

Budget Cuts, Maternal and Child Health Services, and Community Need

Budget cuts and maternal and child health service reductions occur in counties with highest rates of low birth weight

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Educational Need/Practice Gap: Limited understanding of the relationship between local health department maternal and child health services and birth outcomes

Expected Outcome: Local health department leaders and other decision-makers will consider the potential impact of maternal and child health cuts on low birth weight (especially in areas with high incidence) and identify ways to eliminate or minimize those impacts

Acknowledgements

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Maternal and child health (MCH) services have been consistently reduced

- Resource allocation decisions are not always based on perceived community need
- Investments in MCH services have a positive impact on health outcomes

To what extent are local health department (LHD) budget cuts and changes in the provision of MCH services associated with community need?

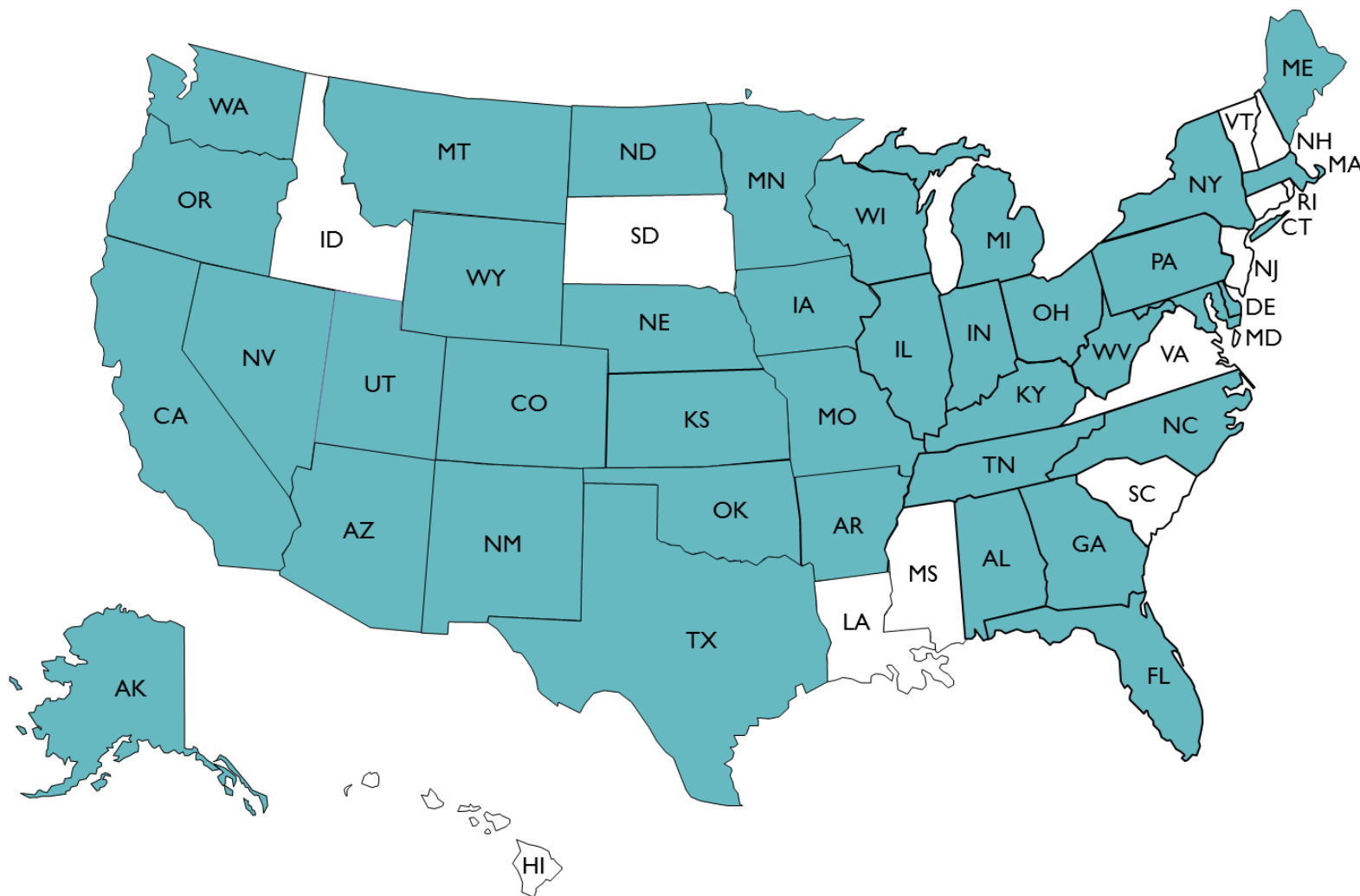


Combined data sources

NACCHO's 2014 Forces of Change survey: LHD budget cuts and provision of MCH services

2014 County Health Rankings: County-level rates of low birth weight

Analyzed cross-sectional dataset of 422 county-level LHDs



Tested associations between three variables

Budget cuts

- Less than, same as, greater than previous fiscal year

MCH service provision

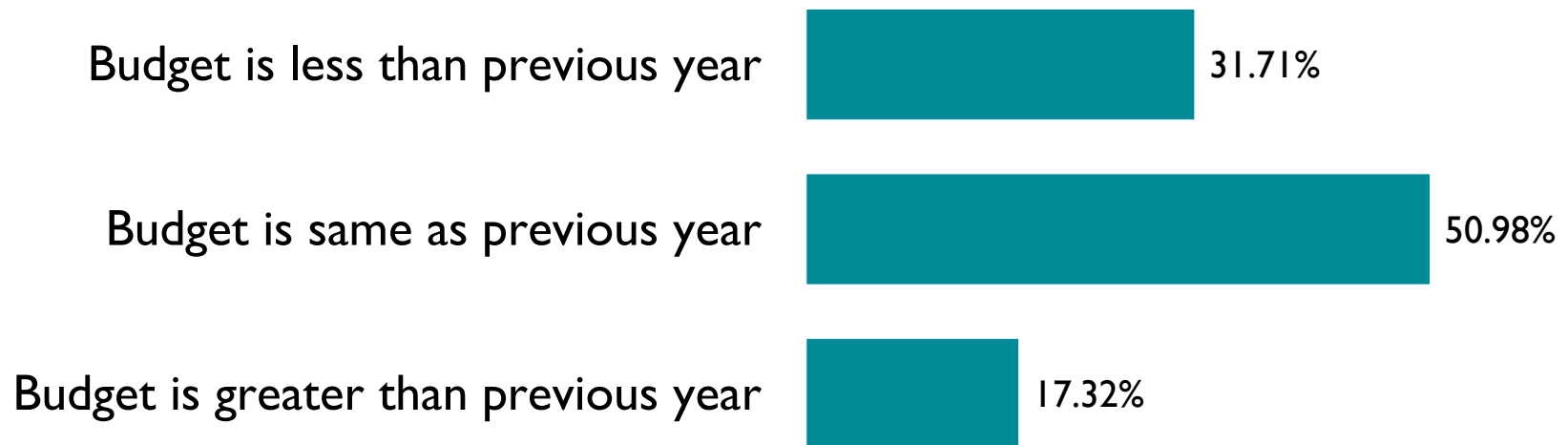
Family planning, prenatal care, obstetrical care, WIC, MCH home visits, EPSDT, well child clinic

- Reduced, expanded, no change in service provision; does not provide MCH services

