

Consumer Satisfaction Survey 2008

September 25, 2008

**Prepared by:
National Service Research**

Introduction and Methodology

Background

The Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) serves as the State Unit on Aging (SUA) in the State of Texas. The SUA supports the Older Americans Act's mission to assist older individuals to maintain independence and dignity in their homes and communities. DADS is a visible and effective advocate and leader in providing for a comprehensive and coordinated continuum of services and opportunities to enable the older population to live dignified lives. DADS' consumers are the older population of Texas, 60 years of age or older, their families, and caregivers who receive a wide variety of services provided through federal, state, and local funding.

DADS is committed to providing the highest level of quality in the services it provides to consumers through the 28 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and their service providers. In order to achieve this goal, the Department understands the critical importance of measuring consumer satisfaction and obtaining suggestions by consumers for improvements.

Goals of the Research

This report outlines the steps taken to gain an accurate measure of satisfaction among the AAAs' many consumers. Results of the consumer satisfaction survey are being used to improve service delivery and will be included in DADS' strategic plan. Another goal of the research project is to develop a research methodology which can be used to assess the satisfaction of the AAA consumers on an on-going basis.

The types of services provided by AAAs and their contractors vary from region to region. For this reason, DADS has selected the services utilized by the largest number of consumers and considered to have the greatest impact on an older individual's quality of life and ability to remain independent.

Introduction and Methodology

DADS selected seven AAA services for this research. These services and a brief description of each are below:

Benefits Counseling/Legal Assistance – Benefits Counseling/Legal Assistance services include advice from or representation, by an attorney, including assistance by a paralegal or law student under the supervision of an attorney, or counseling or representation by a non-lawyer, where permitted by law, to older individuals with economic and social needs.

Care Coordination – Care Coordination services include assessing an individual's needs, developing a care plan and accessing consumer services through providers for assistance such as homemaker, personal assistance, or residential repair services. These services are often provided to older adults who are recovering from surgery or other illnesses or who need additional help to remain in their homes.

Caregiver Support Coordination – Caregiver Support Coordination services include assessing the needs of a caregiver and care recipient, effectively planning, arranging, coordinating and following-up on services which most appropriately meet the identified needs as mutually defined by the caregiver, the care recipient, and the access and assistance staff. A caregiver is an adult family member or another individual who provides in-home and community care to an older individual or to an individual with Alzheimer's disease or a related disorder with neurological and organic brain dysfunction.

Congregate Meals – Hot or other appropriate meals served to eligible older consumers in a group setting. The objective is to reduce food insecurity and promote socialization of older individuals.

Home Delivered Meals – Meals are delivered to consumers' homes and are generally provided through a service provider. The objective is to reduce food insecurity and help the consumer sustain independent living in a safe and healthful environment. The meal can be a standard meal, therapeutic meal or liquid supplement.

Introduction and Methodology

Respite Care – An array of services which provide temporary relief for caregivers to dependent older individuals who need supervision. Services are provided in the older individual’s home environment on a short-term, temporary basis while the primary caregiver is unavailable or needs relief. In addition to supervision, services may include meal preparation, housekeeping, assistance with personal care or social and recreational activities.

Transportation – Transportation services include rides to places such as the doctor, grocery store or a congregate meal site which are typically provided by a service provider using a car, van or bus and usually require 24 hours advance notice.

Research Methodology

In 2008, the Consumer Satisfaction Survey gathered information on seven key services and utilized a two-tier collection process. In addition to the four original services surveyed in 2007 including Benefits Counseling/Legal Assistance, Care Coordination, Home Delivered Meals, and Transportation, three additional services were added. The additional services for 2008 are Caregiver Support Coordination, Congregate Meals, and Respite (agency-managed and consumer directed). In Tier One – the AAAs collected data on services provided through service providers. Using a standardized survey instrument, they collected data for Congregate Meals, Home Delivered Meals, Respite (agency-managed and consumer directed), and Transportation. In Tier Two – DADS, using a standardized survey instrument, collected data on the services the AAAs provide directly to the consumer. The services surveyed were Benefits Counseling/Legal Assistance, Care Coordination, and Caregiver Support Coordination.

The AAAs were allowed to reduce their population if the consumer received less than five units of service.

Introduction and Methodology

From August 1 through September 9, AAAs used telephone and mail-in surveys to collect data and entered their results into the National Service Research (NSR) website. The website was created by NSR especially for this survey. AAAs conducted follow up calls to respondents or expanded their sample groups as appropriate. For the DADS portion, NSR conducted 100 telephone surveys per each Tier Two service. During the period of August 29 through September 12, NSR called respondents up to three times at different times of the day and night, seven days per week.

