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Lessons Learned from Exceptional Florida Local Health Departments in Maternal  
and Child Health  
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# Lessons Learned from Exceptional Florida Local Health Departments in Maternal and Child Health

Local health departments (LHDs) are under increasing pressure to improve performance with limited resources. While research has found that financial resources may be associated with better health outcomes, there are some LHDs that maintain exceptional performance, even with limited budgets.

## METHODS



Using data from the Public Health Activities and Services Tracking (PHAST) database as a resource for identifying *Positive Deviant LHDs* in MCH outcomes in terms of 4 areas:

- Teen Births
- Late or No Prenatal Care
- Infant Mortality
- Percent of Low Weight Births

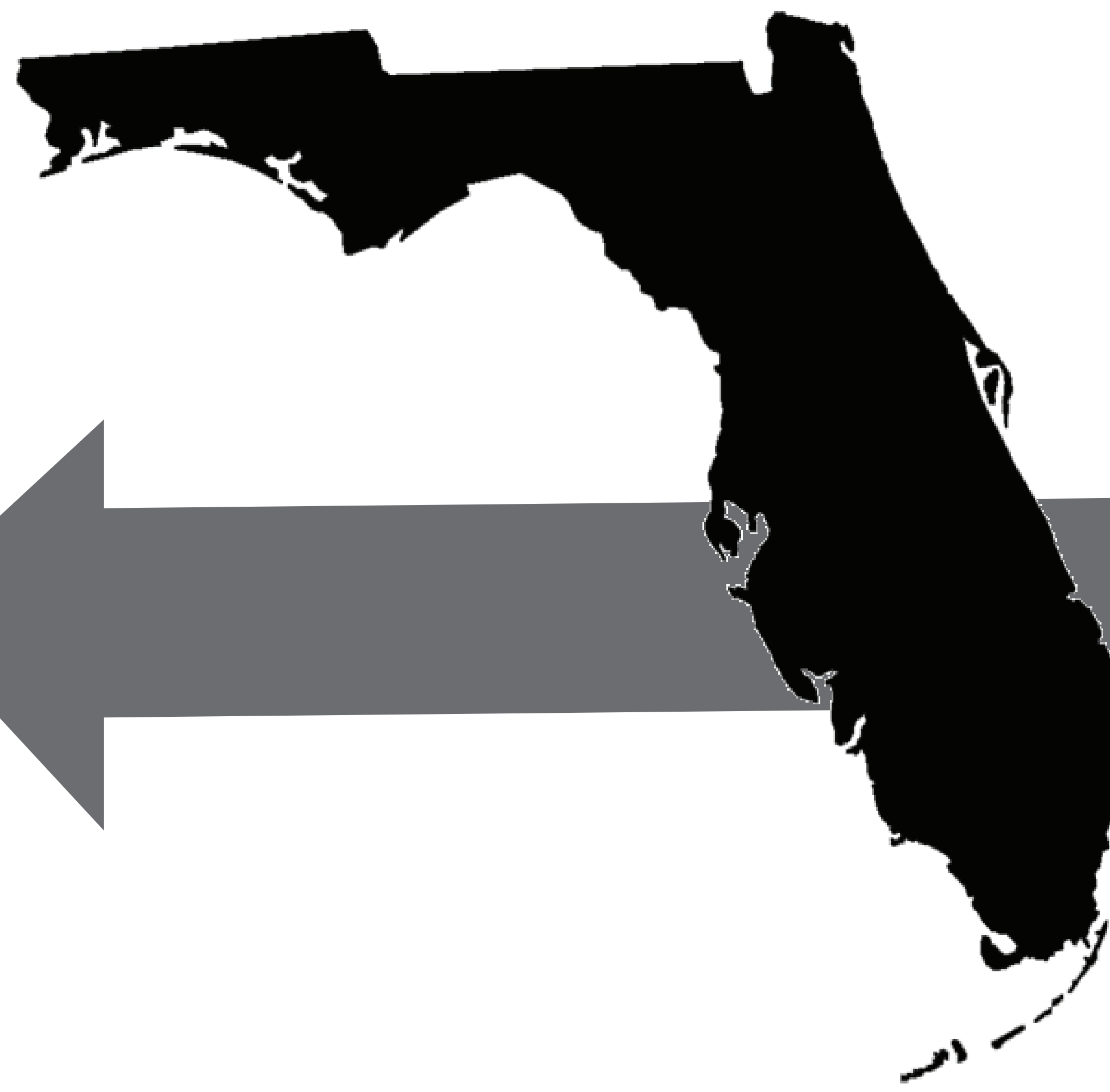
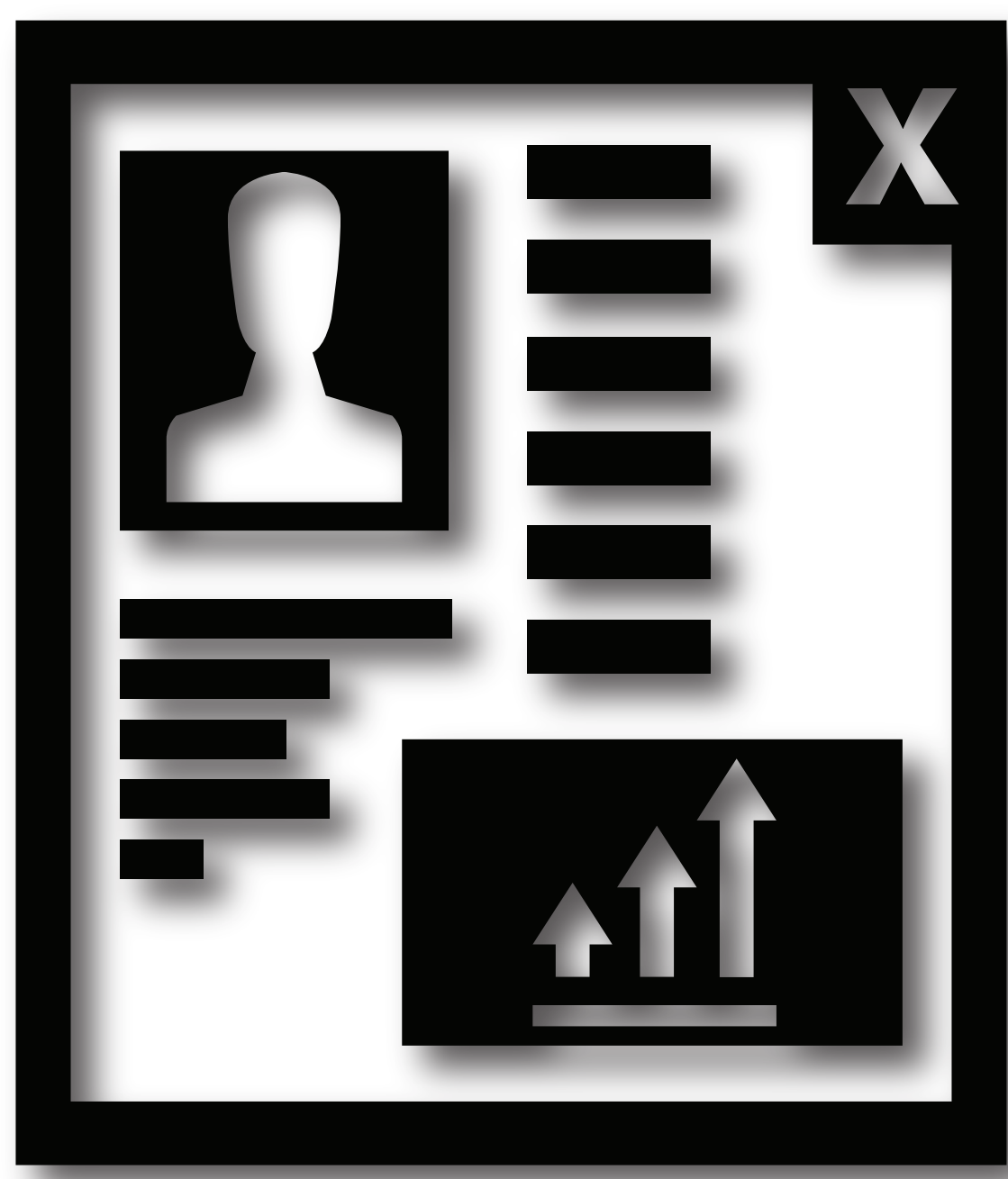
"People ask what is public health-it is whatever the legislation says it is. A lot of times decisions are made and you are required to pull personnel to address the issue of the day and it becomes a challenge to provide services."  
-----Survey Participant



