

Issue Brief:

2004 OREGON POLICYMAKER and STAFF SURVEY

November 2004



**Oregon Health
Policy and Research**

If you would like additional copies of this report, or if you need this material in an alternate format, please call (503) 731-3005 ext. 355

If you have additional questions about the Legislative survey results, call (503) 731-3005 ext. 354.

This report is also available at:
<http://www.ohpr.state.or.us>

Issue Brief: 2004 Oregon Policymaker and Staff Survey

INTRODUCTION

The Office for Oregon Health Policy and Research (OHPR) conducted a survey of legislators and staff in an effort to better understand the informational needs of policymakers. The goal of this survey was to generate specific suggestions for effectively communicating relevant health policy research to those making health policy decisions in Oregon. This Issue Brief will address the survey findings and their potential applications.

BACKGROUND

In the realm of health care, policy and research are often disjointed. Policymakers receive large volumes of information on health care research, but often don't find the answers they seek within these materials. This survey found that 30% of participating legislators and staff were unable to obtain accurate and reliable data on health policy issues. Furthermore, policymakers and researchers speak different languages. Formats and/or delivery methods of the information can also present barriers to effectively communicating ideas. Compounding this already difficult problem to solve is the fact that health policy is complex and time-consuming, yet is only part of the job for policy makers.

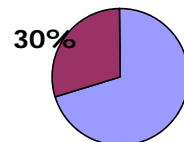
Who was surveyed?

Legislators and staff identified with roles and responsibilities on health care committees were contacted by phone and email. Of the 40 legislators identified, 10 were surveyed (five (5) Senators, five (5) Representatives). Of the 15 staff identified, 13 were surveyed.

Survey Details

The telephone survey included 56 questions, and averaged 21 minutes in length.

During the last Legislative session, 30% of respondents said



they were unable to obtain accurate, reliable data

Preferred Sources

The top three frequently used sources by

Legislators' include:

- *Legislative staff*
- *Department of Human Services*
- *Lobbyists*

*The top three frequently used sources by **Staff** include:*

- *Department of Human Services*
 - *Legislative staff*
 - *The Office for Oregon Health Policy and Research*
-

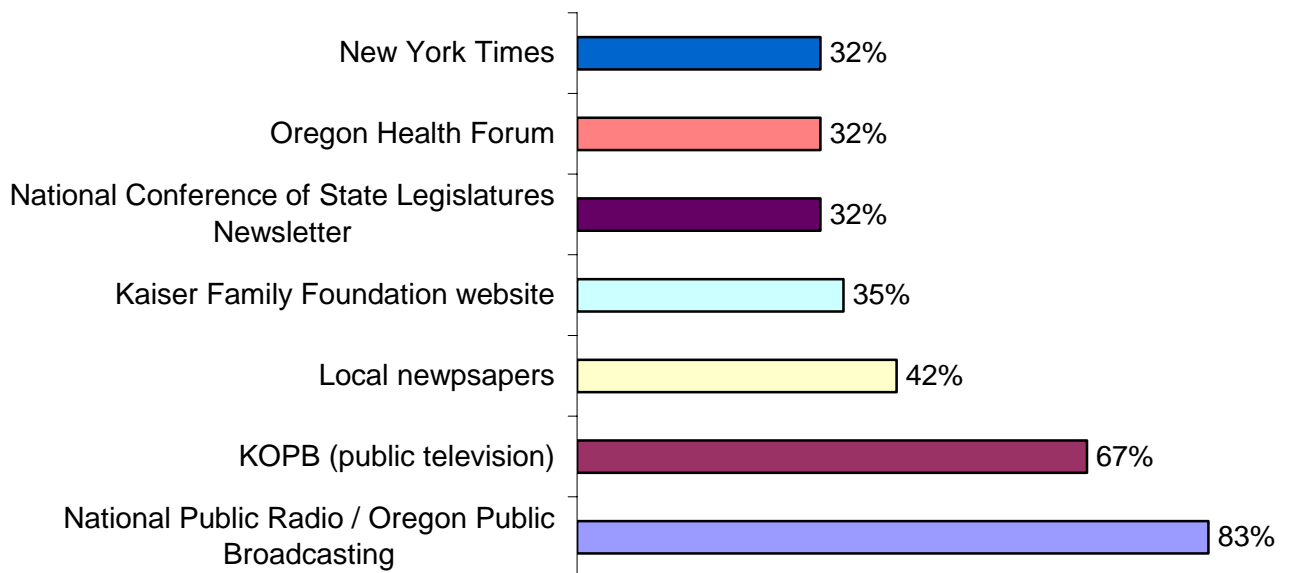
WHICH SOURCES OF INFORMATION ARE USEFUL?

