

Barriers and Supports to Employment for State Vocational Rehabilitation Clients

Presenters

Frank Martin, Mathematica Policy Research

Purvi Sevak, Mathematica Policy Research

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Discussant

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University of Massachusetts, Boston**

Washington, DC

June 9, 2016

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— CENTER FOR —
STUDYING DISABILITY POLICY

Welcome



Moderator

Angie Jaszczak

Mathematica Policy Research

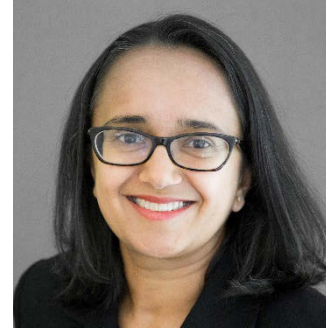
About CSDP

The Center for Studying Disability Policy (CSDP) was established by Mathematica in 2007 to provide the nation's leaders with the data they need to shape disability policy and programs to fully meet the needs of all Americans with disabilities.

Today's Speakers



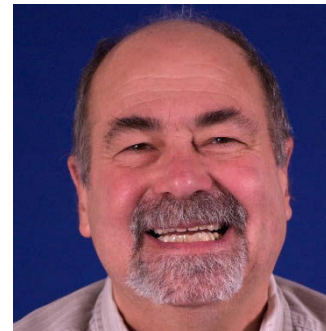
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- **The findings and conclusions are those of the authors and do not represent the policy of HHS or NIDILRR; the authors retain sole responsibility for any errors or omissions**

Today's Presentations

- **Administrative data**
 - Matched data sets from the Social Security Administration (SSA) and Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)
 - Highlights from studies on the efforts of people with disabilities to work over many years
- **Survey of Disability and Employment (SDE)**
 - Survey collects information from adult applicants for vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, focusing on their employment and employment-related efforts before applying for VR services
 - Sample selected from applicant lists provided by three state VR agencies during 2014
 - 2,804 state VR applicants ages 25 to 60

What Have We Learned Using Matched Administrative Data from SSA and RSA?

Frank H. Martin
Mathematica

Presented at the
Center for Studying Disability Policy Forum

Washington, DC

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Purpose

- **Identify research that uses state VR data matched to data on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) at the individual level**
 - RSA
 - SSA
 - “RSA-SSA matched data”
- **Summarize findings enabled by matched data**
- **Consider strengths and limitations**

14 Studies with 17+ Authors

- **NIDILRR**
 - Hugh Berry
 - Leslie Caplan
- **SSA**
 - Paul O’Leary
- **US Census Bureau**
 - Michael Freiman
- **Kessler Foundation:
John O’Neill**
- **Hunter College:
Elizabeth Cardoza**
- **University of Wisconsin,
Madison: Fong Chan**
- **Government Accountability
Office**
- **Mathematica**
 - Yonatan Ben-Shalom
 - Todd Honeycutt
 - Jody Schimmel Hyde
 - Su Liu
 - Arif Mamum
 - Frank H. Martin
 - Elizabeth Potamites
 - David Stapleton
 - Craig Thornton
 - David Wittenburg

Millions of Records

- **RSA-911 data on VR closures**
 - 1998 through 2013
 - ~600,000 closures per year
- **SSA Disability Analysis File**
 - All 25+ million adults with SSDI or SSI benefits in at least one month from 1996 through 2013
- **Master Earnings File**
 - Earnings from Internal Revenue Service records maintained by SSA

Important Strengths of the Matched Data

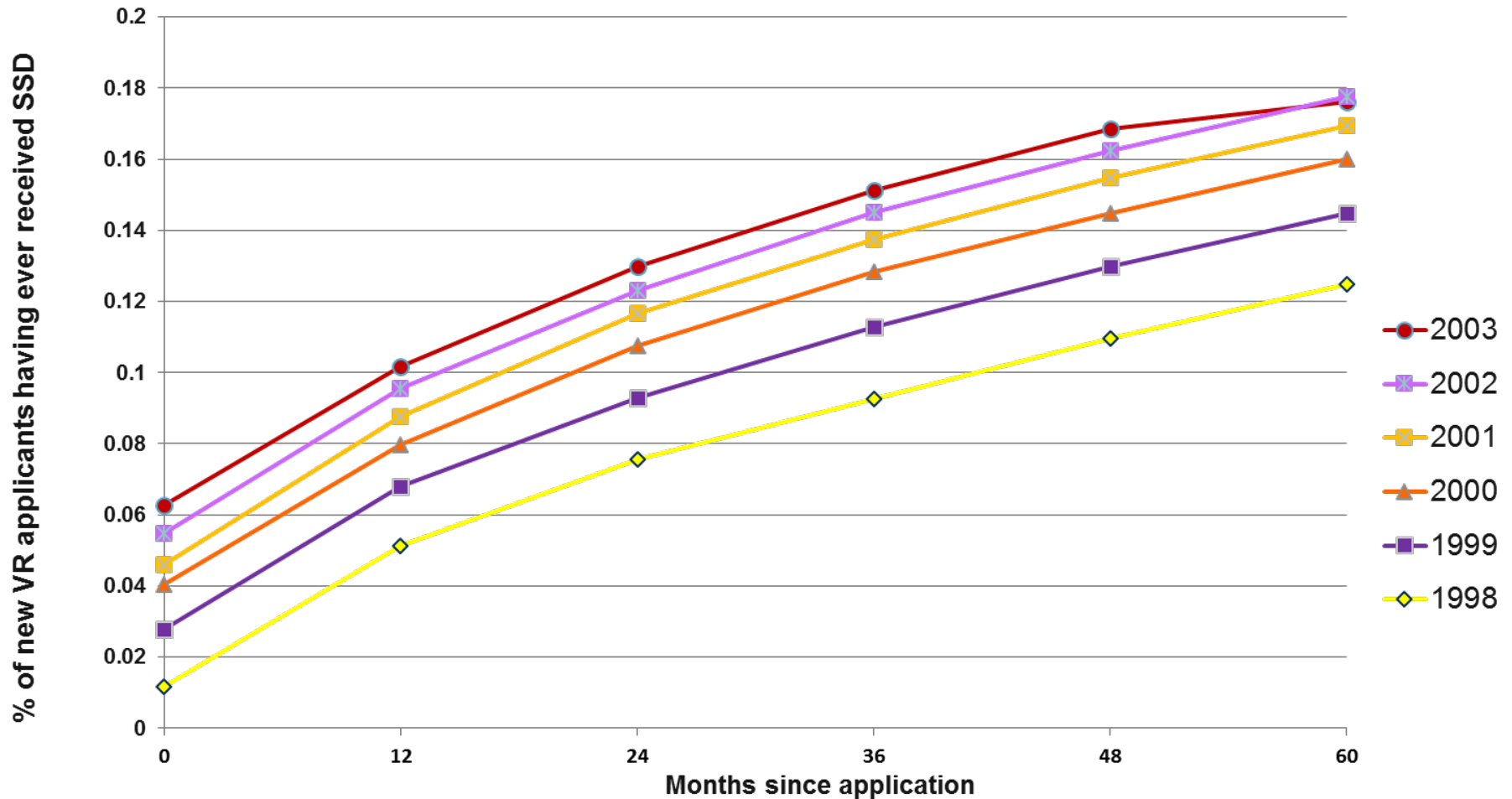
- **Can follow people from the first time they appear in either program through all later years**
 - Annual VR applicant cohorts
 - Annual SSDI/SSI award cohorts
 - Measure outcomes for all VR applicants after closure
- **Can examine variation across states, ages, education levels, impairments, and other characteristics**

