

# Evolving Supports for Workers with Disabilities: The MaineCare Workers with Disabilities Option

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**Building Systems so that**  
**Money Follows the Person**  
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# CHOICES and the MaineCare Workers with Disabilities (WWD) Option

- CHOICES is a Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) awarded to Maine's Department of Human Services (DHS), from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).
- Maine enacted one of the earliest Medicaid options for workers with disabilities (Medicaid Buy-In program). The MaineCare Workers with Disabilities (WWD) Option began operation in August 1999. As of June 30, 2003, 580 people were enrolled in the WWD Option. Cumulatively, 1,917 people had enrolled since it began in August 1999.
- The CHOICES project will analyze the MaineCare Workers with Disabilities Option in order to better understand program impact, costs, and potential. It will report research findings and make recommendations for change, where appropriate, so stakeholders can make the most informed choices.
- More information available at the project web site:  
<http://choices.muskie.usm.maine.edu/>

# Tracking Outcomes: 2001 and 2003 Telephone Surveys of MaineCare WWD Option Enrollees

August 1999	2001 Survey	June 2001	2003 Survey	June 2003
	<u>2001 Survey Population</u>		<u>2003 Survey Population</u>	
	First enrolled in WWD Option between August '99 and May '01 (N=906)		First enrolled in WWD Option between June '01 and June '03 (N=976)	
	<u>Completed Surveys</u>		<u>Completed Surveys</u>	
	482 telephone surveys completed from August to October 2001		539 telephone surveys completed from September 2003 to January 2004	
	<u>Overall Response Rate: 53%</u>		<u>Overall Response Rate: 55%</u>	

# Demographic Profile of 2003 WWD Option Enrollees\*

Of those completing telephone interviews in 2003:

- 42% were 18 to 44 years old; 47% were 45 to 64 years; and 12% were 65 years or older
- 59% were female and 41% were male
- 51% lived in an urban area, 31% lived in a rural area and 18% could not be classified.
- 25% were married; 2% were separated; and 73% were not married.

\* 2001 survey results available at:

<http://choices.muskie.usm.maine.edu/surveycover.htm>

# Health, Disability and MaineCare Status

- 43% of respondents in the 2003 survey described their health as excellent or good; 57% said it was fair or poor
- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of participants reported a physical or sensory impairment as their primary disability; 29% reported a mental health disability; and 7% had mental retardation or a developmental disability.
- As of June 2003, 42% of respondents were still enrolled in the WWD Option; 43% were on MaineCare under another disability category; and 14% were no longer enrolled in MaineCare

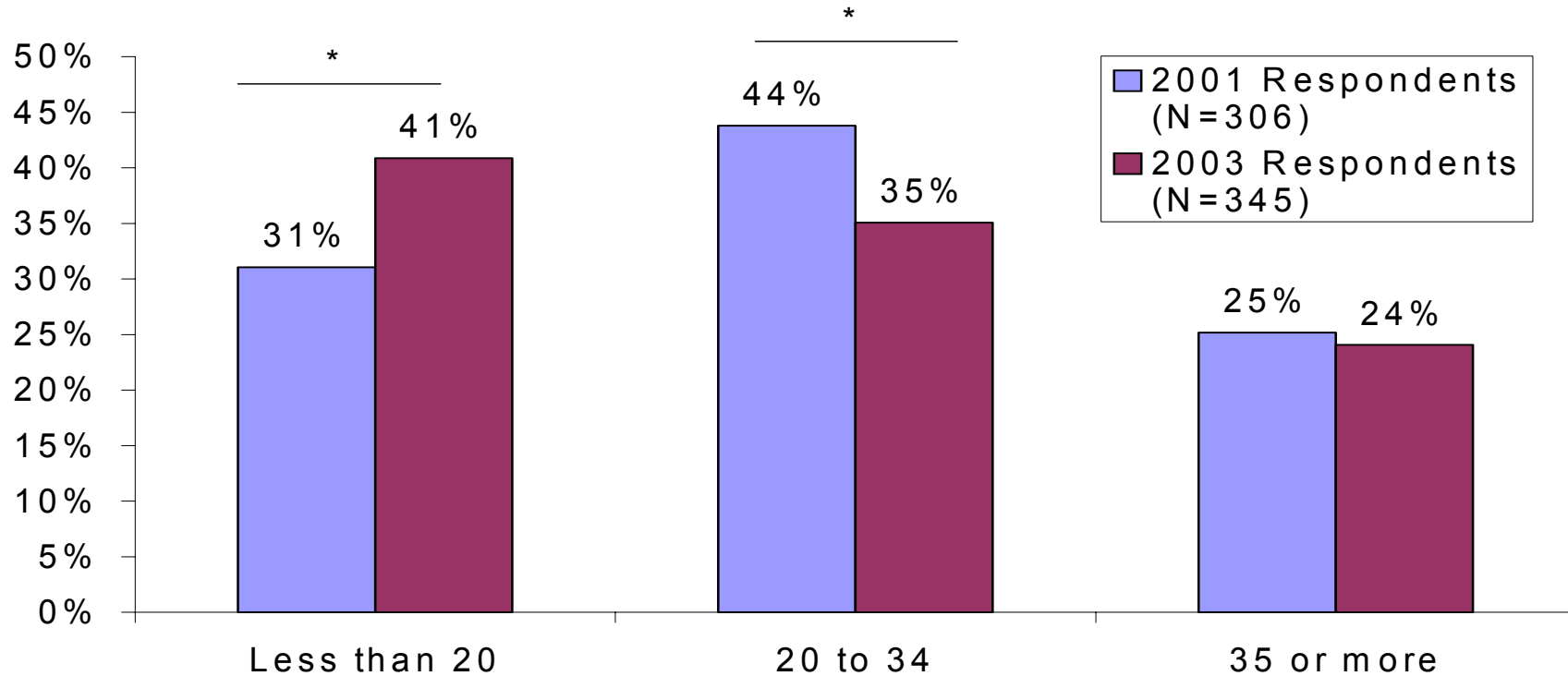
# Working under the WWD Option: Earnings, Occupation and Tenure

