

Empowering the Public through Web-based Health Information: Evaluation Results from BC

Presentation for the Canadian Public Health Association

September 20, 2005

ACTION for Health

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Applied Communication Technology: Information . Organizations . Networks

September 20, 2005 – Canadian Public Health Association

Empowering the Public Through Web-based Health Information: Evaluation Results from BC

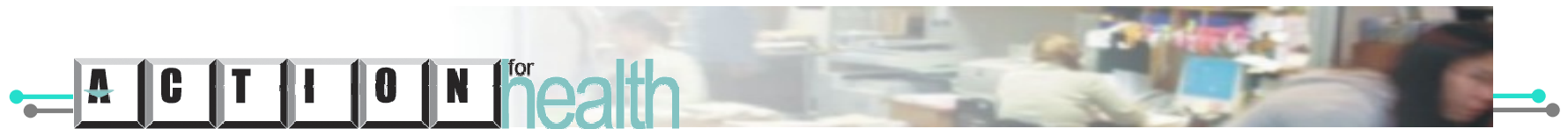
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Web study results presented on behalf of the Quality Improvement of Literacy, Telecare and Self Help (*QUILTS*) Collaboration and the BC Ministry of Health

Overview



- ❑ Review findings from recent BC HealthGuide evaluation
- ❑ Policy implications to consider when designing web sites
- ❑ Lessons learned



The BCHealthGuide Program

BC HealthGuide Handbook

- 400 page handbook distributed free of charge to BC households (Spring 2001); French language version (2004); First Nation Handbook (2003)

BC HealthGuide HealthFiles

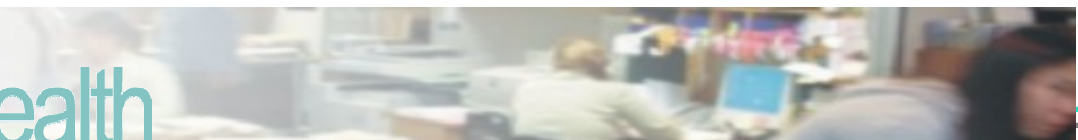
- 170 fact sheets

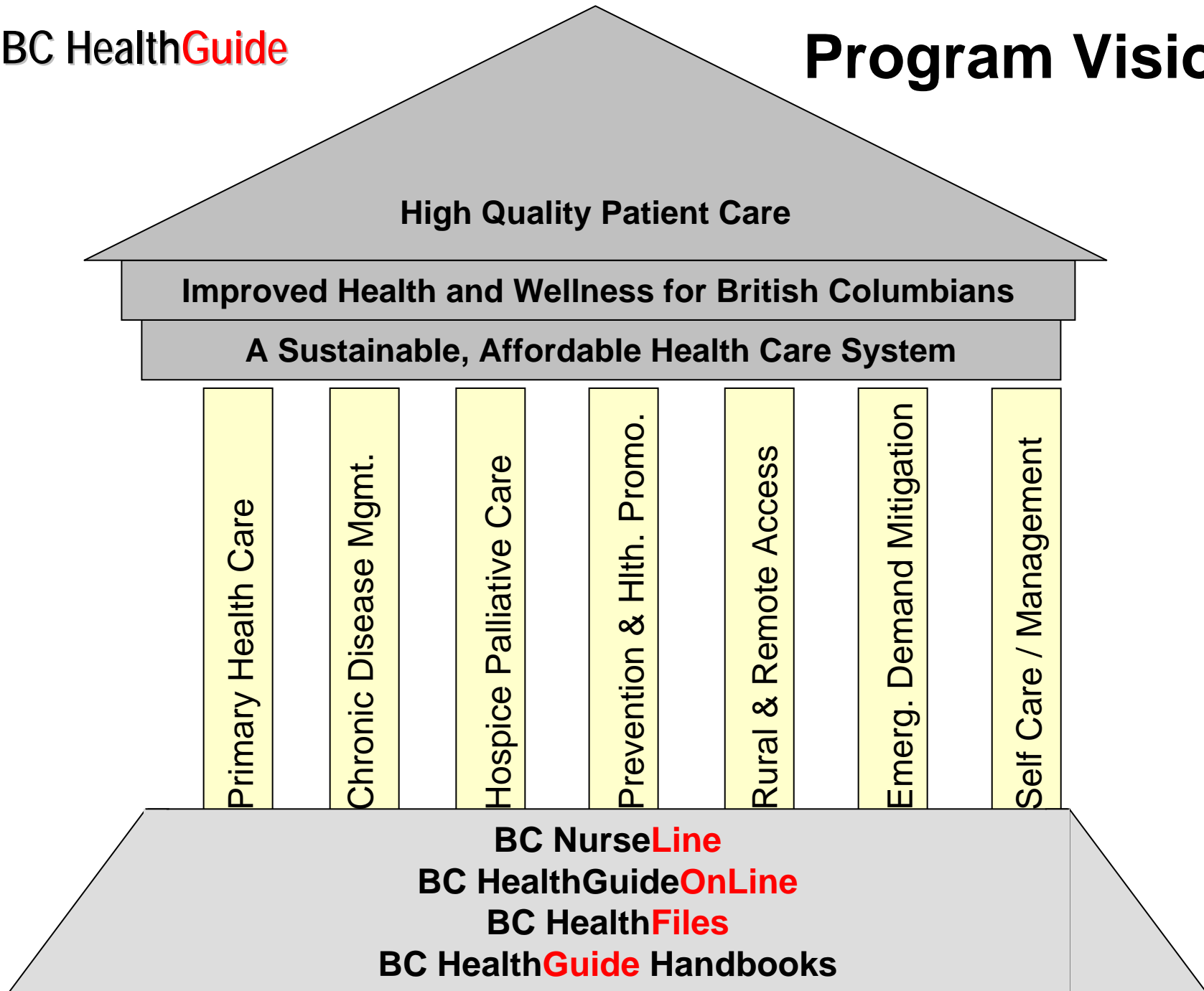
BC NurseLine (24/7 access to nurses)

