

## Executive Summary

Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM) is pleased to present the executive summary of a telephone survey and focus groups to assess public attitudes toward long-term care and health needs in Oregon.

**Research Methodology:** Between November 17 and 23, 2008, DHM, Inc. conducted a telephone survey of 600 likely voters in the state of Oregon that lasted an average of 18 minutes with a margin of error of +/-4.0%, at the 95% confidence level. Likely voters are defined as registered voters who have voted in at least two of the last four elections. This is a sufficient sample size to assess residents' opinions generally and to review findings by multiple subgroups including gender, age, area of state, and political affiliation.

Focus group discussions were held in Coos Bay (13<sup>th</sup>), Medford (14<sup>th</sup>), and Portland (15<sup>th</sup>) during December 2008. We recruited men and women ages 40 and older who had no affiliation with the health care industry, with some in each group having had experience providing care for a loved one. Although research of this type is not designed to measure with statistical reliability the attitudes of a particular group, it is valuable in giving a sense of the attitudes and opinions of the populations from which the samples were drawn.

### Key Findings:

- Oregonians generally have a good overall idea of what long-term care means. They associate it with both the *need* for services, as well as a range of *type* of services, ranging from in-home care to assisted living to nursing homes. Many are extremely concerned, and at times fearful, about how they will be able to provide needed services for themselves or a loved one due to the cost of long term services.

Over three-quarters of voters had done planning for their own care (30% a great deal, 47% some), four in ten had a loved one with long-term care needs, or anticipated a loved one needing care within the next ten years, and a majority had experience with long-term care that was provided to others.

- Questions probing voters' top concerns for long-term care revealed the importance of being able to afford personal care or home services and insurance coverage and cost, the desire to live at home, and being assured access to trained professionals and services.

Compared to other priorities tested in the survey, long-term care ranked below K-12 education, healthcare for children, and economic development, but ahead of public safety, higher education, transportation improvements, and environmental programs.

On the other hand, when allocating funds from a \$100 budget, voters gave more money to long-term care services than any of the other priorities.

### \$100 Budget Building Exercise

Response Category	\$\$
Long term care for seniors and people with physical disabilities	17.3
K-12 education	15.0
Healthcare for children	14.9
Economic development and job creation	13.2
Public safety	11.5
Transportation improvements including roads, highways, bridges, public transit	10.8
Higher education including community college and universities	10.1
Environmental programs to address climate change/other environmental issues	7.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Davis, Hibbitts, & Midghall, Inc: November 2008

- Like survey respondents, focus group participants were unclear whether the state or federal government was responsible for paying for long-term care services when someone could not afford them. Additionally, focus group participants expressed concern and confusion about how much of their own assets would be taken before they qualified for government assistance.
- Both survey and focus group participants showed strong support for Oregon keeping its current long-term care services, especially in-home care. This preference for in-home care came more from their belief that people are far better off if they are able to stay in their home, rather than any connection to savings in cost. While cost was important to them, it was mostly through the information presented during focus group discussions that participants learned about that connection.
- Voter support for increasing state funding for long-term care services that allow people to stay in their own homes received widespread support with 67% who somewhat or strongly supported it. When the idea of raising taxes was included in the wording of the question, support fell off slightly but held above a majority (60%).
- While all reasons for supporting long-term care tested well, the strongest reasons included saving the state money by providing care at home (86% very good/good reason to support), taking full advantage of the federal funding match (85%), and investments in prevention and early intervention programs (84%).
- Overall, a very strong majority (48% very, 38% somewhat) felt that it was important for Oregon to keep its current long-term care services in the face of a tough economy and budget cuts.