## Semi-Structured Interviews

Primary data were collected through hour-long phone interviews with staff in 18 out of 24 (75%) Florida LHDs:

- 12 Metro (67%)
- 1 Micro (5%)
- 5 Rural (28%)



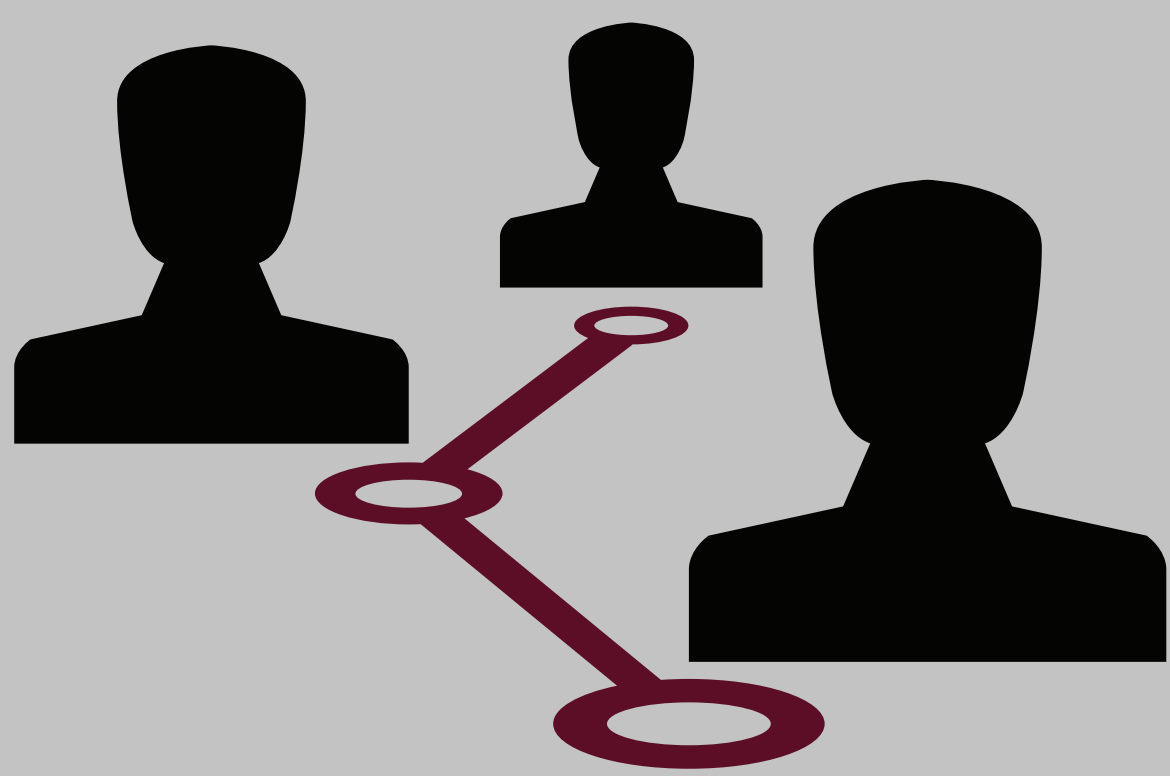
## 3 FOCUS AREAS WERE EXAMINED

- Assessment & Policy Development
- Research & Evaluation
- Regulatory Oversight

## RESULTS

### Themes

*Positive Deviant LHDs* focus on assuring their communities have access to needed services, even when that means changing their roles and responsibilities.