Rates of low birth weight

- Percent of births that are below 2,500g

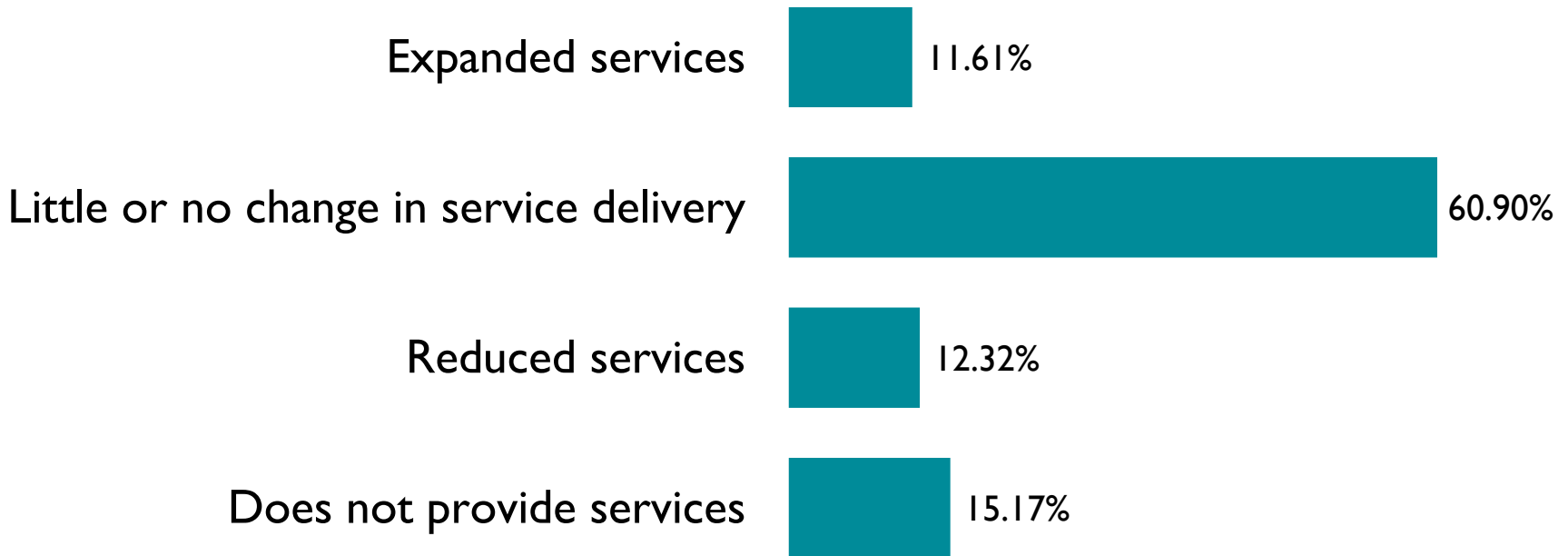
Almost one-third of LHDs reported budget cuts in 2014



