Bridging the Gap: TEFCA Supporting the Needs of Rural Communities

ASTP Annual Meeting

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Current State of TEFCA Participation and Awareness among Rural and Critical Access Hospitals

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Critical access hospitals (CAH) and rural hospitals have faced gaps in interoperability that TEFCA could help address
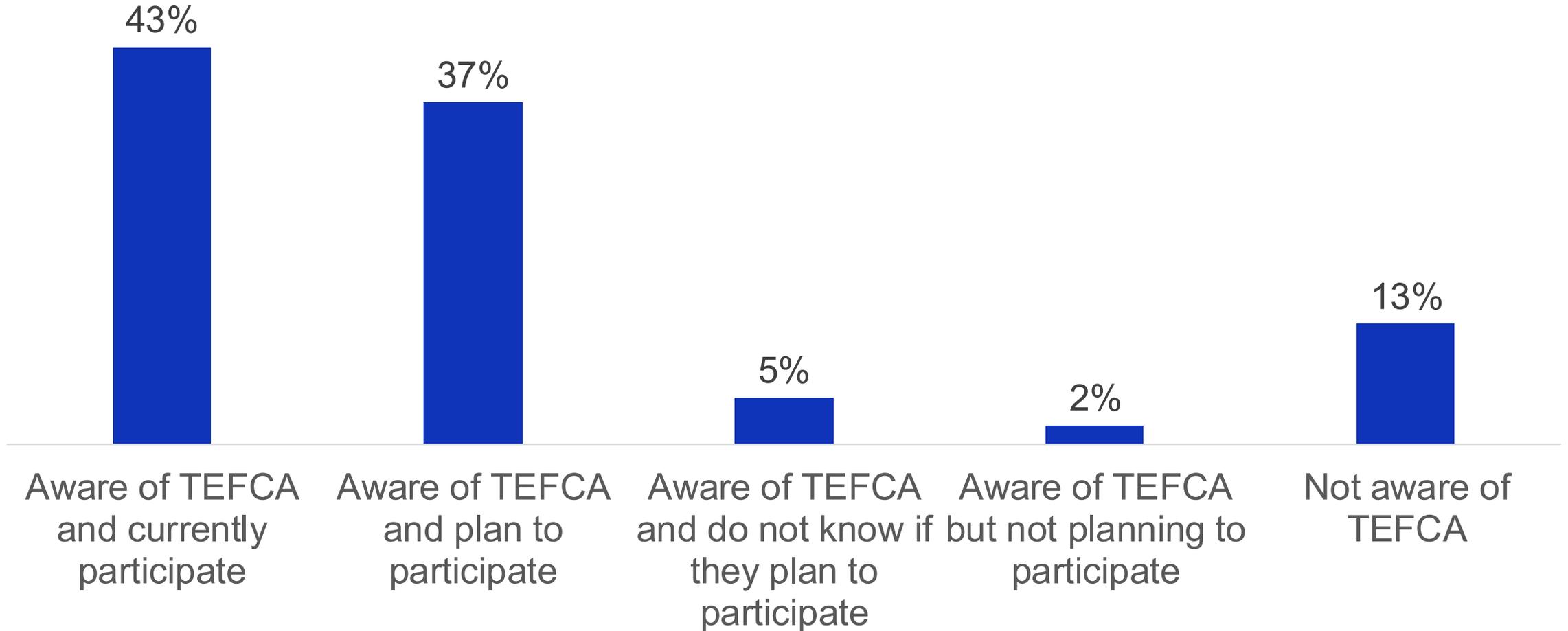
Table 1: Interoperability Frequency Among Non-Federal Acute Care Hospitals by Hospital Characteristics: 2023

Hospital Characteristics	Routinely Interoperable	Sometimes Interoperable	Not Fully Interoperable
Overall Interoperability	43%	27%	30%
Small	38%	23%	39%
Medium	46%*	33%*	21%*
Large	53%*	30%*	17%*
Independent	22%	23%	55%
System Affiliated	53%*	29%	18%*
Rural	36%	23%	41%
Urban	47%*	30%*	23%*
Critical Access Hospital (CAH)	37%	22%	42%
Non-CAH	45%*	30%*	25%*

Source: 2023 AHA Annual Survey Information Technology Supplement.

Gabriel MH, Richwine C, Strawley C, Barker W, Everson J. Interoperable Exchange of Patient Health Information Among U.S. Hospitals, 2023. ONC. Data Brief: 71. 2024.