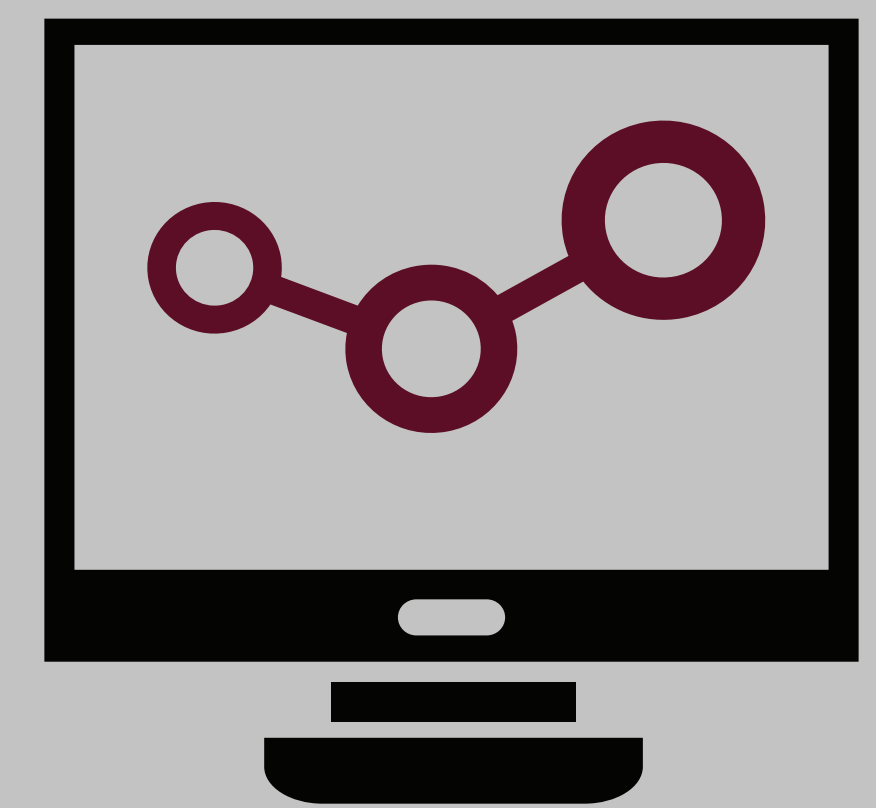


#### Importance of Community Partnerships:

- Community Based Organizations
- Schools
- Internal LHD Departments



#### Importance of Healthy Start Coalitions in Improving MCH Outcomes

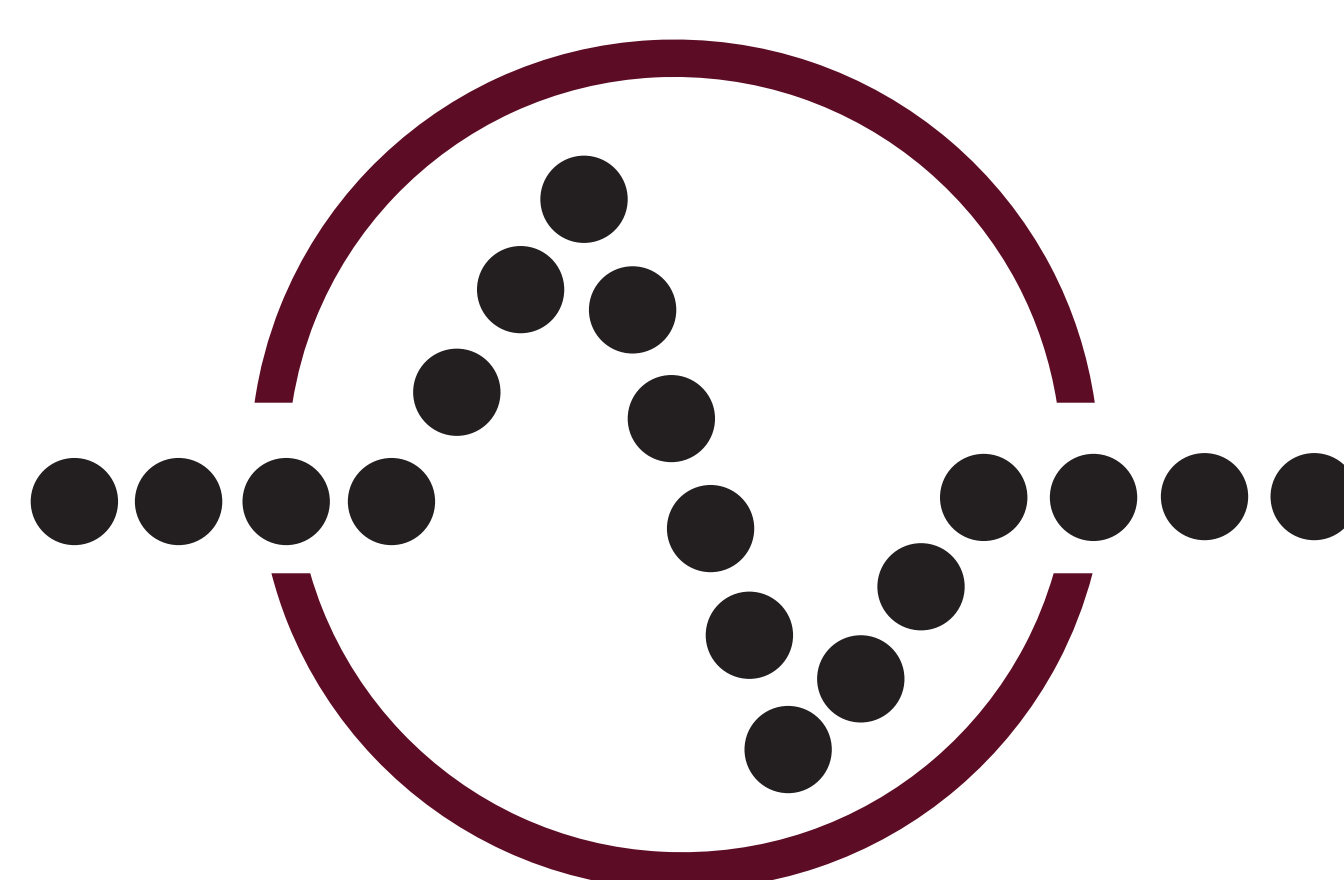


#### Importance of Clearly Defined Goals:

- Referral Services
- Population Based
- Data-Defined Outcomes

## Challenges

Similar challenges across the LHDs interviewed included funding, the shift to Medicaid Managed Care and staff turnover.



## CONCLUSIONS

Our findings offer insight into activities LHDs can undertake-implementing partnerships and identifying evidence-based goals-utilizing the resources they currently have to improve MCH outcomes. *Positive Deviant LHDs* have maintained their assurance role by strengthening partnerships and identifying goals based on community health outcome data.