n=410

Note: Only county-level LHDs are included in this analysis

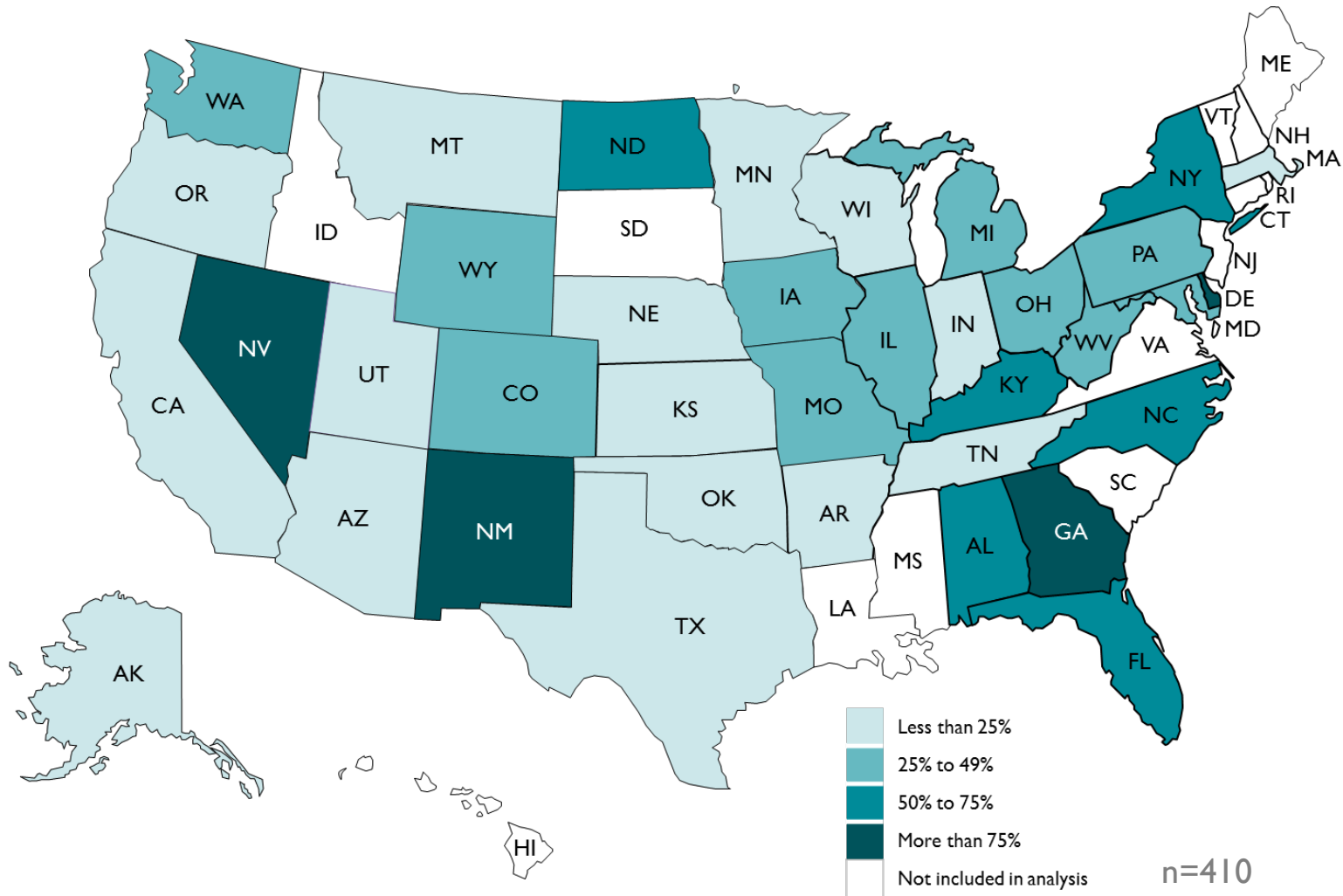
One in eight LHDs reported reducing MCH services



