# Marijuana Use among Women

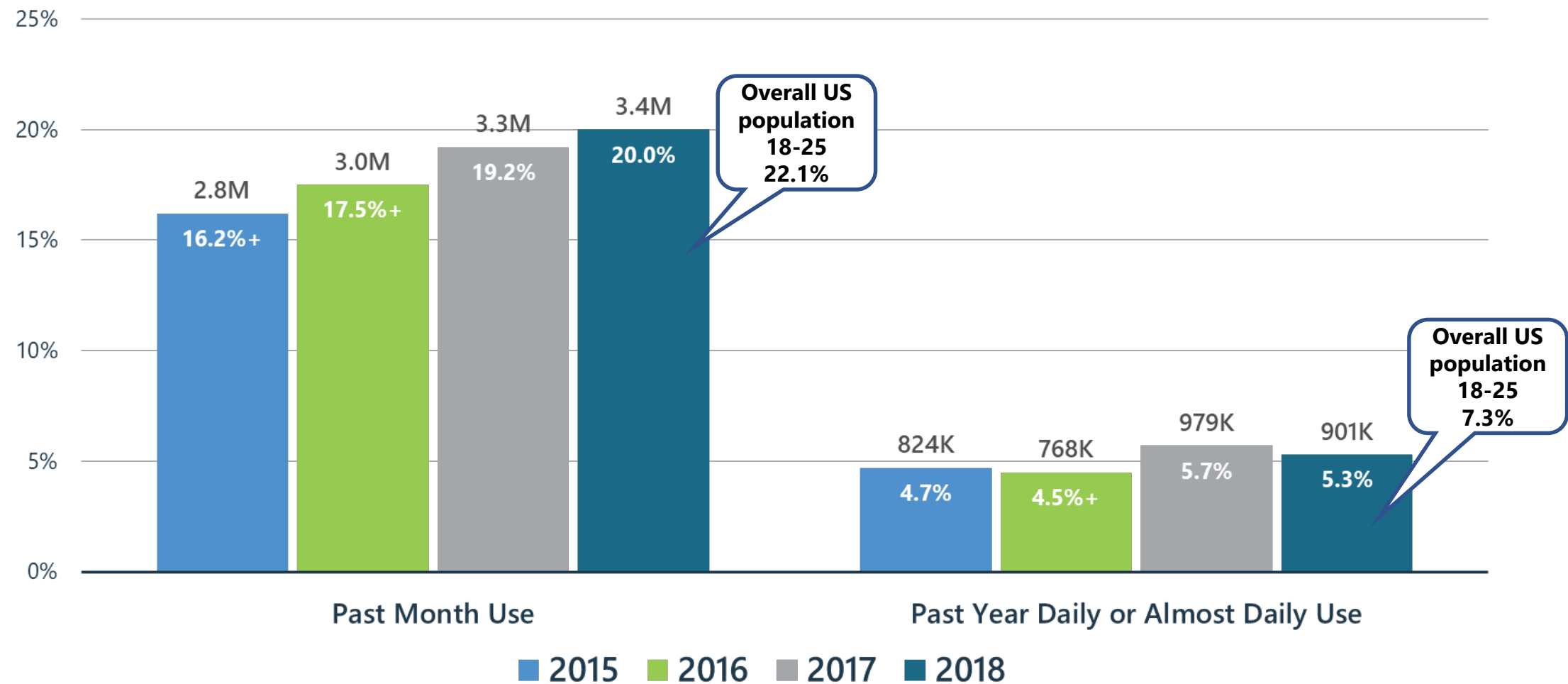
PAST MONTH, 2015-2018 NSDUH, Women 12+



+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Marijuana Use among Young Adult Women (18-25 y.o.)

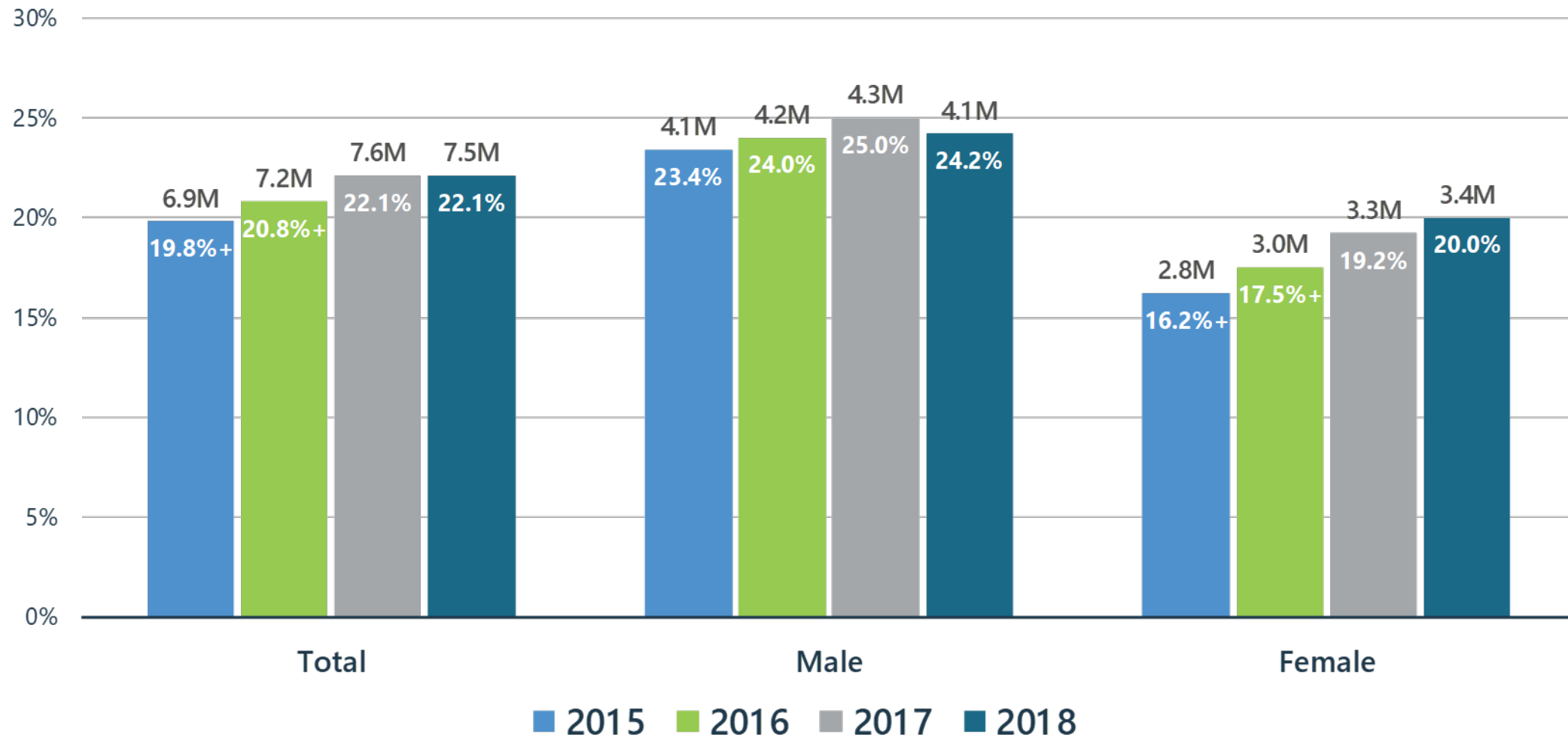
PAST MONTH/YEAR, 2015-2018 NSDUH, Women 18-25



+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Marijuana Use among Young Adult Men and Women (18-25 y.o.)

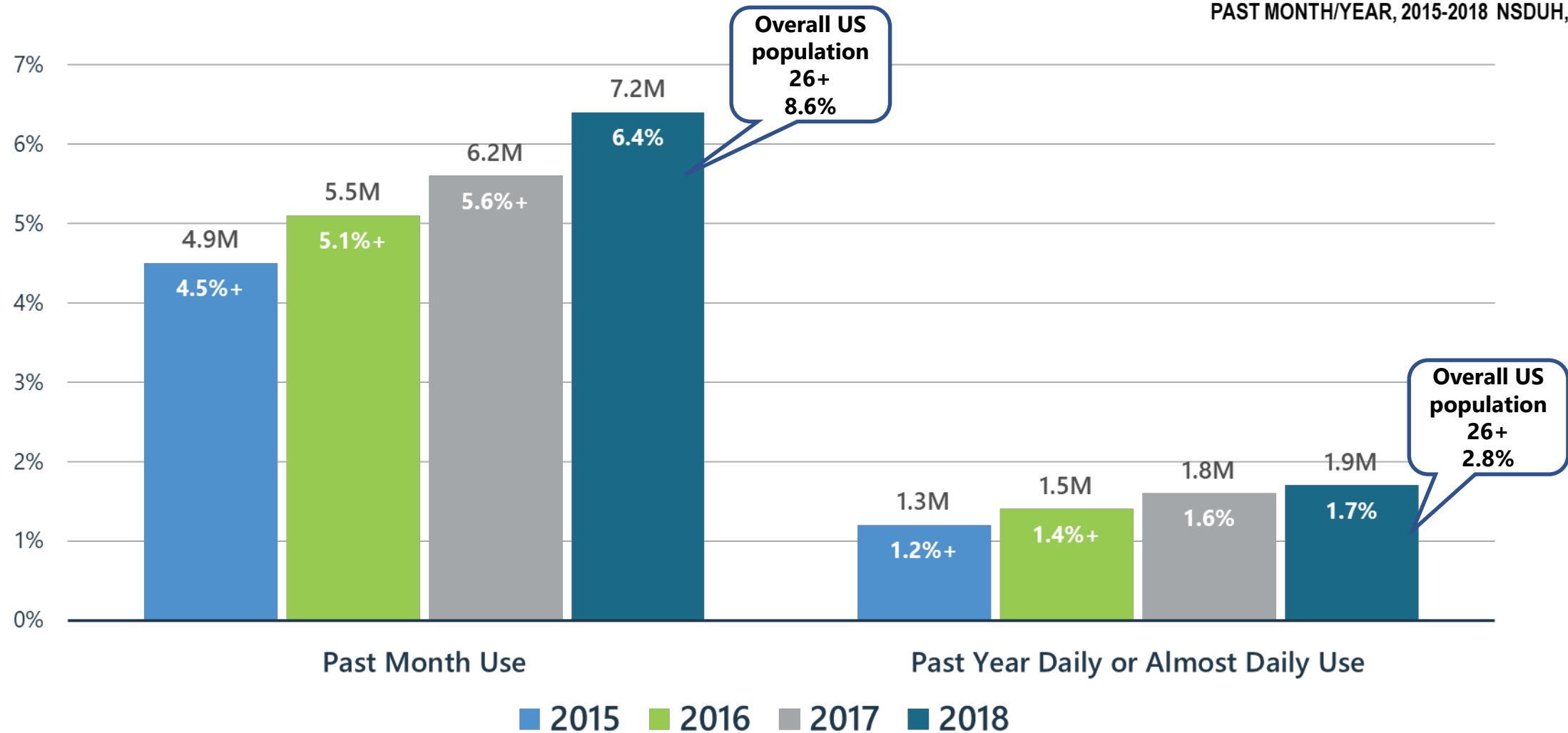
PAST MONTH, 2015-2018 NSDUH, 18-25



+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Significant Increase in Marijuana Use among Women 26+

