


Living Well at the End of Life: A National Conversation

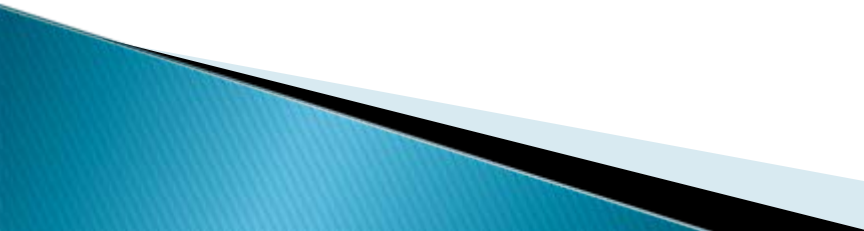
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Chair, Health Stewardship Project, Aspen Institute




The Regence Foundation is committed to:

- ▶ Improving access to and quality of palliative care through hospital-based planning, implementation and innovation grants
 - ▶ Recognizing leadership, innovation and inspiration in palliative care through our Sojourns Awards Program
 - ▶ Facilitating an open dialogue regarding end-of-life issues
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We partnered with The National Journal to commission a three-part poll:

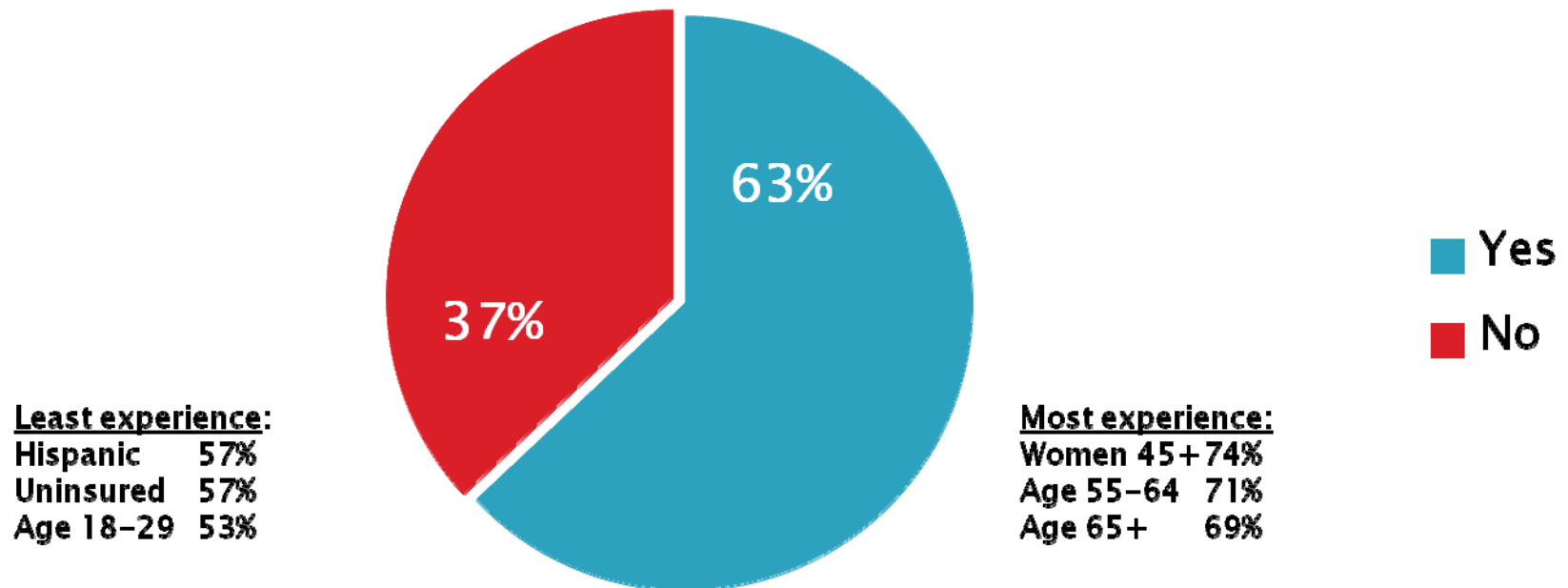
1. Designed to explore national attitudes and expectations (March 2011)
 2. Designed to gain a deeper understanding of attitudes among voters in Oregon and Washington (July 2011)
 3. Seeks to gain an understanding of provider training, experience and willingness to engage with patients and their families on these issues (November 2011)
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Our key insights thus far . . .

