

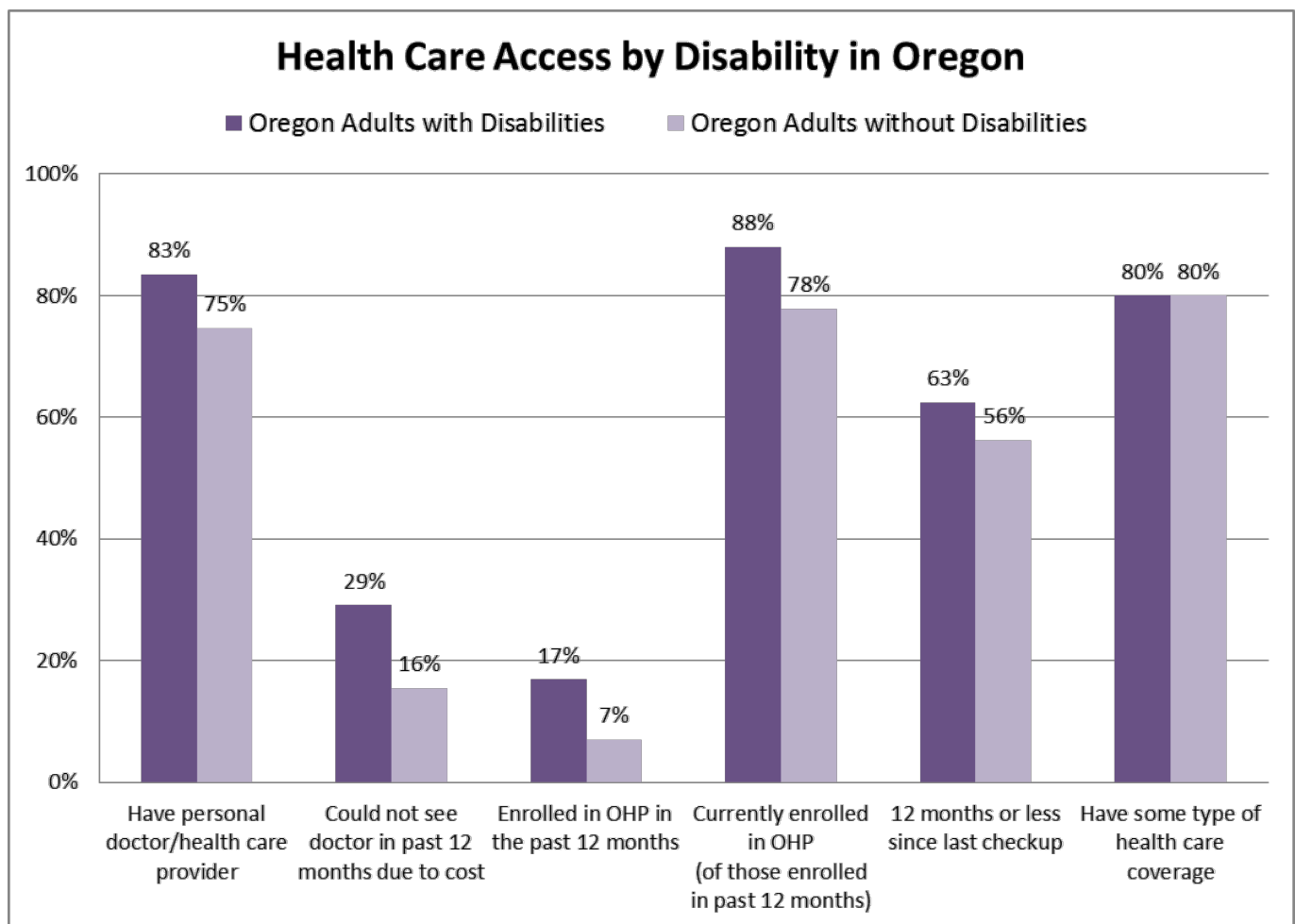
Access to Health Care among Oregonians with Disabilities

Created by the Oregon Office on Disability & Health www.oodh.org

Access to health care is important to maintaining health, early detection and treatment of illness, prevention of injury, helping recovery when illness or injury happens, and increasing quality of life.¹ The purpose of this report is to compare access to health care among Oregonians with disabilities to those without disabilities. We examined several indicators of access to health care among Oregon adults age 18 years and older using the most recent data from a telephone survey, the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) from 2012.

This is what we learned in Oregon

Figure 1: Health Care Access by Disability in Oregon



Differences:

We found that access to health care for adults with disabilities differed from access among adults without disabilities in several ways:

- 83% of adults with disabilities had a personal doctor or health care provider compared to 75% of adults without disabilities
- 29% of adults with disabilities reported not being able to see a doctor in the last 12 months due to cost compared to 16% of adults without disabilities
- 17% of adults with disabilities were enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan (OHP) at some point in the past year compared to 7% of adults without disabilities
- 88% of those adults with disabilities who were enrolled in OHP at some point in the last year are currently enrolled in OHP compared to 78% of adults without disabilities
- 63% of adults with disabilities had a health care checkup within the past year compared to 56% of adults without disabilities

Similarities:

With respect to having some form of health care coverage, we found no difference between adults with disabilities and those without disabilities:

- 80% of adults with disabilities have some form of health care coverage compared to 80% of adults without disabilities

Access to Health Care Matters for Oregonians with Disabilities

- Access to health care is important to health and quality of life but it is not evenly distributed across the U.S. population and more than 46 million Americans lack health insurance.^{1,2}
- In particular, people with disabilities are more likely than those without disabilities to skip or delay medical care due to cost.³ This difference is evident in this report: cost was a greater barrier to seeing a doctor or other care provider for people with disabilities.
- Furthermore, there is evidence that unmet health care needs sometimes lead to serious health complications for people with disabilities.^{4,5} Consequently access to health care within this segment of the population is of particular importance.
- Although, this report suggests that access to care for Oregonians with disabilities is similar to or slightly higher than their non-disabled counterparts for most of the indicators shown here, the financial barrier remains. Reducing this disparity is an important step in ensuring that this potentially vulnerable population within Oregon remains healthy and fulfilled.

¹ Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). 2013. *National Healthcare Disparities Report 2012*. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

² Cohen RA., Martinez ME. 2012. Health insurance coverage: Early release of estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, 2011. National Center for Health Statistics.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 2010. CDC Vital Signs, November 2010.

⁴ DeJong G, Palsbo SE, Beatty PW, et al. The Organization and Financing of Health Services for Persons with Disabilities. *The Milbank Quarterly* 2002, 80(2):261-300.

⁵ Long SK, King J, Coughlin TA. The Implications of Unmet Need for Future Health Care Use: Findings for a Sample of Disabled Medicaid Beneficiaries in New York. *Inquiry* 2005/2006, 42(4):413-420.