n=422

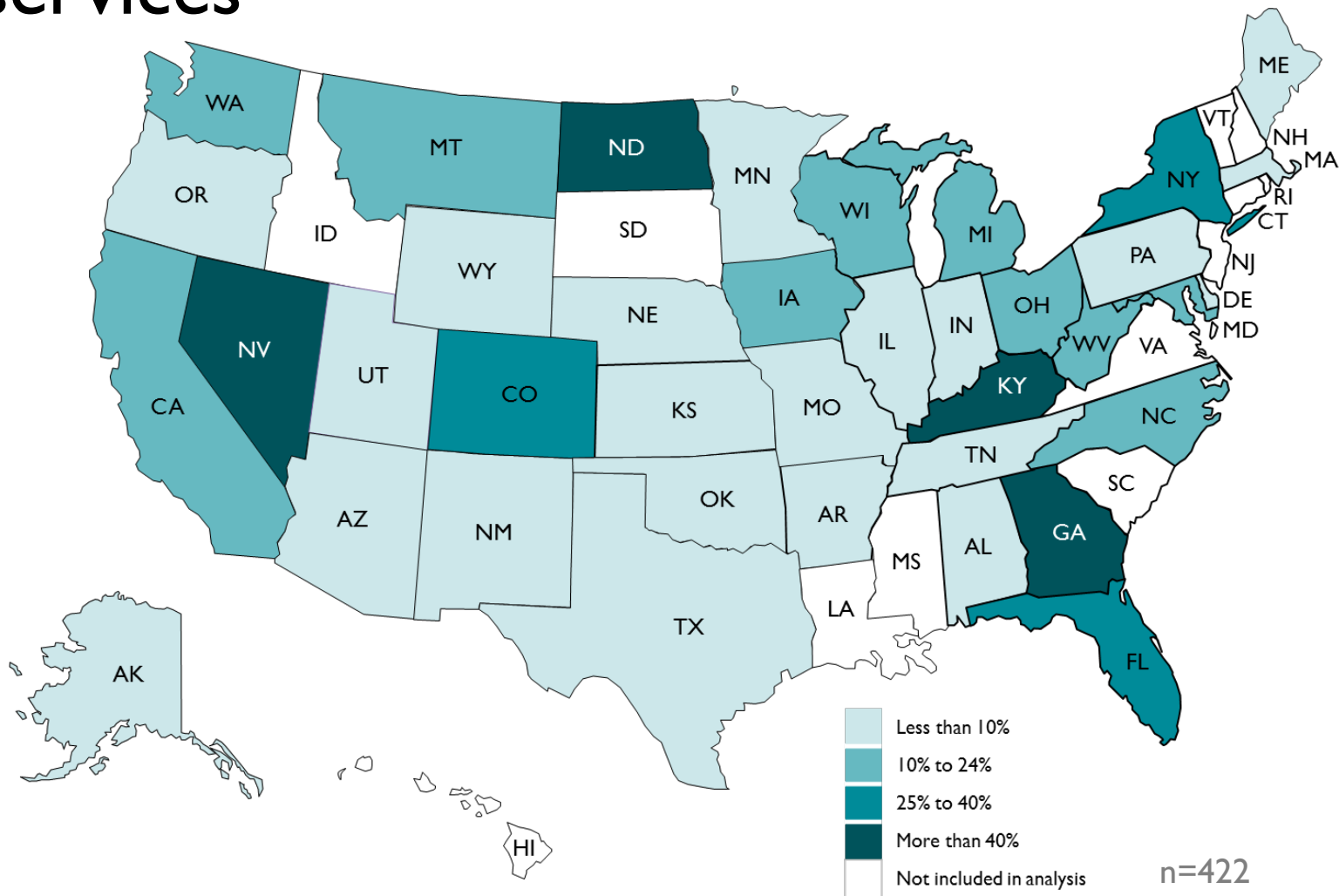
Note: Only county-level LHDs are included in this analysis