Overall, 8 in 10 hospitals participate or plan to participate in TEFCA

TEFCA awareness and participation status among hospitals

43%	Aware of TEFCA and currently participate
37%	Aware of TEFCA and plan to participate
5%	Aware of TEFCA and do not know if they plan to participate
2%	Aware of TEFCA but not planning to participate
13%	Not aware of TEFCA

Source: American Hospital Association Information Technology Survey, 2025.

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Among the other 2 in 10 hospitals, a majority are rural or CAH hospitals

	Among 20% of hospitals who don't have plans or don't know if they will participate
Rural vs. Urban Status	
Rural (40%)	62%
Urban (60%)	38%
Critical Access Hospital status	
CAH (31%)	52%
Other Rural (15%)	18%
Urban (54%)	30%

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CAH hospitals' participation and plans to participation in TEFCA increasing but gaps persist

Currently Participating or Plan to Participate in TEFCA by CAH status
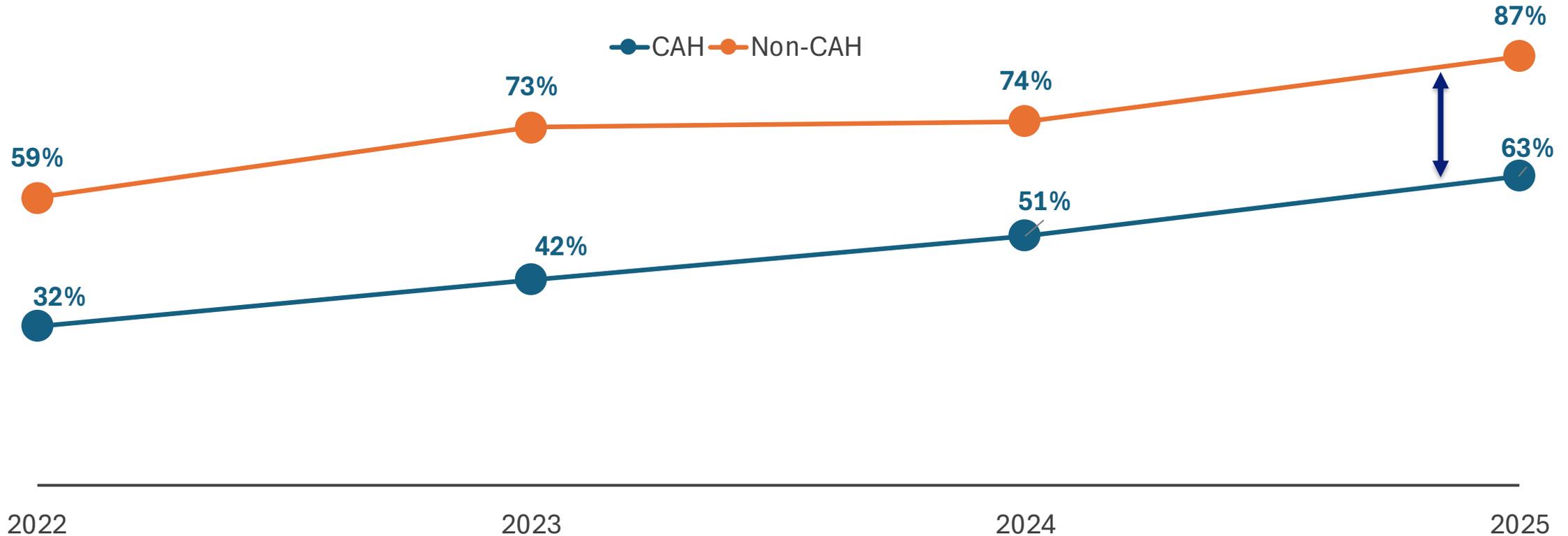
CAH — **Non-CAH**