Among the survey participants in 2003, 64% (346 participants) had paid employment. Of those who were working:

- 52% earned less than \$500 in the prior month; 31% earned between \$500 and \$1000; and only 17% earned more than \$1000.
- 60% worked in a service, maintenance or retail sales job; 9% were in secretarial or clerical jobs. Fewer than 6% were in professional or managerial jobs.
- 27% had worked at their main job for less than 1 year; 32% had worked 1 to 3 years, and 42% had worked for more than 5 years.

# Hours Worked per Week

## Part-time work is most prevalent, and 2003 respondents worked fewer hours

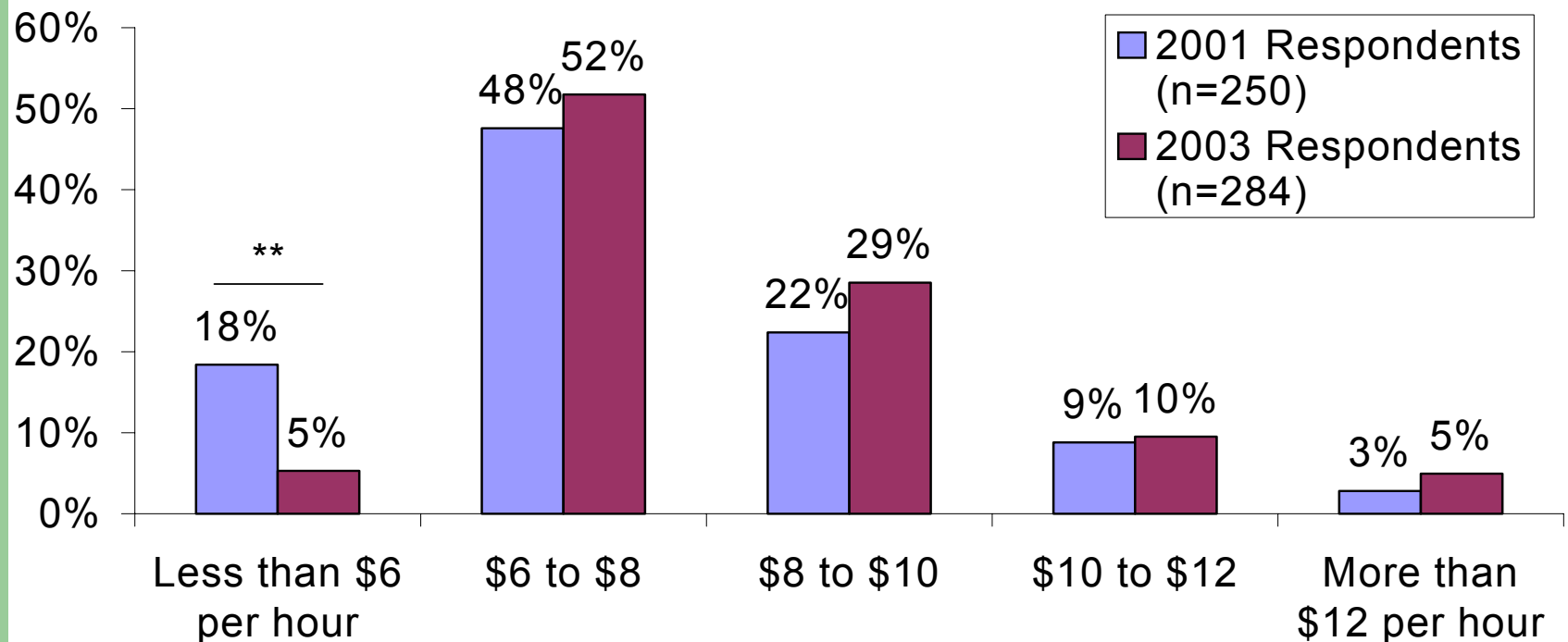


Includes only working respondents for 2001 and 2003

\* Difference between 2001 and 2003 is significant at the .05 level

# Reported Hourly Wages

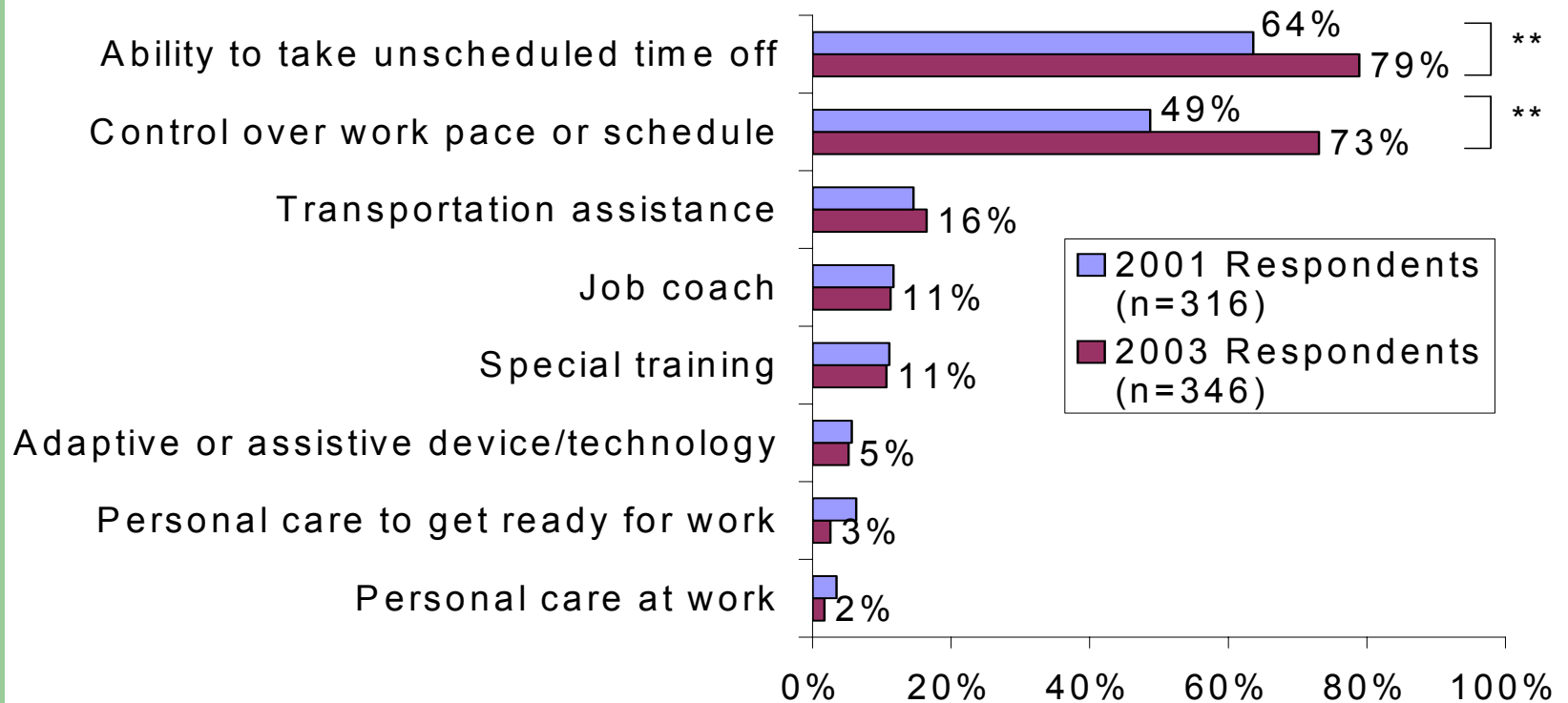
## Generally low, with less minimum wage work among 2003 respondents