- BC is one of 8 CDN jurisdictions providing services

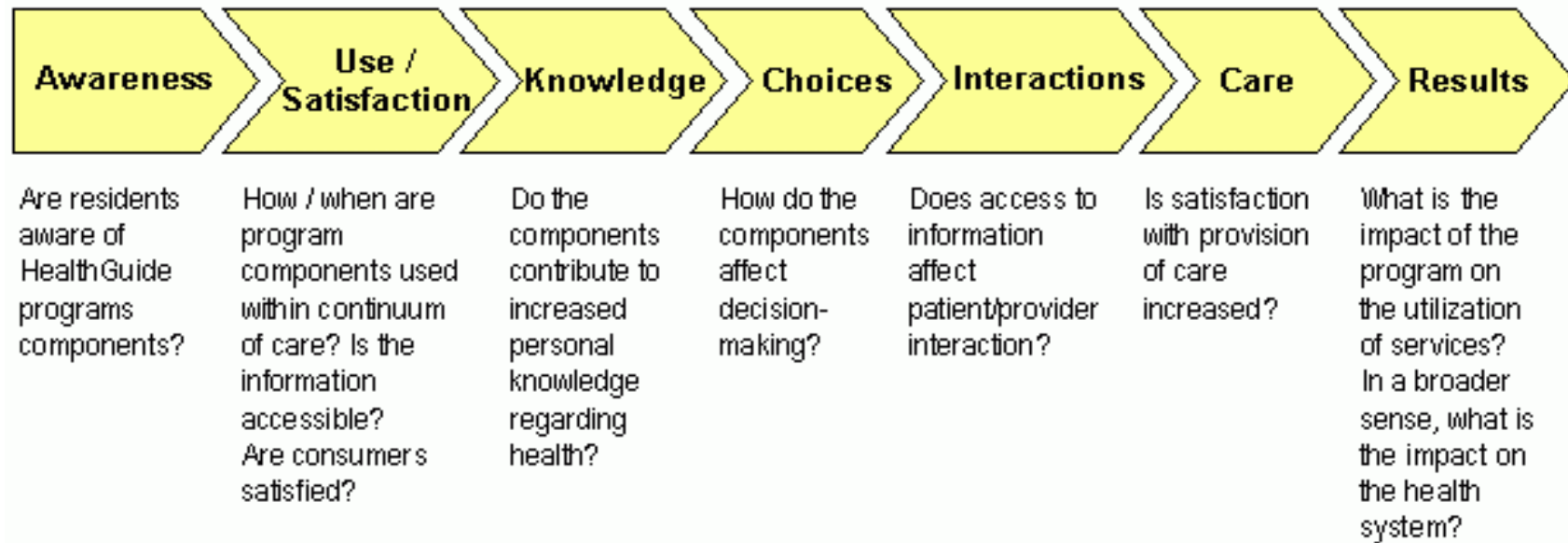
BC HealthGuide Online (www.bchealthguide.org)

- 3,000 common health concerns, including tests, procedures and other resources





Health Information's Role in Primary Care Experience



Source: QUILTS evaluation framework report

BC HealthGuide Research Strategy (Web Site)

□ 4-Prong Research Strategy

■ Focus groups

- Involved both English speakers/multi-lingual speakers
- Who is using/not using?
- Navigation patterns
- Included physicians (both FP and ER)

■ Population-based telephone survey

- Gauge awareness

■ Pop-up web survey

- Develop profile of users

■ Key informant interviews of health care professionals

- Are they aware of web site?
- How do they use it, compared to their use of the printed materials?

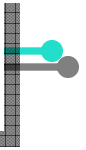
Who is Looking for Health Information Via the Web?

- ❑ BC has the highest level of Internet usage in the country
 - ❑ 71% of BC households were regular users (2003)
 - Up 23% from 1999
- ❑ Rates similar in
 - Alberta (69%)
 - Ontario (68%)
- ❑ Lowest rates were found in
 - New Brunswick (53%)
 - Quebec (66%)

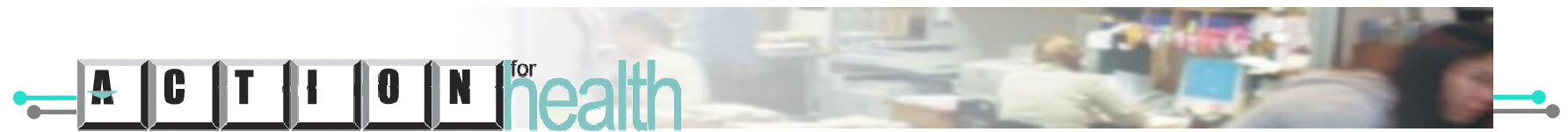
BC HealthGuide OnLine (entry page)