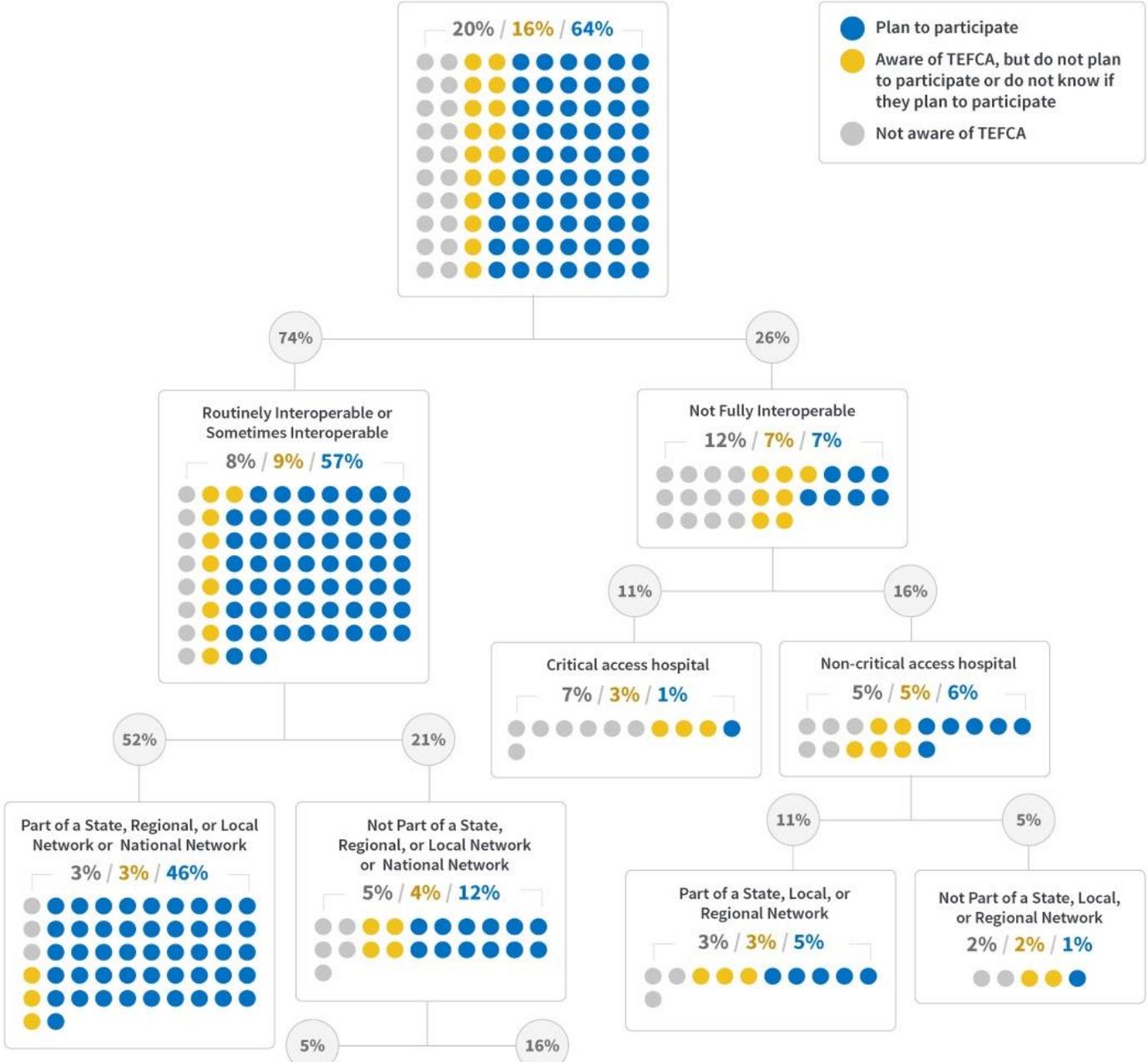| Year	CAH	Non-CAH
2022	32%	59%
2023	42%	73%
2024	51%	74%
2025	63%	87%