Many VR Applicants Are Already in SSDI or SSI, and Many Others Enter Later

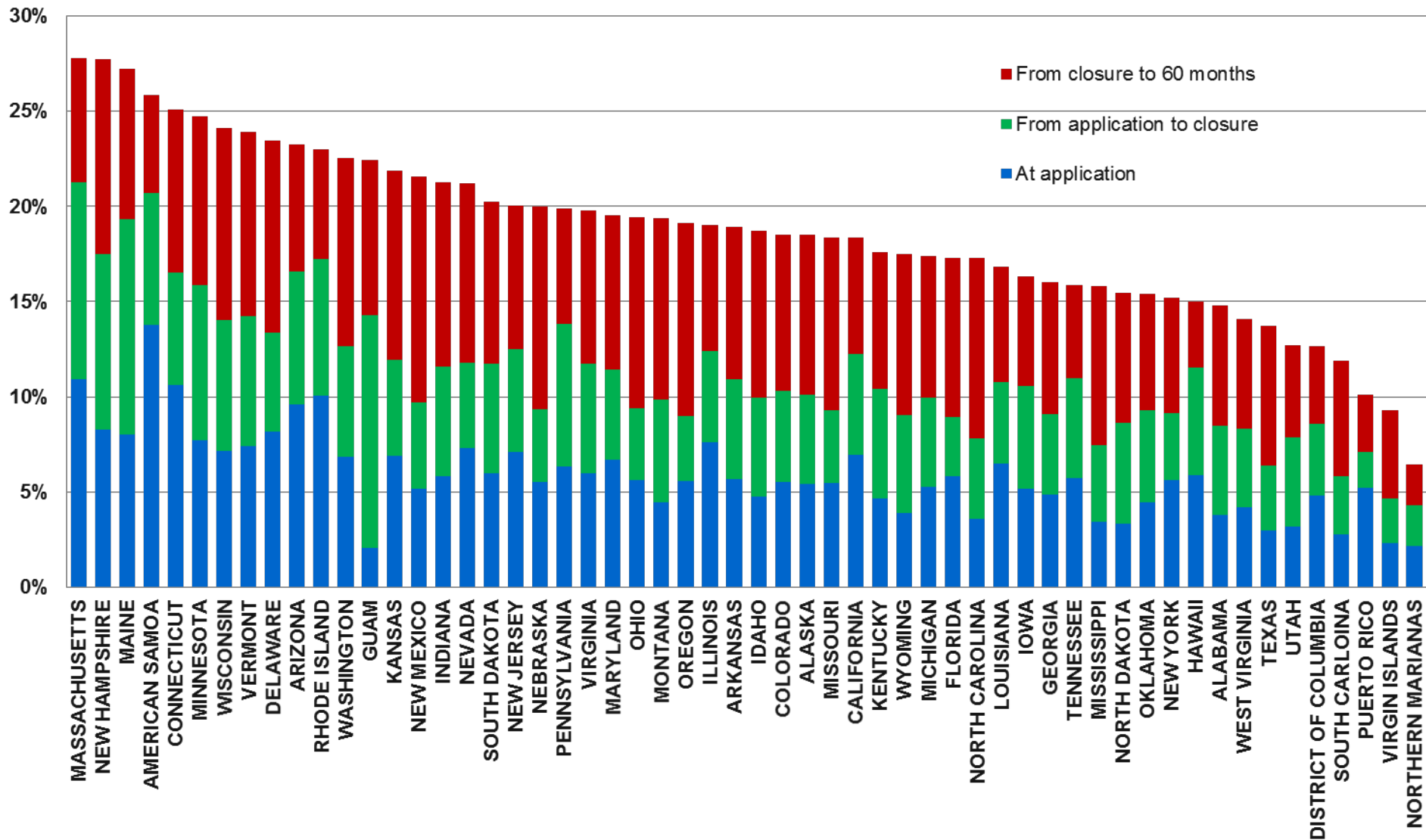
- **Already in SSDI or SSI at first VR application**
 - 2002 applicants: 8.4% in SSDI or SSI
 - 5.5% in SSDI, 4.2% in SSI
- **Not already in SSDI or SSI**
 - 2002 applicants: 91.6%
- **Higher SSDI/SSI participation by closure**

Source: Stapleton and Martin 2012.