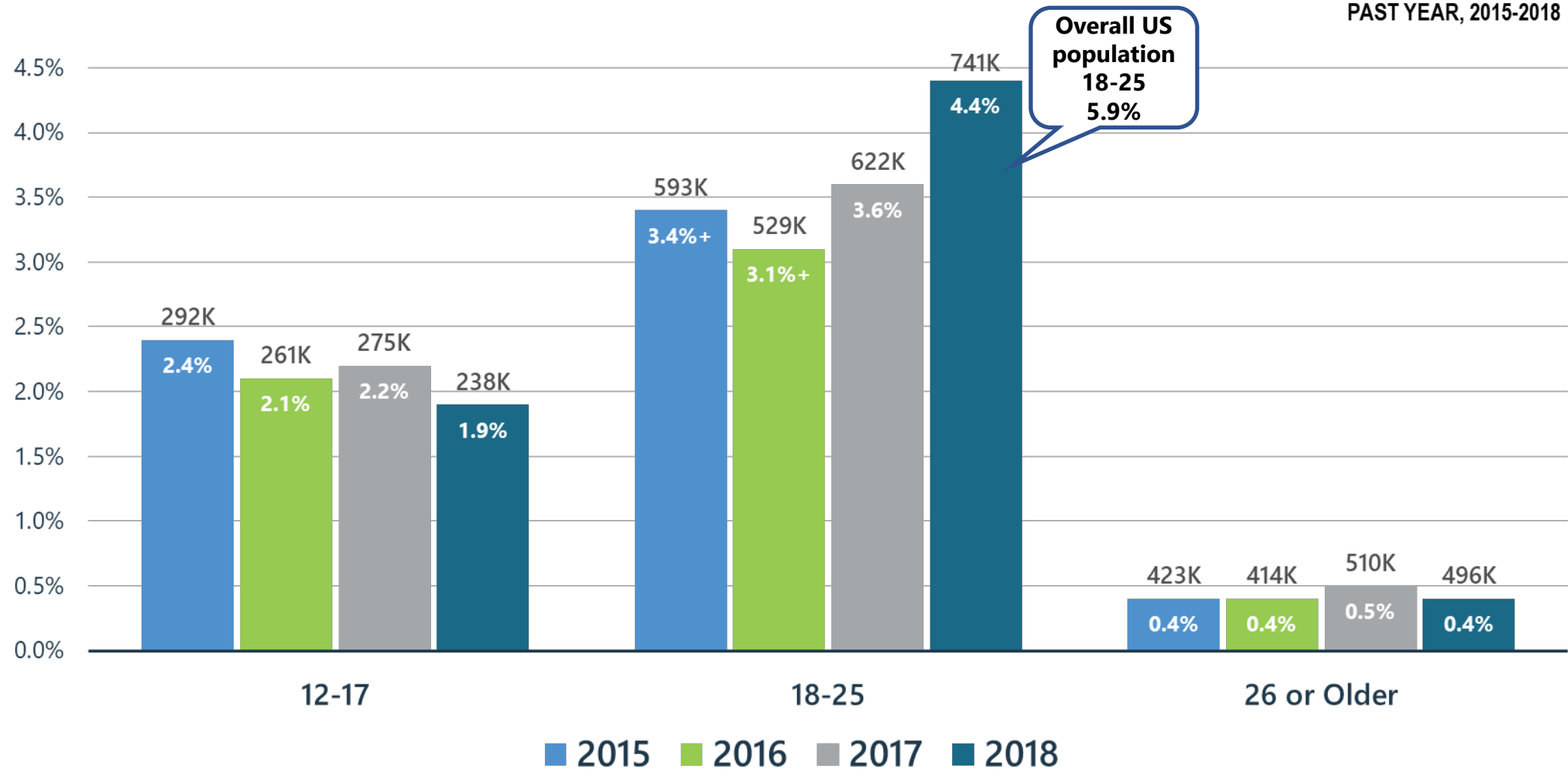
PAST MONTH/YEAR, 2015-2018 NSDUH, Women 26+



+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Marijuana Use Disorder among Women

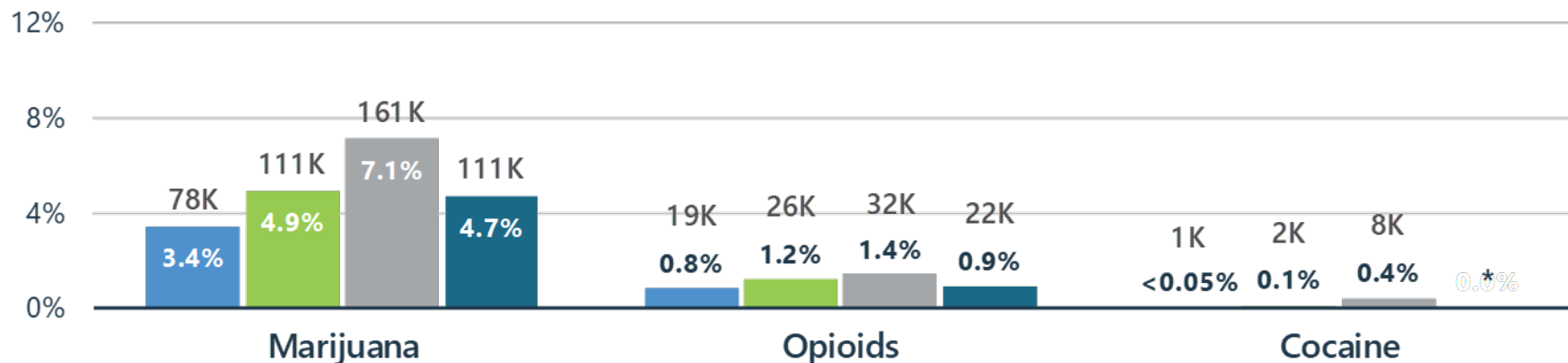
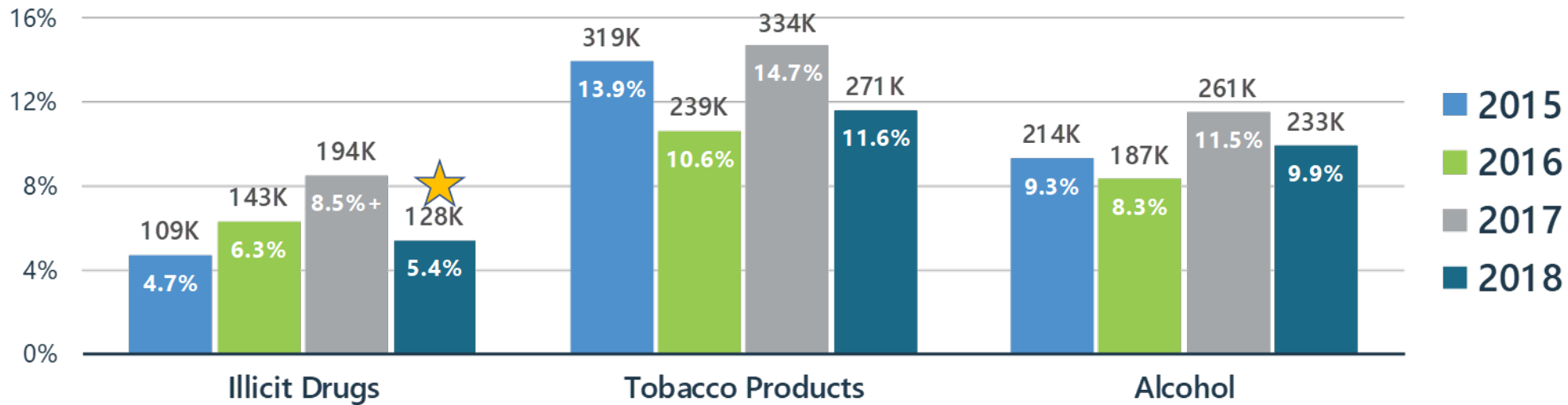
PAST YEAR, 2015-2018 NSDUH, Women 12+



+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Past Month Substance Use among Pregnant Women

PAST MONTH, 2015-2018 NSDUH, 15-44

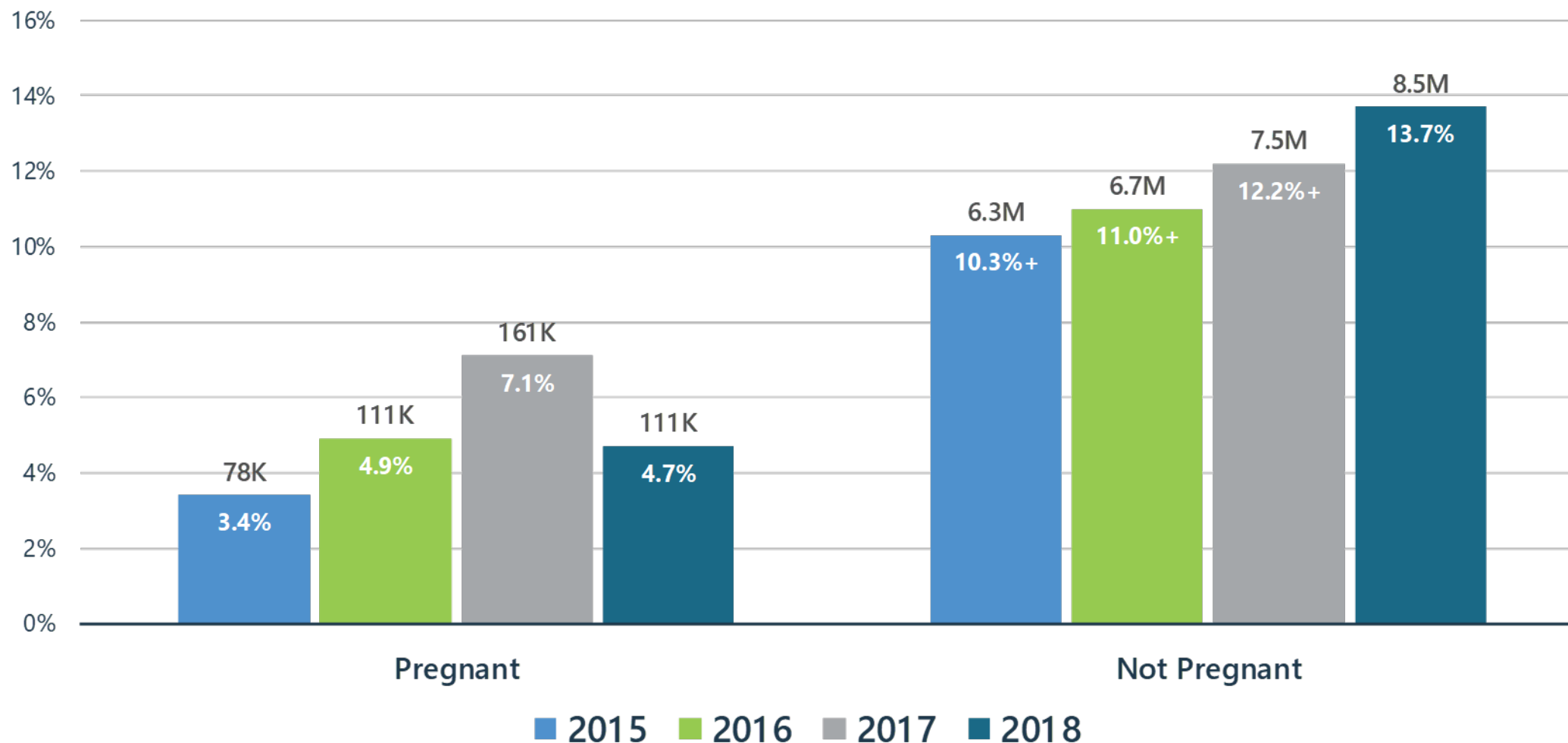


\* Estimate not shown due to low precision.

+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Marijuana Use among Women by Pregnancy Status

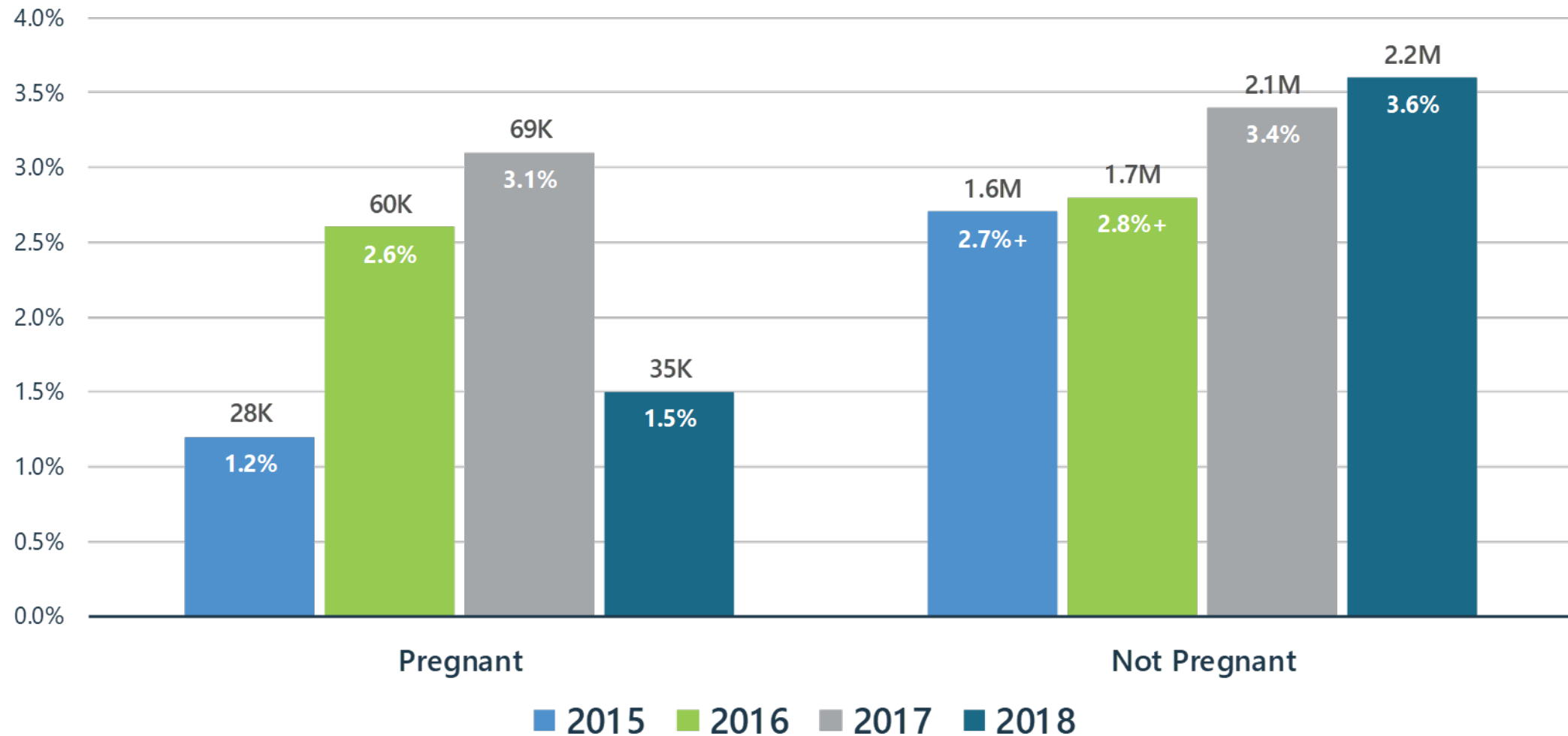
PAST MONTH, 2015-2018 NSDUH, 15-44



+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Daily or Almost Daily Marijuana Use Among Women by Pregnancy Status

PAST YEAR, 2015-2018 NSDUH, 15-44



+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.



