

**Working Papers
Project on the Public and Biological Security
Harvard School of Public Health**

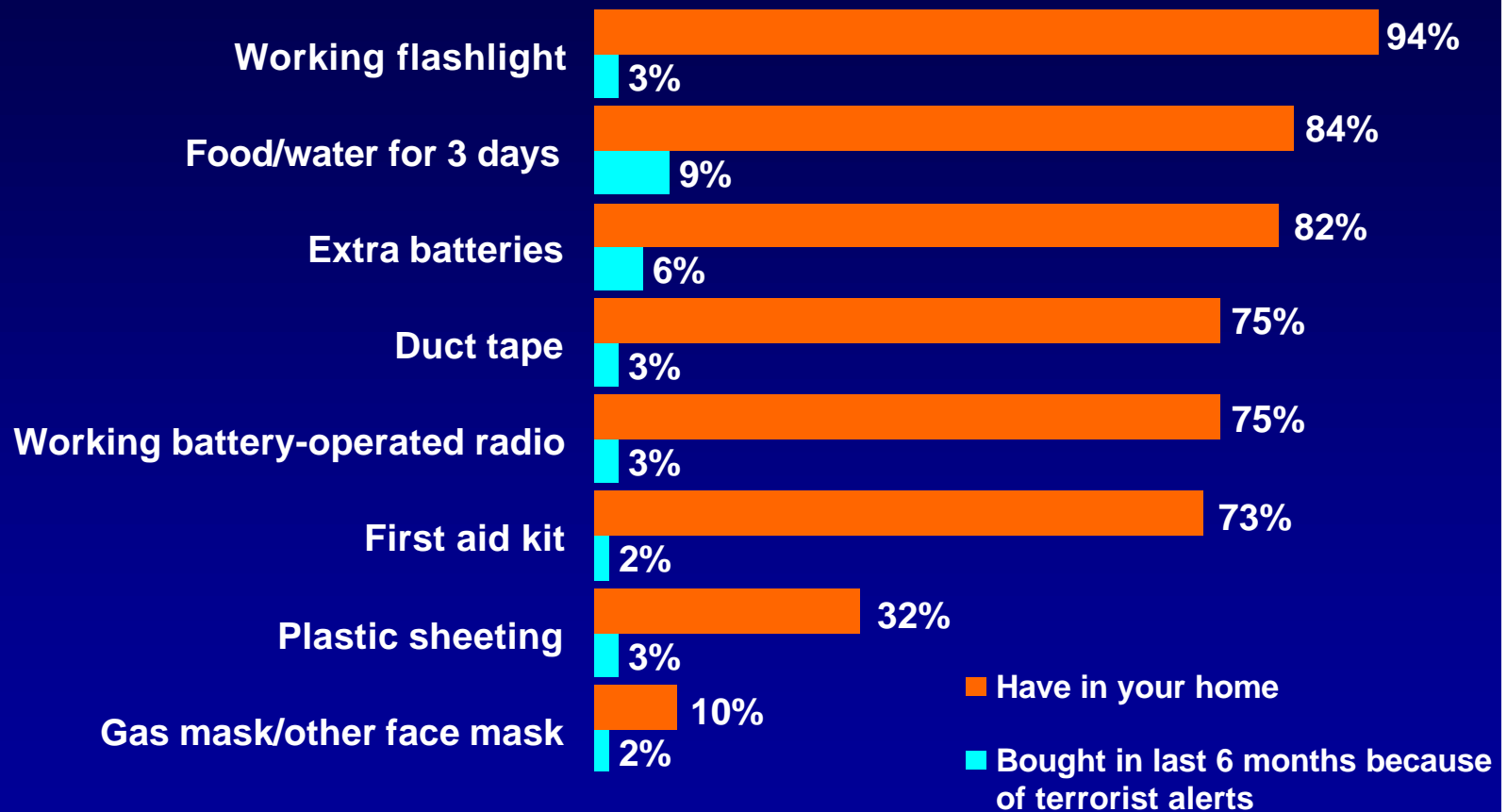
7.

**IMPROVING GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE
PUBLIC IN A BIOTERRORIST ATTACK**

Robert J. Blendon, Harvard School of Public Health, Project Director

Paper presented at Beyond Duct Tape, a conference sponsored by the Executive Session on Domestic Preparedness, Kennedy School of Government, April 3, 2003.

Steps Americans Have Taken Because of Terrorist Threat



Source: Project on Biological Security and the Public, Harvard School of Public Health, March 21-25, 2003.

Evacuation Plans

Thought about making an evacuation plan 28%

Actually made an evacuation plan 12%

Have made evacuation plan that includes...

Getting out of your house 11%

Leaving your community 7%

Getting to a community shelter 5%

Have made an evacuation plan and practiced it 4%

Source: Project on Biological Security and the Public, Harvard School of Public Health, March 21-25, 2003.

Facts from CDC vs. Beliefs of the General Public

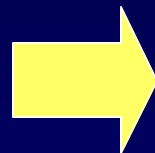
Facts

Public's Beliefs

Last case of smallpox reported...

In U.S. in 1949

In world in 1977



Cases of smallpox during past 5 years

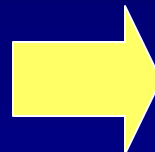
In U.S.

30%

In world

63%

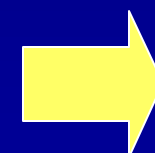
No known effective treatment for smallpox once contracted



Once someone contracts smallpox, there is a medical treatment to prevent death/serious consequences

78%

Vaccine within 2-3 days of exposure to smallpox protects people



Vaccine within a few days of smallpox exposure protects people

42%

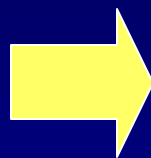
Source -Facts: CDC; Public's Beliefs: Harvard School of Public Health survey, as published online in New England Journal of Medicine, December 19, 2002.