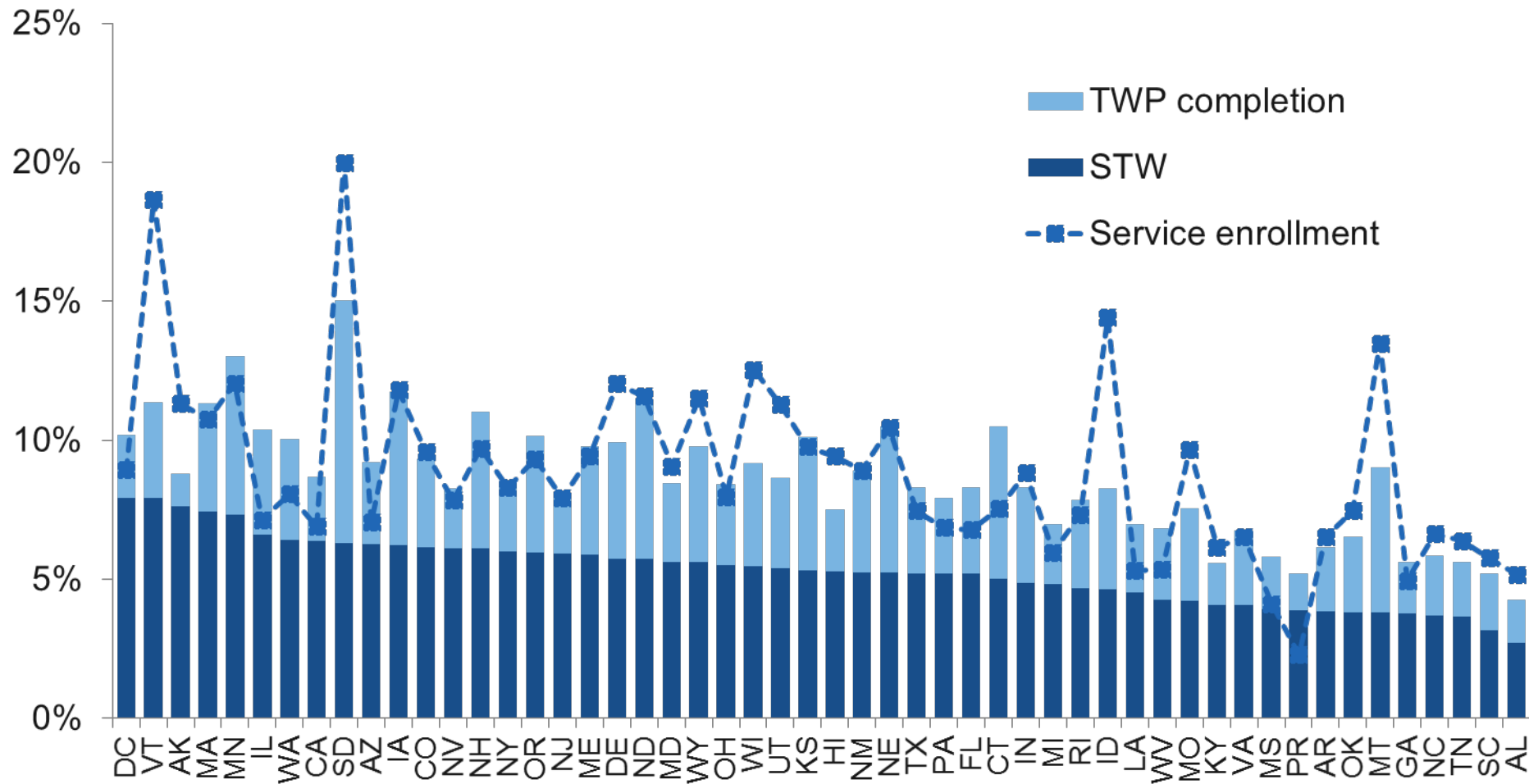
Growth in SSDI Participation After VR Application



Recurring Theme: Variation Across States in SSDI Program Entry



Recurring Theme: Variation Across States in Return-to-Work Outcomes



Source: Ben-Shalom and Mamum 2014.

Note: States are ordered from largest to smallest effects in STW regression.

Highlights: SSDI/SSI Beneficiaries Who Enroll in VR

- **7 to 10% of SSDI/SSI awardees eventually enroll for VR or other employment network services**
 - About 40% increase their earnings afterwards
 - About 20% forgo at least some benefits for work
- **About 80% of SSDI/SSI beneficiaries who forgo at least some benefits for work do not enroll for VR or other employment network services**

Sources: GAO 2007; Liu and Stapleton 2011; Ben-Shalom and Stapleton 2015.

Highlights: SSA Payments to VR Agencies for SSDI/SSI Beneficiaries Who Enroll for VR

- **SSA makes payments to VR agencies for:**
 - 4% of SSDI/SSI beneficiaries who apply for services
 - 6% of those who actually receive services
- **SSDI/SSI benefits forgone over 10 years are more than seven times higher than SSA payments to VR agencies**
 - Do not know total expenditures for VR services
 - Do not know what the benefits forgone would have been if SSA had not paid the VR agencies

Sources: GAO 2007; Schimmel Hyde and O’Leary 2015.

Highlights: Evaluation of Ticket to Work

- **Ticket to Work initially increased enrollment for VR and other employment network services**
- **Ticket to Work had no measurable impact on earnings or SSDI/SSI benefits forgone for work**

Sources: Stapleton et al. 2008, 2012.

Highlights: Relationships Between VR Waiting Time and VR Outcomes

- **As VR waiting times increase, VR applicants are:**
 - **Less likely to achieve substantial earnings**
 - **More likely to receive SSDI/SSI benefits**

Sources: Honeycutt and Stapleton 2013; Hyde et al. 2014.