RATED HIGHLY BY LEGISLATORS: newsletters, in-state meetings, shorter summaries and briefs

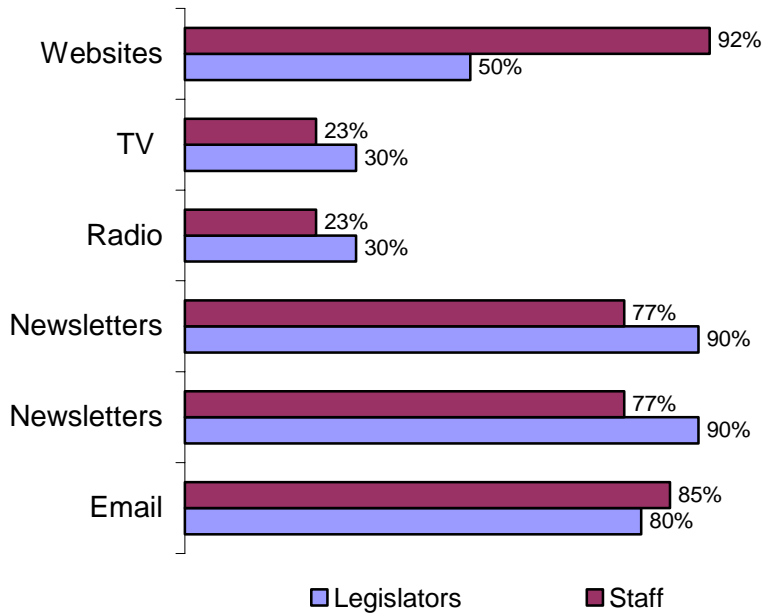
RATED HIGHLY BY STAFF: on-line news and health policy journals, in-state meetings, and reports from states that are demographically similar to Oregon

RATED LOWER by Legislators and Staff: out of town meetings, audiotapes and audio conferences, reports or longer documents, reports from bellwether states

MOST COMMONLY USED INFORMATIONAL SOURCES



HOW ARE INFORMATIONAL SOURCES ACCESSED?

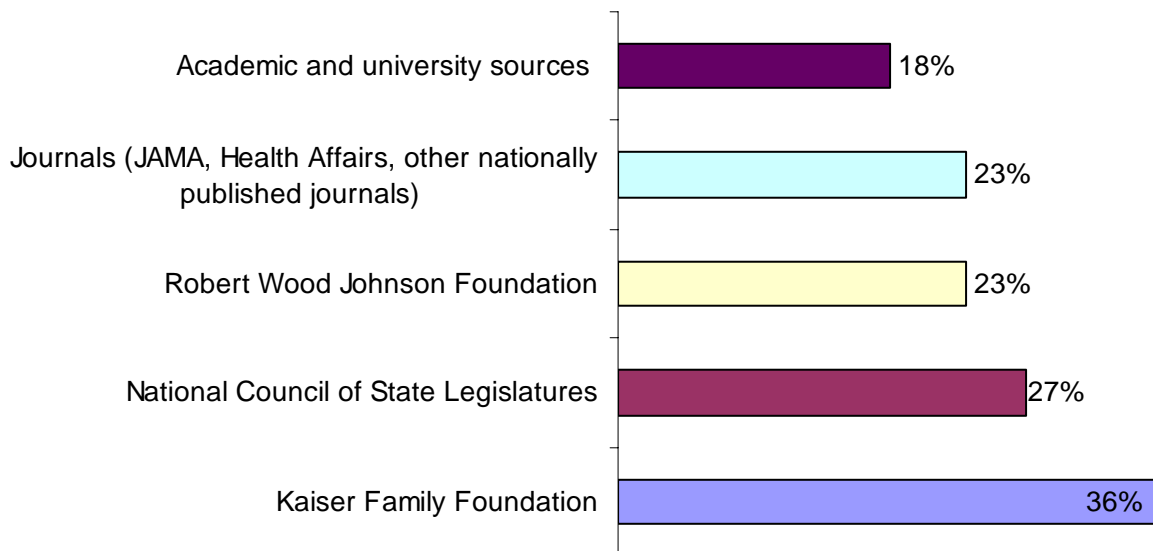


WHAT FORMATS ARE PREFERRED WHEN RECEIVING INFORMATION?