# Substance Use in Pregnancy: Trends in the Right Direction

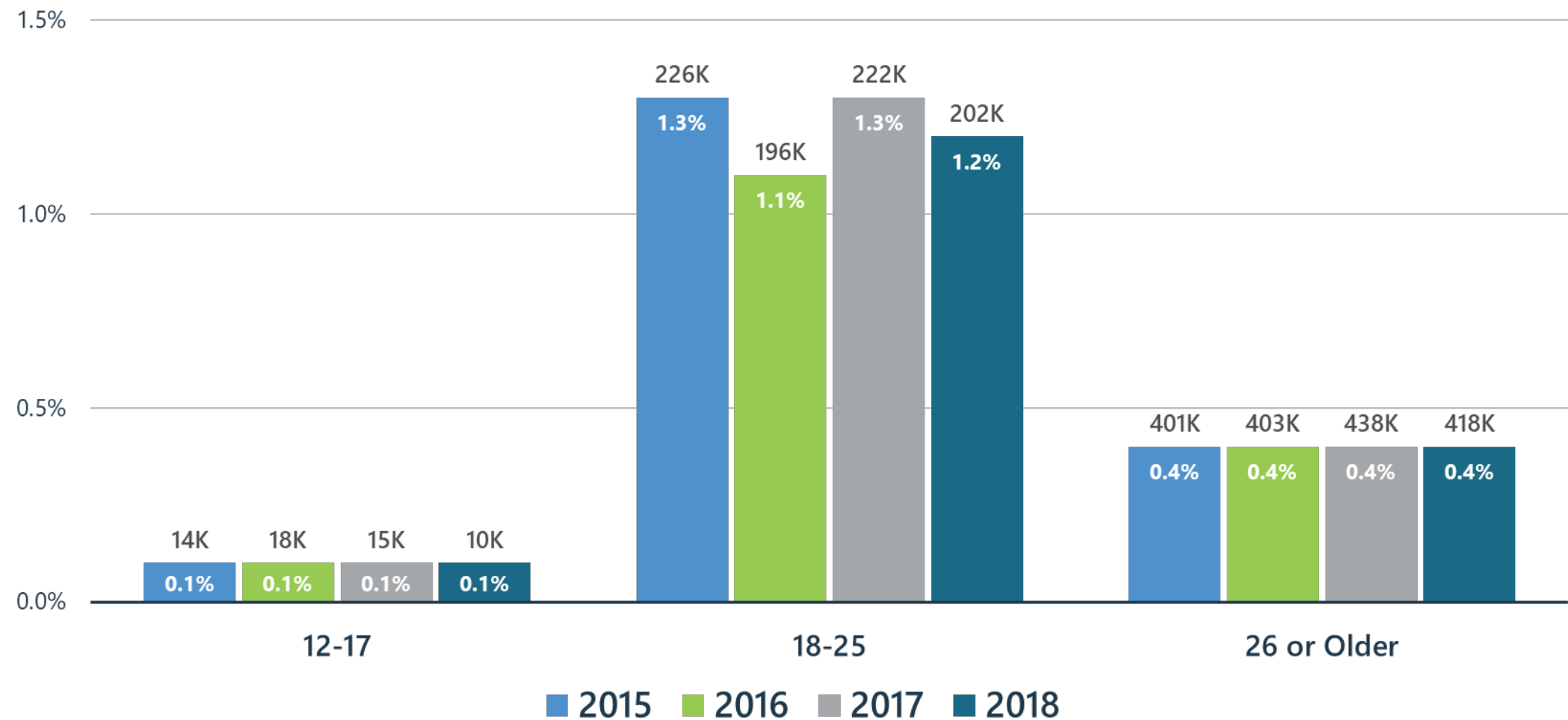
## **2017: Showed a startling increase in substance use and particularly marijuana use in**

**pregnancy:** may be associated with fetal growth restriction, stillbirth, and preterm birth; may cause problems with neurological development, resulting in hyperactivity, poor cognitive function (*Metz TD and Stickrath EH, 2015*)

- **Significant decline in illicit drug use among pregnant women between 2017 and 2018.**
- SAMHSA/HHS made strong efforts to address this situation in an effort to improve the health and mothers and their babies:
- Public awareness efforts: information sharing with stakeholders and the public
- Launch of SAMHSA.gov/marijuana
- Launch of Substance Abuse Prevention Technology Transfer Centers with a focus on marijuana and other substance use in pregnancy
- Expansion of treatment programs for pregnant/post partum parenting women: both residential and outpatient through CARA
- Publication of Clinical Guidance for Treating Pregnant and Parenting Women with Opioid Use Disorder
- Publication of Healthy Pregnancy/Healthy Baby Factsheets for women and their families
- Use of STR and SOR funding for opioid use disorder in pregnancy and prevention interventions
- Joint article from Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use and Surgeon General addressing treatment of opioid use disorder in pregnancy

# Cocaine Use among Women

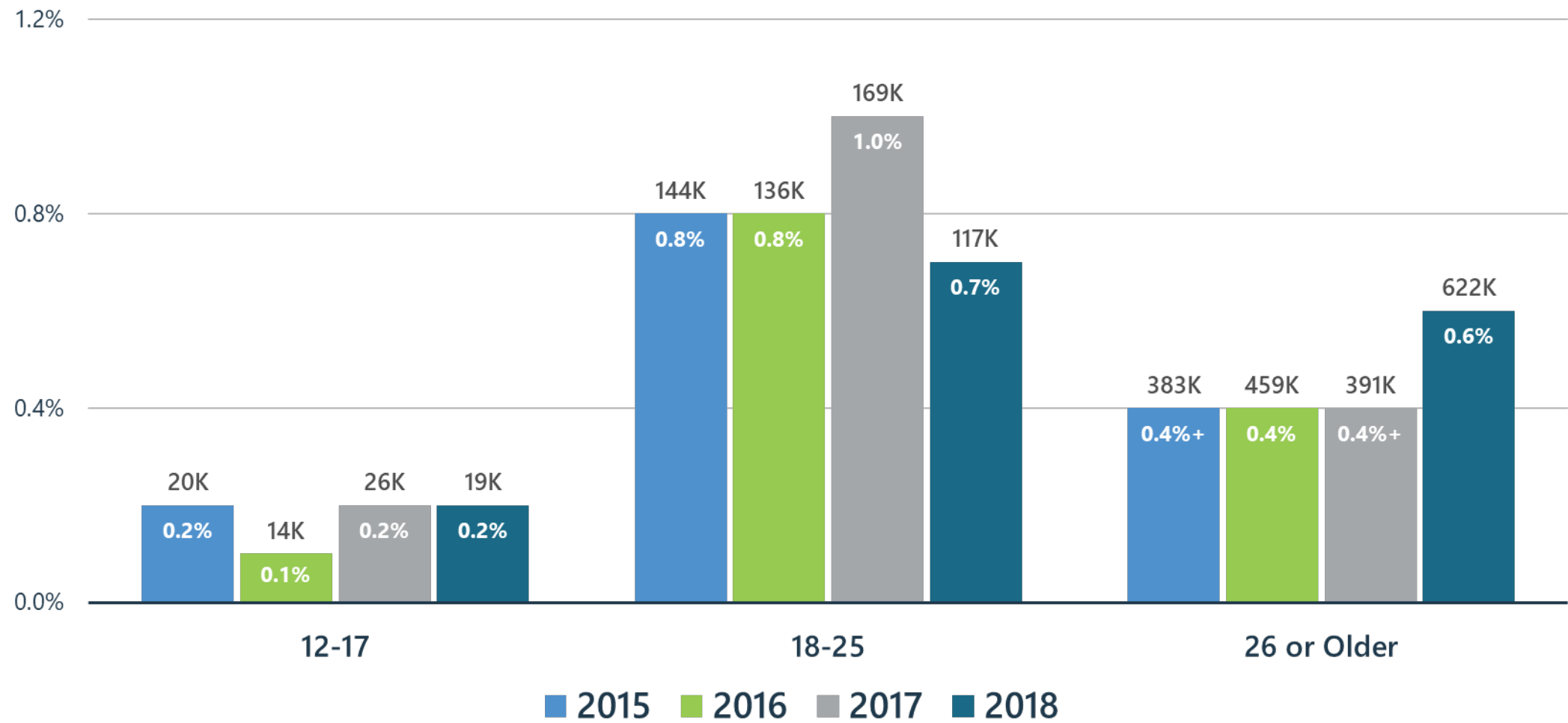
PAST MONTH, 2015-2018 NSDUH, Women 12+



No differences between prior year estimates and the 2018 estimates are statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Methamphetamine Use among Women: Significant Increase in Adults Aged 26+

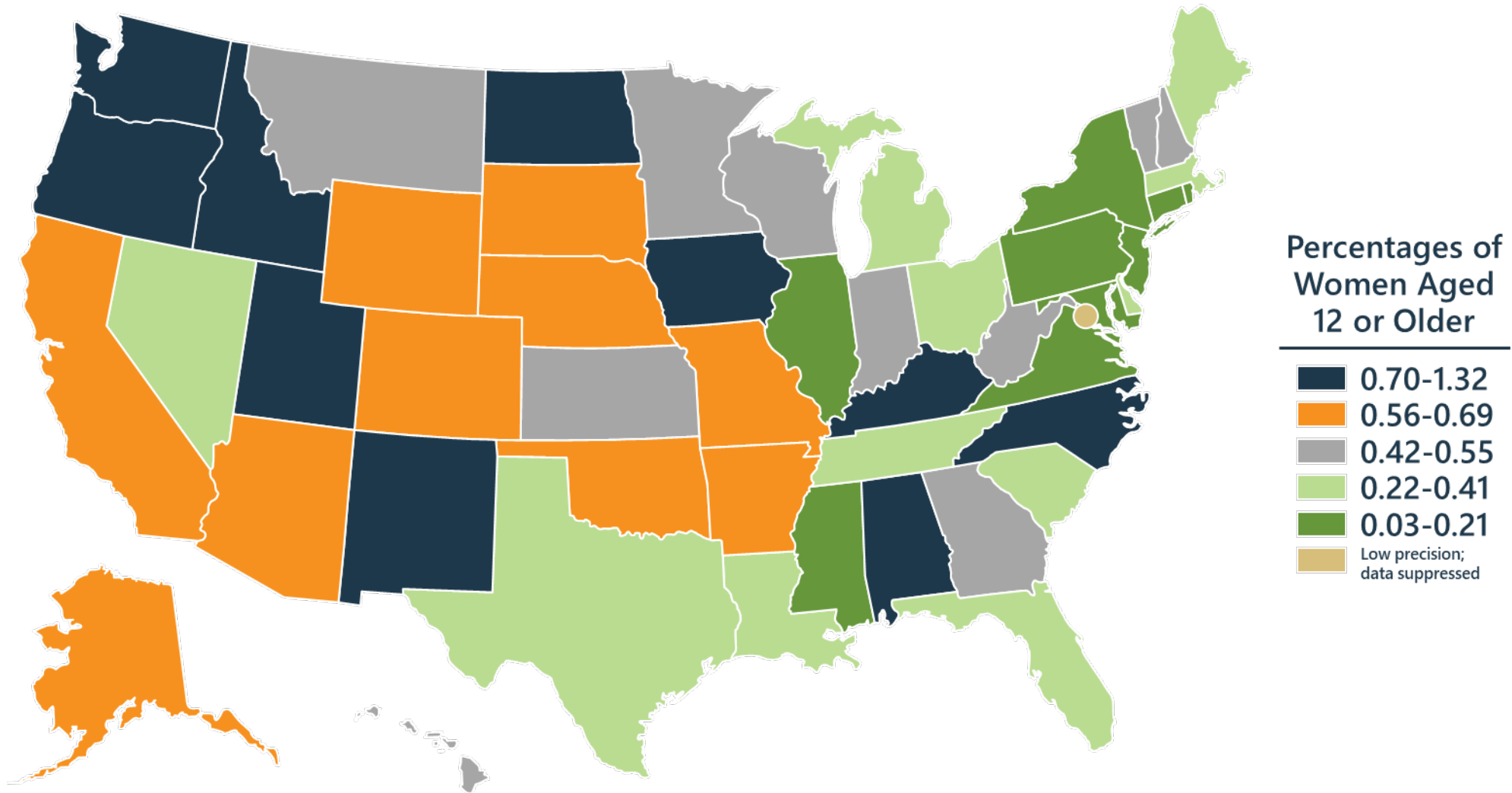
PAST YEAR, 2015-2018 NSDUH, Women 12+



+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Methamphetamine Use among Women by State