- ▶ On a personal level, the vast majority of Americans believe it is more important to enhance the quality of life for seriously ill patients rather than to extend life through every possible medical intervention
 - ▶ Personal experience rather than political persuasion drives attitudes and opinions around end-of-life issues
 - ▶ Although Americans lack familiarity with the term “palliative care,” they think end-of-life issues should be a priority for the health care system
 - ▶ They want more information and believe that public dialogue and debate will help them understand their choices
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Americans have significant personal experience with these issues

*Have you, personally, had experience with palliative care, end of life care or hospice care either for yourself or a family member? **



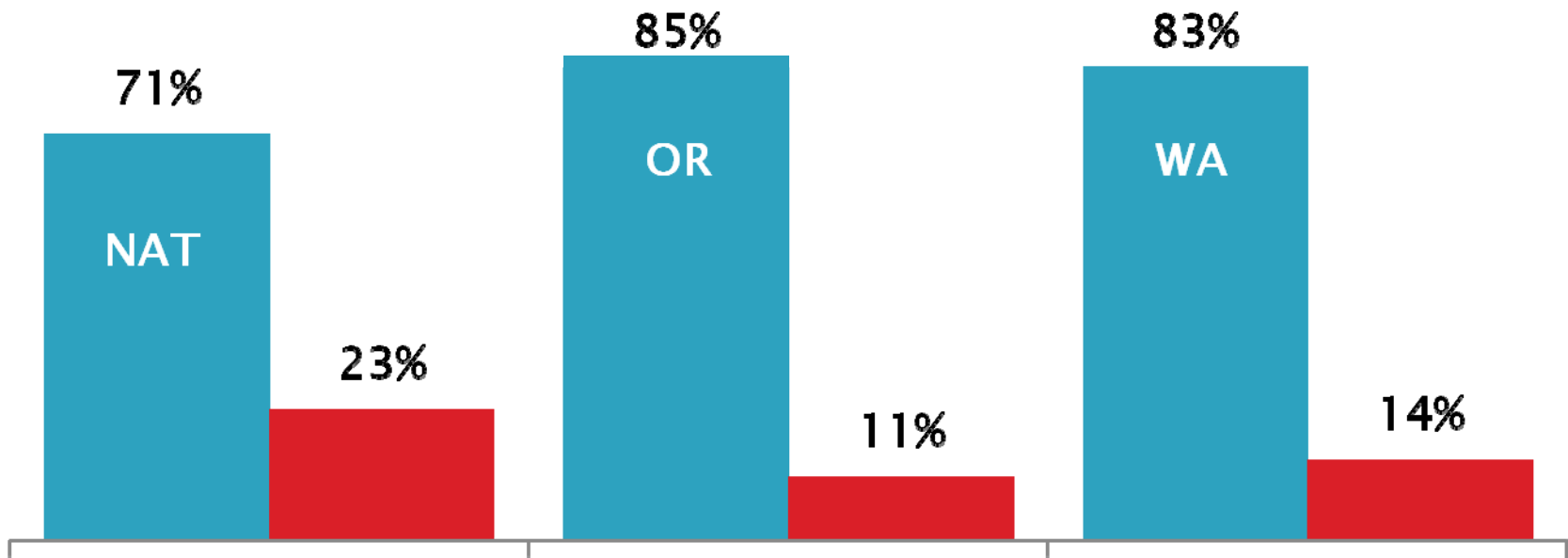
* National survey data

Which statement comes closer to your point of view?