Survey Instrument

The survey instruments were provided by DADS. The survey instruments were designed to be user-friendly, easy to understand, have non-leading and unbiased questions, and use scaled responses to questions with actual words that utilize no more than three response categories.

A total of 3,336 surveys were completed, including 300 surveys conducted by telephone at the state level. A total of ten AAAs participated and are listed below with the number of surveys each completed:

- Bexar County-382
- Concho Valley-238
- Coastal Bend-678
- Dallas County-305
- Harris County-344
- Heart of Texas-239
- North Central Texas-669
- Permian Basin-41
- South Plains-228
- South Texas-212

Significant Findings

Overall Satisfaction

There is an extremely high level of satisfaction among AAA consumers. Respondents were found to be highly pleased with the services received. The highest level of satisfaction was found with regard to caregiver support: 96% responded “yes” to the question, “Overall, are you satisfied with the person who arranged for the services you received.” Satisfaction was also high with home delivered meals (93%), benefits counseling/legal assistance (90%), care coordination (90%) and respite care (89%). Congregate meals received the lowest satisfaction rating (77%).

Satisfaction with Specific Aspects of Service

Respondents were also asked about specific aspects of each service. Their responses reveal high levels of satisfaction.

Benefits Counseling/Legal Assistance: Consumers felt staff listened to them and understood their needs (95%), they got useful information (93%), and received information in a reasonable amount of time (90%). Of the consumers surveyed, 94% reported the person was knowledgeable with 96% reporting staff was courteous and professional. Consumers reported they were satisfied with the help they received (90%) and the service helped them resolve their issue (79%). A majority (96%) would call again if they needed assistance.

Care Coordination: Care Coordinators received good ratings of satisfaction, especially with regard to being friendly (96%) and understanding consumers’ needs (91%). A total of 75% said the AAA provided services in a reasonable amount of time. Explaining services clearly (88%) also rated high. Some consumers (19%) did not feel involved in planning and choosing which services to receive, however, a majority (63%) stated they were involved. More than half (55%) reported someone followed-up with them to see how they were doing, 96% said it was important that they received these services and 94% would call again if they needed assistance.

Caregiver Support Coordination: Caregiver support received 100% ratings for friendly staff. Consumers stated they would use the service again and it is important they received the services.

Significant Findings

Congregate Meals: According to congregate meal consumers, the temperature of the meals was satisfactory (83%) and there was enough food (85%). The consumers are satisfied with the variety of meals (70%) and the meals were served at the scheduled time (93%). Of the consumers surveyed, it was reported the location where meals were served was easy to reach (94%) and the food server was friendly (94%). As a result of receiving meals, 62% reported their diet had improved and 85% said they feel more socially engaged. Overall, 77% were satisfied with congregate meals.

Home Delivered Meals: According to home delivered meal consumers, the delivery person was friendly (98%), the temperature of the meals was satisfactory (90%), there was enough food (83%) and the deliveries were on time (83%). The taste of the meals was rated only slightly lower (70%). Comments on how to improve meals mainly included requests for more variety and flavor (more seasoning), more vegetables, fresh fruit, fish and less starch and salt. Several consumers would like the overall quality of the food improved. A total of 70% indicated someone had mentioned they could make a donation toward the meal if they wanted. As a result of getting home delivered meals, 91% reported they have been able to maintain their independence.

Respite Care: Consumers felt AAA staff listened to them and understood their needs (96%), that they were able to find a provider (81%), and the service helped them care for a family member longer (84%). Of the consumers surveyed, it was reported the AAA staff was knowledgeable (93%) and they were courteous and professional (97%). Consumers were satisfied with the help they received (90%). The consumers felt it was important for them to be able to choose their own provider (71%). A majority (96%) said it was important they got the services with 71% reporting they would have needed alternative living arrangements had they not received the services.

Significant Findings

Transportation: Consumers of the transportation program appear satisfied with specific aspects of the service. They indicated the driver was friendly (93%), drove safely (94%), and the rides came on time (82%). A total of 77% reported rides were available when they needed them and 18% reported they were “sometimes” available when needed. A total of 62% indicated they were aware they could make a donation toward the ride if they wanted. A total of 89% were better able to maintain their independence as a result of getting rides.

