



Expanding the PRAMS Survey: Addressing New Measures to Capture Maternal Health Challenges

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AKPQC and MCDR Joint Summit
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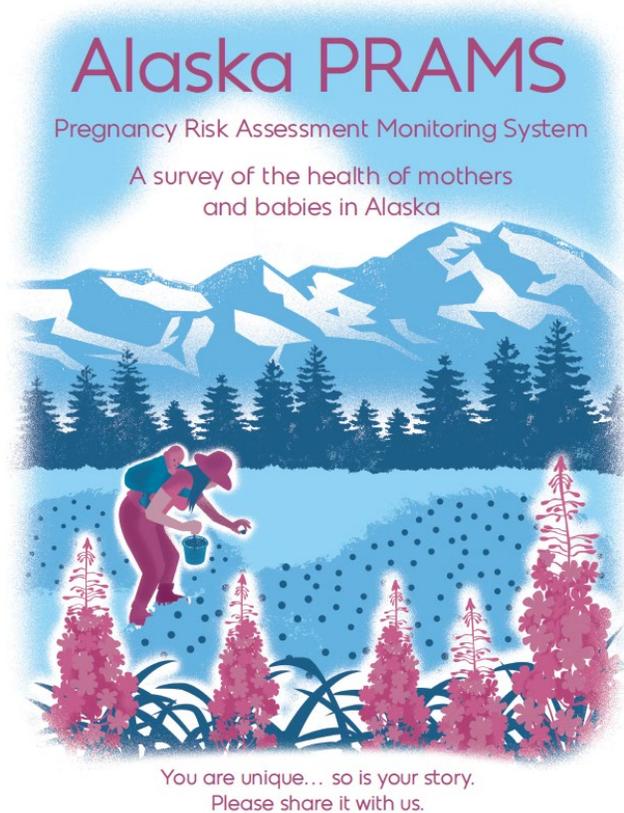


Alaska Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS)



- ❖ surveys Alaska-resident women who recently delivered a liveborn infant in-state, regardless of maternal age
- ❖ samples approx 1 of 5 from birth records
- ❖ 2 to 6 months after birth
- ❖ mail, web, and phone
- ❖ question responses and comments
- ❖ statewide and population-based, but also has multi-site comparison
- ❖ 35 years of data for Alaska