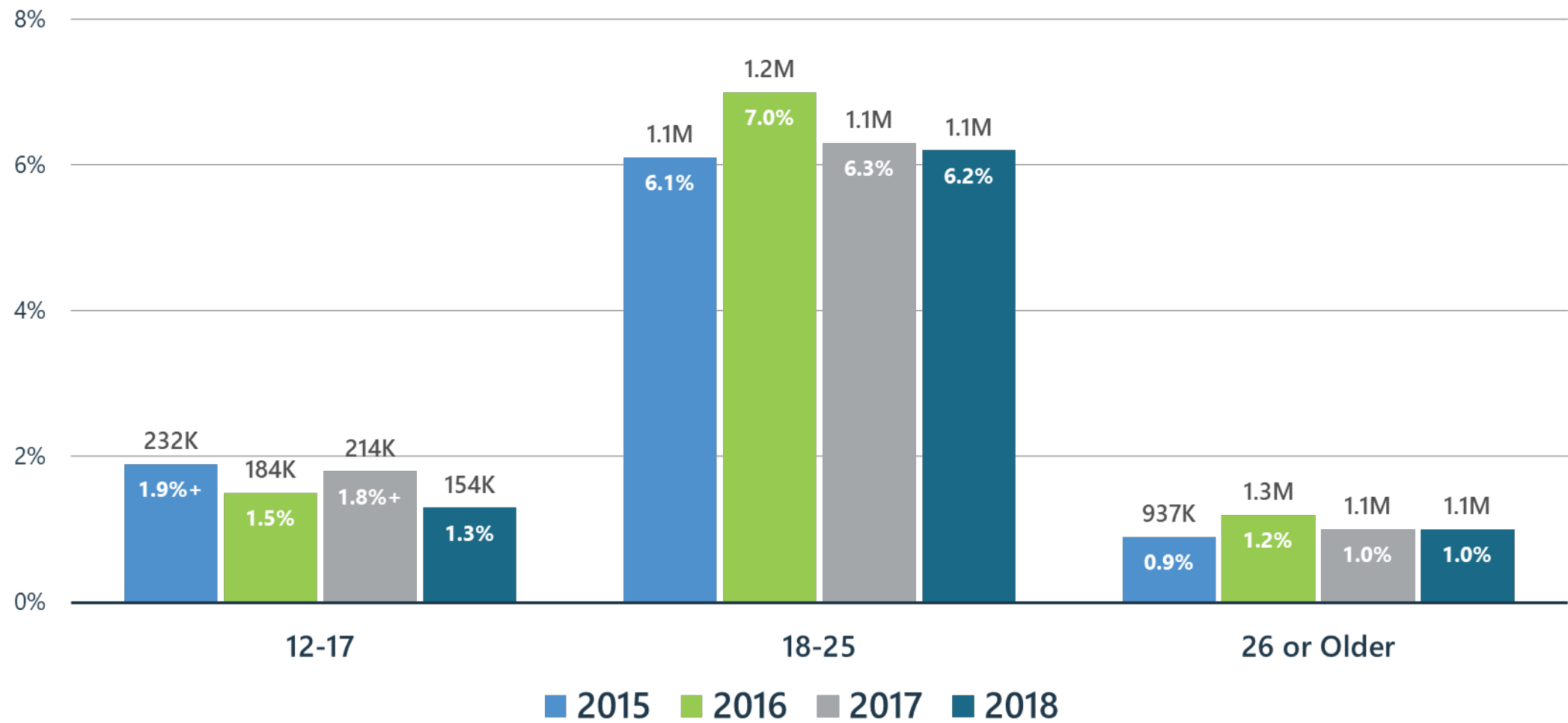
PAST YEAR, 2016-2017 NSDUH, Women 12+



Differences in colors across states do not indicate significant differences in estimates.

# Misuse of Prescription Stimulants among Women

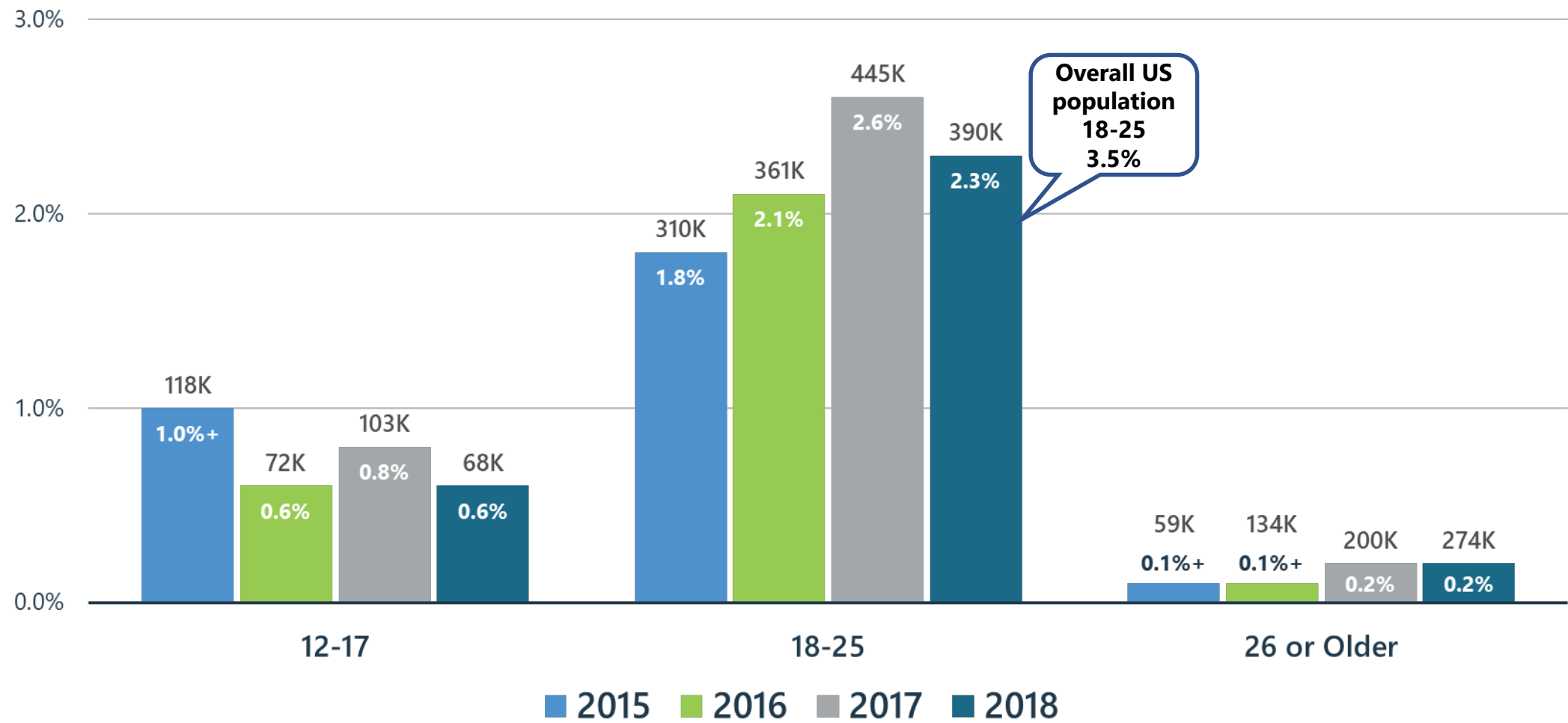
PAST YEAR, 2015-2018 NSDUH, Women 12+



+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Hallucinogen Use among Women: LSD

PAST YEAR, 2015-2018 NSDUH, Women 12+



Estimates represent past year use of LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide), a type of hallucinogen.

+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Summary: Other Substance Use in the United States in 2018

- During 2015-2018, marijuana use remained stable among female youth, but significantly increased among adult women aged 18-25 and 26+
- Significant increase in marijuana use disorder in adult women aged 18-25 during 2015-2018
- Significant decline in illicit drug use by pregnant women between 2017 and 2018
- Significant increase in methamphetamine use in women aged 26+ between 2017 and 2018
- Significant decline in prescription stimulant misuse and LSD use in female adolescents during 2015-2018