Facts from CDC vs. Beliefs of the General Public

Facts

Public's Beliefs

Government sources say
enough doses of smallpox
vaccine for everyone in
U.S.



Enough doses of vaccine for
everyone in U.S. **16%**

Source -Reactions: CDC; Doses: New York Times, October 12, 2002; Public's Beliefs: Harvard School of Public Health survey, as published online in New England Journal of Medicine, December 19, 2002.

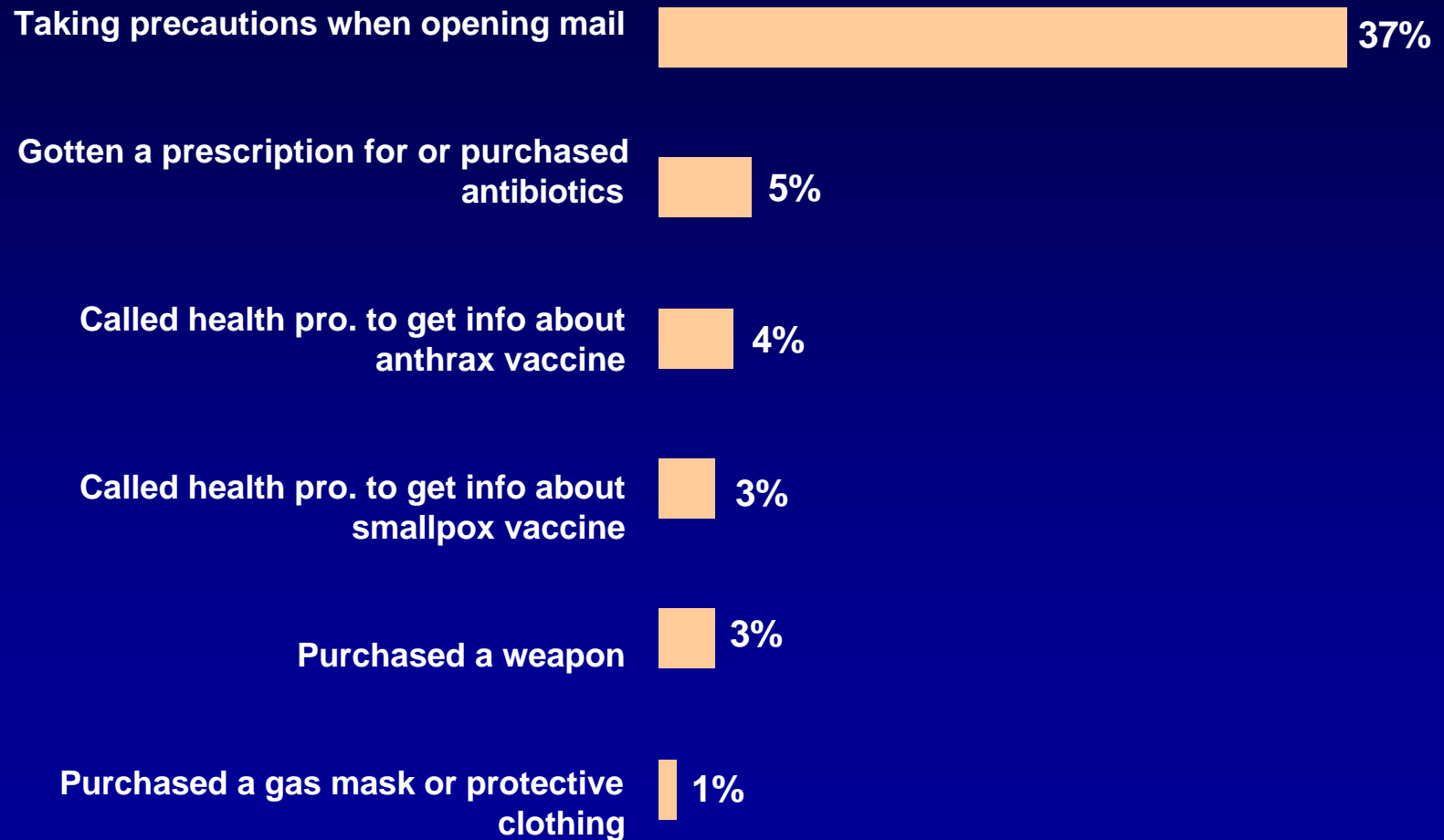
Whom Do Americans Trust as a Source of Reliable Information

during a national outbreak of disease caused by bioterrorism



Source: Harvard School of Public Health/Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Survey Project on Americans' Response to Biological Terrorism, October 24-28, 2001.

Precautions Americans Have Taken Against Possible Bioterrorism



Source: Harvard School of Public Health/Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Survey Project on Americans' Response to Biological Terrorism, October 24-28, 2001

What Would Affect Americans' Desire to Get a Smallpox Vaccination? (1)

Would get vaccinated if it were available



Would get vaccinated if...

Your doctor and most other doctors were getting vaccinated



President Bush and his family were getting vaccinated



Cases were reported.....



Source: Harvard School of Public Health survey, as published online in New England Journal of Medicine, December 19, 2002.

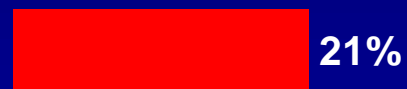
What Would Affect Americans' Desire to Get a Smallpox Vaccination? (2)

Would get vaccinated if it were available



Would still get vaccinated even if...

Your doctor and many other doctors refuse to get vaccinated



You heard that some people died from the vaccine



Source: Harvard School of Public Health survey, as published online in New England Journal of Medicine, December 19, 2002.