

Freestanding Birth Center Data

Gene Declercq, PhD

Birth by the Numbers

February, 2025



Early Midwife-Led Maternity Centers

(from Cole & Avery. *Freestanding Birth Centers* (2017))

- (1946) La Casita, the “little house” in Santa Fe, New Mexico
- (1971) Su Clinica Familiar in Raymondville, Texas.
- (1975) Maternity Center Association Childbearing Center, New York City

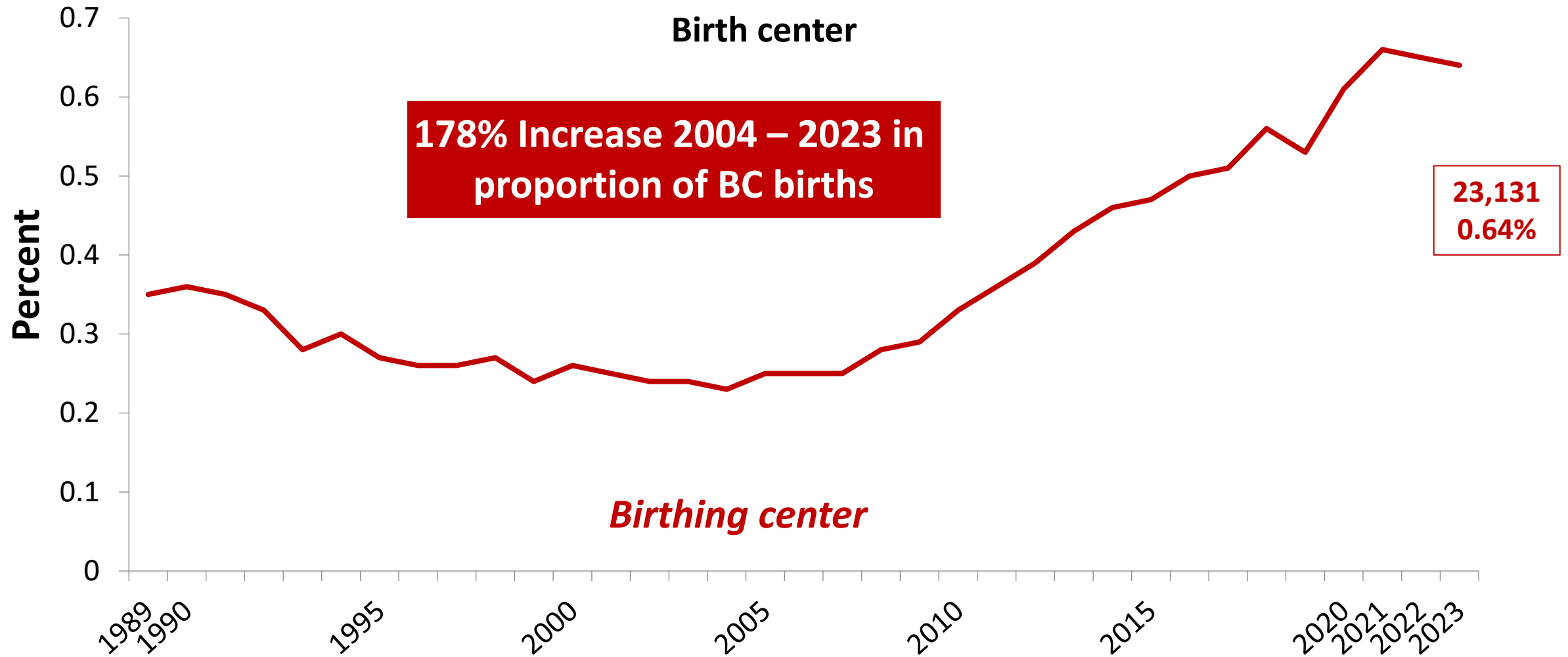
1989 Revised Standard Certificate of Live Birth includes Freestanding Birth Centers for the first time

