

Audiologist's Role in Directly Referring to Early Intervention

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Introduction

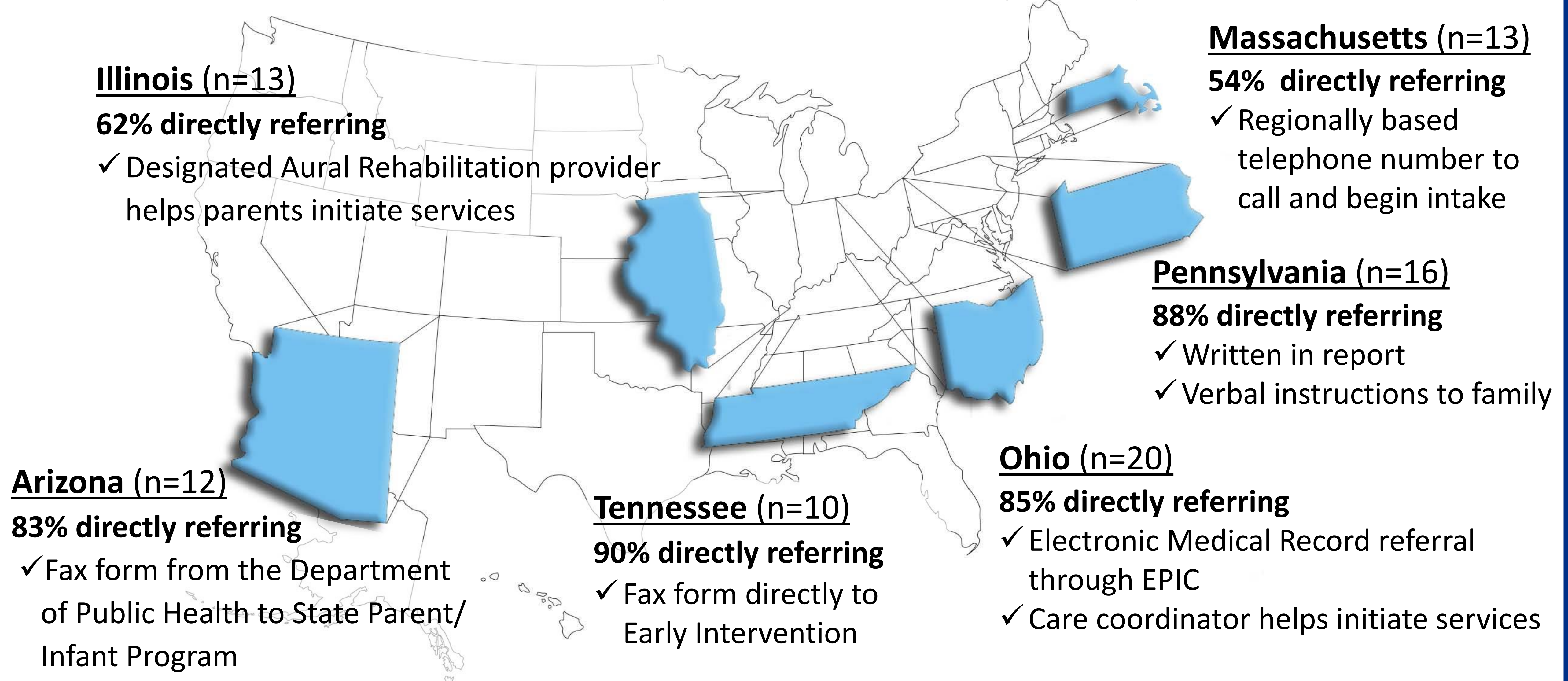
- The Joint Council on Infant Hearing recommends that infants are screened for hearing loss by 1 month, diagnosed by 3 months, and receive intervention by 6 months of age (JCIH, 2007).
 - 97.9% of newborns were screened and 1.6% referred on the hearing screening
 - 57.6% of babies had diagnostic testing to which 9.7% were diagnosed with hearing loss
 - Of the 6,163 newborns diagnosed, 12.1% of babies were not referred to early intervention (CDC, 2016)**
- With early identification and enrollment in services, children with hearing loss have significantly better outcomes in speech, language, and social-emotional development. (Yoshinaga-Itano, 2003).
- A consistent, direct referral process from audiologists could improve the percentage of newborns enrolled in early intervention.
- The purpose of this study was to investigate audiologists' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities for directly referring children with hearing loss into early intervention.

Methods

Participants: Pediatric audiologists from around the country (n=132) representing 29 different states

Data Collection: RedCap survey approved by the Institutional Review Board at Boston Children's Hospital. Survey distributed via email and social media outlets.