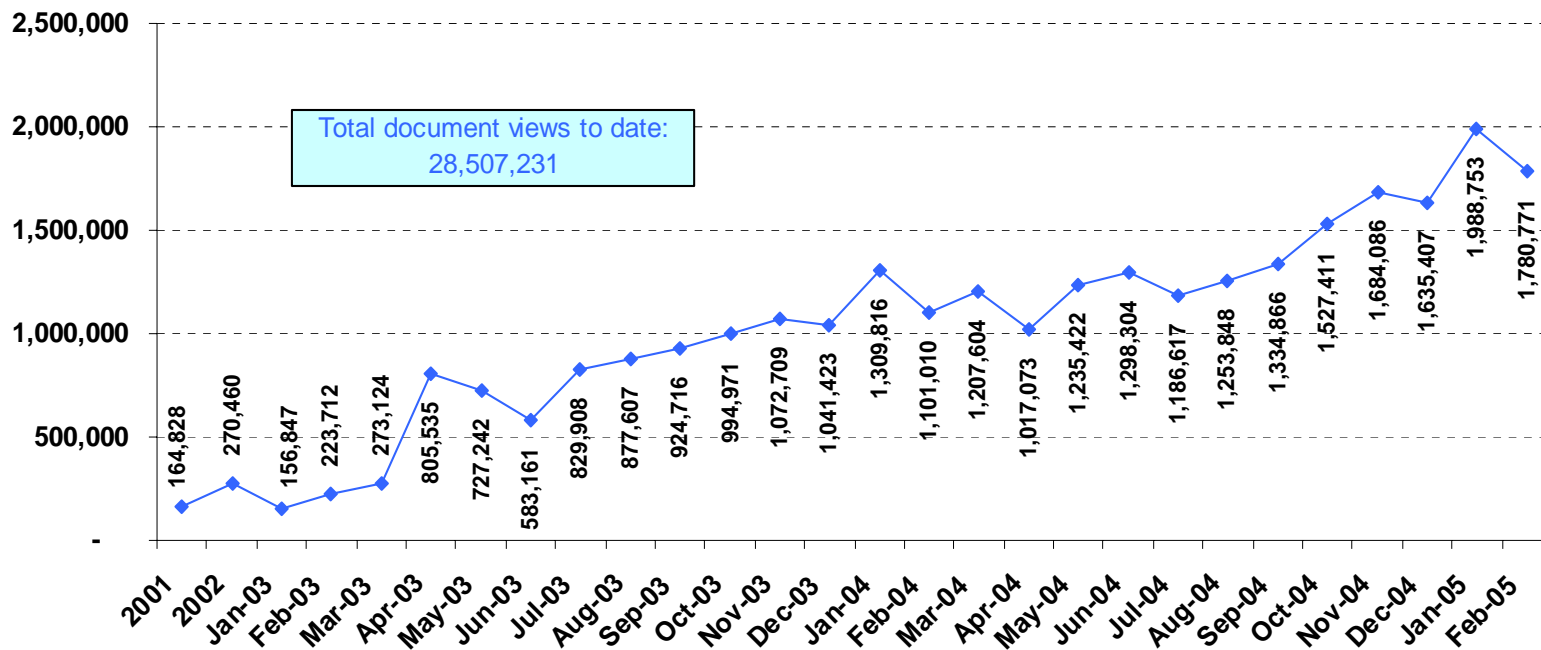
● Navigating BC HealthGuide OnLine



Navigation on BC HealthGuide Online



BC HealthGuide Online



Source: BC Ministry of Health, 2005

Focus Group Results

10 consumer groups held throughout the province

- Included both users of the program & non-users
- Navigation patterns
 - Majority use search engine (e.g., Google, MSN, Excite)
 - Web sites accessed included:
 - Ask Jeeves, Medline, Mayo Clinic, WebMD
 - Low awareness for BC HealthGuide, and government-sponsored web sites in general (about 1 in 10 were aware of the web site)
- Evaluation of information found
 - Using multiples sites
 - Using credible sites



Use of Information During Physician's Visit

Does information affect an office visit?

- ❑ Physicians are “not happy”
 - Esp. “older physicians”
- ❑ Questions competency
 - Expected that the physician already knows the info
- ❑ Disincentive for physicians to support programs like the BC HealthGuide
 - Less business
- ❑ Consumer strategy – “hide” the written information, but bring up what they know in the conversation