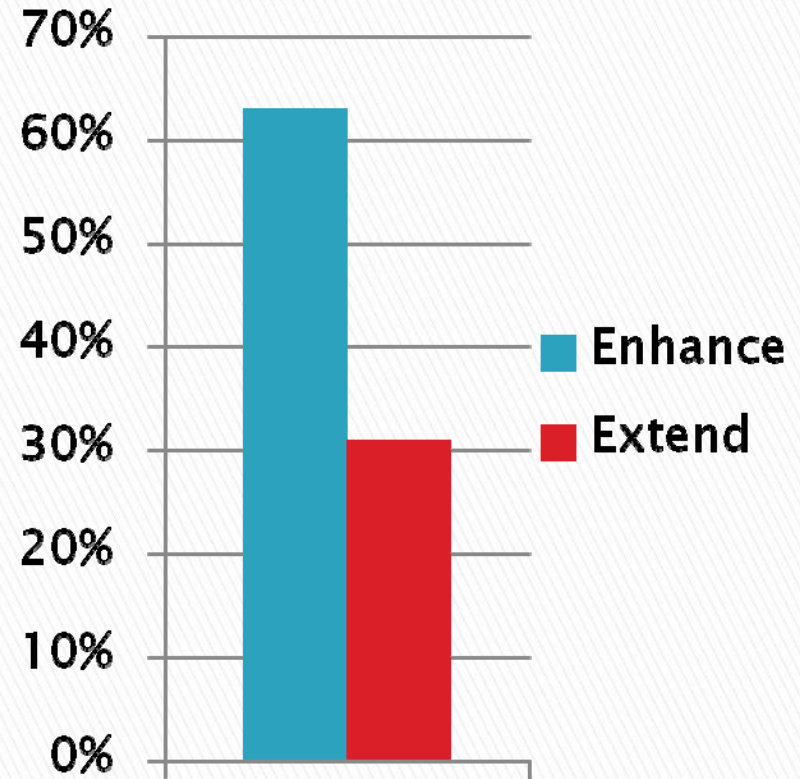
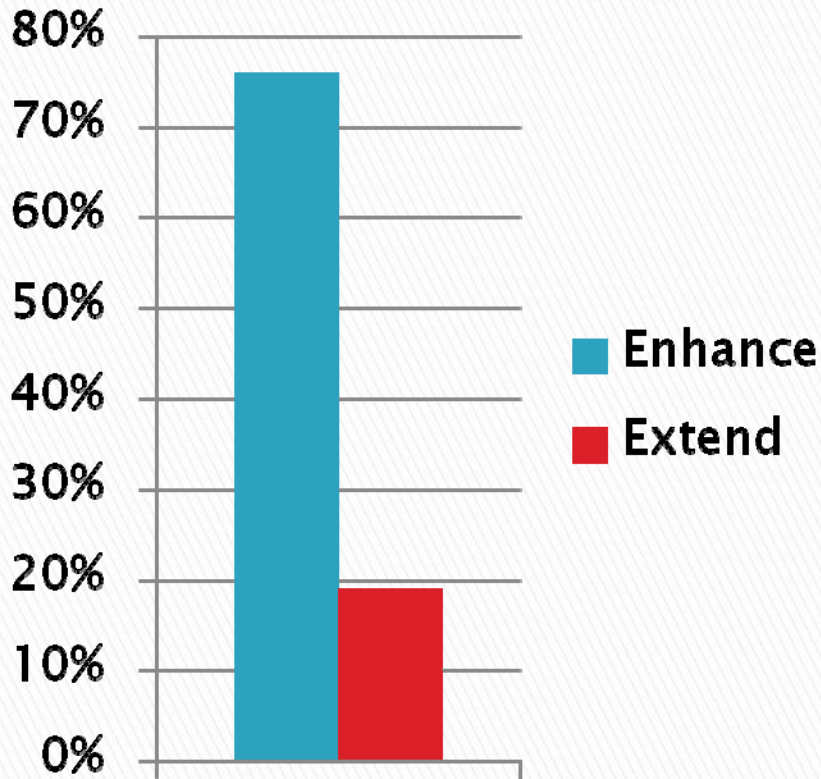
*It is more important to **ENHANCE** the quality of life for seriously ill patients, even if it means a shorter life.*

-- OR --

*It is more important to **EXTEND** the life of seriously ill patients through every medical intervention possible*