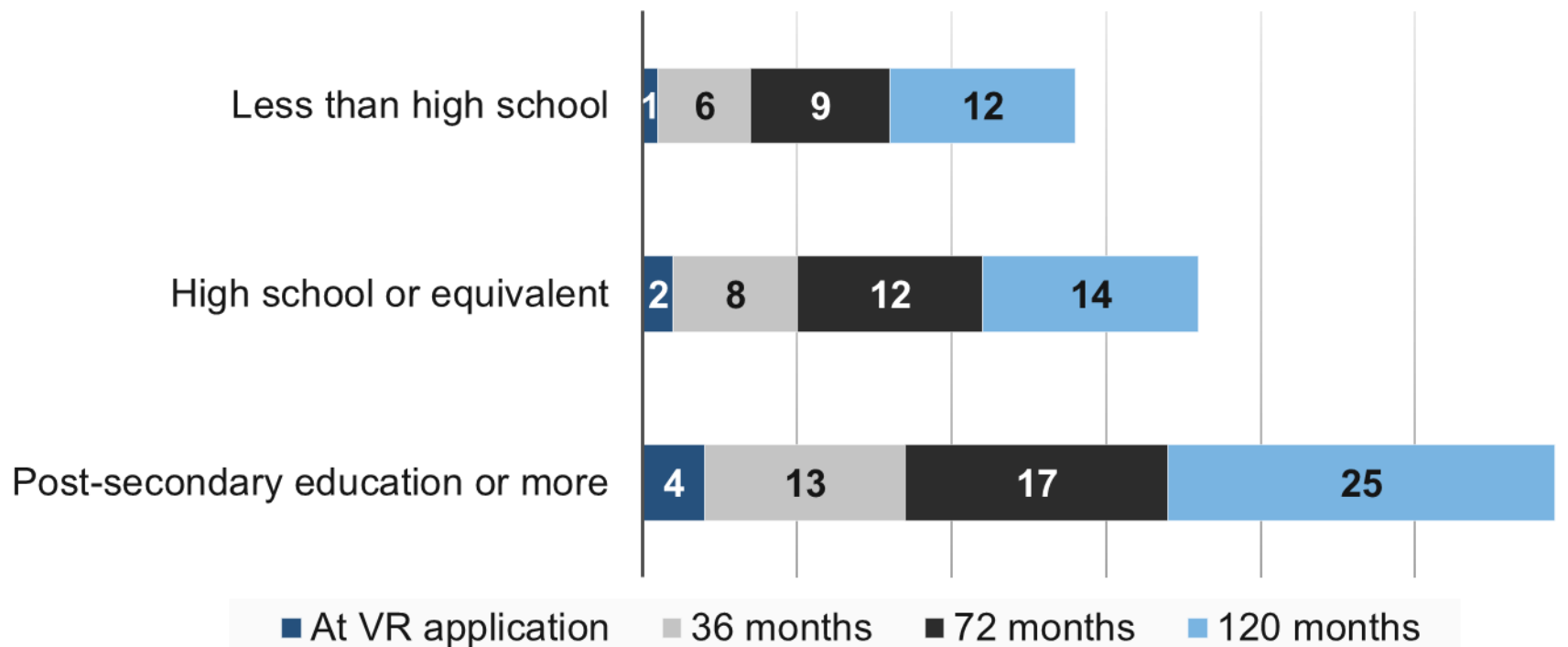
Recurring Theme: Young Adults Achieve Better Outcomes Than Older Adults

- Younger applicants (under age 40) were among the most likely to have at least one month of benefits suspended or terminated due to work

Sources: Stapleton et al. 2008; Liu and Stapleton 2011; Ben-Shalom and Mamum 2015.

Recurring Theme: Outcomes Improve with Education

Percentage of first-time beneficiary VR applicants with at least one month of non-payment due to STW



Source: Schimmel Hyde and O'Leary 2016.

An Important Limitation

- **We would like to know: What is the impact of VR services on employment and benefit outcomes?**
- **The problem: no counterfactual outcomes**
- **Results can be suggestive**
 - **Example: wait time versus outcomes**
- **Other information can help**
 - **Example: use random variation in Ticket to Work mailings during the rollout to make inferences about initial impacts**

Conclusion

- **These studies have already generated a wealth of information**
 - About program interactions between VR and SSA programs
 - Illustrates the value of creating and maintaining the RSA-SSA matched data
- **Other studies are under way**
 - Transition age youth with serious mental illness
 - Long term adult outcomes for transition age youth
 - Long term outcomes for VR clients who do and do not receive services

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Barriers and Facilitators to Employment: What Can We Learn from VR Applicants?

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Presented at the
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Background and Motivation

- **Research using administrative and survey data reveal large differences in employment by:**
 - Type of disability
 - Race
 - Education
 - State of residence
- **Information collected from SDE tells us why these differences exist**