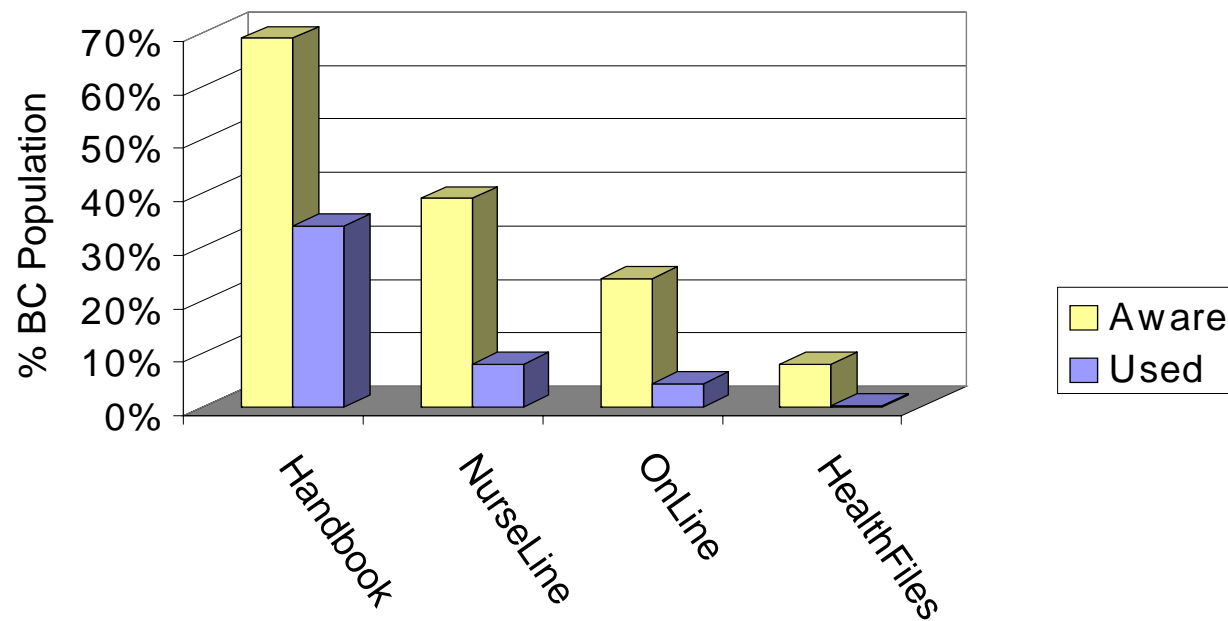


Population-Based Telephone Survey Results

Findings related to the BC HealthGuide Online:

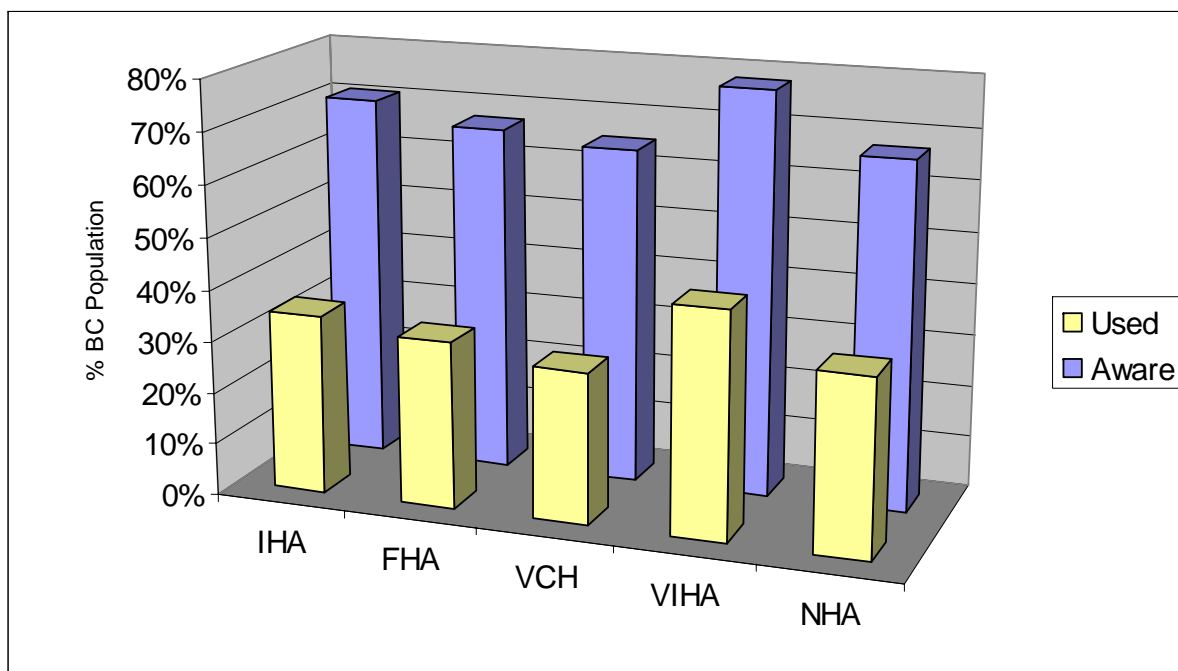
- ❑ Used by 4% of British Columbians in the last year
- ❑ Utilization highest among
 - Men
 - Younger persons (18-34)
 - Higher income households (over \$30,000)