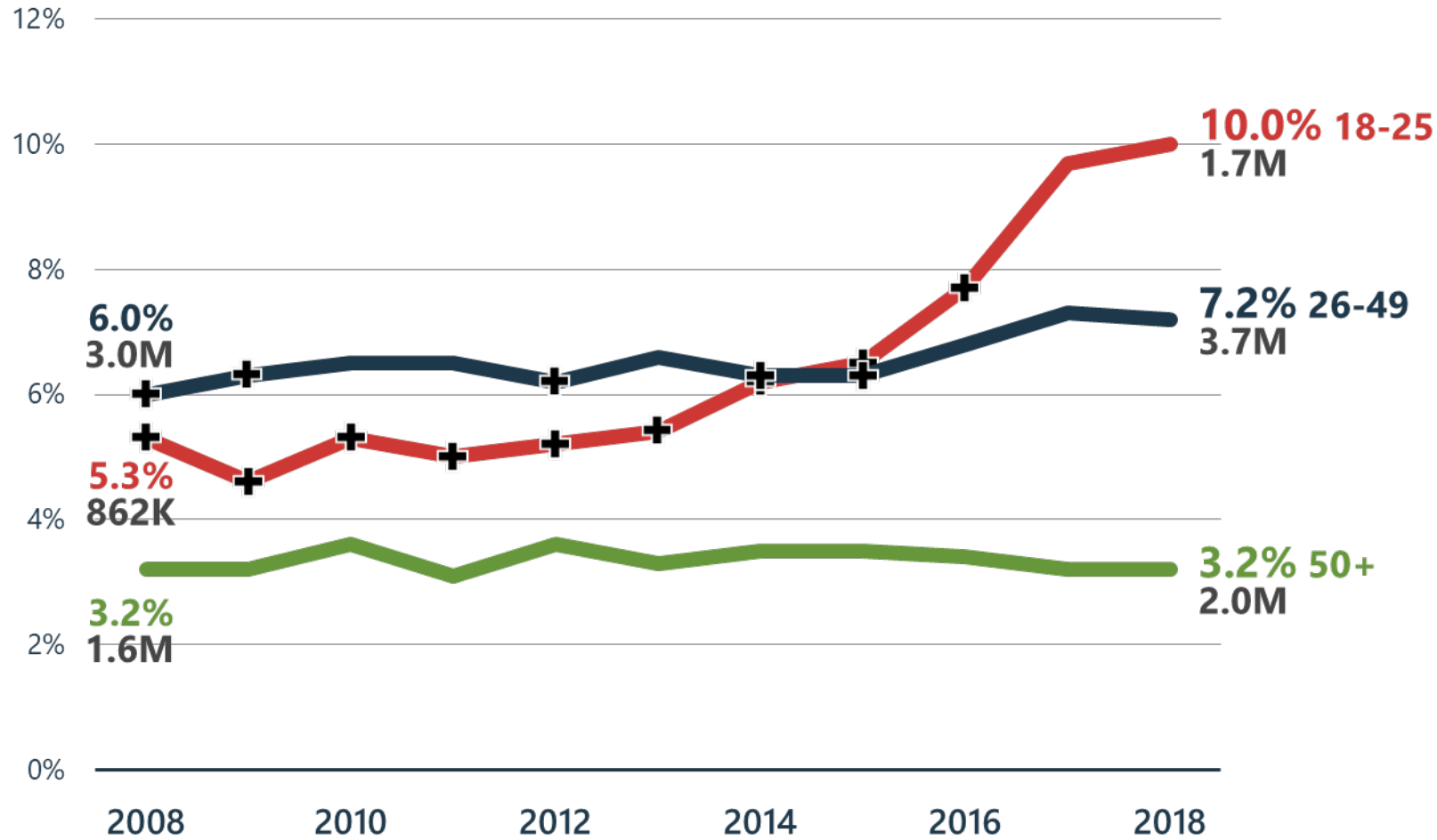
**PREVENTION WORKS!**

# Mental Health



# Serious Mental Illness (SMI) Rising among Young Women Aged 18-25 and Women Aged 26-49

PAST YEAR, 2008-2018 NSDUH, Women 18+



**56.6%<sup>+</sup>**  
**960,000 YOUNG WOMEN**  
**WITH SMI RECEIVED**  
**TREATMENT IN 2018**

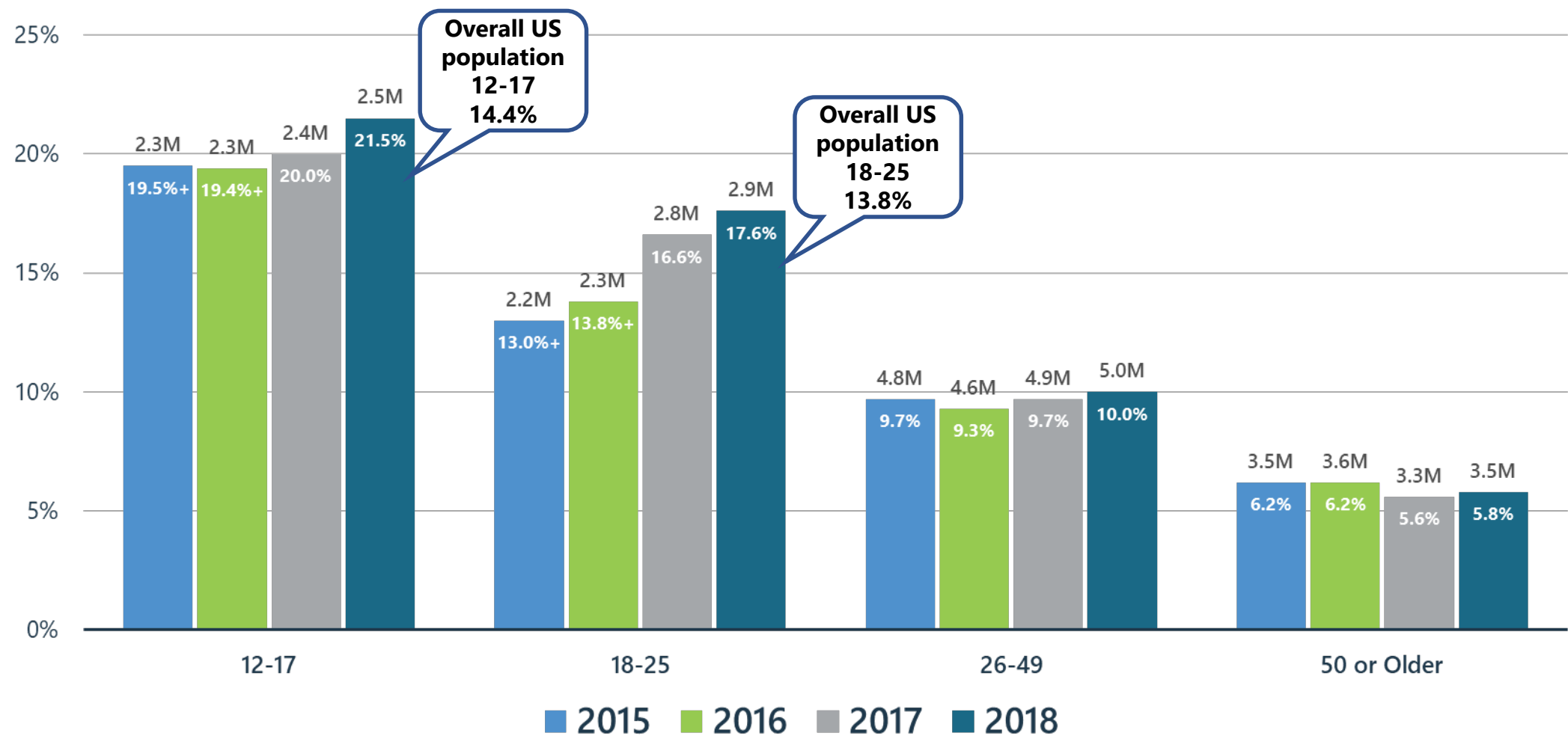
**43.4% got NO treatment**

**68.1%**  
**2.5M women (26-49 y.o.)**  
**with SMI received treatment;**  
**31.9% got NO treatment**

+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Major Depressive Episodes among Women

PAST YEAR, 2015-2018 NSDUH, Women 12+

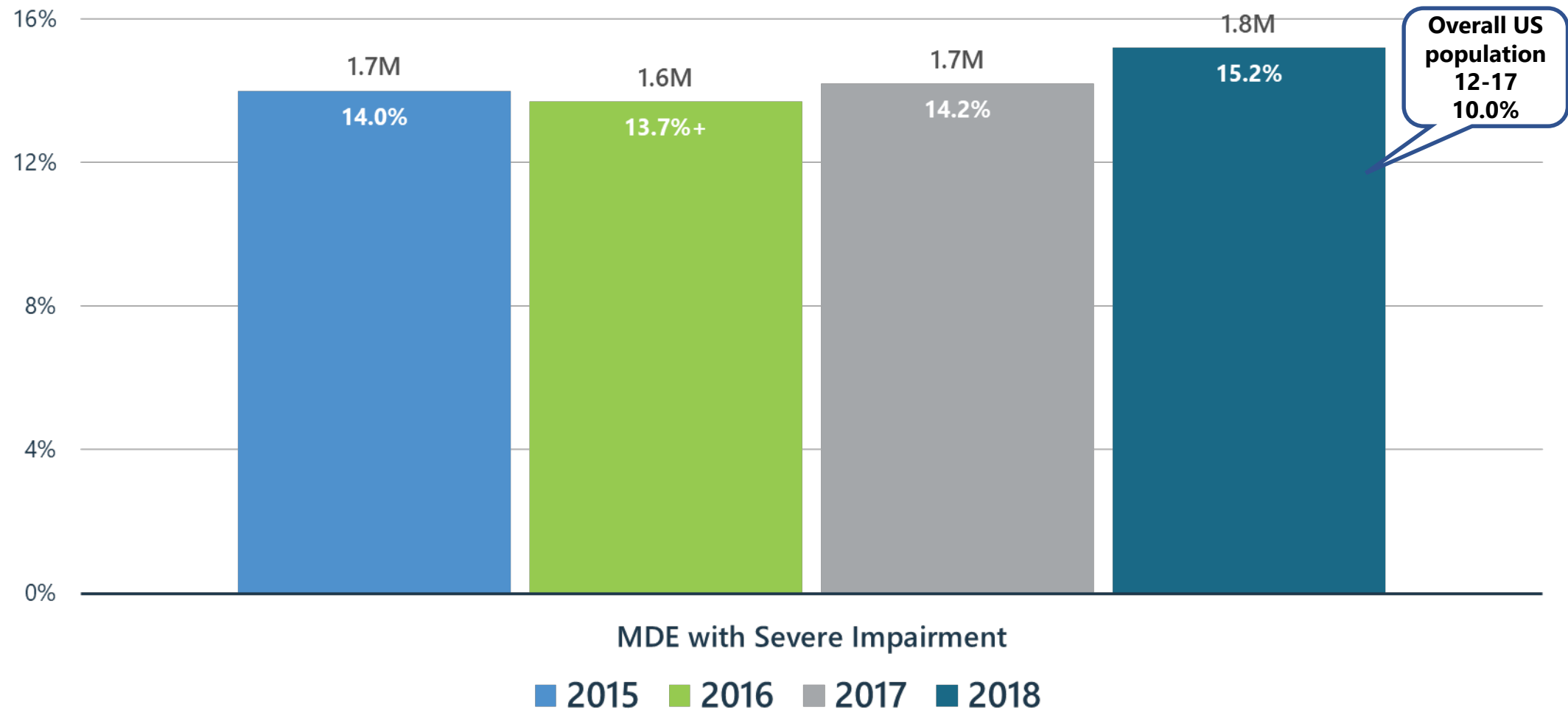


Note: The adult and youth MDE estimates are not directly comparable.

+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Major Depressive Episodes with Severe Impairment among Adolescent Females

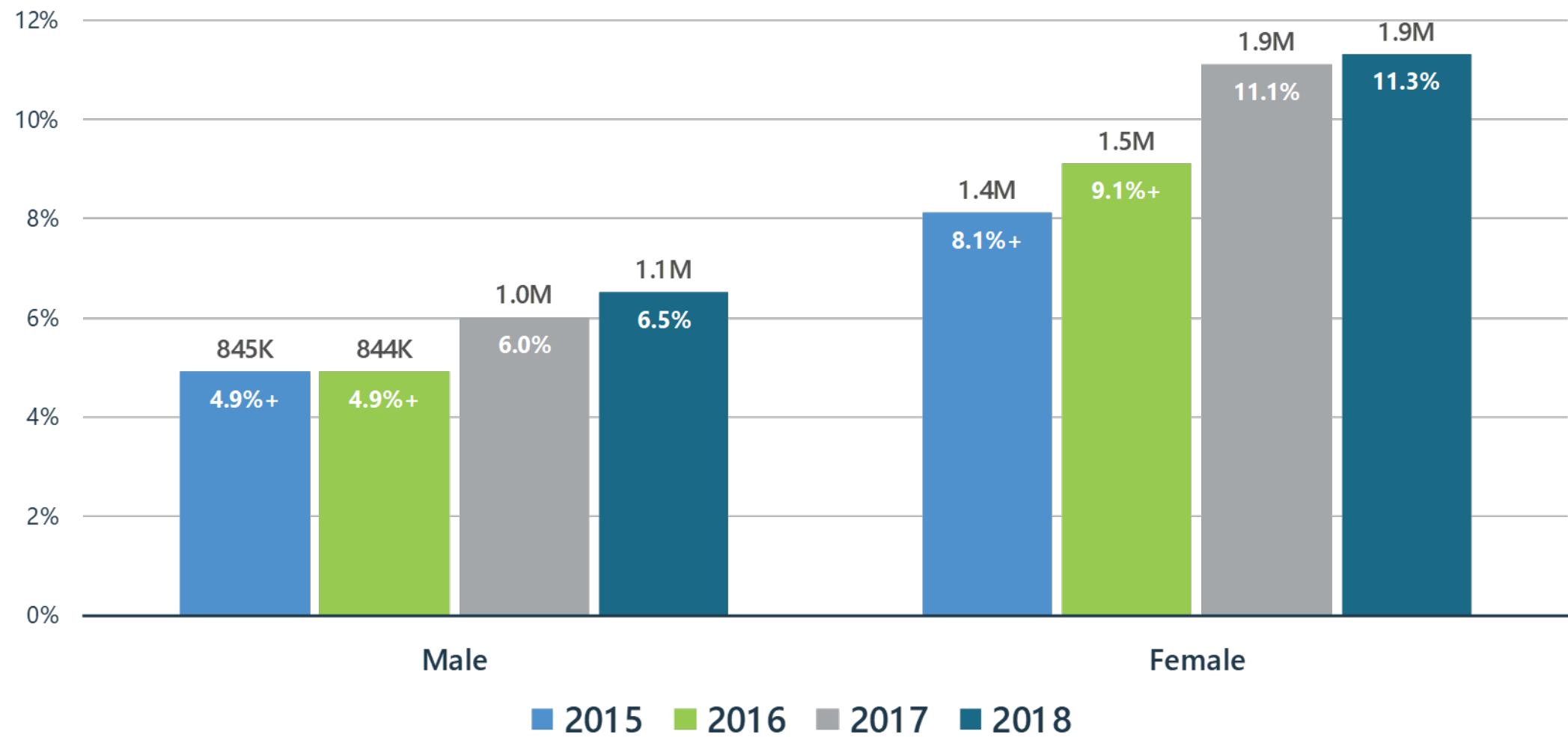
PAST YEAR, 2015-2018 NSDUH, Women 12-17



+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Major Depressive Episodes with Severe Impairment among Young Adults (18-25 y.o.)

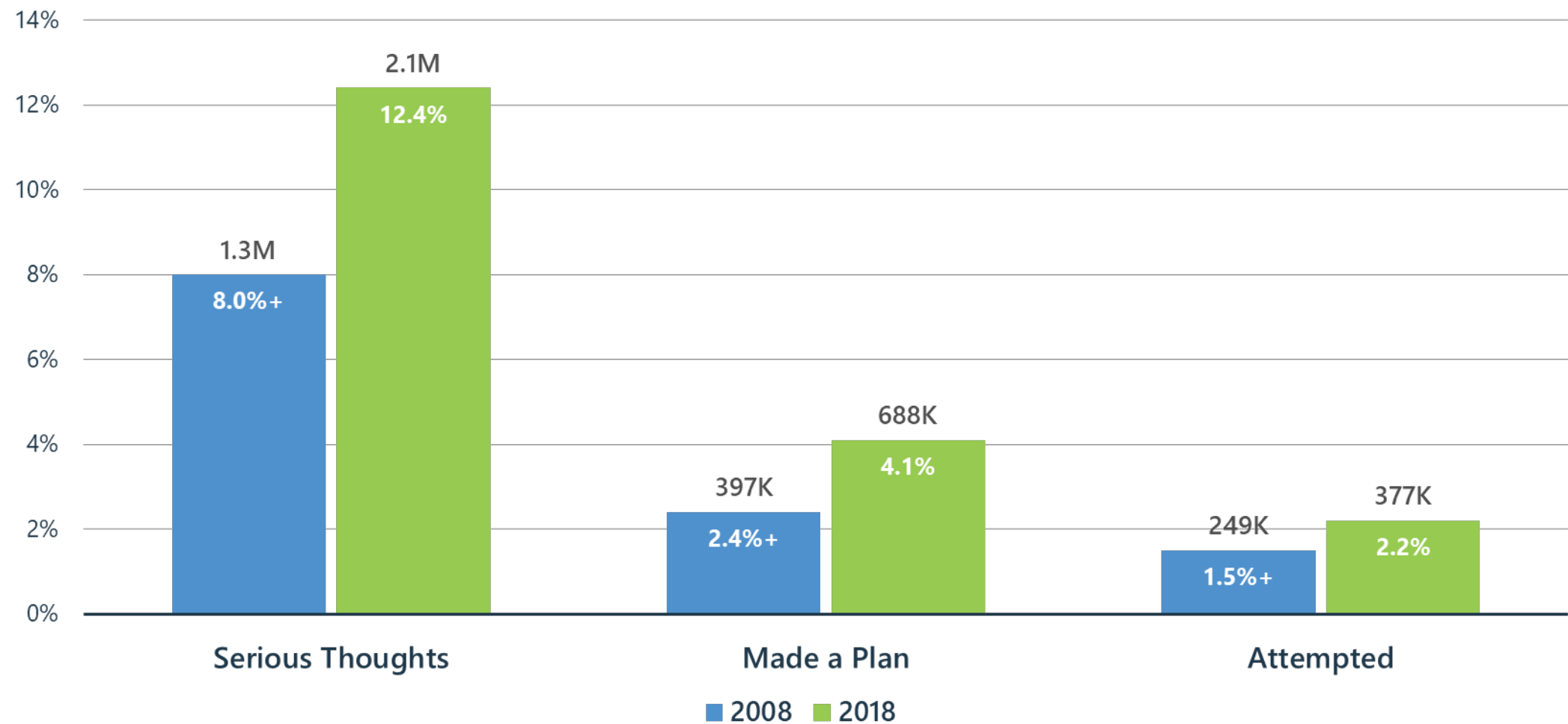
PAST YEAR, 2015-2018 NSDUH, 18-25



+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Suicidal Thoughts, Plans, and Attempts Increase for Young Adult Women (18-25 y.o.)