Suggestions for Improvement

Consumers were asked for their suggestions for ways to improve services. Most of the respondents were extremely satisfied and liked the services. Below are suggestions offered by a few consumers.

Benefits Counseling/Legal Assistance: Paperwork should be sent in a timely manner and more frequent services are needed.

Care Coordination: Need Spanish speaking staff, improve follow-up, arrive quicker, receive services sooner, need more people and more services.

Caregiver Support Coordination: Better screening of staff, better training of staff, more hours of help are needed.

Congregate Meals: More diversity, less salt, tastier food, vegetables are over cooked, more salads and fruit included and more activities including exercise.

Home Delivered Meals: More variety, less salt and starch, more vegetables and fruit, and improve overall food quality.

Respite Care: Educate the public about the services available, more flexible hours, more hours of help needed, include weekend options, and need help twice a week.

Significant Findings

Transportation: Improve scheduling, hire more drivers, more time to grocery shop, be prompt and reduce wait time for rides back home.

Impact of Services

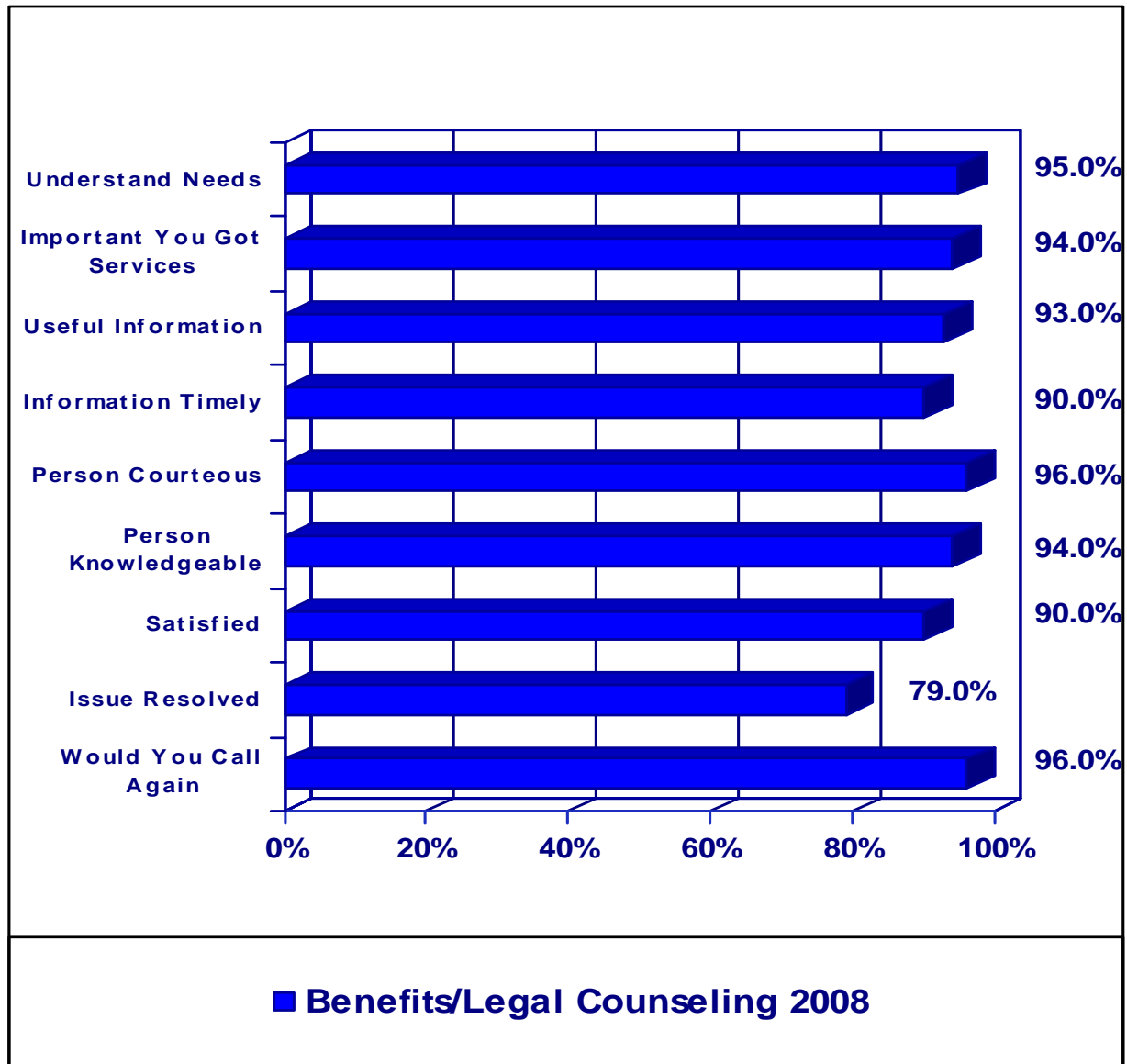
One of the most important findings of this study is the impact these services have on consumers. Consumers regard these services as very important to their lives (rated as important by 79% to 91% for all services) and as being instrumental in helping them maintain their independence. Caregiver support coordination and home delivered meals are perceived as having the greatest impact on helping older individuals remain independent: 90% of caregiver support recipients reported as a result of getting services, they are better able to maintain their independence. The consumers were able to maintain their independence as a result of having home delivered meals (91%) and assistance with care coordination (79%). A total of 89% of those receiving transportation services said it was important they receive this service.