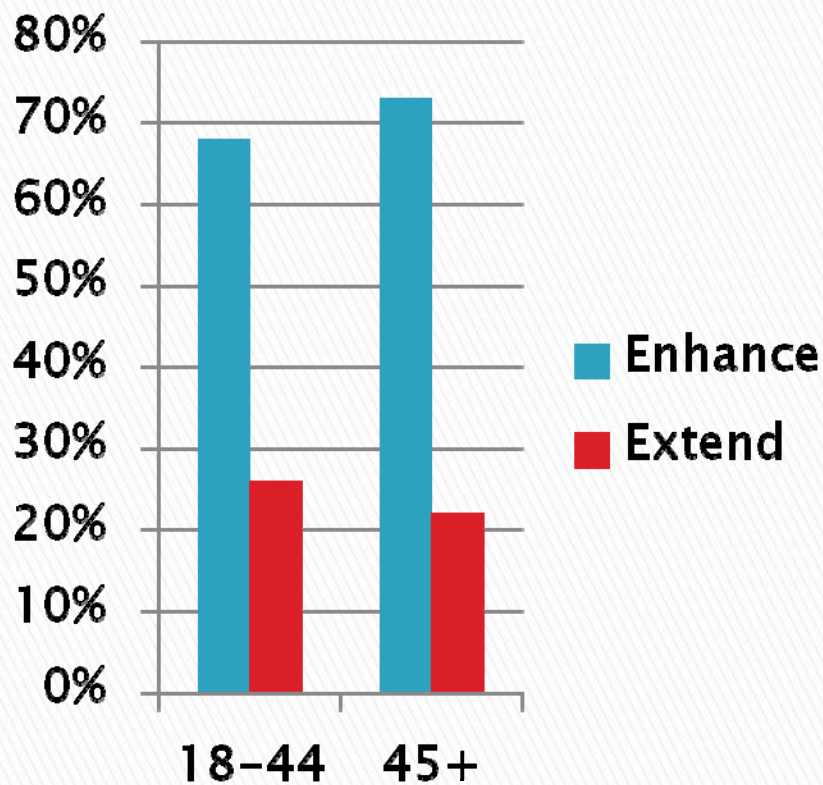
Those with firsthand experience are more likely to think enhancing the quality of life is more important than extending it



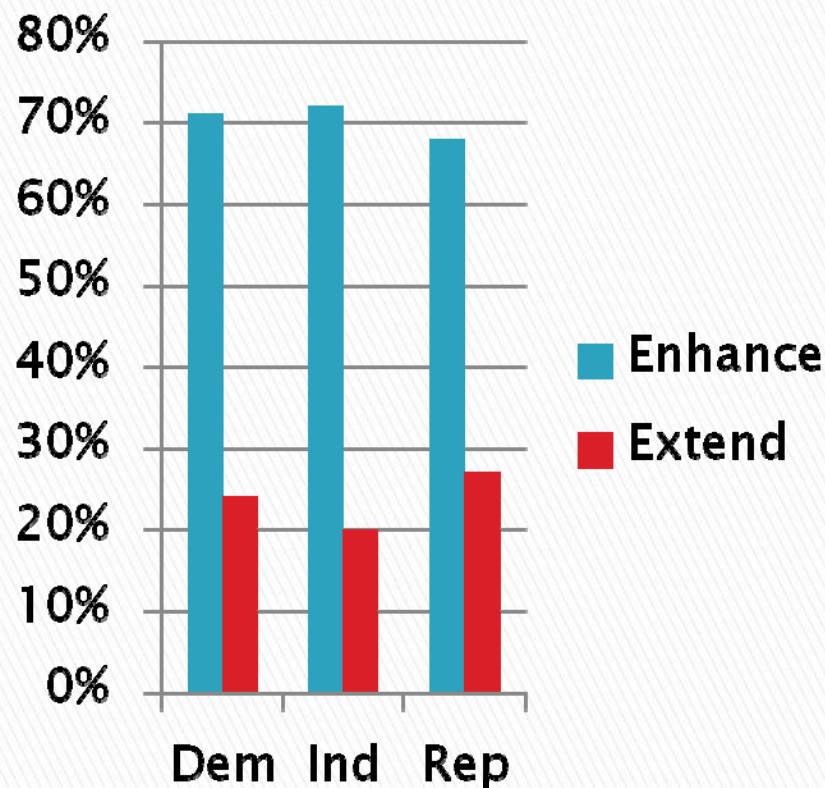
Those with firsthand experience (63%)

Those without experience (37%)

Age and political affiliation do not drive the choice between enhance or extend



Age



Political Affiliation

Which statement comes closer to your point of view? *

▶ 55% :

The health care system in this country has the responsibility, the medical technology, and the expertise to offer treatments to seriously ill patients and spend whatever it takes to extend their lives.