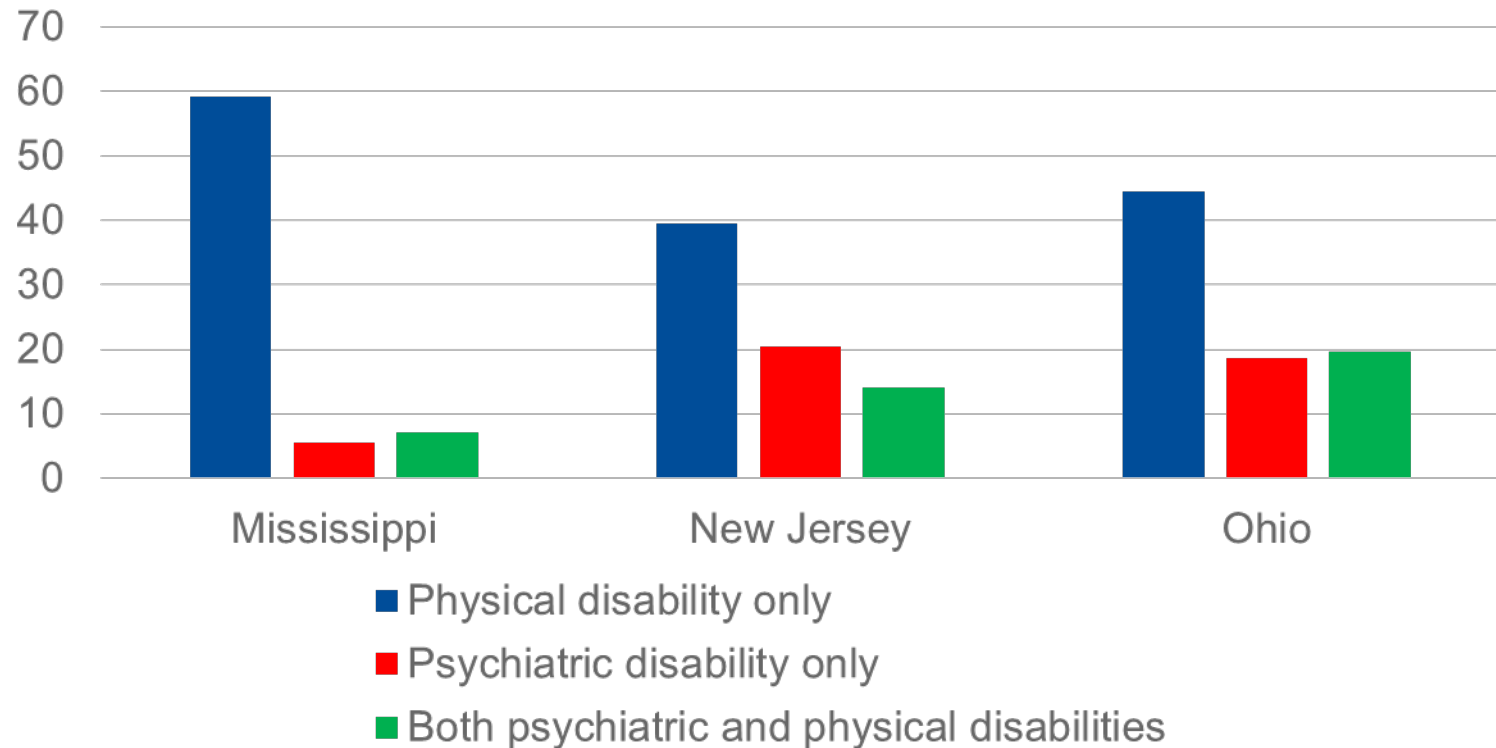
Selected Findings

- **A majority of VR applicants in three states reported:**
 - It's very important that they work
 - Health problems restrict work
 - Many nonhealth barriers to employment
 - Receipt of workplace accommodations
- **Applicants with psychiatric disabilities face additional employment barriers**
- **Applicants who are not employed have limited access to social support**

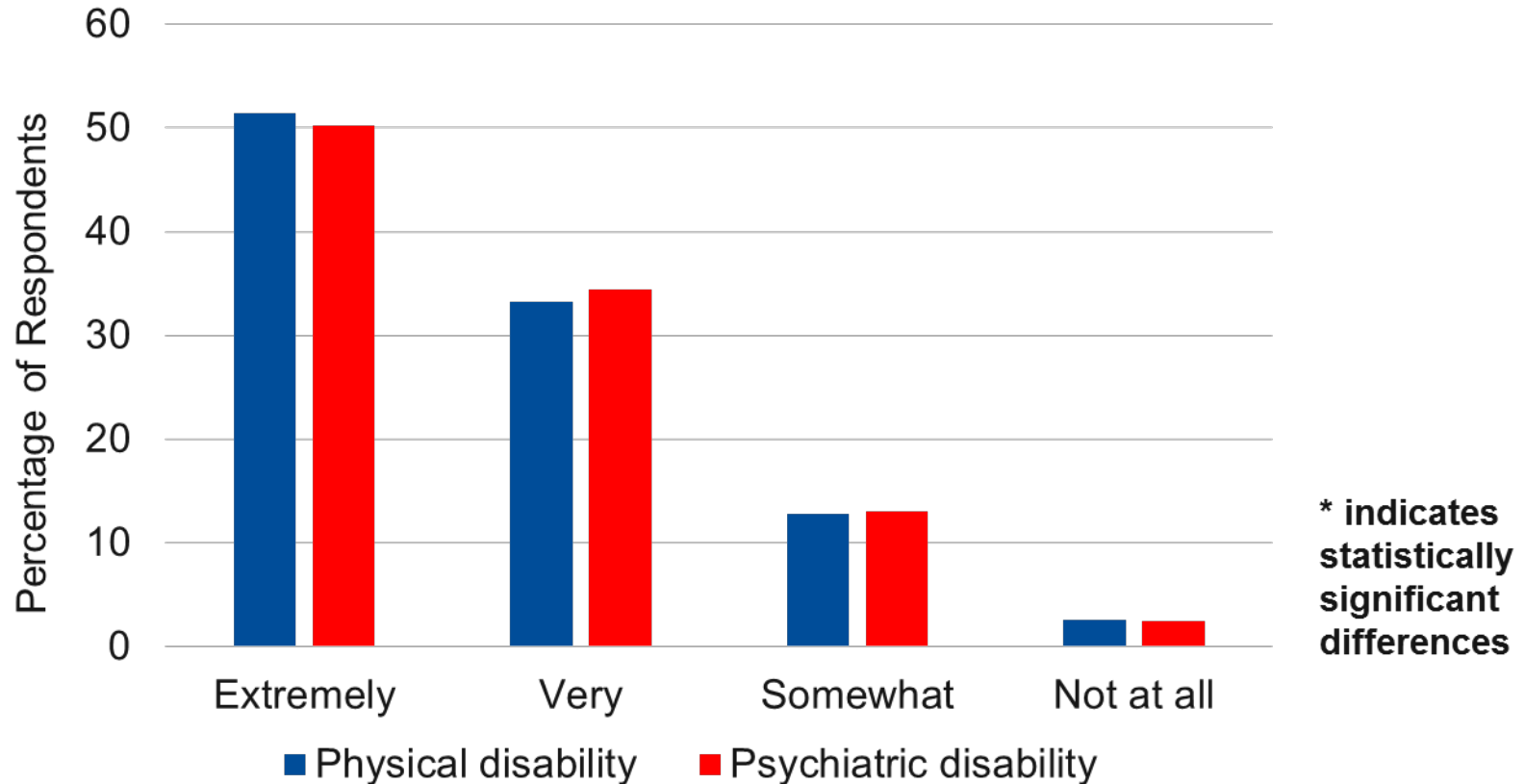
SDE Overview and Methods

- Interview 3,000 applicants to state VR in Mississippi, New Jersey, and Ohio in 2014
- SDE interviewers asked applicants about:
 - Impairments and health conditions
 - Employment history
 - Reasons for not working
 - Receipt of accommodations
 - Social connections
- Presentation today compares:
 - Responses of those with physical vs. psychiatric disabilities
 - Differences in social capital by employment and disability