PAST YEAR, 2008 and 2018 NSDUH, Women 18-25

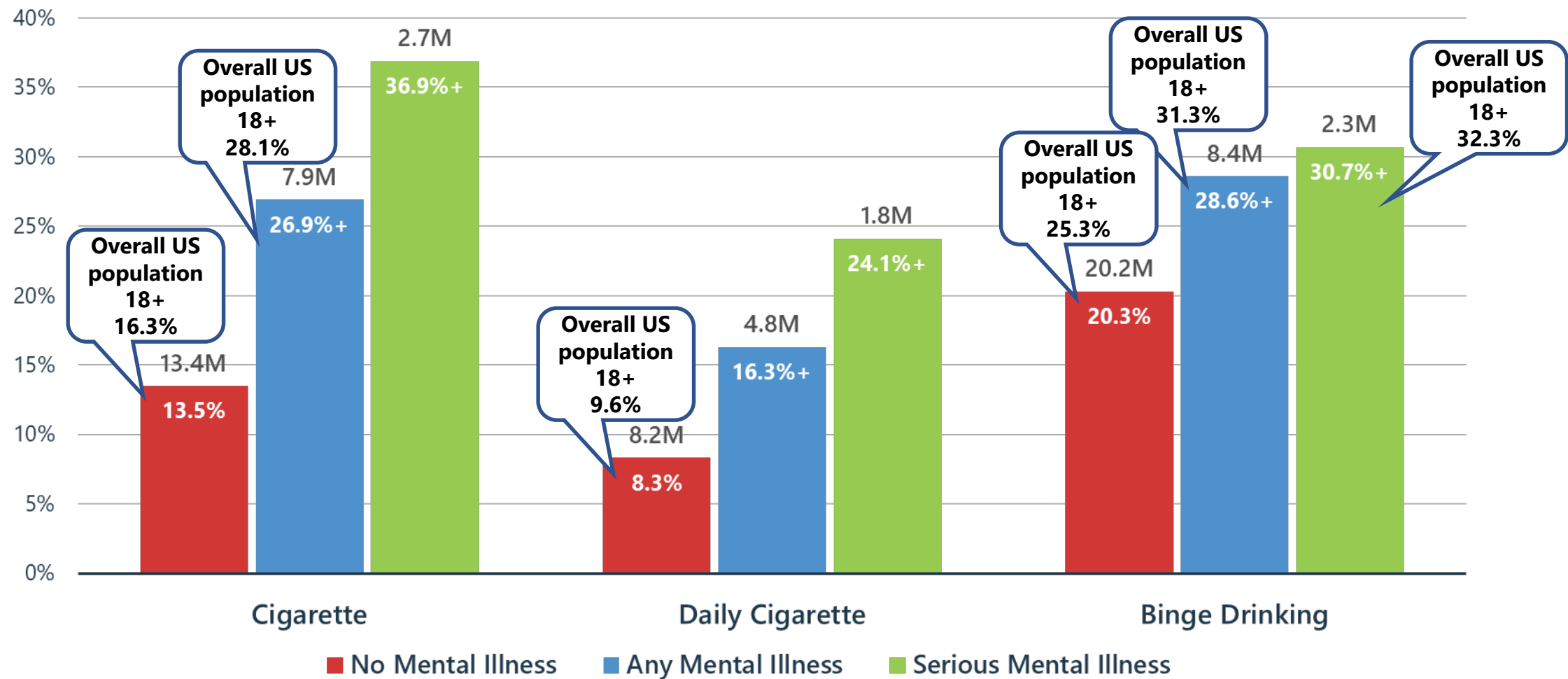


+ Difference between this estimate and the 2018 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Co-Occurring Disorders

# Co-Occurring Issues: Substance Use Is More Frequent among Adult Women (≥18 y.o.) with Mental Illness

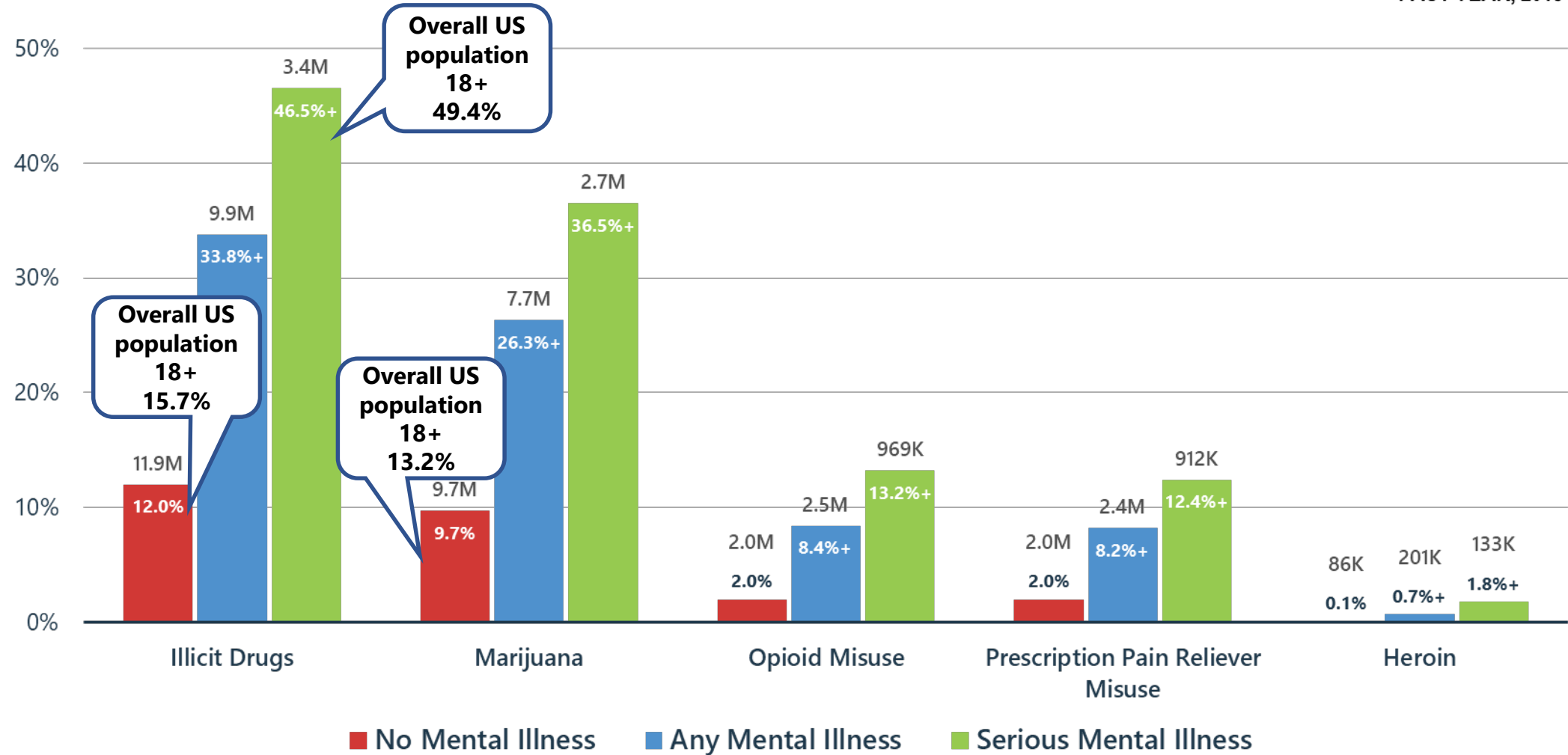
PAST MONTH, 2018 NSDUH, Women 18+



+ Difference between this estimate and the estimate for adults without mental illness is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Co-Occurring Issues: Substance Use Is More Frequent among Adult Women (≥18 y.o.) with Mental Illness

PAST YEAR, 2018 NSDUH, Women 18+

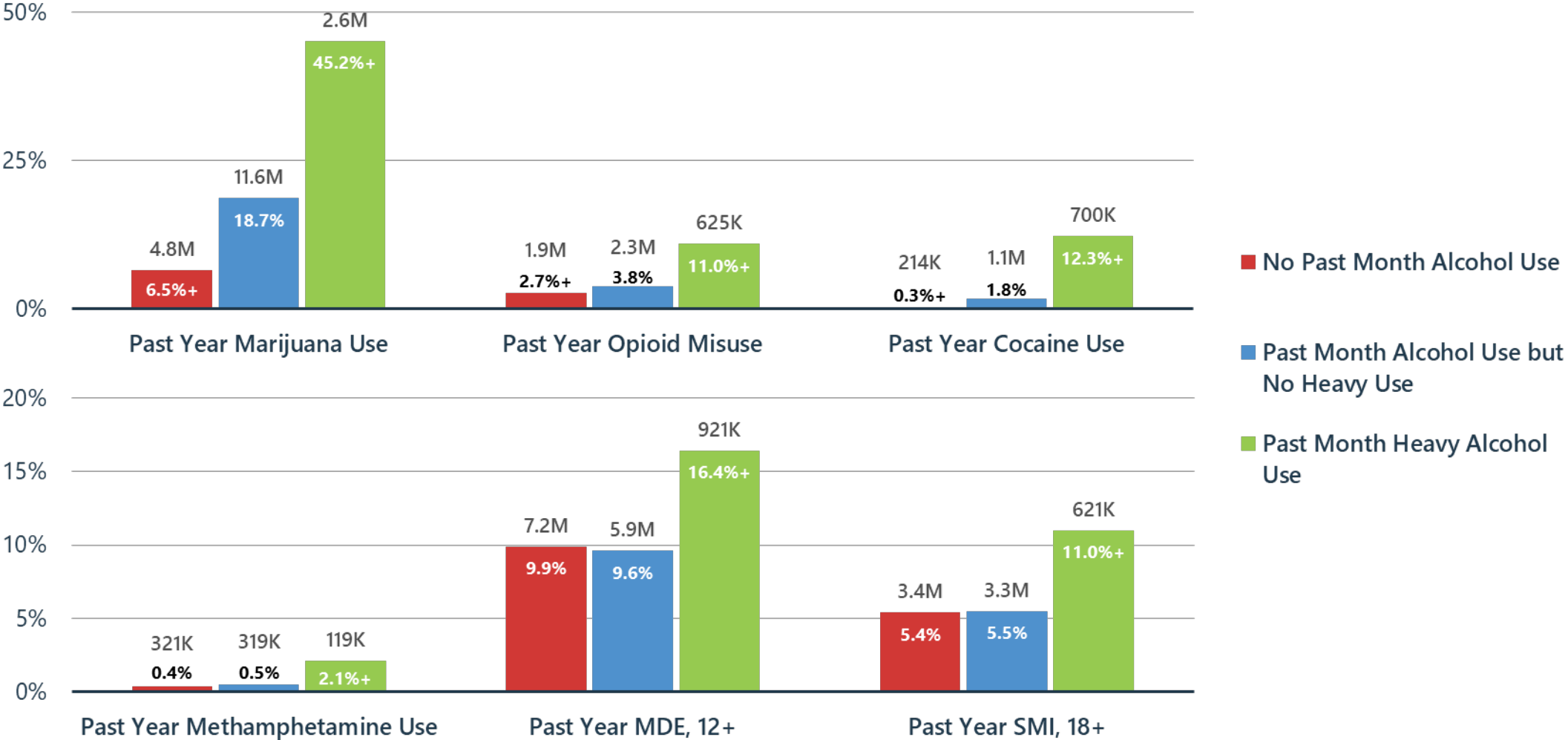


+ Difference between this estimate and the estimate for adults without mental illness is statistically significant at the .05 level.