U.S. STANDARD
CERTIFICATE OF LIVE BIRTH

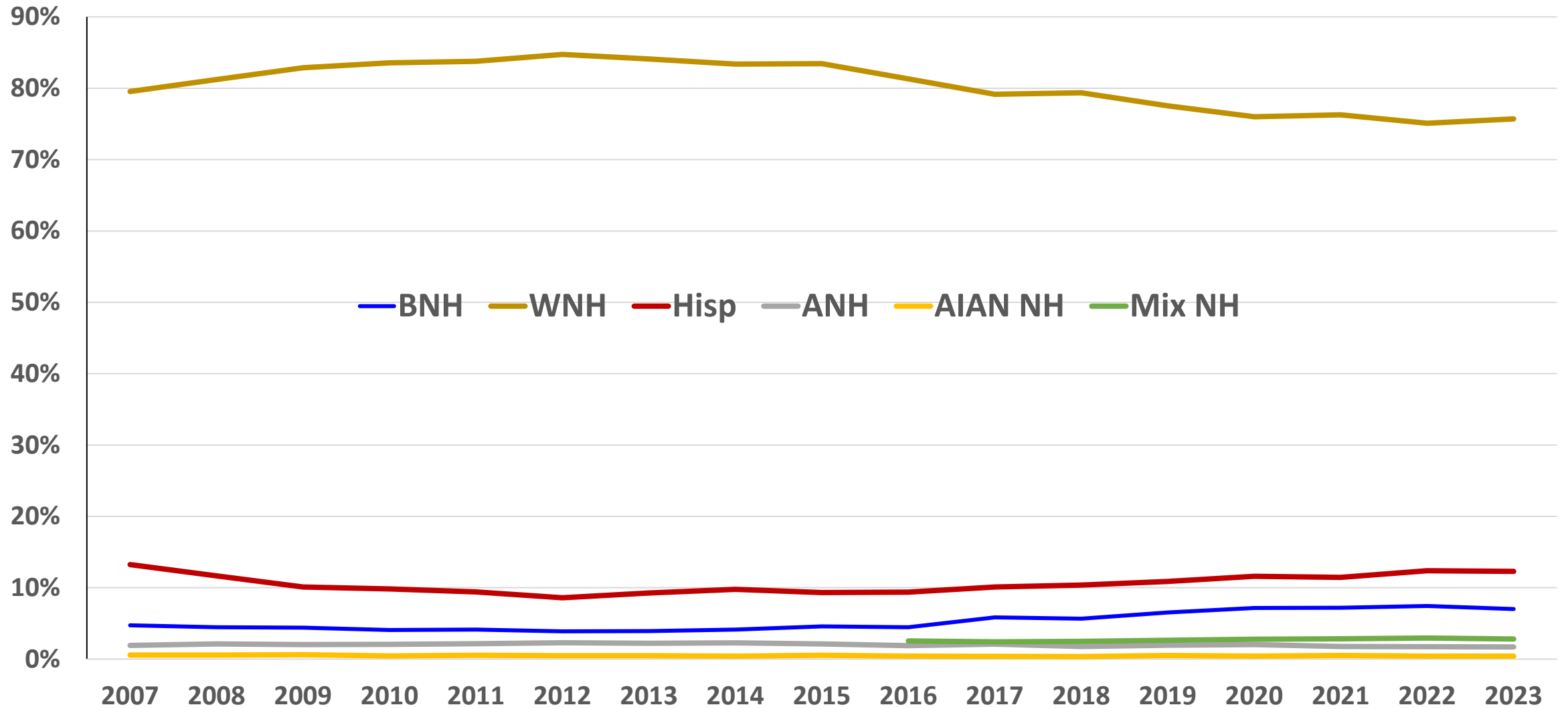
LOCAL FILE NUMBER		BIRTH NUMBER
1. CHILD'S NAME <i>(First, Middle, Last)</i>		2. DATE OF BIRTH <i>(Month, Day, Year)</i>
3. TIME OF BIRTH	4. SEX	5. CITY, TOWN, OR LOCATION OF BIRTH
6. COUNTY OF BIRTH		7. PLACE OF BIRTH: <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital <input type="checkbox"/> Freestanding Birthing Center <input type="checkbox"/> Clinic/Doctor's Office <input type="checkbox"/> Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(Specify)</i> _____
8. FACILITY NAME <i>(If not institution, give street and number)</i>		

7. PLACE OF BIRTH: Hospital Freestanding Birthing Center
 Clinic/Doctor's Office Residence
 Other *(Specify)* _____

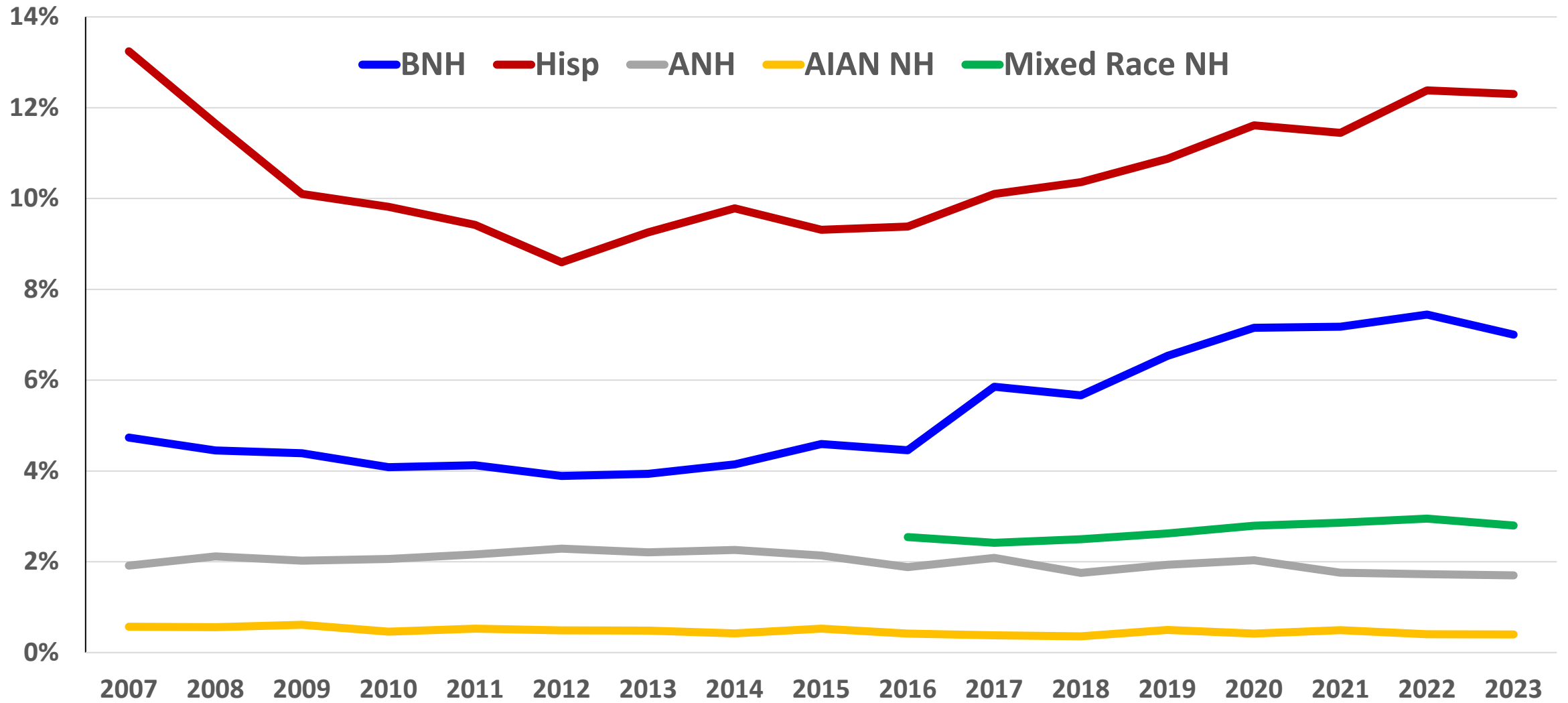
Percent of all births at a birthing center, United States, 1989-2023