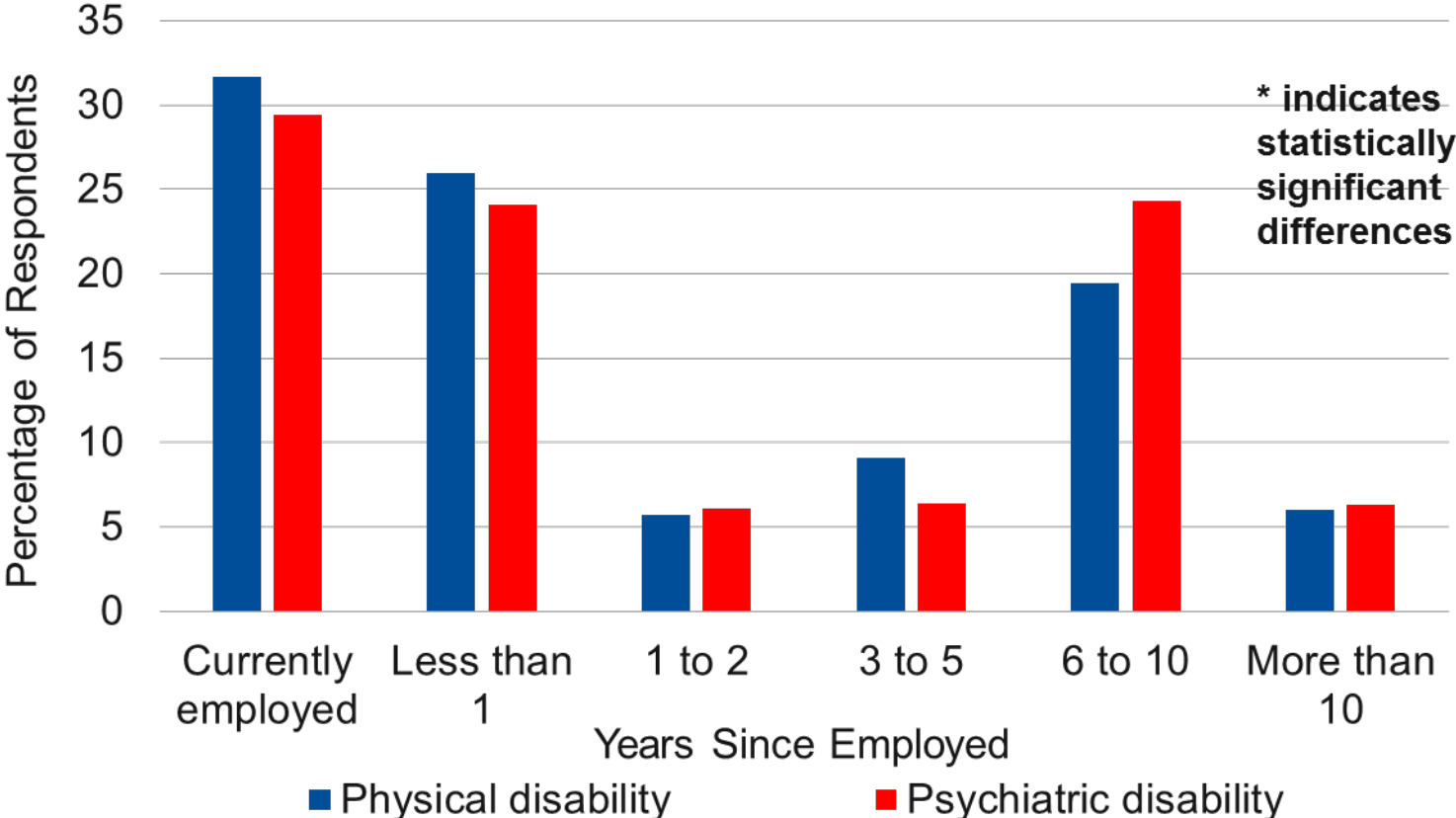
NJ and Ohio have More Applicants with Psychiatric Disabilities



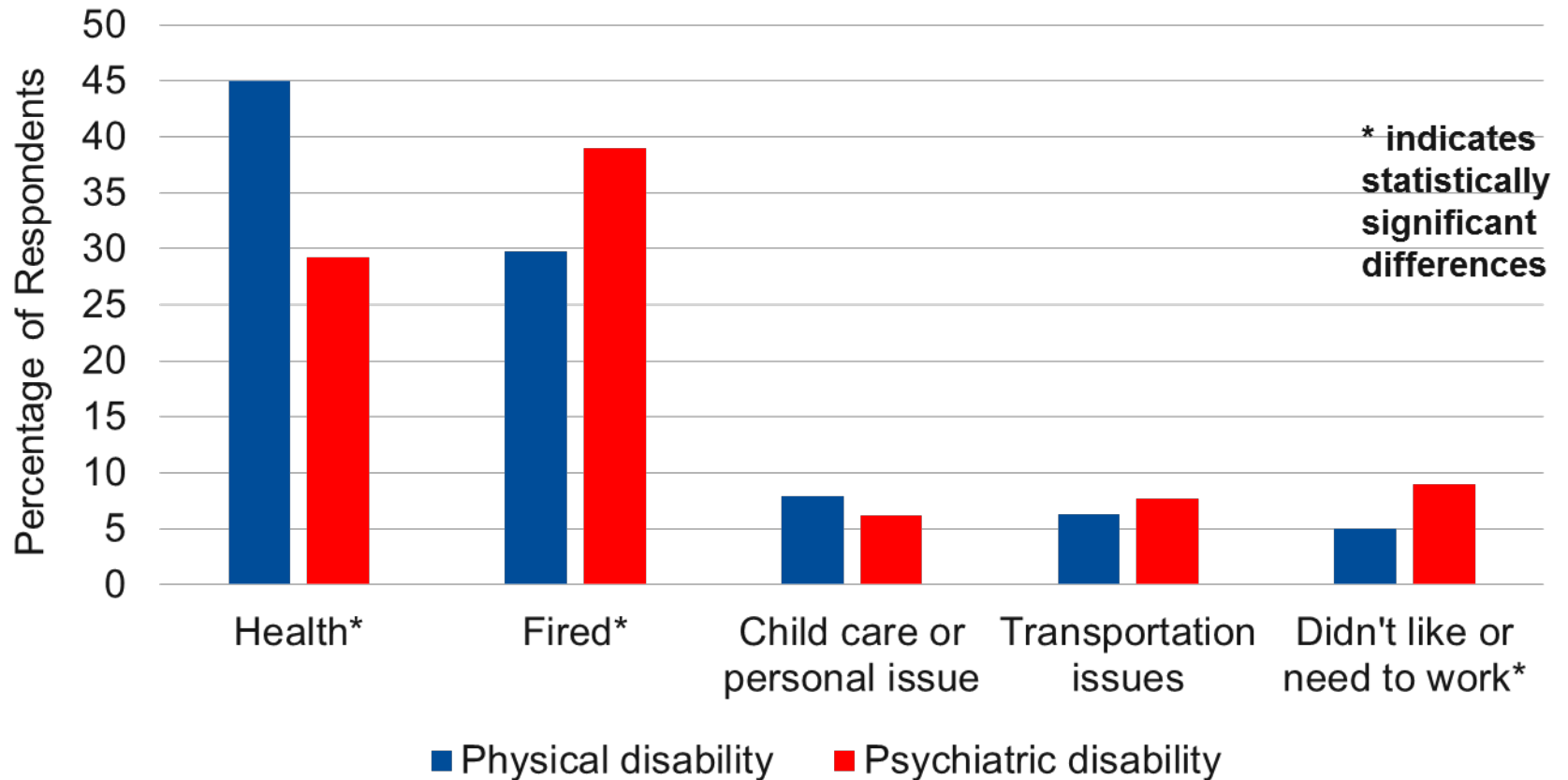
How Important Is It That You Work?