In some cases, specific aspects of independence were also assessed. Respite care is critical to the respondents in being able to live where they choose. In fact, 71% of respite care respondents reported if they had not received these services, they would have to choose alternative housing like a nursing home or somewhere else to live. Caregiver support consumers (59%) and care coordination consumers (25%) would need to choose alternative living arrangements had they not received services. Most transportation consumers (91%) indicated it is easier to get where they need to go as a result of getting rides.

Department of Aging and Disability Services Consumer Satisfaction Survey

Benefits Counseling/Legal Assistance (100 completed surveys – State of Texas)

Percent Responding “Yes” to Each Issue Listed in the Chart Below

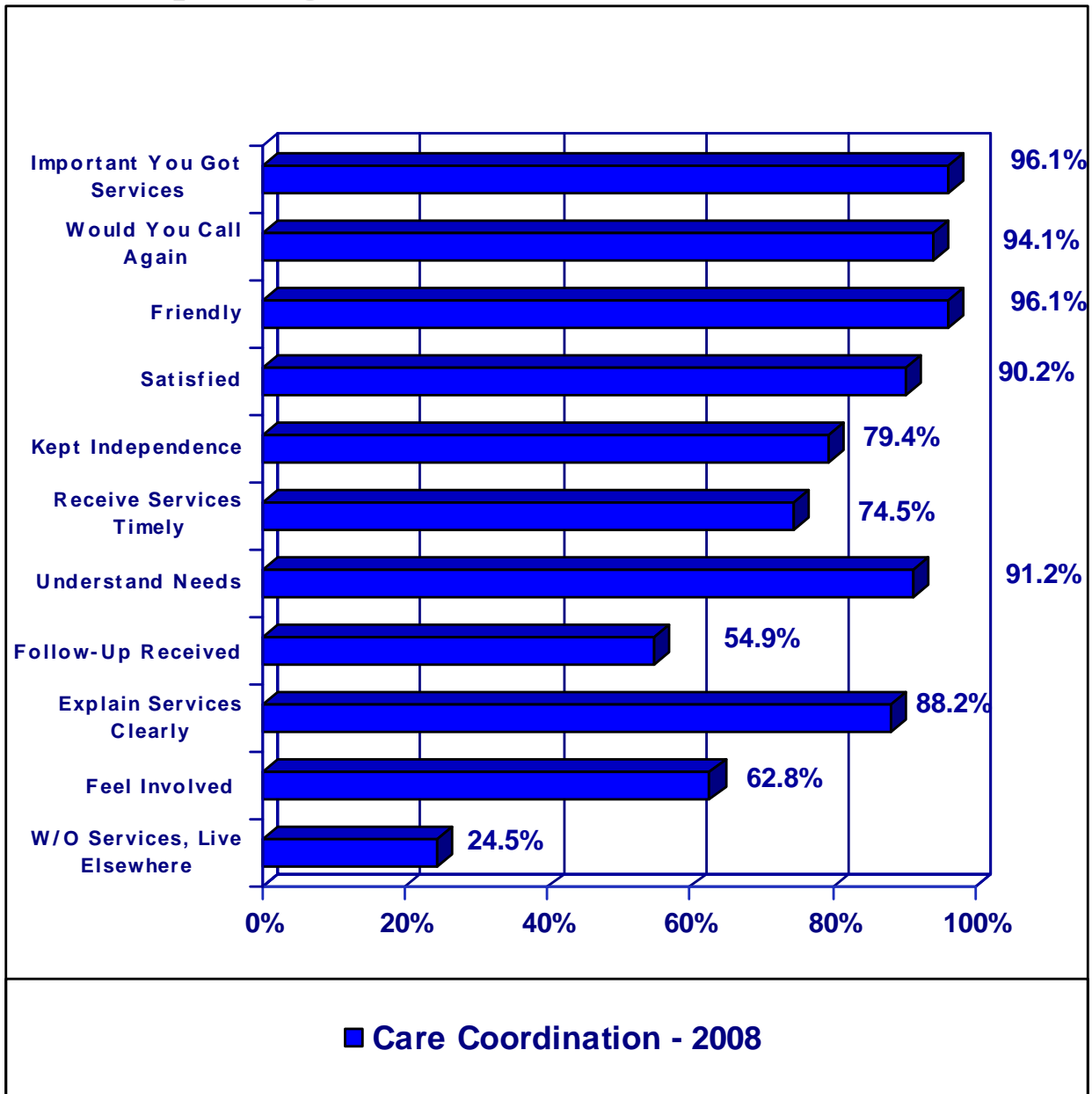


Department of Aging and Disability Services Consumer Satisfaction Survey

Care Coordination

(102 completed surveys – State of Texas)