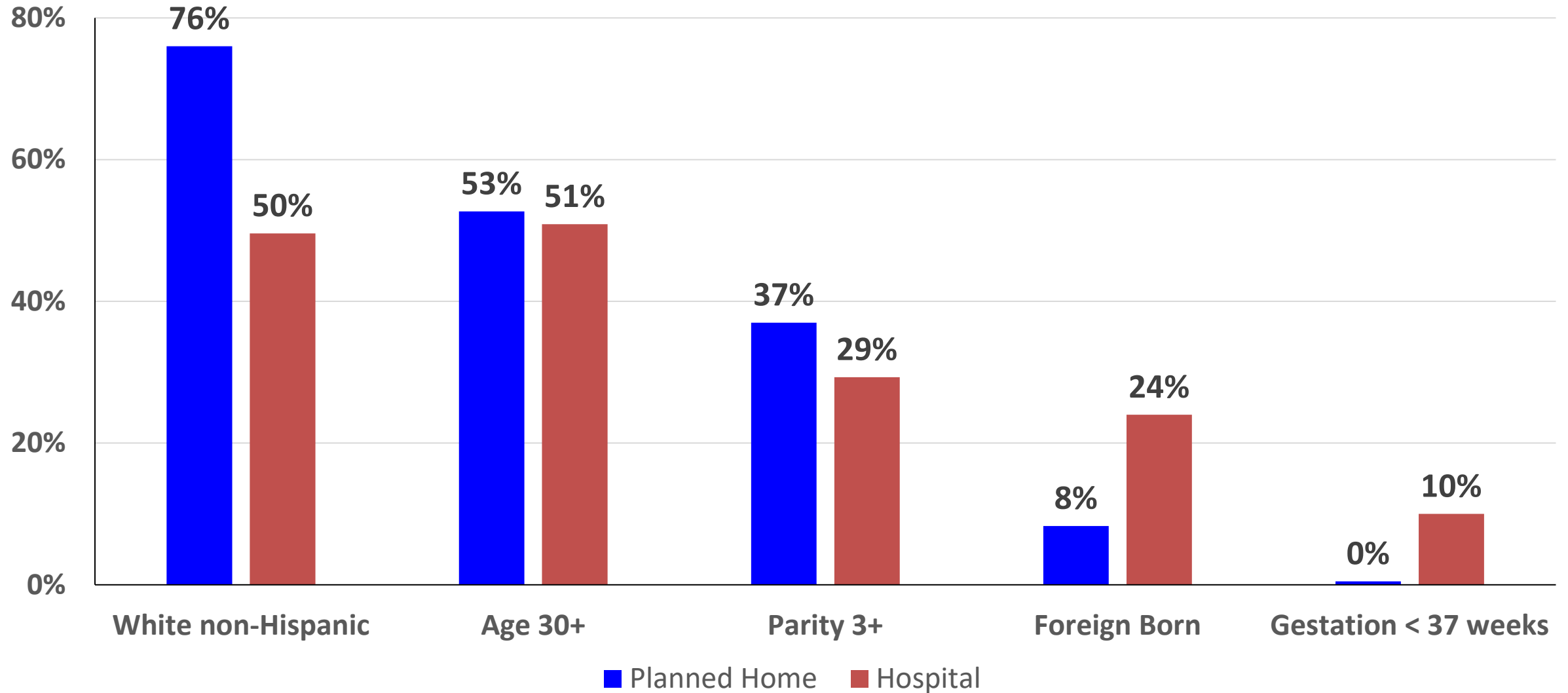
U.S. Birth Center Births by Race Ethnicity, 2007-23