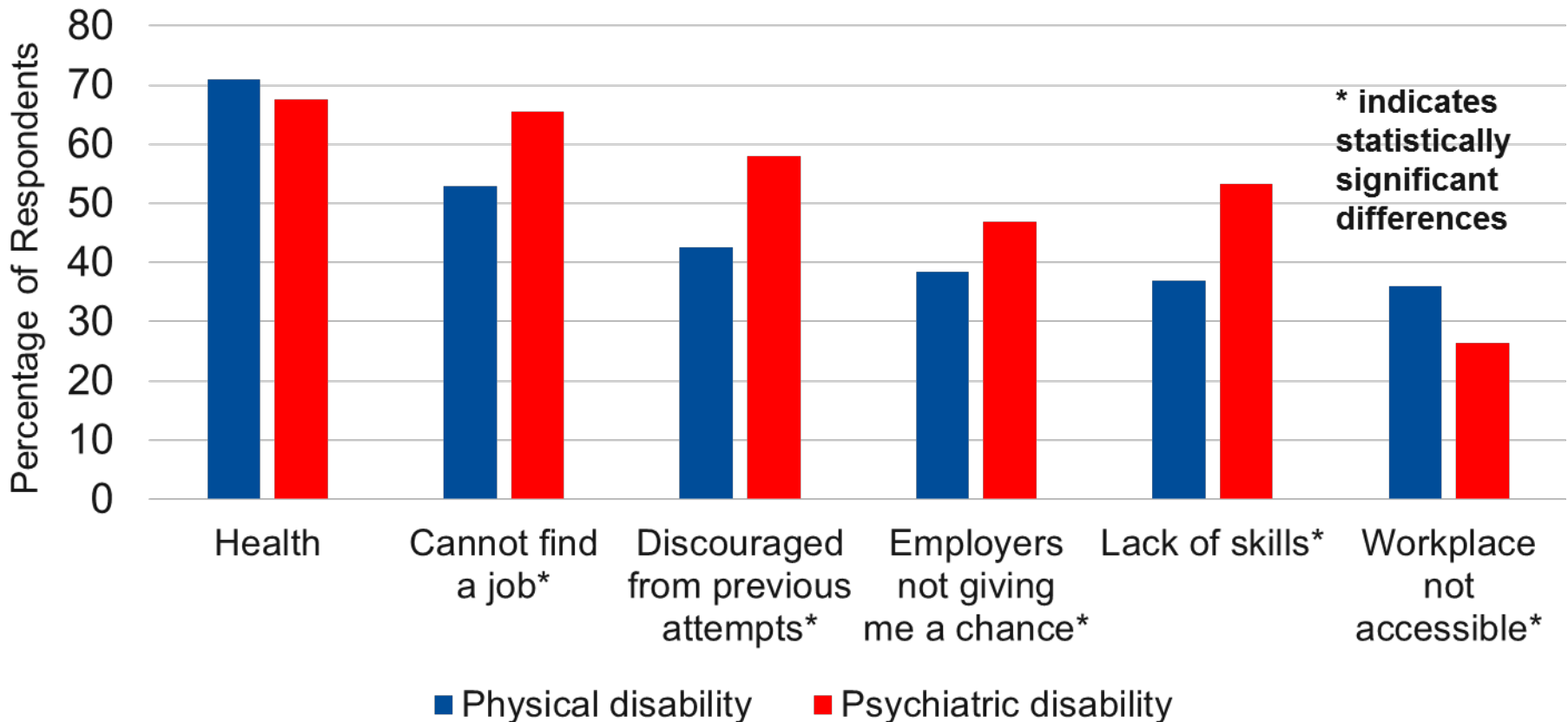
Quarter Have not Worked in Five Years



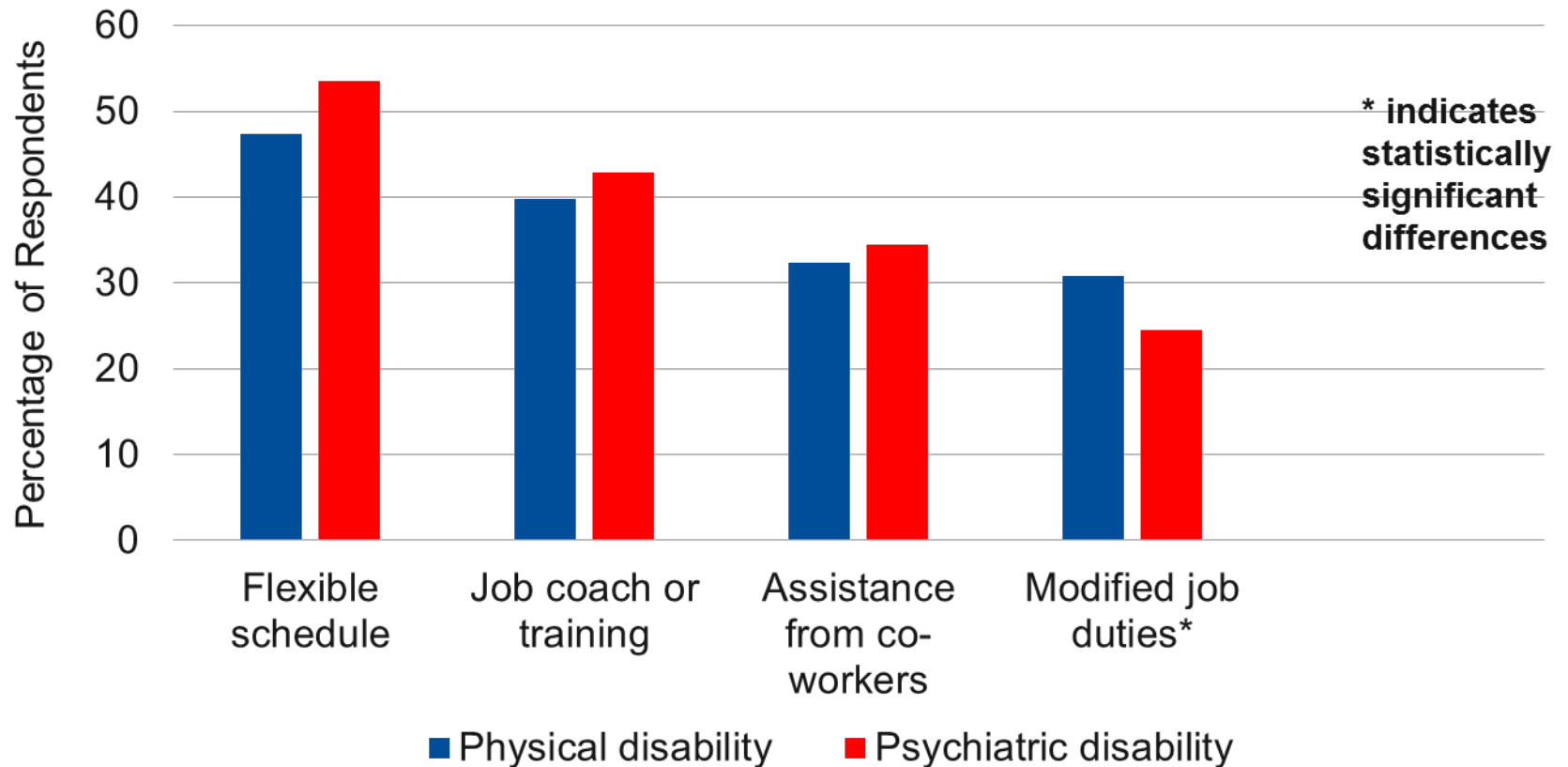
Why Did You Leave Your Last Job?



Why Are You Not Currently Working?



Did You Receive This Accommodation at Work?



Social Capital Can Be Related to Employment

- **Social capital can reduce barriers to employment or facilitate employment**
- **We will explore variations in social capital among applicants for VR**

What Is Social Capital?

Our research focuses on social capital
as it relates to employment



High levels of social capital increase
opportunities for employment,
but
employment also increases social capital

Prior Research on Social Capital

- **For the general population, levels of social capital:**
 - Are higher with better education, employment, health, political participation, safety, and well-being (Field 2003; Halpern 2011; Kawachi et al. 2008; Murayama et al. 2012; Potts 2005; Putnam 1995, 2000; Wilkinson 1996)
- **For people with disabilities, levels of social capital:**
 - Are low and vary by disability type
 - Vary according to labor force participation
 - Do not vary between those who are employed versus those looking for work (Brucker 2015)

Measures: Social Capital

- **SDE asked respondents whether they have anyone they can rely on for:**
 - **Help finding a job (68%)**
 - **Transportation to get to work urgently (67%)**
 - **Help with a serious personal crisis that makes it difficult for them to find or keep a job (66%)**
 - **Borrowing money to pay an urgent bill (57%)**

Expect Variations in Social Capital by:

- **Severity of disability**
 - Difficulty with independent living or self-care (38%)
- **Age of disability onset**
 - Younger than age 17 (28%)
 - Ages 17 to 24 (15%)
 - Ages 25 to 44 (37%)
 - Ages 45 to 65 (19%)
- **Health status**
 - Likert scale: 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) (mean = 2.8)
- **Employment**
 - Currently working or not (36%)

Results

- **Controlling for demographic variables,* we find:**
 - Applicants who are employed have much higher levels of social capital
 - Applicants with better health have more access to social supports
 - Applicants with severe limitations have less access to social supports
 - People who acquire a disability at age 25 or older have less access to financial support than people who acquire disabilities at age 17 or younger