- Legislators preferred to get information from staff, followed by e-mail and postal service
 - Staff preferred to get information via e-mail, websites, and from each other
-

96% of Respondents Tend to Trust Some Sources More than Others

TRUSTED SOURCES OF INFORMATION



IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR OREGON

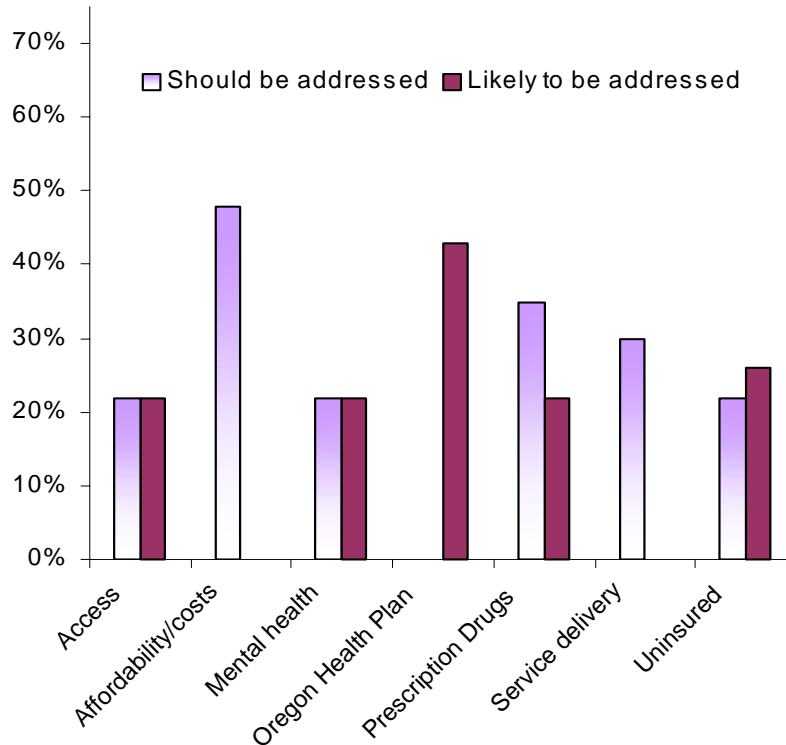
WHAT ISSUES WILL OREGON ADDRESS?

*What Oregon should address and what those surveyed believe will be addressed is slightly different. The respondents reported that the top issues **likely** to be addressed are:*

- OHP
- Uninsured
- RX Drugs

*The Top 3 issues that **should** be addressed:*

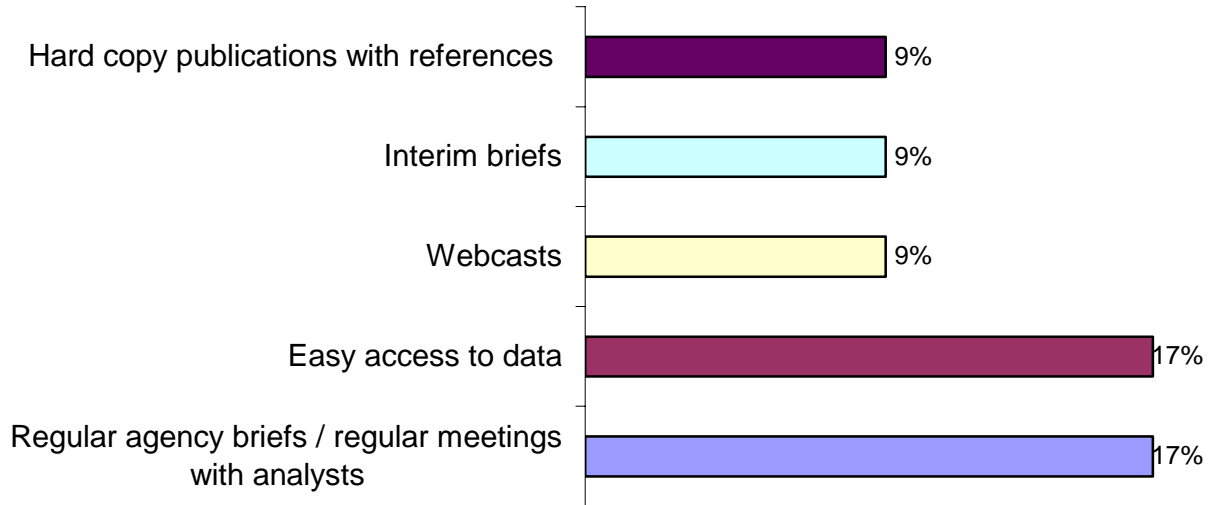
- Affordability & Costs
 - Rx Drugs
 - Service Delivery
-