U.S. Birth Center Births by Race Ethnicity, 2007-23

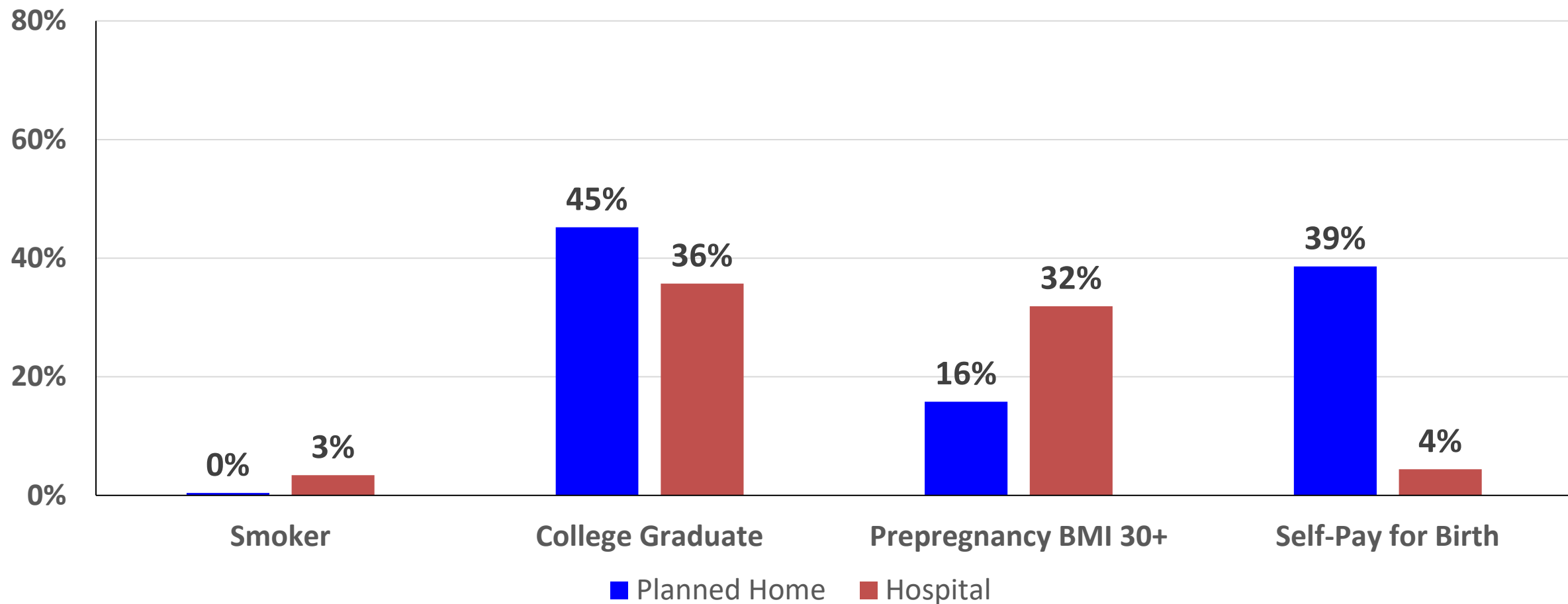


Contrasting U.S. Birth Center & Hospital Births, 2023





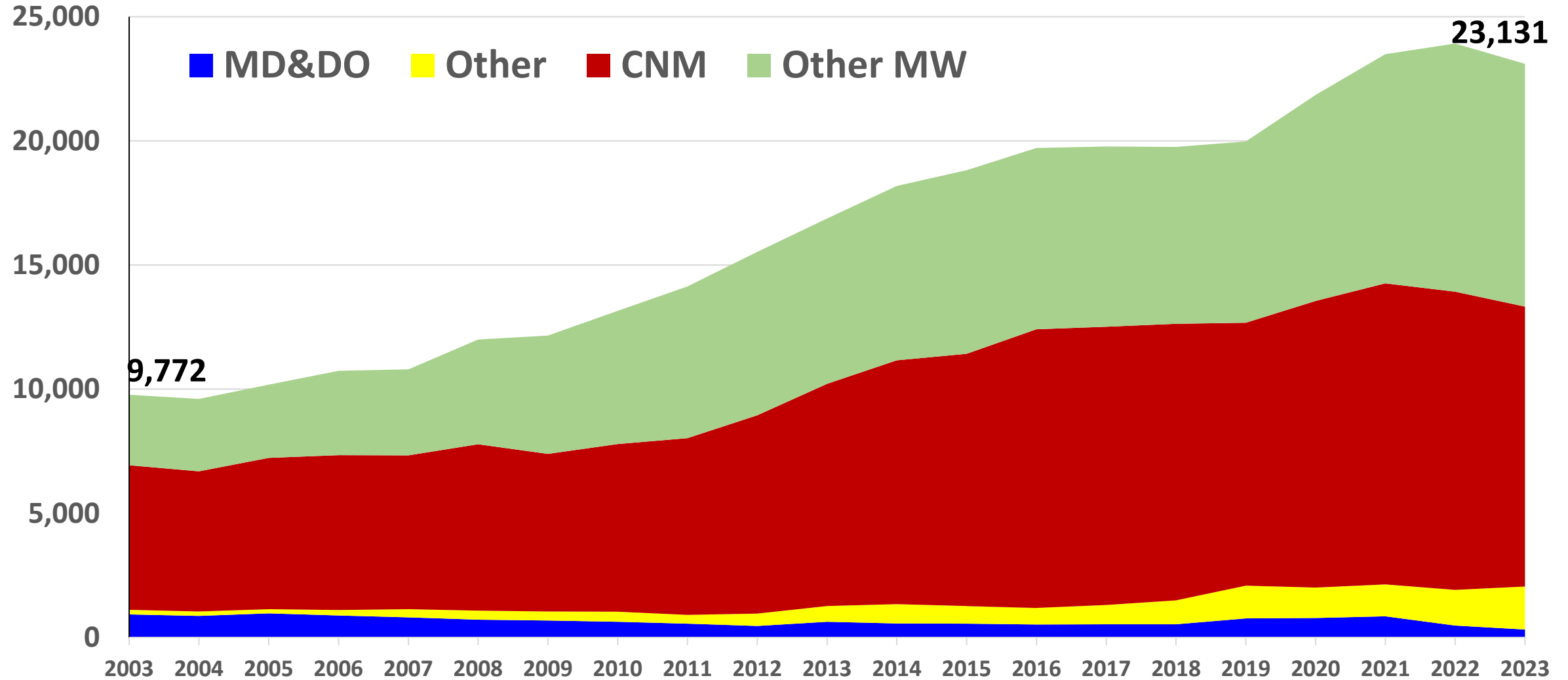
Contrasting U.S. Birth Center & Hospital Births, 2023



Who Attends Birth Center Births?