Percent Responding “Yes” to Each Issue Listed in the Chart Below

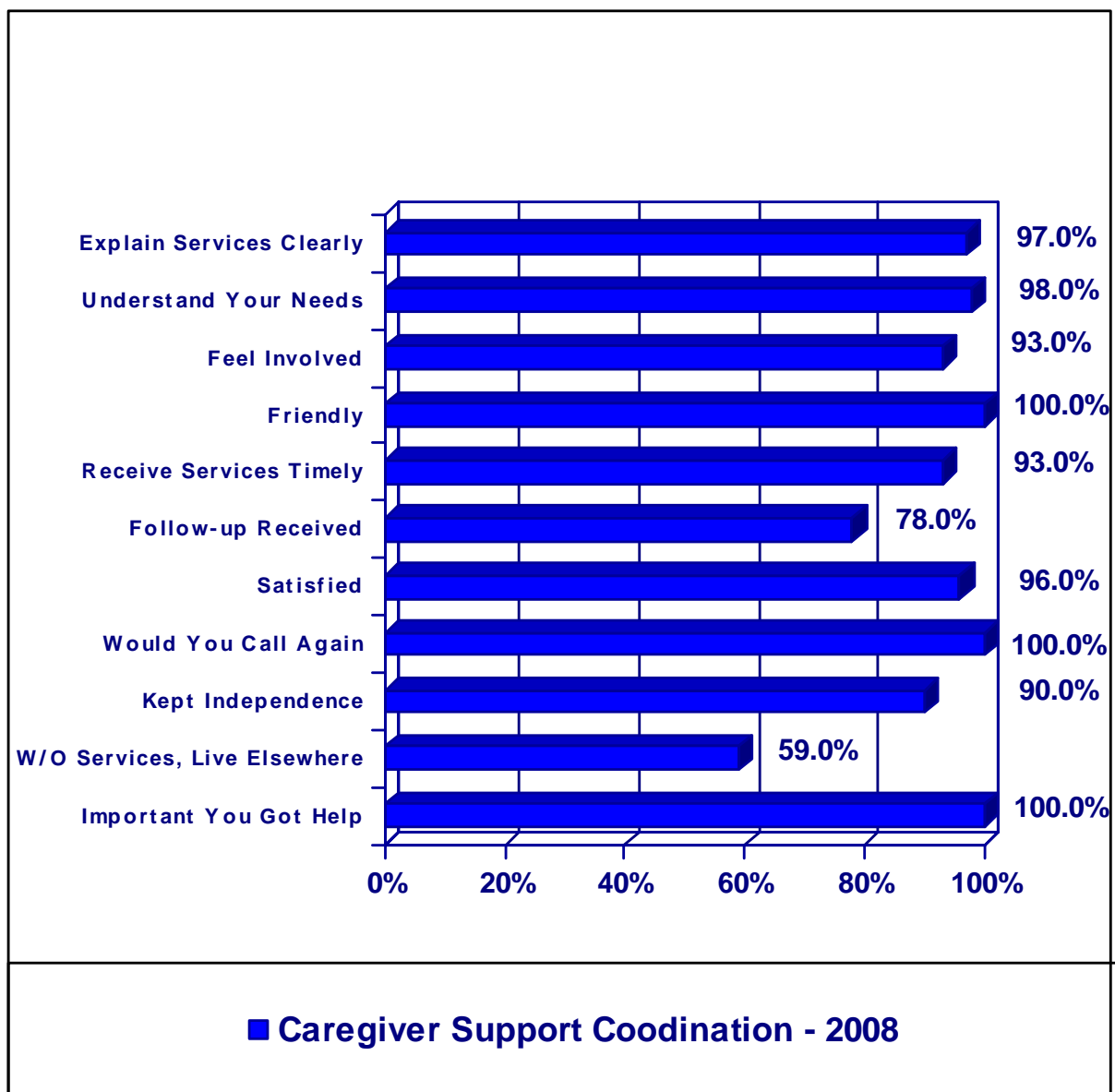


Department of Aging and Disability Services Consumer Satisfaction Survey