BC HealthGuide Program Component Awareness & Utilization



Source: QUILTS Evaluation Team, telephone survey, Jan 04

Geographic Distribution of Awareness/Usage of Web Site

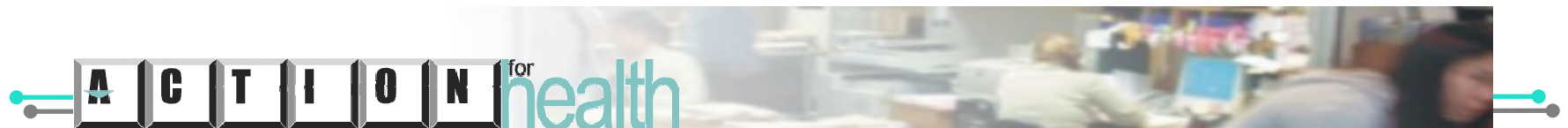


Source: QUILTS Evaluation Team, telephone survey

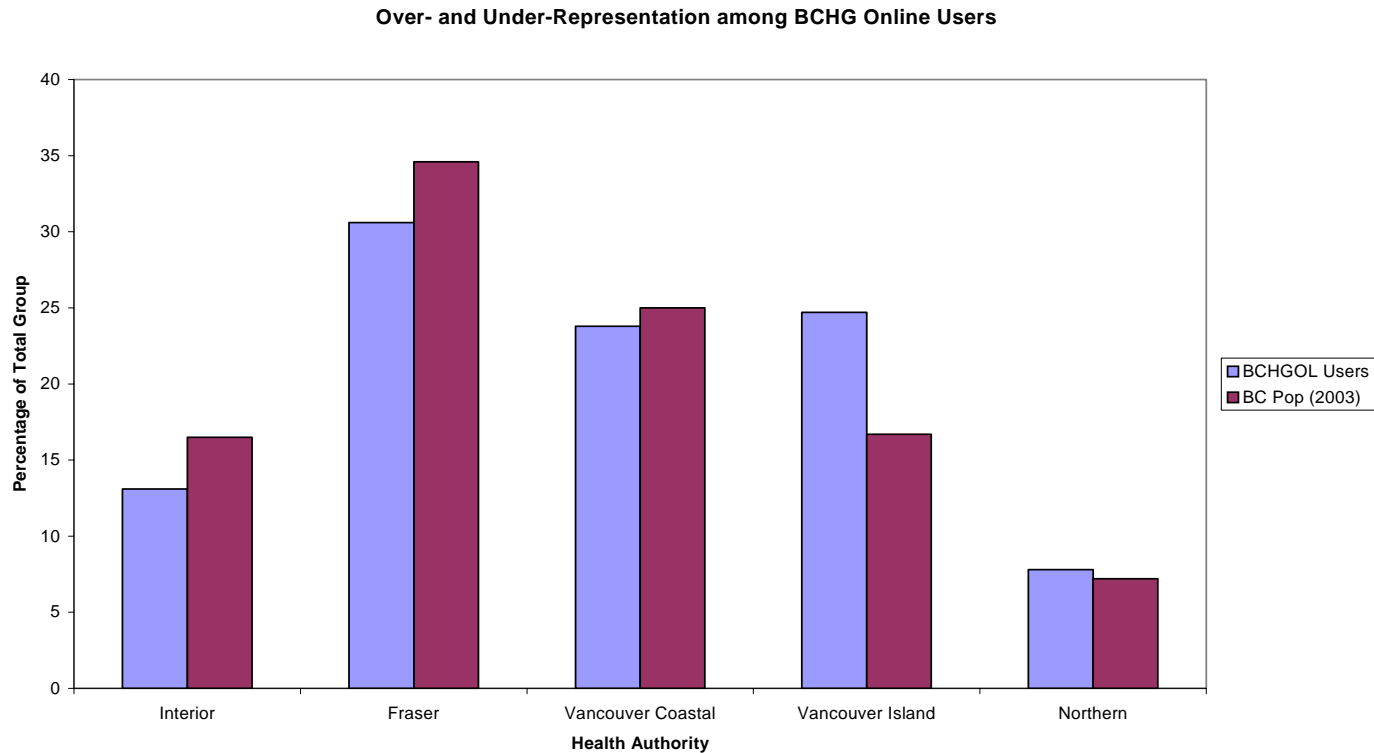
BC HealthGuide Web Survey

- Pop-up survey ran on web site from mid September 2004 through February 1, 2005
 - 5,800 individuals were presented with survey
 - Completed surveys = 2,927 (50% response rate)
 - Convenience-based sampling as users of the site self-selected into our survey

- User Profile
 - 76% of respondents were female
 - Most users (93.5%) were between 20 to 65 years old
 - Over 65+, more evenly divided by sex



With Respect to BC Population



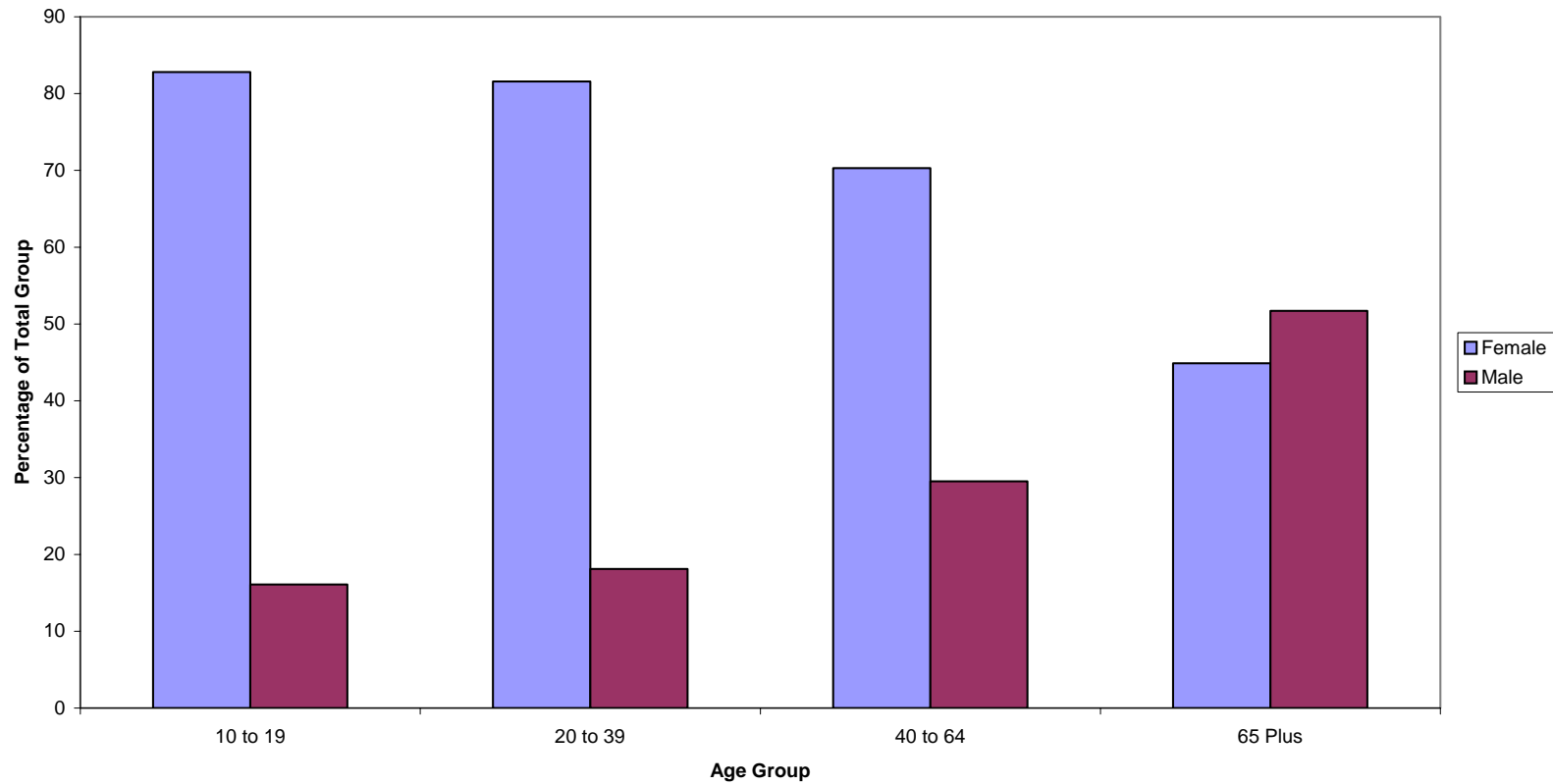
Users over-represented on Vancouver Island and the North