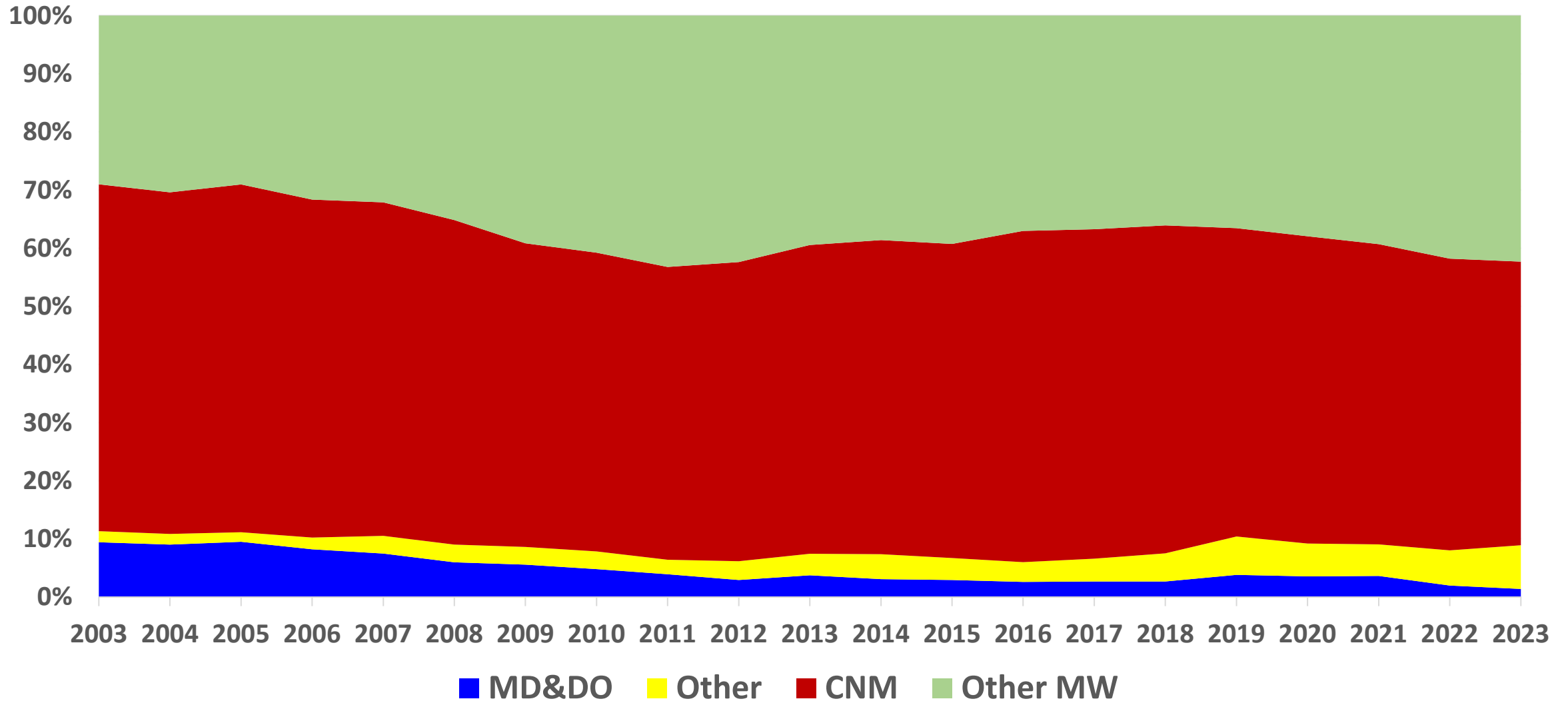


Total Birth Center Births by Attendant, 2003-2023





Proportion of Birth Center Births by Attendant, 2003-2023



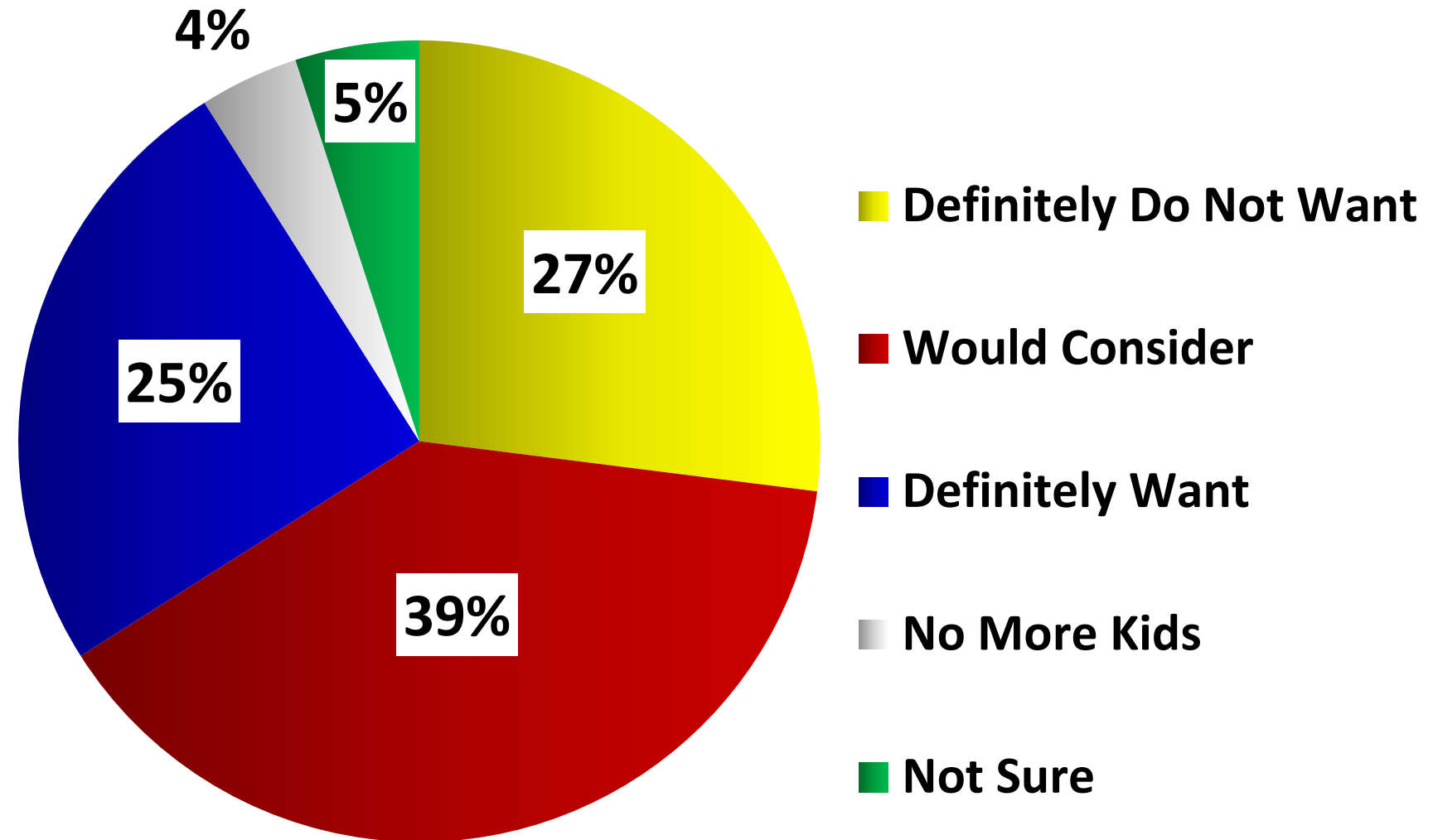
Attitudes Toward Birth Center Births

(among women who just gave birth in a hospital)