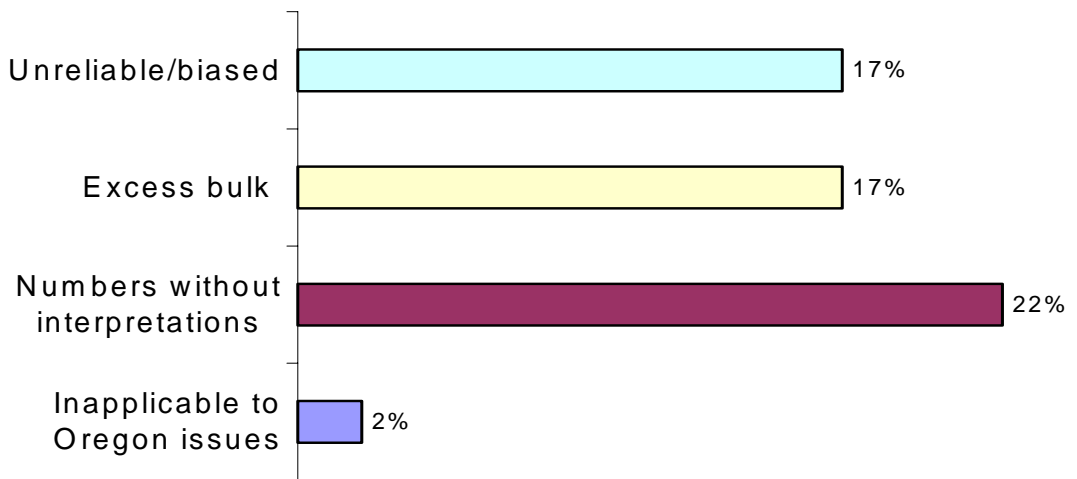
TOP ISSUE AREAS WHERE POLICYMAKERS SAY THEY NEED MORE INFORMATION:

- The uninsured population and its impact on cost shifting
- Health care finance and delivery in general and in regards to provider reimbursements
- Access (health care safety net)
- Prescription drug coverage
- Mental health and substance abuse
- Medical Liability and tort reform

WHAT FORMATS ARE PREFERRED FOR RECEIVING INFORMATION?



WHAT MAKES INFORMATION LESS USEFUL?



SUMMARY

This survey provided insight on the informational needs of Oregon's legislators and staff, their favored sources and/or formats for receiving information, and likely health policy issues for the upcoming 73rd Legislative session. Participants reported that timely and Oregon specific information was highly valued, particularly from sources that have a reputation for being objective and reliable. Preferred formats varied from e-mail to in-person updates from knowledgeable staff and analysts. This valuable information will provide guidance in the process of translating information from the language of researchers to the language of policy makers.

GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT INFORMATION

- *Legislative staff were less likely to feel they had adequate information to make policy recommendations*
- *Legislative staff felt it was difficult to get timely, reliable answers to question about health policy*
- *When receiving health policy information or research, legislators and staff also want to receive the author's analysis and recommendations.*
- *Legislators and staff prefer research data gathered from populations in Oregon as compared with state-to-state comparative data, or data gathered on a national basis*

REFERENCES

- Sorian R, Baugh T. Power of Information: Closing the Gap Between Research and Policy. *Health Affairs* 2002; 21:264-73.
- Reh D, Taymans C, Andrews E. 2002 Connecticut Health Policymaker Survey. *Conn Med.* 2002; 66(7):415-8.

Special thanks to both groups for allowing us to view original survey instruments and to borrow and/or adapt questions for use in this survey.