# Alcohol Use Related to Other Substance Use, MDE and SMI among Women

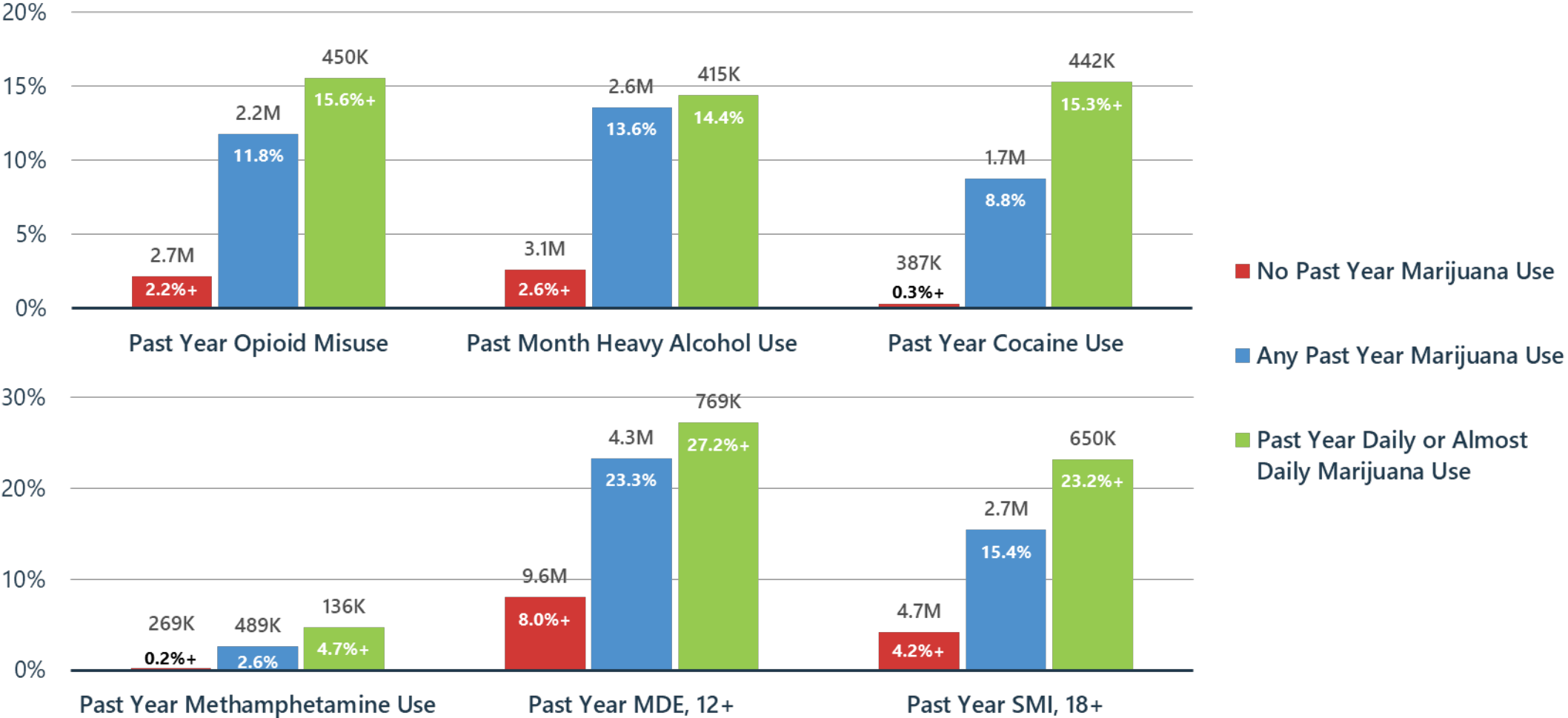
PAST YEAR/MONTH, 2018 NSDUH, Women 12+



+ Difference between this estimate and the estimate for people with past month use but not heavy alcohol use is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Marijuana Use Related to Other Substance Use, MDE and SMI among Women

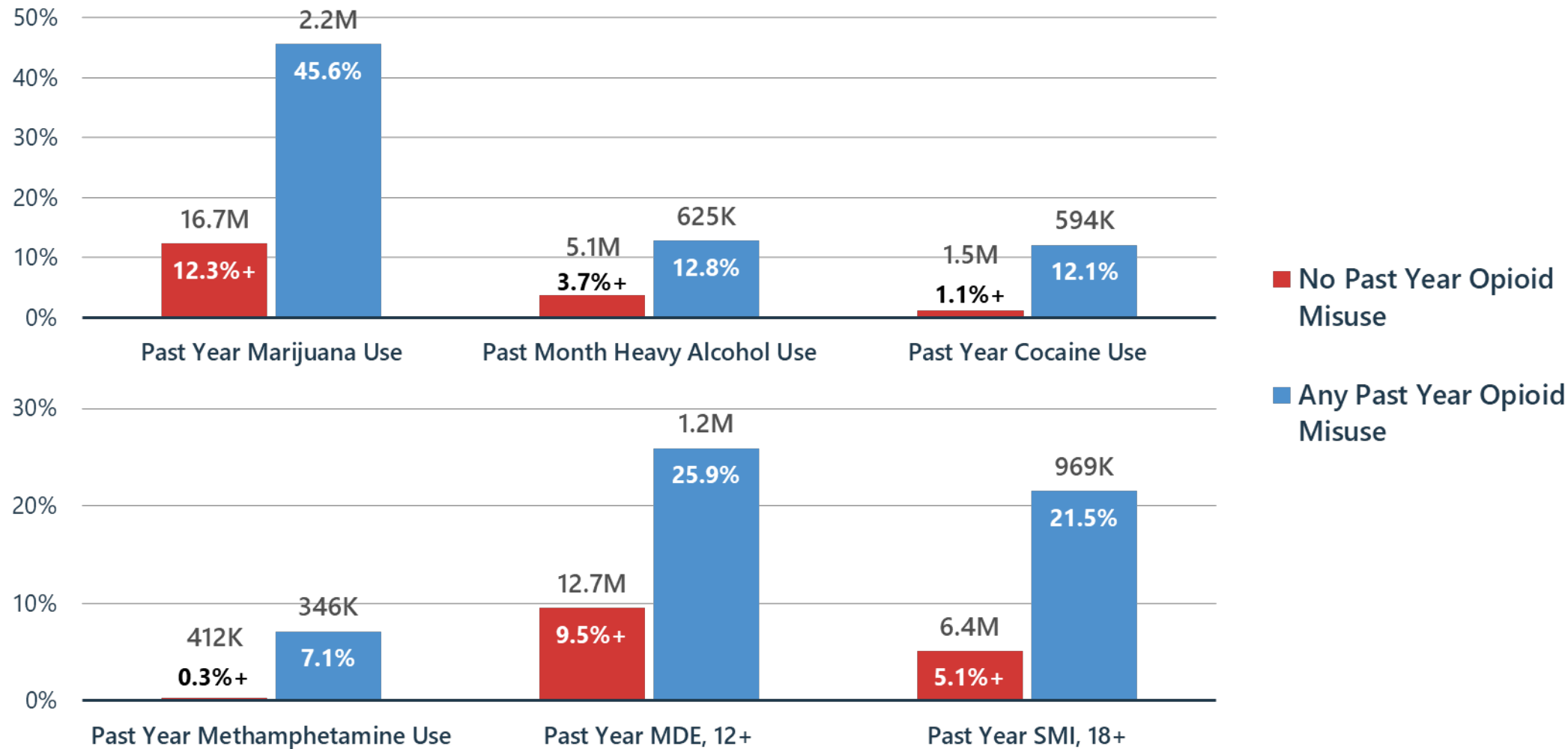
PAST YEAR/MONTH, 2018 NSDUH, Women 12+



+ Difference between this estimate and the estimate for people with past year marijuana use is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Opioid Misuse Related to Other Substance Use, MDE and SMI among Women

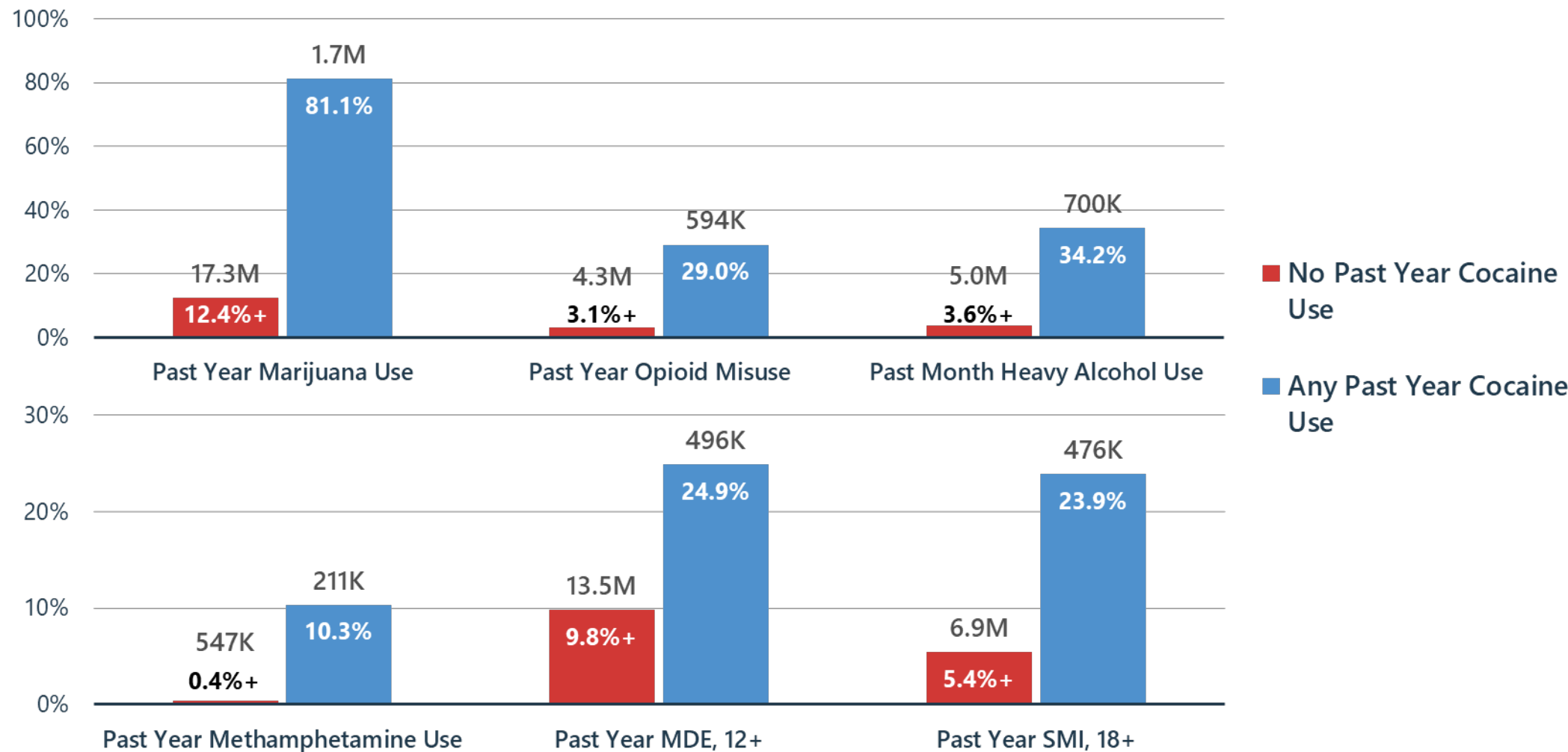
PAST YEAR/MONTH, 2018 NSDUH, Women 12+



+ Difference between this estimate and the estimate for people with past year opioid misuse is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Cocaine Use Related to Other Substance Use, MDE and SMI among Women