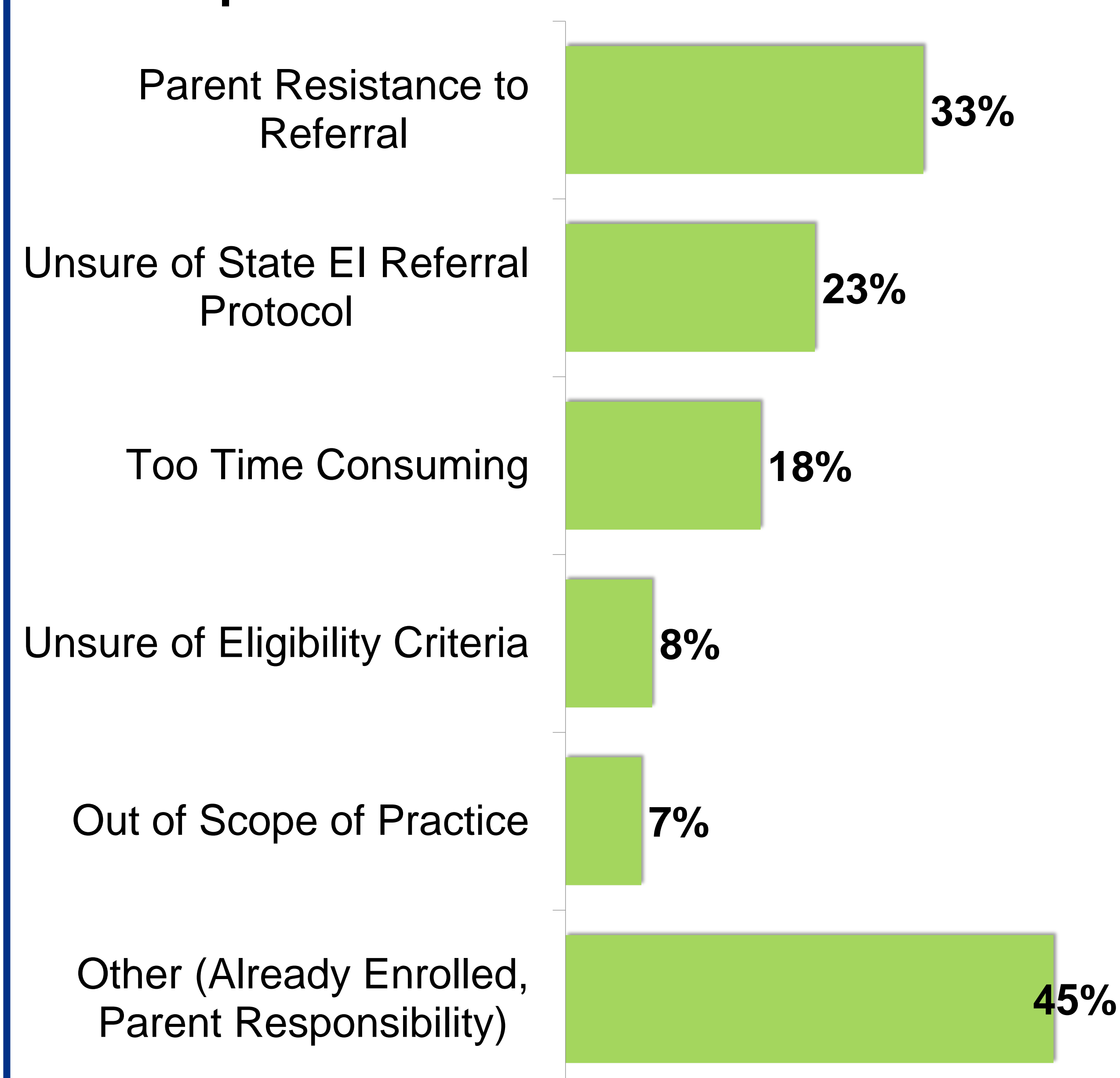
Arizona, Illinois, Massachusetts, Ohio, Pennsylvania, & Tennessee together represent 64% of our results.



Results

32% of audiologists report they are not directly referring to early intervention.

Reported barriers to direct referral



Special thanks to all audiologists who responded to the survey and provided us with this data.

Discussion

- 94% of responding audiologists believe they should be directly referring children with hearing loss to Early Intervention.
- Only 78% of respondents report they are directly referring when diagnosing or confirming a hearing loss.
- Systems for direct referrals vary widely across states.
- 70% of audiologists who are not making direct referrals rely on parents to make the referral.
 - Does this empower or burden the parents?

TOP SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Online referral system (30%)
- Directory of regional EI providers (12%)
- Universal guidelines across states (12%)