*Demographic variables include age group, gender, race, educational attainment, and marital status.

Key Findings (1)

- **More than one-third of VR applicants (36%) are already employed and likely to have strong social networks**
- **But most VR applicants (64%) are not employed and thus are likely to have limited social support in the community**
 - **May need help not only with job search and preparation activities but with accessing acute services to address financial issues, crises, and transportation concerns**

Key Findings (2)

- **VR applicants with more severe limitations have lower levels of social capital**
 - **Community-based services may need to fill these social support gaps**
- **VR applicants with better self-reported health have more social capital**

Summary

- **Applicants with physical and psychiatric disabilities place great importance on work**
- **Barriers to employment include health AND nonhealth factors**
- **Many clients report receipt of accommodations**
- **Agency outreach could decrease the number of years since employed and VR application**

Implications for VR

- **Although not nationally representative, the SDE provides insights into the needs of VR clients**
- **Counselors and agencies may be able to use this information to better serve clients**
 - **The IC-RRTC is working with Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) plans to integrate SDE findings into OOD's needs assessment**

For More Information

- Debra L. Brucker, Amanda Botticello, John O’Neill, Ann Kutlik: “Social Capital Among Vocational Rehabilitation Applicants.” Forthcoming in *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*.
- Winter 2016 issue of *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*: “Individual and Agency Differences in Employment Outcomes: Lessons Learned and New Directions.”

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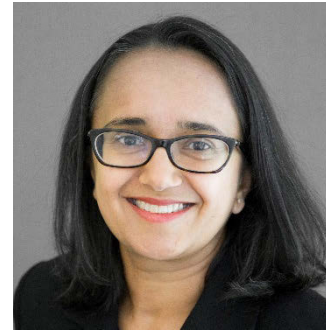
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Audience Q&A



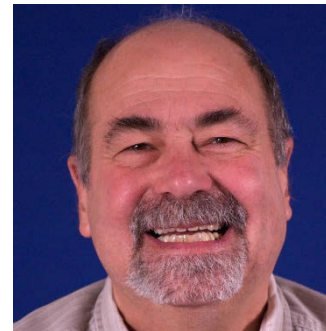
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Save the Date

Disability Research Consortium Annual Meeting
National Press Club, Washington, DC
August 3, 2016

Register at

http://www.nber.org/aging/drc/SSA_drc.html

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