Caregiver Support Coordination

(100 completed surveys – State of Texas)

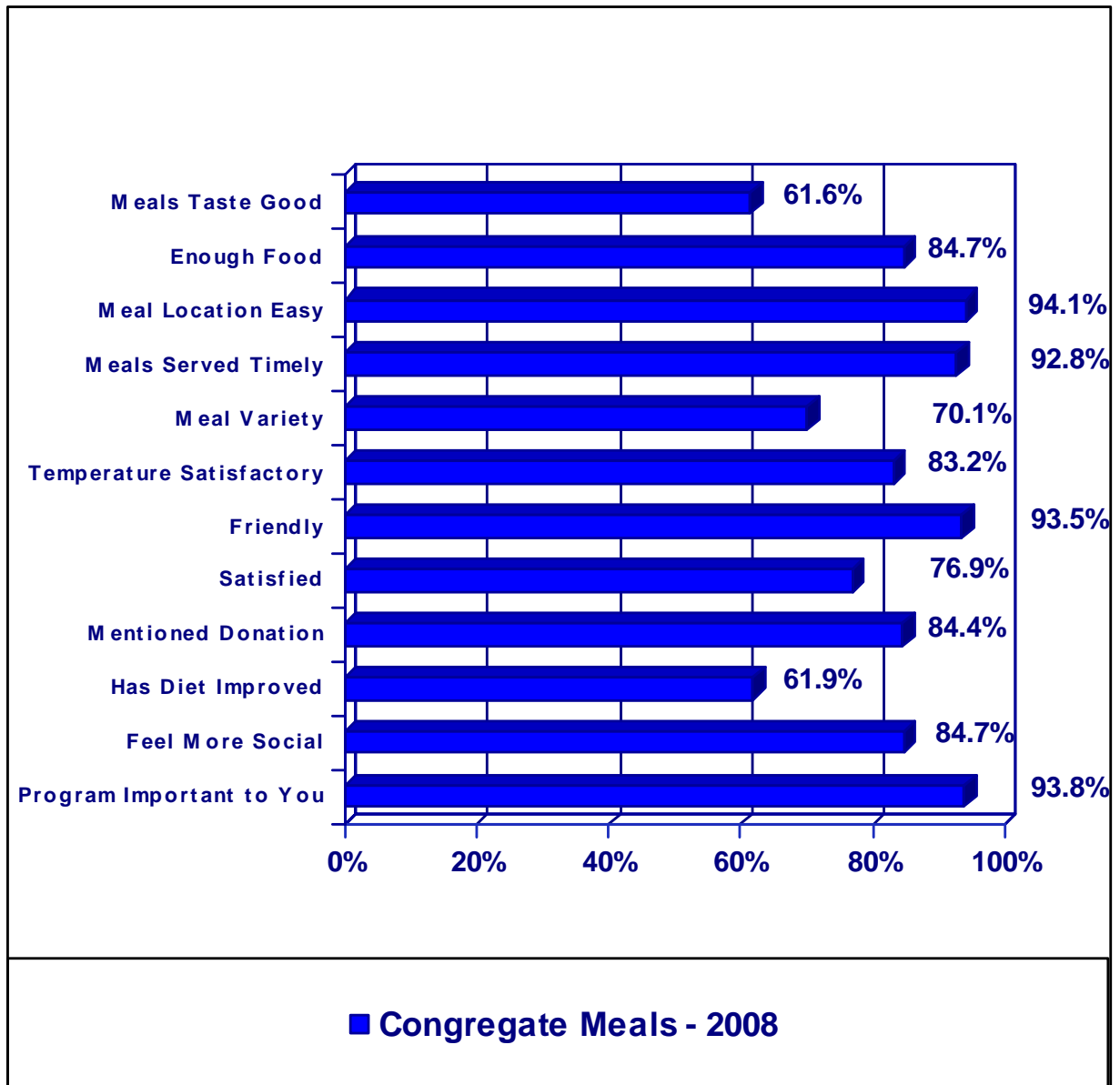
Percent Responding “Yes” to Each Issue Listed in the Chart Below