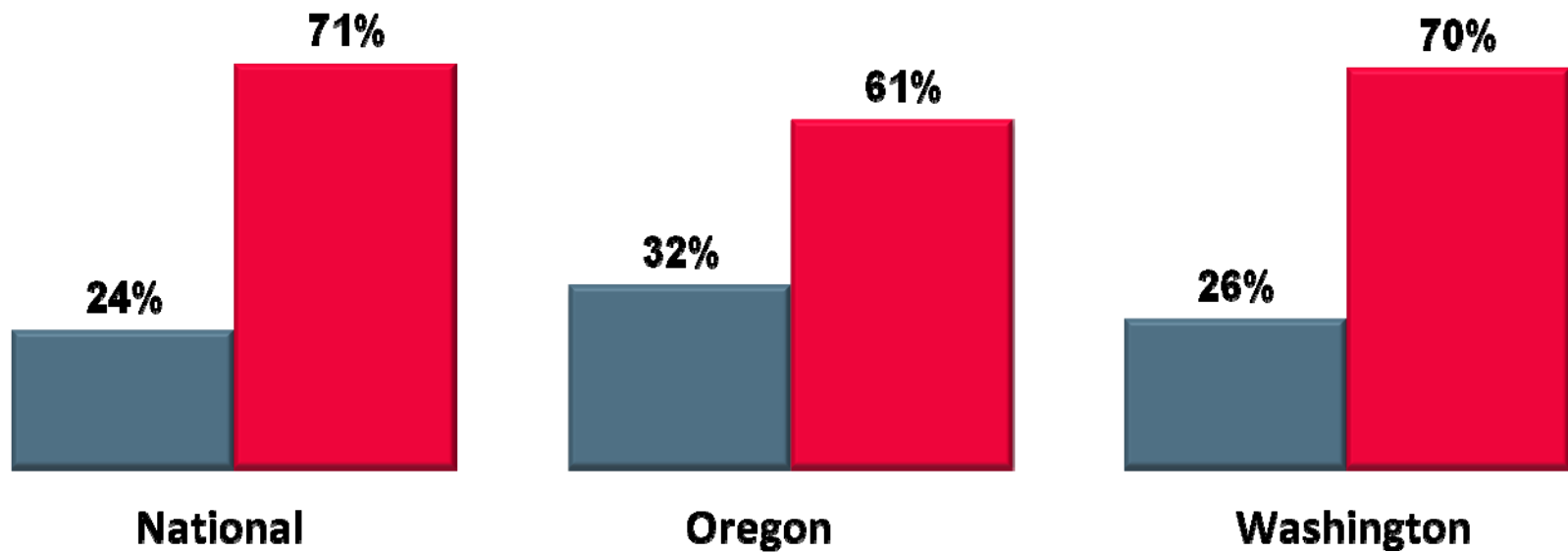
▶ 37% :

The health care system spends far too much trying to extend lives of seriously ill patients which diverts resources from other priorities, add to our country's financial difficulties, and increases the cost of care for everyone.

** National Survey Data*

Americans are not familiar with the term “Palliative Care”

Familiar / Not Familiar



We defined it for them:

Palliative care describes any kind of care or treatment for seriously ill patients which focuses on reducing the severity of symptoms rather than attempting to reverse progression of the illness or provide a cure.

The goal of palliative care is to provide physical, emotional, and spiritual support to patients and also their families. Palliative care can be provided alongside of curative treatment and is commonly provided at home, at a hospital, or at a nursing home.

