

NORTHWEST HEALTH FOUNDATION

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New Research Shows Where Oregonians Want Health Care Dollars Spent

83 percent want healthy behaviors to trigger lower insurance premiums

PORTLAND, Ore. — The Northwest Health Foundation (NWHF) today released new research showing exactly where Oregonians want health care dollars spent.

The poll, which measured Oregonian's perceptions and attitudes toward public health issues, shows that 8 out of 10 (83 percent) want lower health insurance premiums for people who choose healthy behaviors. It also finds a majority of state residents in support of increased funding for public health.

Other key findings include:

- 93 percent support a tax credit for small businesses that provide health insurance to *all* employees
- 84 percent support increasing state funds for farm-to-school programs to provide children with healthier meals
- 84 percent support more state money to provide physical education in schools
- 71 percent want lawmakers to limit tobacco advertising in Oregon
- 63 percent would support the government adding fluoride to drinking water

“We’re excited to see Oregonians’ support for things that will help keep children healthy,” said Thomas Aschenbrener, president of the Northwest Health Foundation. “For example, we know Oregon elementary students are getting only a fraction of the legislature’s goal of 30 minutes a day of phys-ed. Oregonians are clearly saying that needs to change, and we hope lawmakers can use this as a roadmap to making Oregon a healthier state.”

Community Health Priorities (CHP), a project of the Northwest Health Foundation, commissioned research firm Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. to conduct the study to prioritize Oregon’s most pressing health issues. CHP’s goal is to foster conversations about public health among the residents and legislators of Oregon, and to help develop policies that enhance existing health practices and programs throughout the state. This opinion poll, which is part of the program’s bi-annual series of public health

studies, surveyed 500 Oregonians over the phone about their perception of issues related to public health.

“It’s clear Oregonians understand health is about so much more than the health care debate raging nationwide,” said CHP’s David Rebanal. “It is about access to health care, but it’s also about what we can do as a state to make it easier for people to make healthy choices.”

When asked about their top priority for their own health, the largest number of Oregonians (36 percent) said maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Affordability of health insurance came in second (31 percent) and access to health care came in third (20 percent).

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The mission of the Northwest Health Foundation is to advance, support and promote the health of the people in Oregon and southwest Washington. The Foundation invests in efforts that address the root causes of health through community-driven solutions and seeks to ensure that the voices of all people are represented in health policy discussions. Northwest Health Foundation focuses its work in three areas: public health, health care reform, and health workforce. More information can be found at www.nwhf.org.