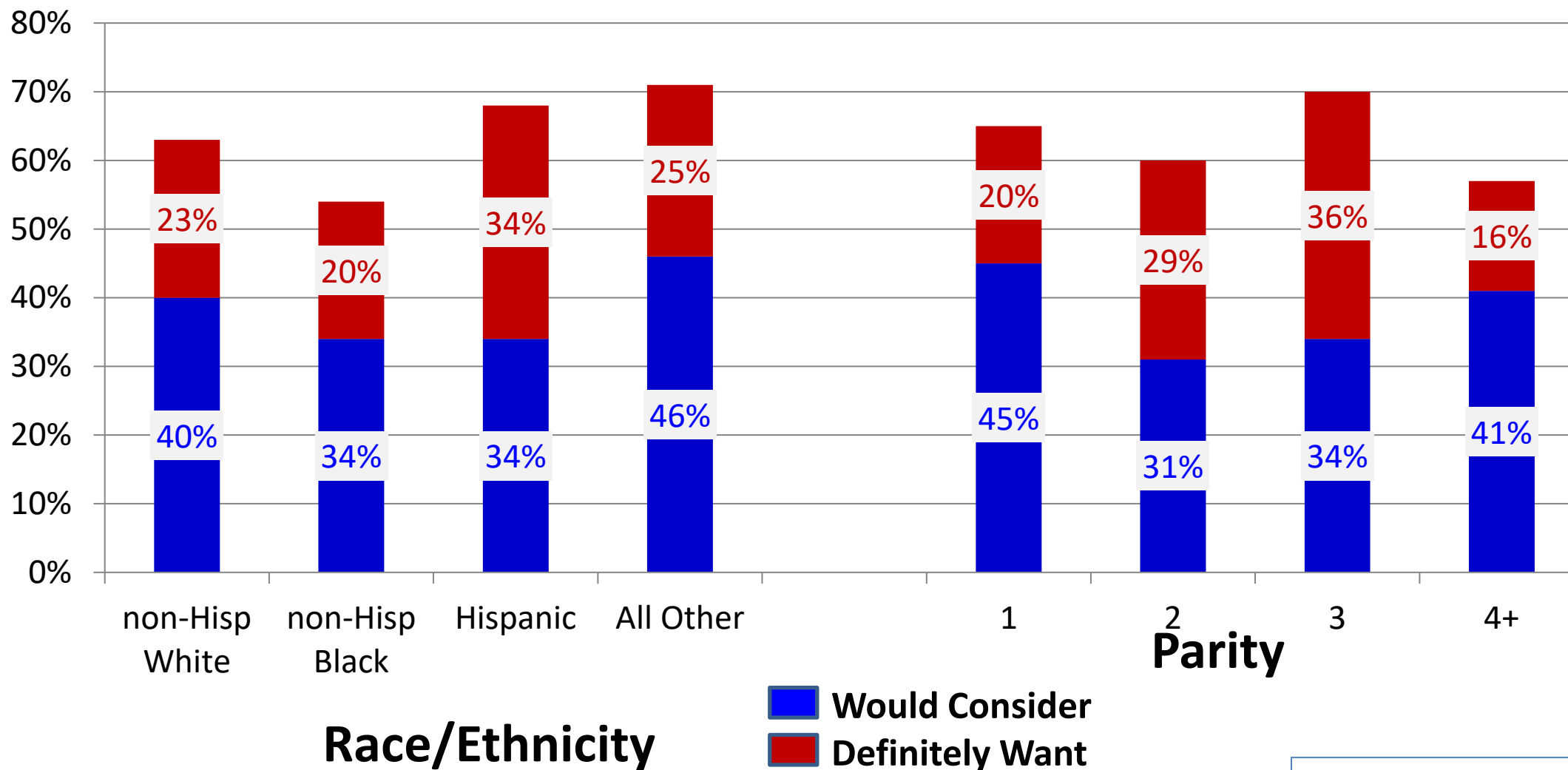


For any future births, how open would you be to giving birth at a birth center that is separate from a hospital?

64% of women who just gave birth in a hospital, are open to a birth center birth in a future birth



For any future births, how open would you be to giving birth at a birth center?



Rates of maternal mistreatment in the US are high across the board — especially for women of color

By Rachel Somerstein, September 13, 2019, 6:15 p.m.



<i>Why women might prefer a birth center birth</i>	Hospital (n=759)	Birth Center (n=157)
<i>Your physical privacy was violated (i.e., being uncovered or having people in the delivery room without your consent)</i>	10.3%	0.6%