Question is...what makes this so?

Source: QUILTS evaluation team, Web Survey

BC HealthGuide Online By Sex and Age

Percentages of Female and Male Respondents - by Age Group

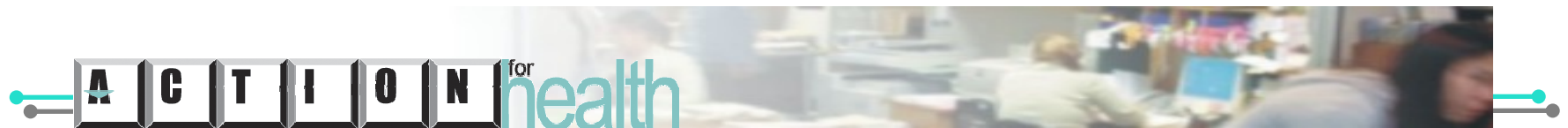


Source: QUILTS evaluation team, Web Survey

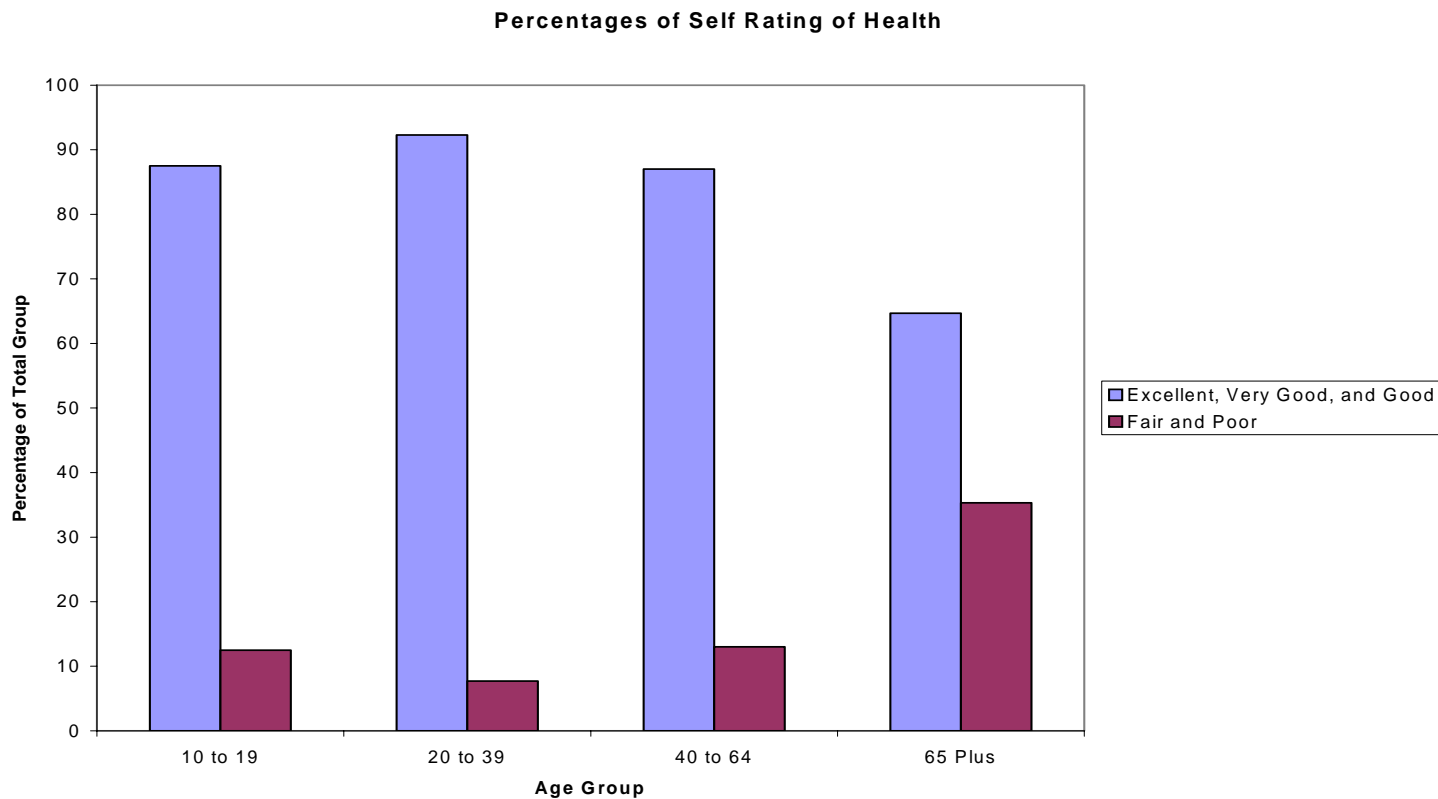


BC HealthGuide Online User Profile

- ❑ About half of users (46%) had children under 19
- ❑ 14% of users were practicing health care professionals
- ❑ 87% had some college education or better
 - 39% had finished university