Proportion of LHDs with budget cuts



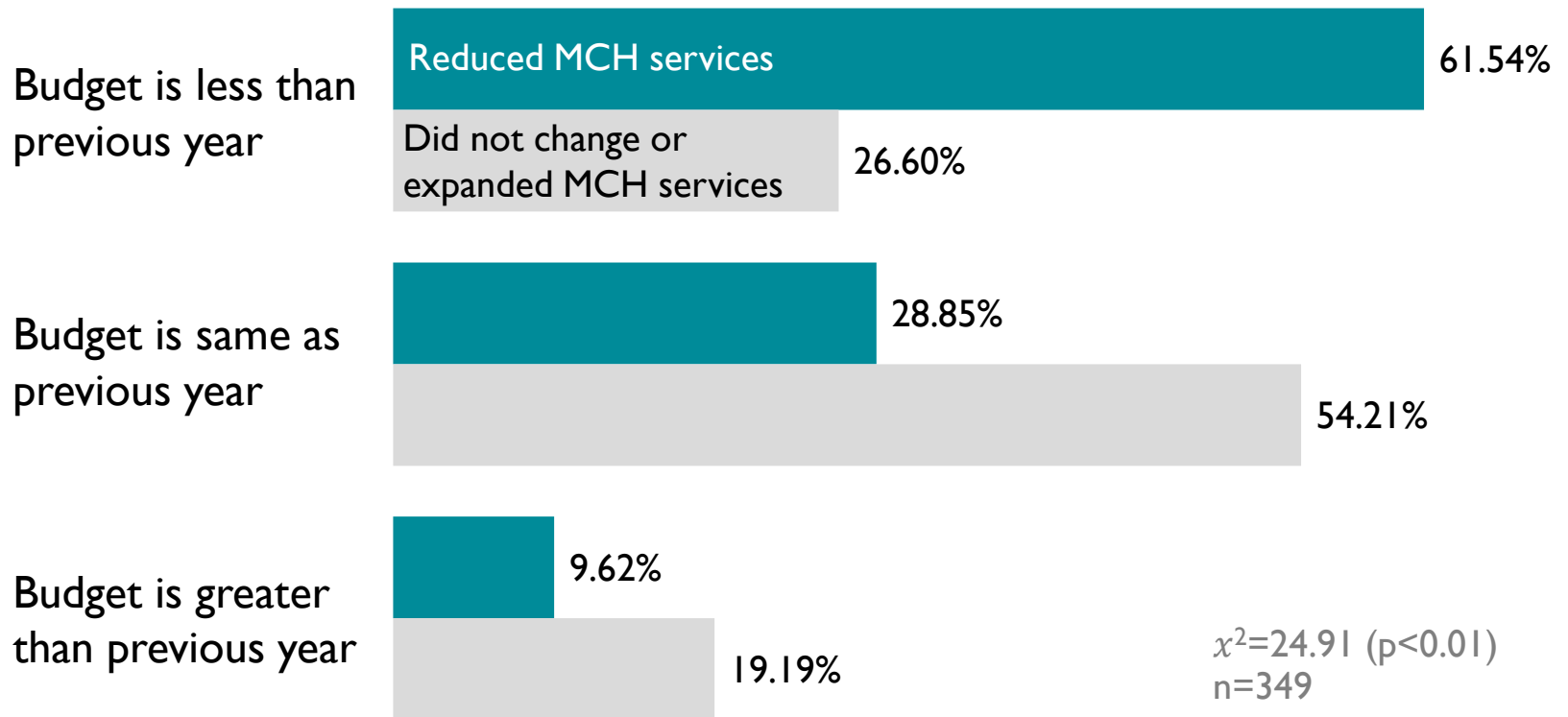
Note: Only counties with LHDs included in the sample are shown

Proportion of LHDs reducing MCH services



Note: Only counties with LHDs included in the sample are shown

LHDs with budget cuts also reduced their MCH services



Rate of low birth weight higher in counties where LHDs experienced budget cuts

	Mean	Standard deviation	n
All counties with LHDs in sample	7.98%	1.76	422
Budget is less than previous year	8.49%	1.97	130
Budget is same as previous year	7.76%	1.62	209
Budget is greater than previous year	7.72%	1.62	71

p=0.001

LHDs in counties with high rates of low birth weight are less likely to provide MCH services

■ Does not provide ■ Reduced ■ Did not change ■ Expanded

Highest rates of low birth weight
(8.9% or higher)



Lowest rates of low birth weight
(6.8% or lower)



$\chi^2=9.51$ ($p=0.023$)
n=224

Limitations

- Only county-level LHDs are included
- Directionality and causation cannot be determined
- MCH services broad category
- No data on size or scope of cuts
- Data were self-reported

Cuts are occurring in counties with greatest need

- Rates of low birth weight higher in counties where LHDs experienced budget cuts
- Counties with high rates of low birth weight
 - Less likely to provide MCH services
 - More likely to reduce MCH services

Implications

- Budget cuts and MCH program reductions perpetuate poor birth outcomes
- Consistent funding in areas of high need will help reduce the burden of poor birth outcomes

Additional resources

- Bekemeier B, Chen A, Kawakyu N, & Yang YR. Local public health resource allocation: limited choices and strategic decisions. *Am J Prev Med* 2013;45(6);769-75
- Bekemeier B, Yang Y, Dunbar MD, Pantazis A, & Grembowski DE. Targeted health department expenditures benefit birth outcomes at the county level. *Am J Prev Med* 2014;46(6);569-77
- National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). Staying resilient in hard times: local collaboration for women, children, youth, and families. Washington, DC. October 2013.
- National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). Staying resilient in hard times: local programs and services for women, children, youth, and families. Washington, DC. June 2014.

Thank You

Carolyn Leep, Jiali Ye, Nathalie Robin

NACCHO's 2014 Forces of Change dataset publicly available:

www.nacchoprofilestudy.org/data-requests