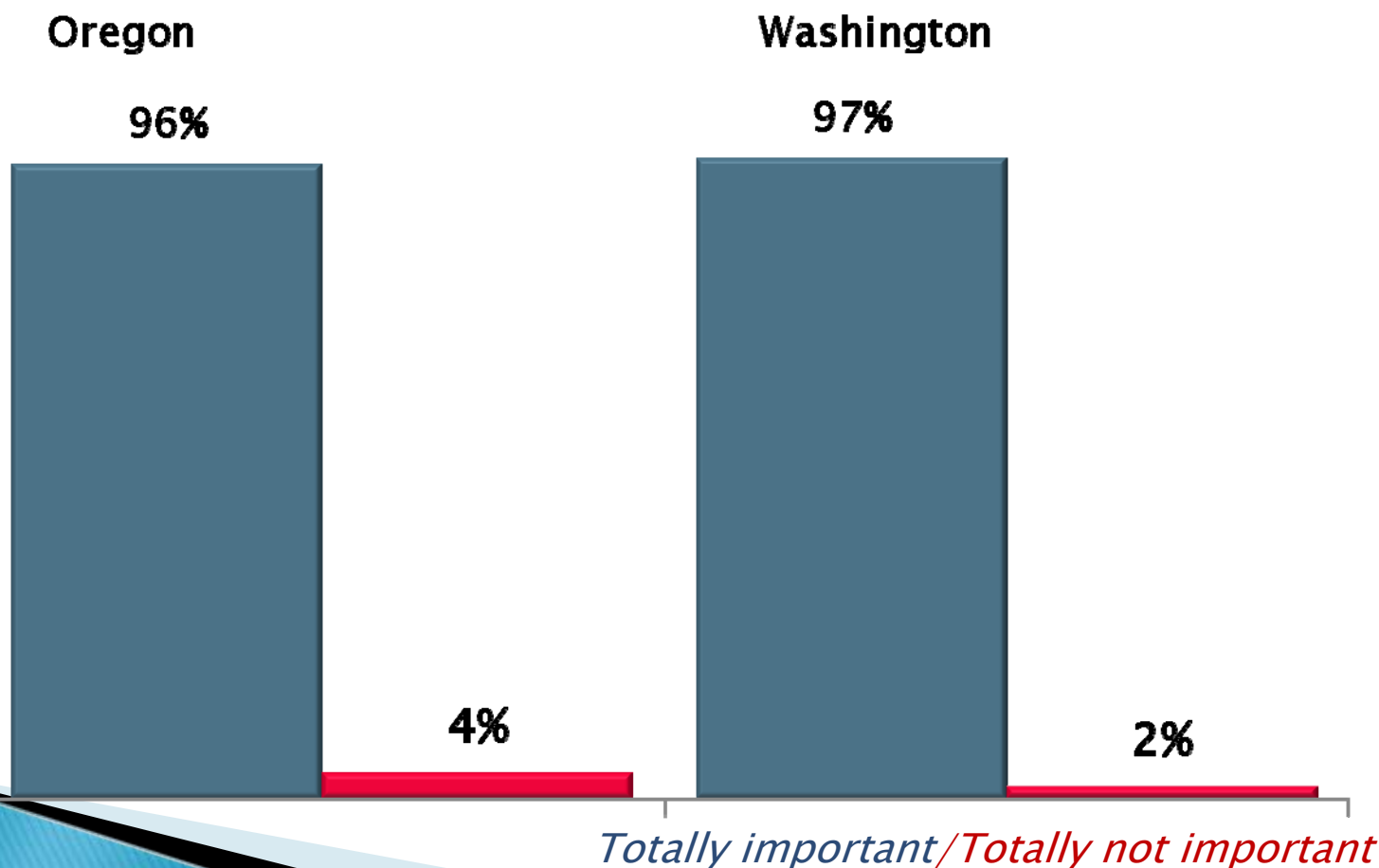
An important part of palliative care is end-of-life care, which focuses specifically on advanced planning for patients approaching death. This includes discussing their preferred treatment options and reducing their pain and suffering.



After providing the definition, we asked . . .

- ▶ First survey: How important is it that these health and life issues be a top priority for the health care system in this country?
 - 96% said “important”
 - 75% said “very important”

Second survey: How important do you believe it is that palliative care treatment options be available to all seriously ill patients who need them and want them?



Americans seek more information, education and public dialogue*

- ▶ **78% believe:**

There should be more of an open debate about public policies regarding these health and life issues