- ❑ 80% reported earnings of \$30K or more
- ❑ About 50% never visited site previously in the last 6 months
 - So...lots of new users. Question is will they return?
 - About 30% had visited between 1 to 3 times
 - 9% had visited 8 times +

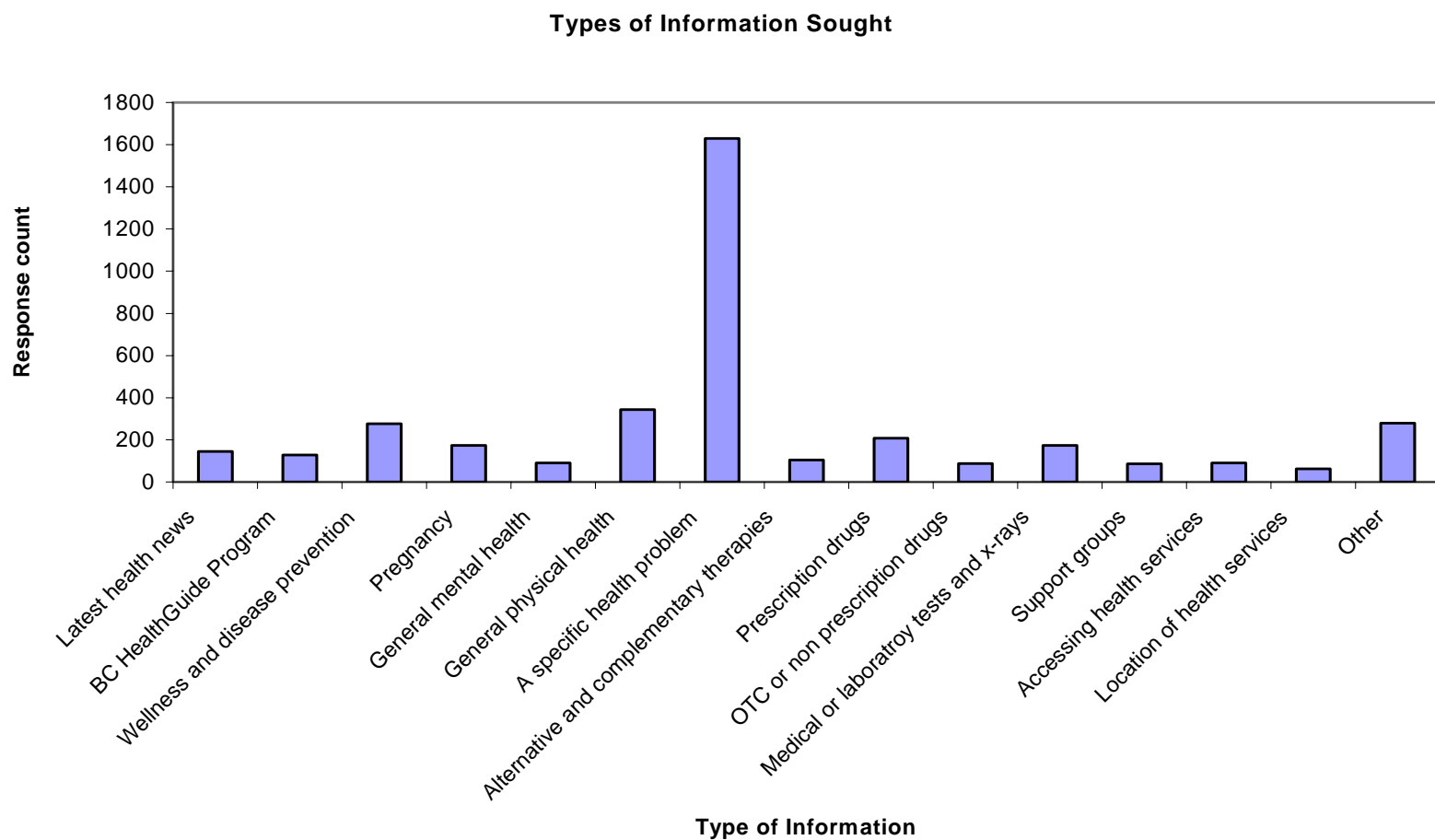


Self-Reported Quality of Health By Web Site Users



Source: QUILTS evaluation team, Web Survey

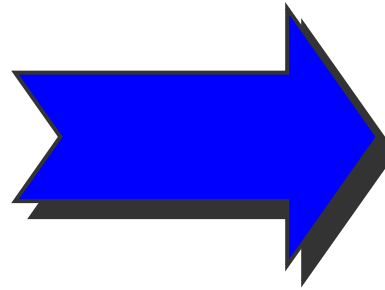
Types of Health Information Sought...



Source: QUILTS evaluation team, Web Survey

List of Health Problems Searched ...