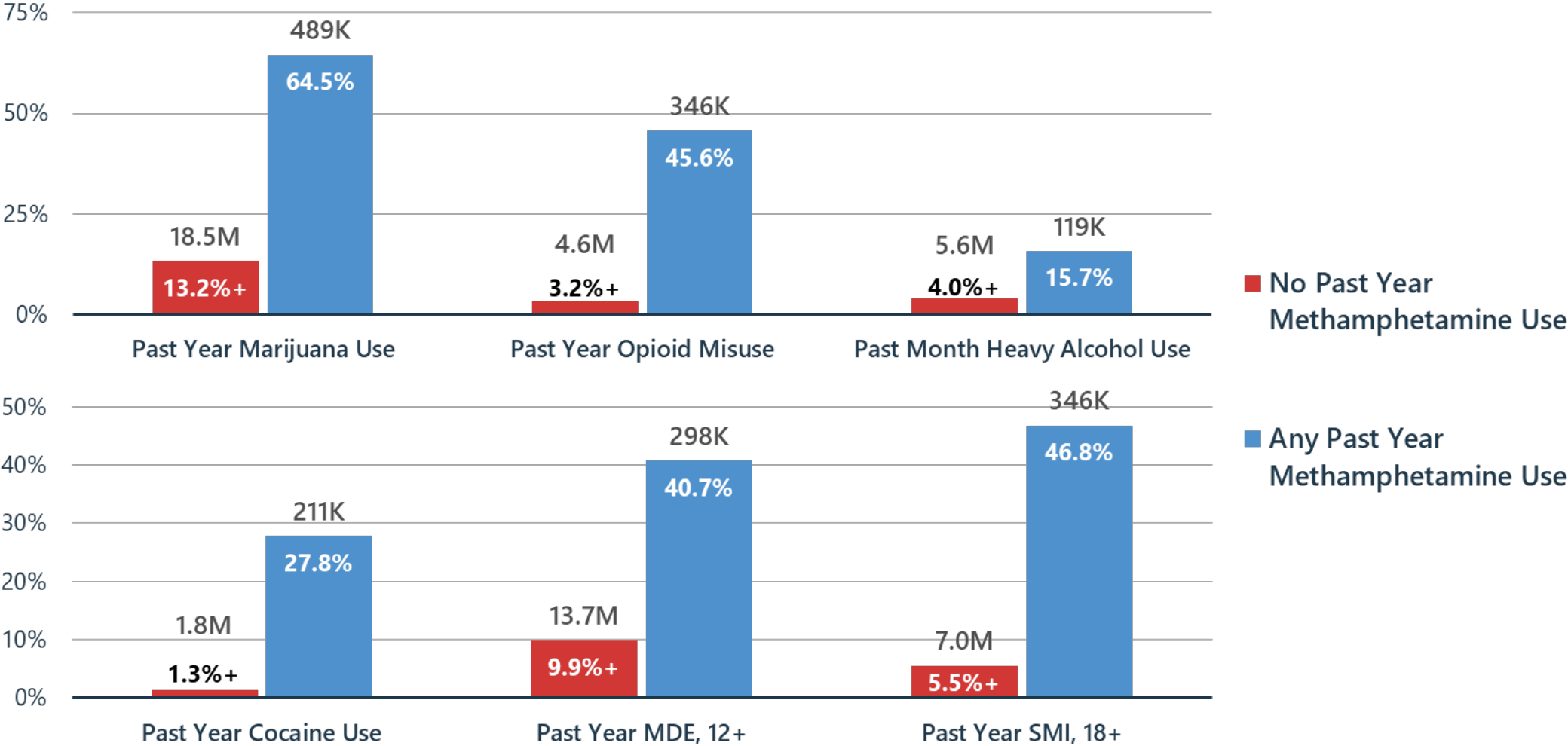
PAST YEAR/MONTH, 2018 NSDUH, Women 12+



+ Difference between this estimate and the estimate for people with past year cocaine use is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Methamphetamine Use Related to Other Substance Use, MDE and SMI among Women

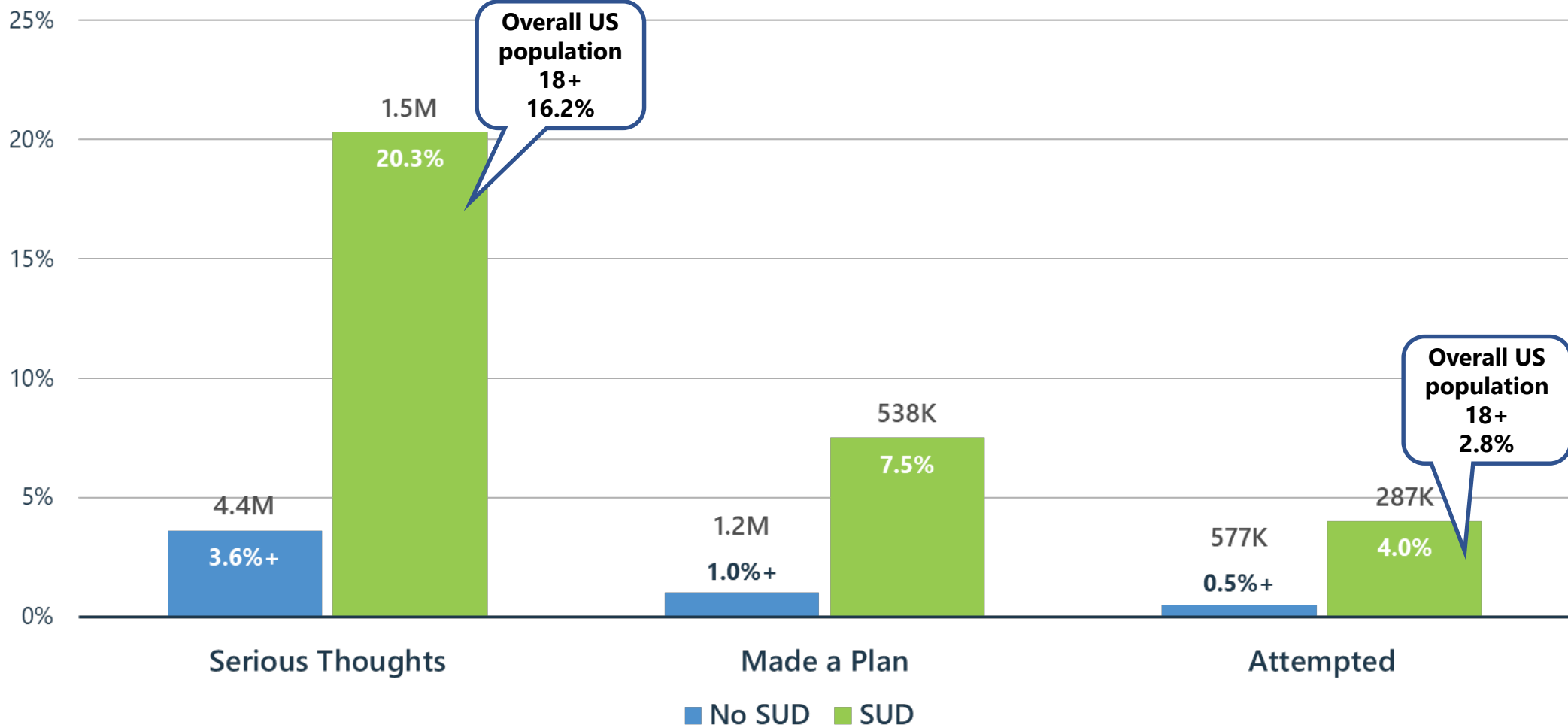
PAST YEAR/MONTH, 2018 NSDUH, Women 12+



+ Difference between this estimate and the estimate for people with past year methamphetamine use is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Co-Occurring Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Is Associated with Suicidal Thoughts, Plans, and Attempts among Adult Women (≥18 y.o.)

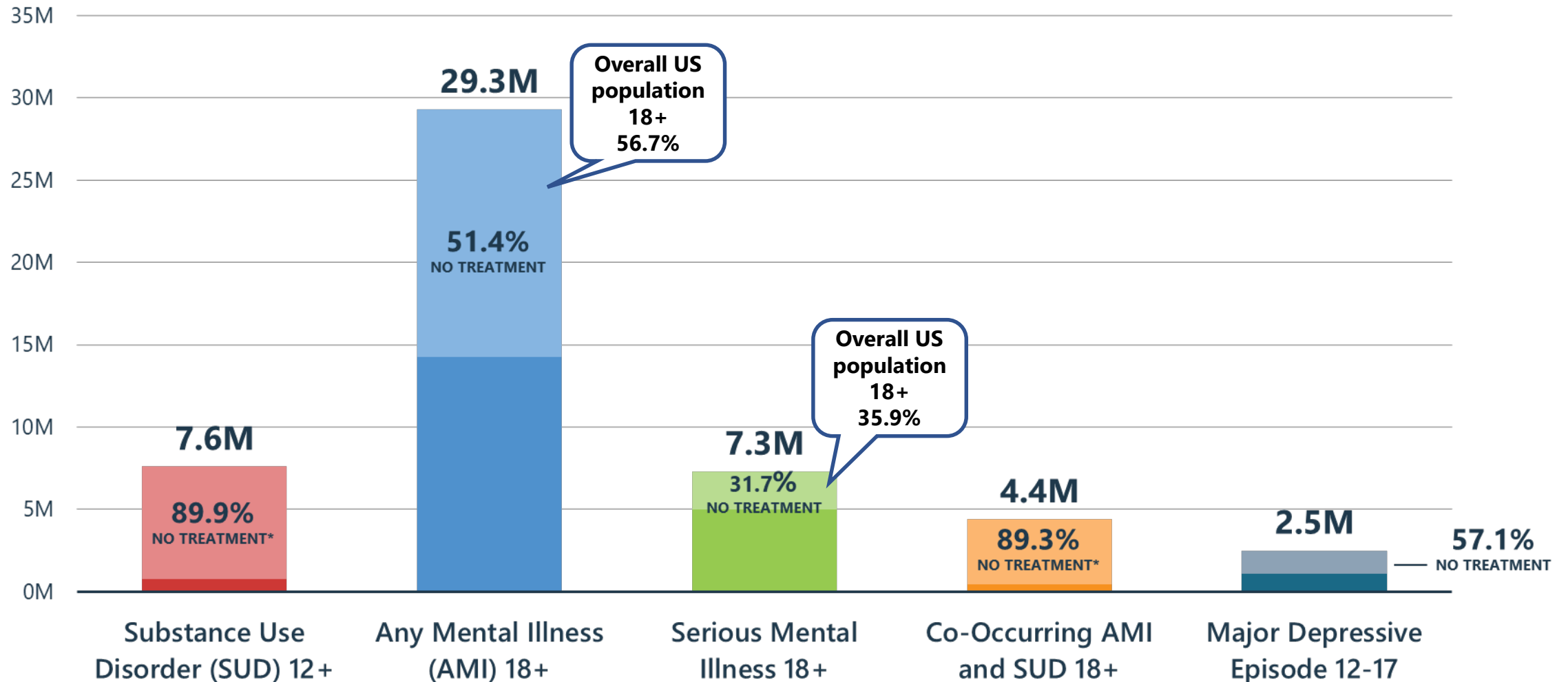
PAST YEAR, 2018 NSDUH, Women 18+



+ Difference between this estimate and the estimate for adults with SUD is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Despite Consequences and Disease Burden, Treatment Gaps Remain Vast among Women

PAST YEAR, 2018 NSDUH, Women 12+



\* No Treatment for SUD is defined as not receiving treatment at any location, such as a hospital (inpatient), rehabilitation facility (inpatient or outpatient), mental health center, emergency room, private doctor's office, self-help group, or prison/jail.

# Summary: Mental Health and Substance Use Issues in the United States in 2018

- During 2015-2018, serious mental illness significantly increased in women aged 18-49, especially among women aged 18-25
- Significant increases in major depressive episode in female youth aged 12-17 and women aged 18-25 during 2015-2018
- Significant increases in major depressive episode with severe impairment in women aged 12-17 during 2016-2018 and women aged 18-25 during 2015-2018
- Significant increases in suicide thoughts, plan, and attempt in women aged 18-25 during 2008-2018
- Co-occurring substance use and mental disorders are common among women
- Among women, use of one substance—alcohol or other illicit substances-- is strongly correlated with polysubstance use and with major depressive episode and serious mental illness underscoring the need to screen for all substances as well as mental disorders when evaluating a person identifying a substance problem or a mental health issue, *and* to treat all co-occurring disorders
- Substance use disorders are associated with increased risk for suicidality among women
- The large gap in treatment need continues among women



# 2018: A Year of Some Progress, but Ongoing Need for Americans Living with Substance Use and Mental Health Issues Continues

## **NSDUH reveals areas where we need to focus resources:**

- Continuing need to address the ongoing opioid epidemic
- Significant increase in marijuana use among women aged 18+
- Significant increase in methamphetamine in women aged 26+
- Significant increases in major depressive episode in youth aged 12-17 and women aged 18-25
- Substance use and mental disorders are closely linked: NSDUH tells us that illicit substance use is associated with increased risk for other hazardous substance use and mental illness, and mental illness is a risk factor for illicit substance use
- Need for ongoing efforts in prevention of substance use disorders

# SAMHSA's Response

- **Workforce: Continue to address the need for clinicians to be prepared to assess and treat mental health issues and substance issues with national training and technical assistance programs**
- **Opioids**
- Continue work with states to address opioids crisis needs in terms of prevention, treatment, and community recovery resources
  - STR/SOR/TOR grants
  - Discretionary grants: pregnant/post partum parenting women/children/families, drug courts, first responder/prevention grants
  - Collaboration with HHS partners and other federal departments to expand resources to communities
- **Other substances:**
- Encourage use of block grant funds to address prevention/treatment needs
- Provide training and technical assistance on evidence-based psychosocial therapies
- **Connecting with the public: Importance of Prevention, Treatment, Community Supports**
- Public service messaging on substance use and mental health issues with focus on prevention
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/technology-transfer-centers-ttc>
- **Monitoring outcomes:**
- Through continuation of NSDUH, DAWN, and SAMHSA grant program evaluation
- **Making policy modifications as indicated**