Note: Only includes working respondents who reported hourly earnings

\*\* Difference between 2001 and 2003 is significant at the .01 level

# Use of Work-Related Supports: More 2003 respondents have time off and control over work pace



Note: Only includes working respondents

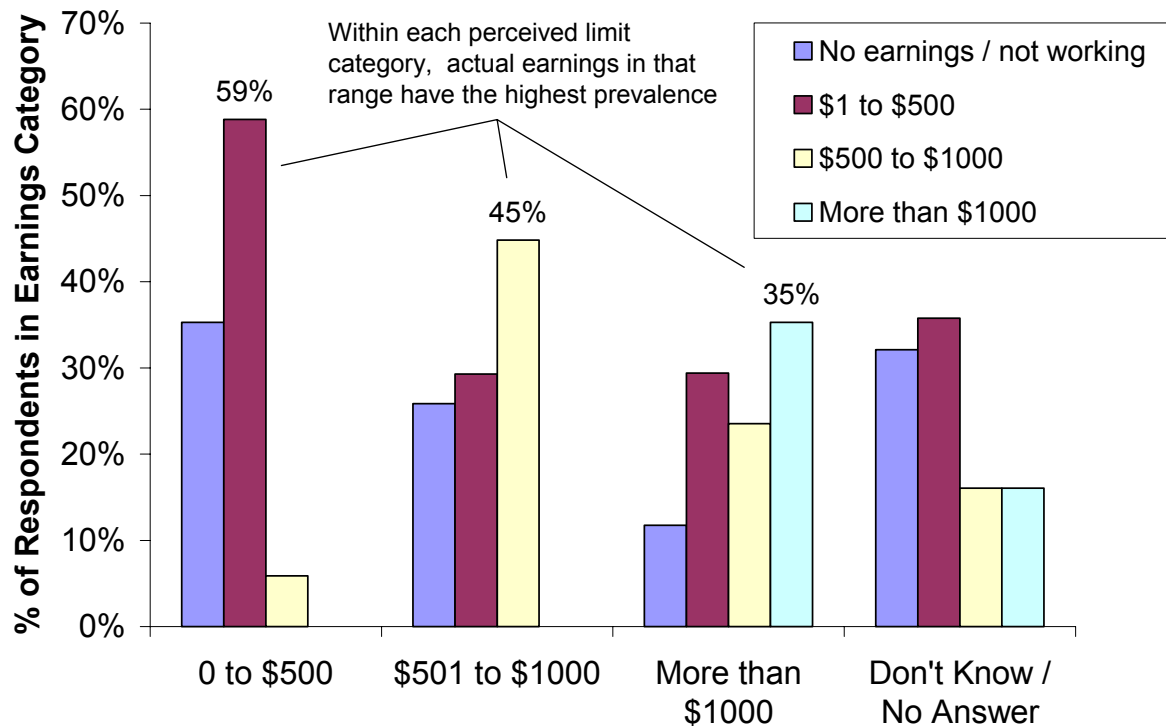
\*\* Difference between 2001 and 2003 is significant at the .01 level

# Consumer Comments on Work-Related Supports

- “The employer would need to have an understanding that the disease I suffer with is unpredictable. If I happen to be...late in the morning, I would make that up...”
- “I get to work between 9:30-11:00, because PCA has to drop her child off at school or daycare... The office is willing to work with this schedule...I am also able to do some work from home.”
- “Public transportation mostly not existent, when available not dependable and too expensive.”
- “I usually go to voc rehab and articulate what I would like, that I would like a job coach. They have helped me out with computer software that helps me talk to my computer [and]...training to use that. They have helped me making medical adaptations.”

Source: CHOICES Focus Groups and Case Studies, 2002

# Association between Perceived MaineCare Earnings Limits and Actual Earnings (2003 Survey)



How much are you allowed to earn w/out losing MaineCare?

Note: Chart includes only the 229 respondents who were on the WWD Option as of June, 2003.

# Kudos from Survey Participants for the MaineCare WWD Option

- “It’s a great program to have when you need it. I think it helps people even when they find work, and it got me motivated to get out and find work.”
- “It's helped me a lot, it helps me get what I need. It lets me work so that I have self worth.”
- “I am thankful for this program and that I've opportunity to be able to work without losing health benefits.”
- “It’s a wonderful program now that they let disabled people work.”

Source: 2001 and 2003 CHOICES Surveys

# Perceived MaineCare Earnings Limits by Reported Earnings (2003 Survey)

Actual Earnings Last Month	How much are you allowed to earn per month without losing MaineCare benefits?				Row Percent
	0 to \$500	\$501 to \$1000	More than \$1000	Don't Know/ No Answer	
No earnings / not working	35%	26%	12%	32%	29%
\$1 to \$500	59%	29%	29%	36%	35%
\$500 to \$1000	6%	45%	24%	16%	23%
More than \$1000	0%	0%	35%	16%	12%
<b>TOTAL</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Column Percent	7% (N=17)	25% (N=58)	7% (N=17)	60% (N=137)	100% (N=229)

Note: Table includes only the 229 respondents who were on the WWD Option as of June, 2003.