CAH hospitals' lack of awareness about TEFCA diminishing but gaps persist

Lack of Awareness of TEFCA by CAH status

Legend: ● CAH ● Non-CAH

CAH: 40% (2022), 41% (2023), 28% (2024), 24% (2025)
Non-CAH: 19% (2022), 16% (2023), 10% (2024), 7% (2025)
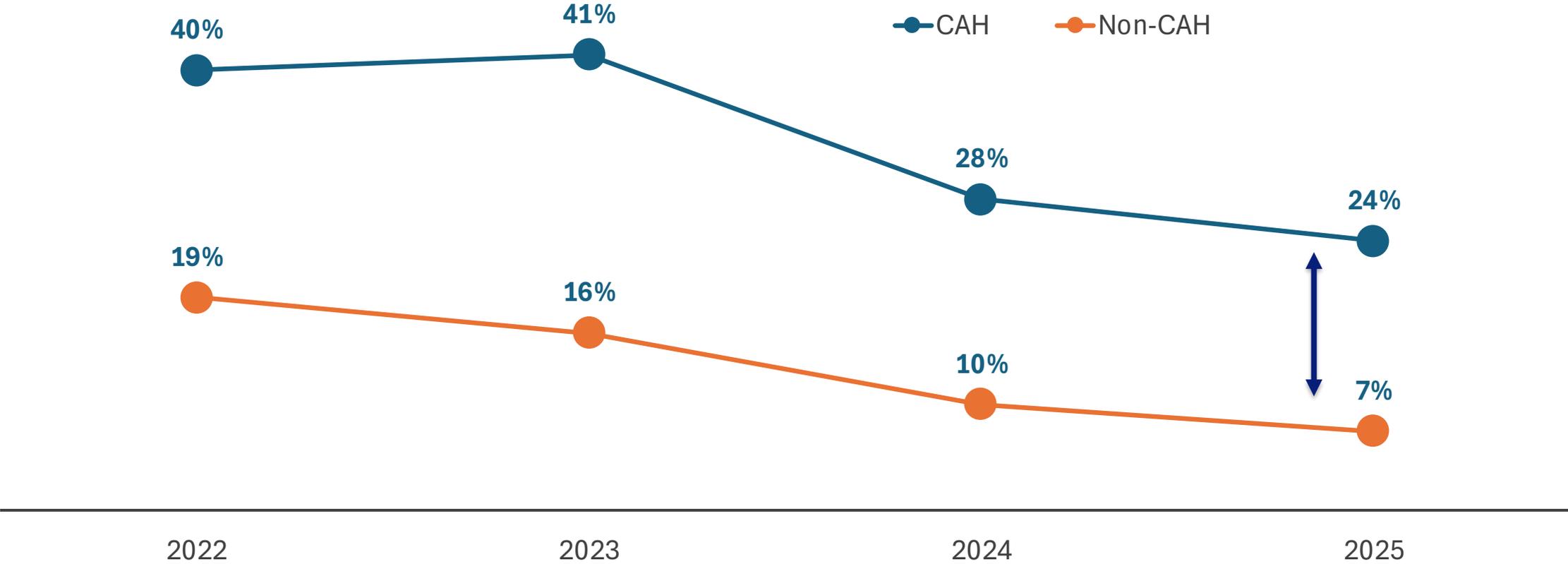
Source: American Hospital Association Information Technology Survey, 2025.

Past analyses indicate that network participation is a major predictor of awareness and plans to participate in TEFCA.

Legend:
- Plan to participate
- Aware of TEFCA, but do not plan to participate or do not know if they plan to participate
- Not aware of TEFCA

20% / 16% / 64%

74% — Routinely Interoperable or Sometimes Interoperable — 8% / 9% / 57%

26% — Not Fully Interoperable — 12% / 7% / 7%

52% — Part of a State, Regional, or Local Network or National Network — 3% / 3% / 46%

21% — Not Part of a State, Regional, or Local Network or National Network — 5% / 4% / 12%

5% ... 16%

11% — Critical access hospital — 7% / 3% / 1%

16% — Non-critical access hospital — 5% / 5% / 6%

11% — Part of a State, Local, or Regional Network — 3% / 3% / 5%

5% — Not Part of a State, Local, or Regional Network — 2% / 2% / 1%

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Past data indicate that rural hospitals are less likely to participate in networks that enable connectivity via TEFCA

Table 3: Percent of U.S. non-federal acute care hospitals that participate in national and state, regional, or local health information networks by hospital type, 2019.

Type of Network	Medium-Large	Small	Suburban-Urban	Rural	Non-CAH	CAH
State, Regional, or Local Network	80%	68%*	78%	68%*	76%	68%*
National Network	75%	63%*	74%	62%*	73%	59%*
Both Network Types	61%	47%*	59%	46%*	57%	46%*
Neither Network Type	5%	17%*	7%	17%*	8%	19%*

Source: 2019 AHA Annual Survey Information Technology Supplement.
Notes: *Significantly different from a corresponding category presented in the column to the left (p<0.05).)

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Key Takeaways

- There is a potential for TEFCA to address gaps in interoperability faced by CAH and rural hospitals
- While hospitals' participation and plans to participate in TEFCA overall are growing, there are about 1 in 5 hospitals that remain on the sidelines
- A majority of those hospitals are rural and critical access hospitals
- These hospitals awareness and participation rates in TEFCA have grown over time but gaps remain
- Past analyses have shown that health information network participation is critical to TEFCA participation but rural hospitals may have lower rates of participating in those networks compared to their counterparts
- Strategies are needed to increase awareness and address specific barriers for rural and CAHs to join TEFCA such as facilitating participation in networks that connect to TEFCA