Department of Aging and Disability Services Consumer Satisfaction Survey

Congregate Meals (1231 completed surveys – State of Texas)

Percent Responding “Yes” to Each Issue Listed in the Chart Below

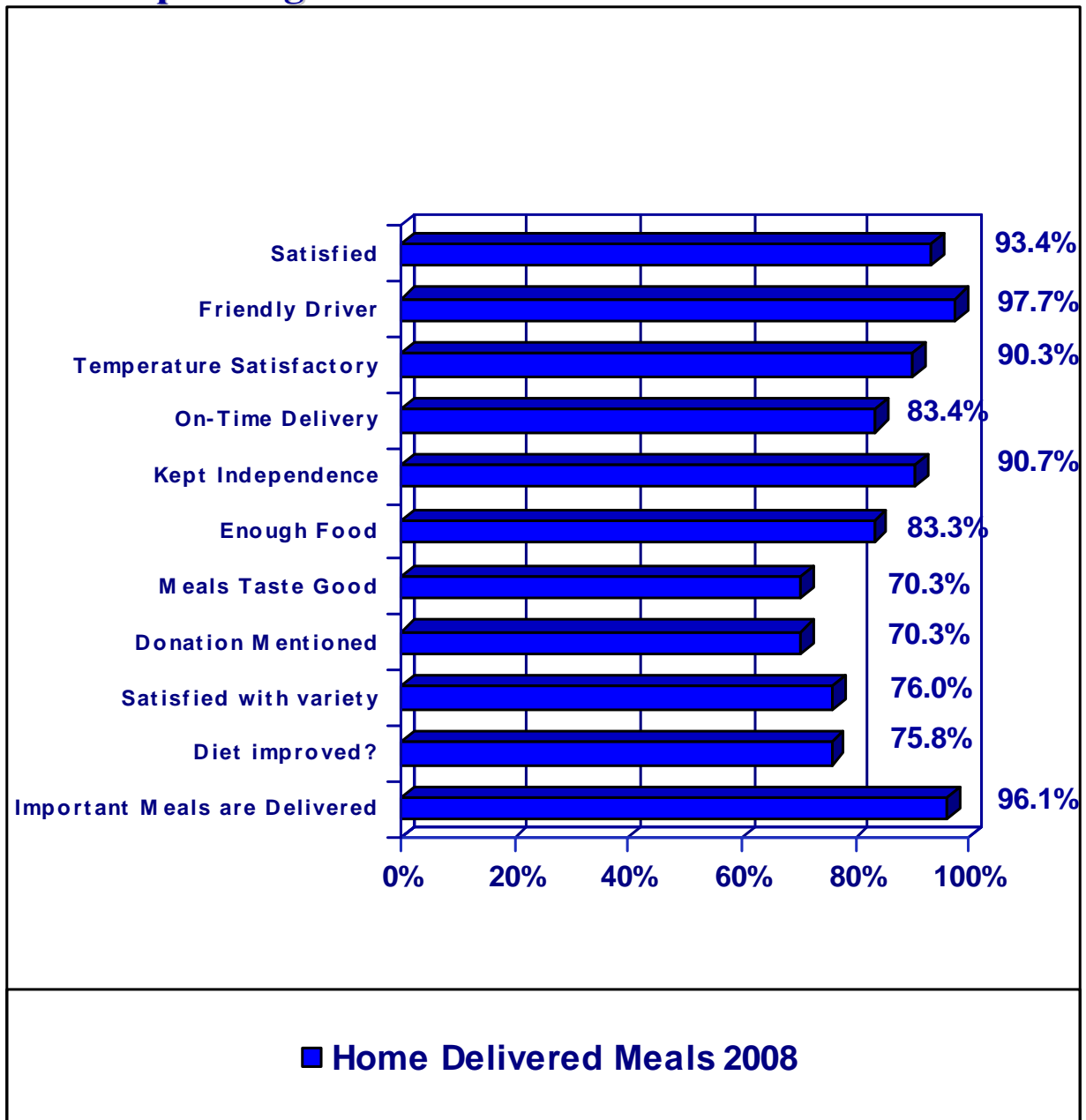


Department of Aging and Disability Services Consumer Satisfaction Survey

Home Delivered Meals

(1,165 completed surveys – State of Texas)