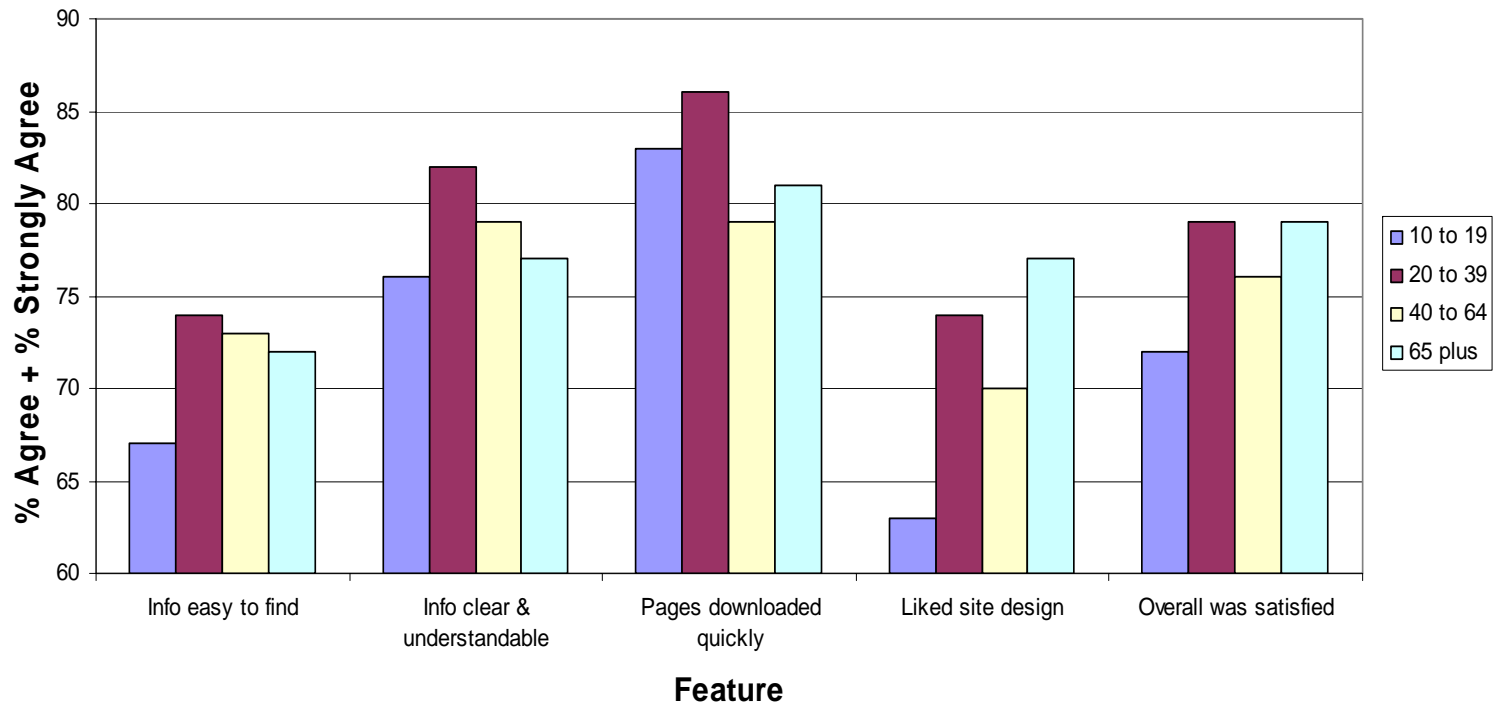
- Abdominal pain
- Back pain
- Cancer
- Chest pain
- Chicken pox
- Flu
- Headache
- Heart problems
- Diabetes



42% of all
responses

Satisfaction

Satisfaction with Aspects of the Site - by Age Group



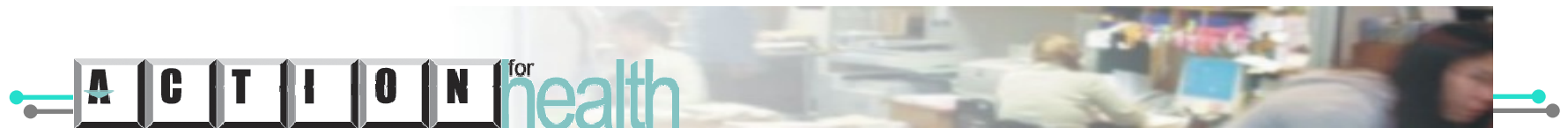
- Younger users (10 – 19y) least satisfied
- Only 63% of this age group liked the site design

Source: QUILTS evaluation team, Web Survey

Policy Implications

Recognize that the Internet is not a substitute for other forms of information for all populations

- ❑ Investment in other forms of information delivery aimed at less educated, less affluent Canadians, and those with literacy barriers, is essential to universal, equitable health care.
- ❑ Targeting seniors via the web continues to be a challenge
- ❑ Rural/remote access, while there in theory, still is a challenge
 - Computer sites in libraries are often very busy
 - Little privacy
 - Dial-up connections slow



Web Site Has Just Undergone Re-design....

New survey



- Shorter version of survey
- Will run on web site for 6 weeks
- Split version

Acknowledgements

I'd like to acknowledge the contributions and support of the following individuals:

- Kevin Brown, Director of BC HealthGuide program
- Irv Rootman, Leader of the BC HealthGuide evaluation collaborative
- Jeanne Legare, Project Director, BC HealthGuide evaluation collaborative
- Ellen Balka, QUILTS member