<i>Health care providers (doctors, midwives, or nurses) shouted at or scolded you</i>	12.9%	2.5%
<i>Health care providers threatened to withhold treatment or to force you to accept treatment you did not want</i>	6.6%	3.2%
<i>Health care providers ignored you, refused your request for help, or failed to respond to requests for help in a reasonable amount of time</i>	12.6%	2.5%
<i>Any mistreatment (1+ of the above)</i>	28.1%	7.0%

Vedam et al. *Reproductive Health* (2019) 16:77
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-019-0729-2>

Reproductive Health

RESEARCH

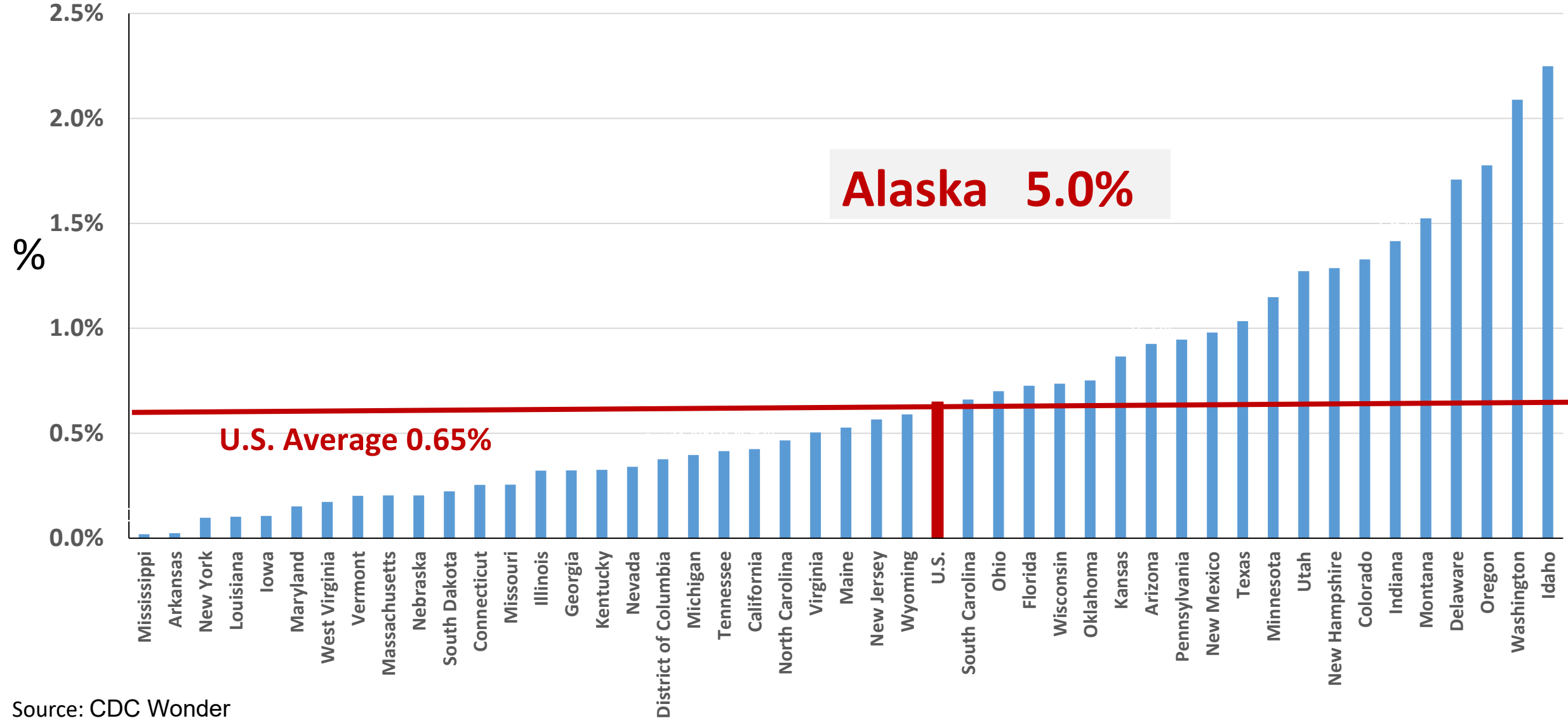
Open Access



The Giving Voice to Mothers study: inequity and mistreatment during pregnancy and childbirth in the United States