Percent Responding “Yes” to Each Issue Listed in the Chart Below

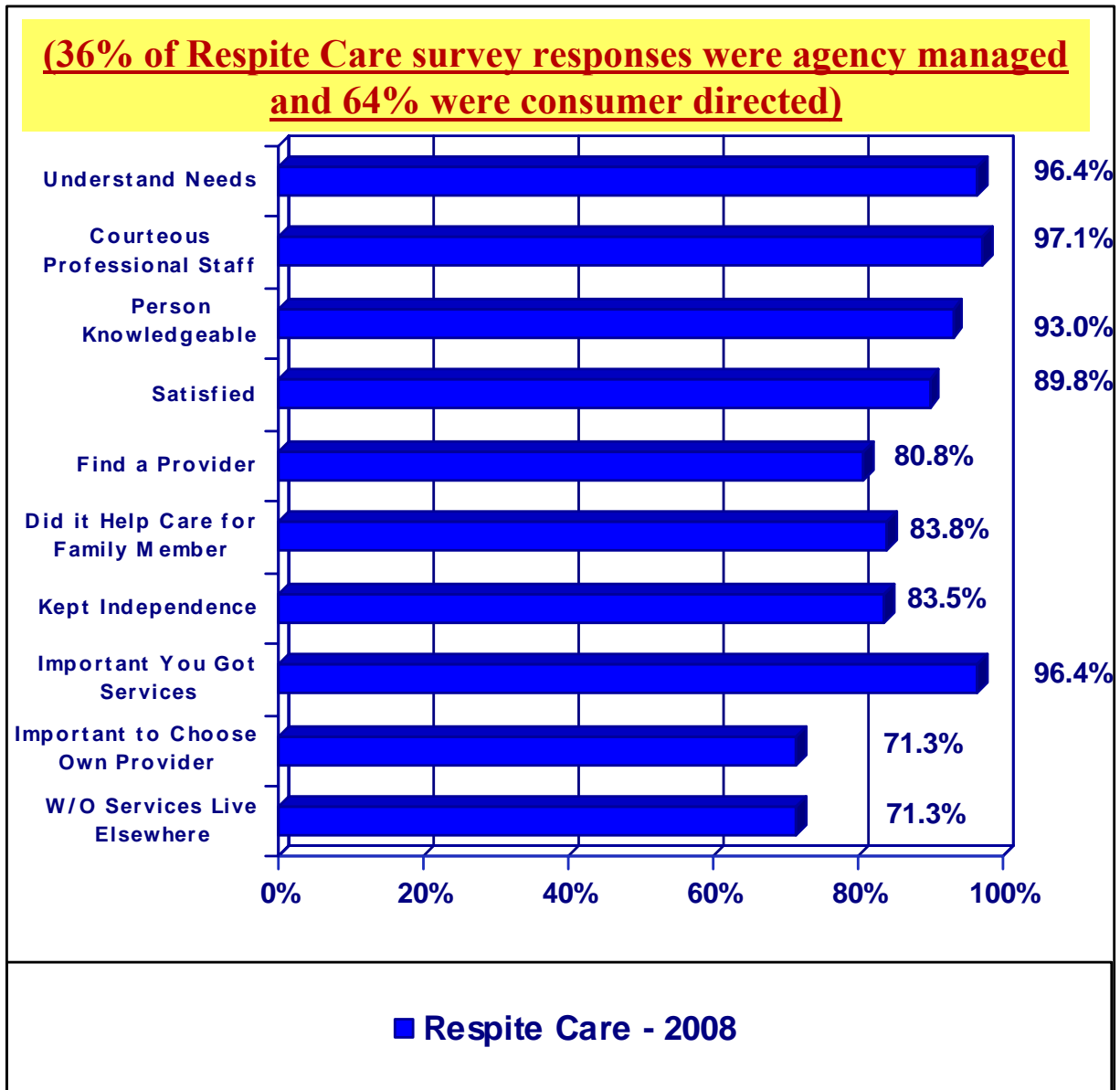


Department of Aging and Disability Services Consumer Satisfaction Survey

Respite Care

(140 completed surveys – State of Texas)

Percent Responding “Yes” to Each Issue Listed in the Chart Below



Department of Aging and Disability Services Consumer Satisfaction Survey

Transportation (470 completed surveys – State of Texas)

Percent Responding “Yes” to Each Issue Listed in the Chart Below