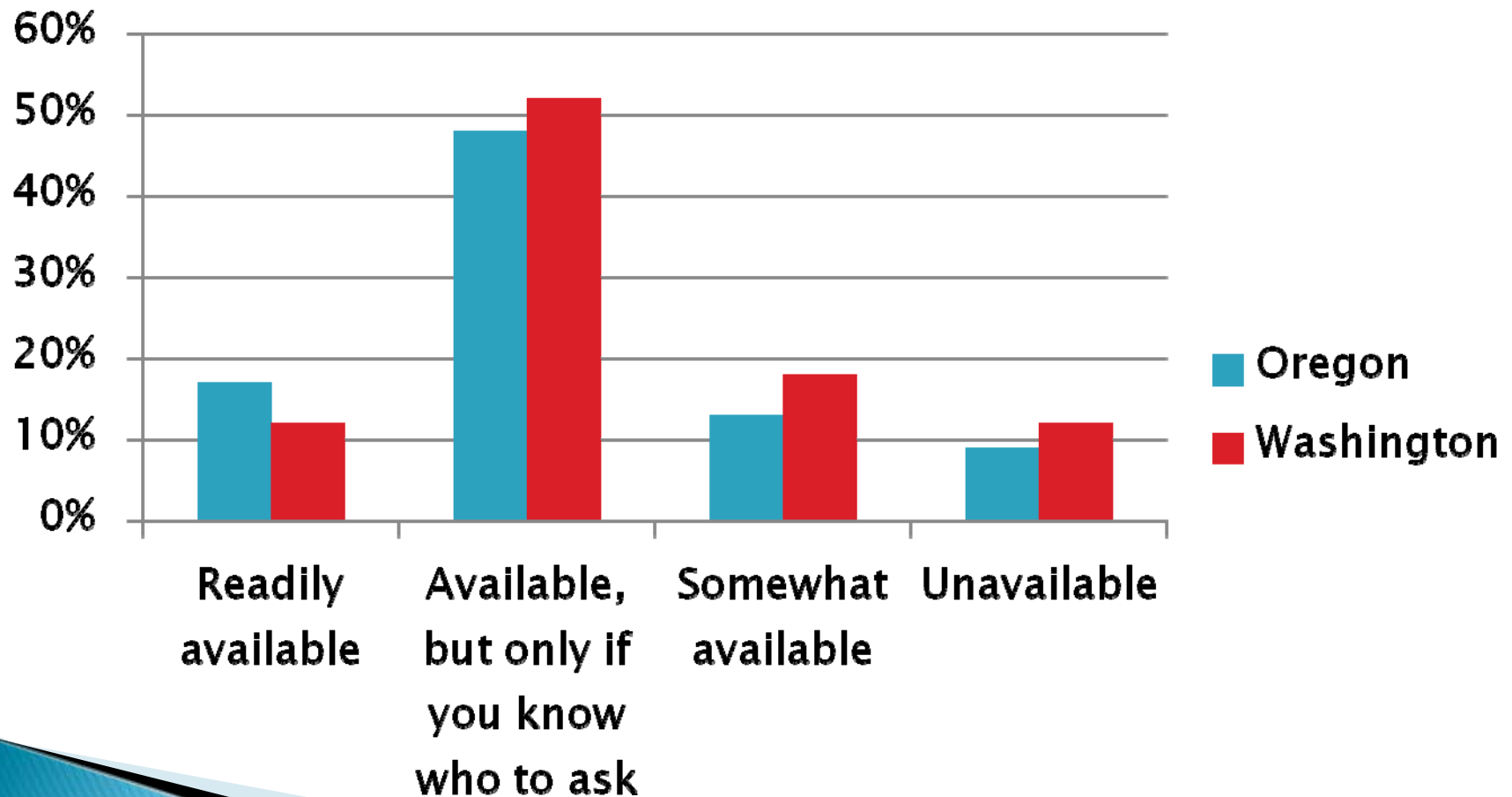
- ▶ **97% believe:**

It is important that patients and their families be educated about palliative care and end of life care options available to them along with curative treatment

- ▶ **86% agree:**

Public dialogue and debate about these health and life issues will help patients and their families by providing them with more information about their treatment options


Even in states that have more history with and knowledge of end of life issues, more information is needed



Preferred delivery channels for more information, based on trust

- ▶ Doctors and health care providers
 - ▶ Family and friends
 - ▶ Religious leaders
 - ▶ Social service agencies
 - ▶ Health insurance companies
 - ▶ The news media
 - ▶ Elected officials and political candidates
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Our final poll seeks to understand

- ▶ Attitudes and expectations among doctors and health care professionals
 - ▶ How knowledgeable they are regarding palliative care treatment options
 - ▶ How frequently they discuss end-of-life issues with patients and families
 - ▶ Whether they have sufficient education and training to prepare them for these difficult conversations
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Questions?