Saraswathi Vedam^{1*}, Kathrin Stoll¹, Tanya Khmet Taiwo^{2,3}, Nicholas Rubashkin⁴, Melissa Cheyney⁵, Nan Strauss⁶, Monica McLemore⁷, Micaela Cadena⁸, Elizabeth Nethery⁹, Eleanor Rushton¹, Laura Schummers¹⁰, Eugene Declercq¹¹ and the GVTM-US Steering Council

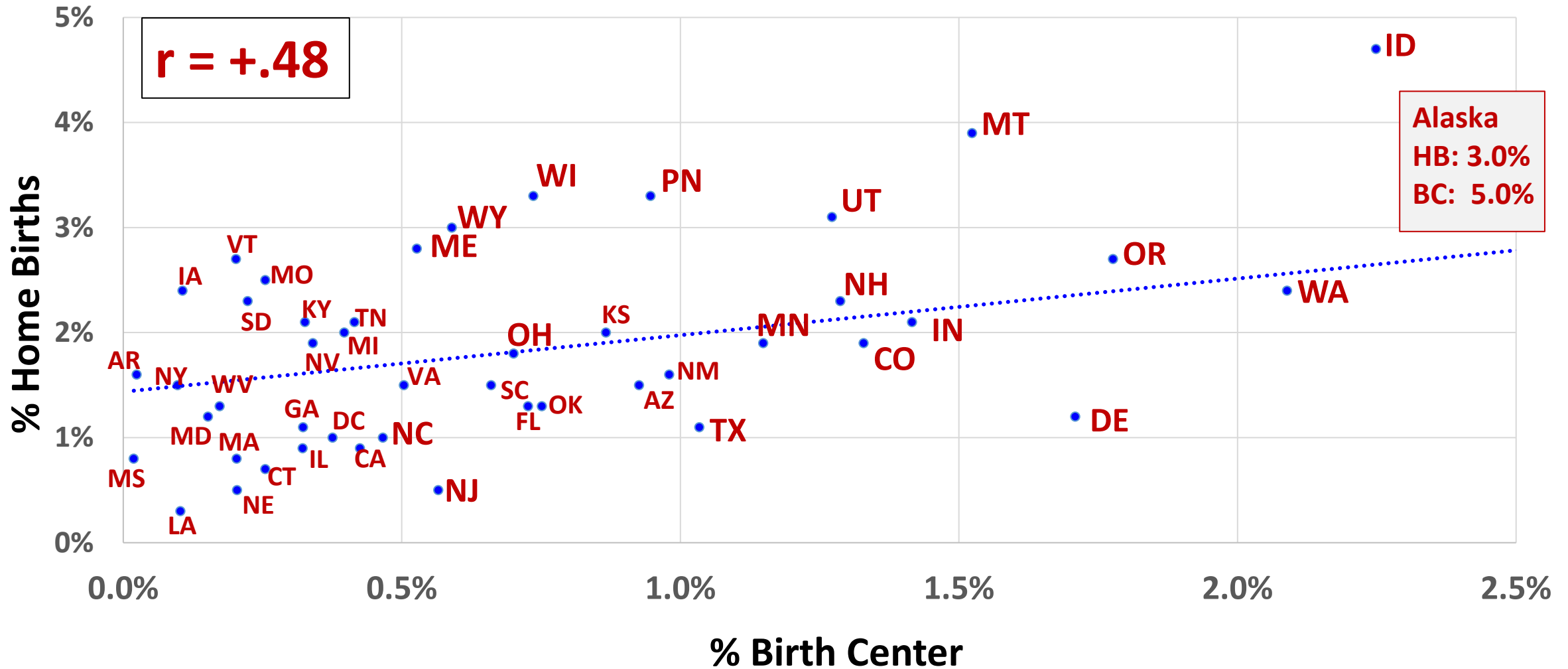
Birth Center Births (%) by State, 2022-23



Source: CDC Wonder

Note: 4 states (Alabama, Hawaii, N. Dakota, Rhode Island) had less than 10 births.

Percent of Home & Birthing Center Births by State, 2022-23



Note: 4 states (Alabama, Hawaii, N. Dakota, Rhode Island) had less than 10 births.

Source: CDC Wonder Datafile. <https://wonder.cdc.gov/natality.html>

Birth Settings in America

OUTCOMES, QUALITY,
ACCESS, AND CHOICE

“International studies suggest that home and birth center births may be as safe as hospital births for low-risk women and that neonatal risk can be substantially reduced when:

*(1) they are part of an **integrated, regulated system**;*

*(2) **providers are well qualified** and have the knowledge and training to manage first-line complications;*

*(3) **transfer is seamless across settings**; and*

*(4) **appropriate risk assessment and risk selection** occur across settings and throughout pregnancy.” (p. 278)*

**THIS SYSTEM IS EXACTLY WHAT
ADVOCATES ARE SEEKING**



Sam

Lee

Maya

Ruby

Corey

Lucy

Staige

Jordy

Kyla

Christina

Sarah

Katie

Sheridan

Annette

Ebere

Allison

Brittany

Jessica

Veronica

Juliana

Kali

Isabelle

Gene

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