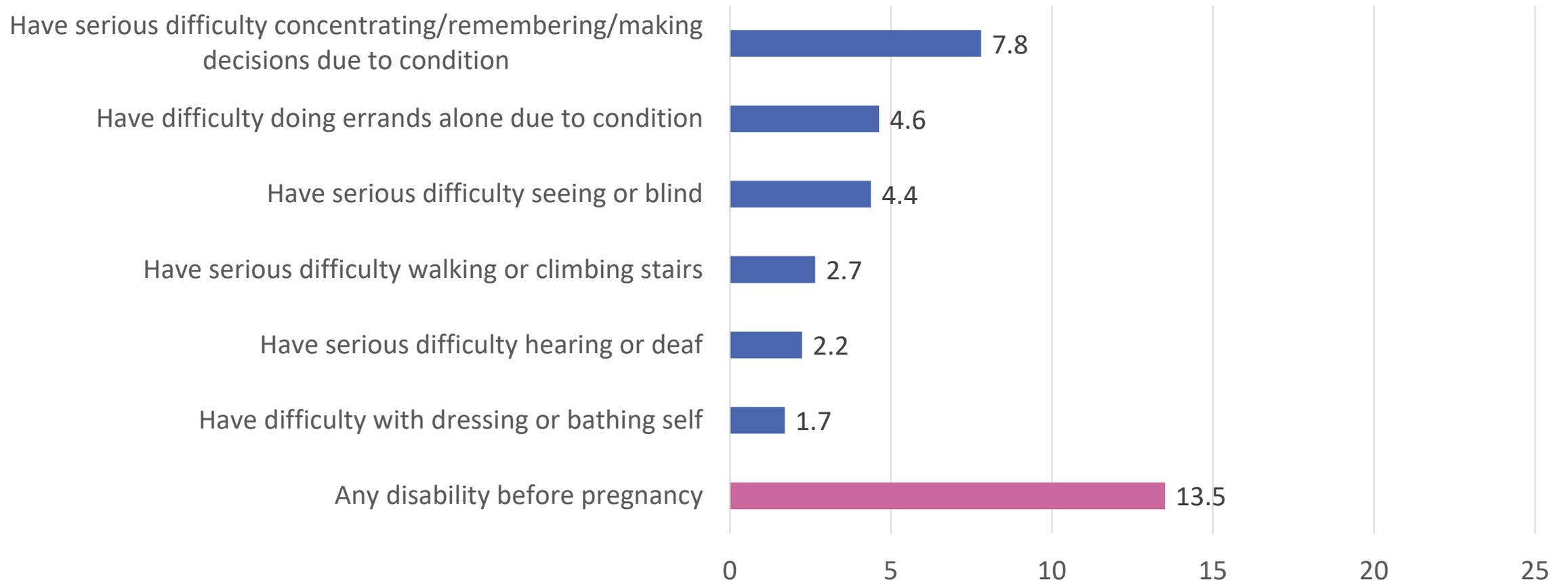
PRAMS Phase 9 – started 2023



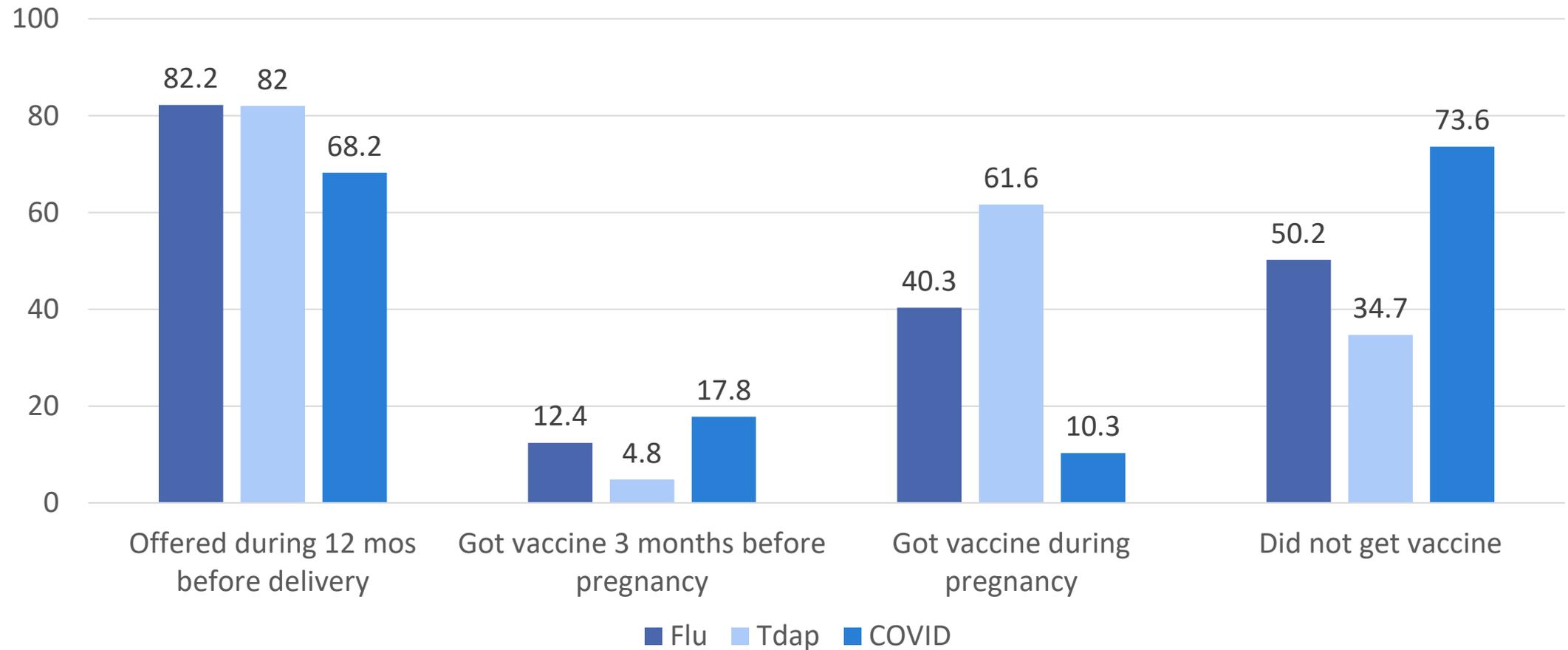
NEW survey question topics

- Disability
- Shots (flu, Tdap, COVID)
- Maternal morbidity warning signs (HEAR Her campaign)
- 3 more mental health questions
- SDOH: food security, lack of transportation
- Doula support
- 1 more social support
- Baby vaccination plans
- 3 new discrimination questions

Disability before pregnancy



Flu, Tdap, COVID vaccinations



High blood pressure (2 timeframes)



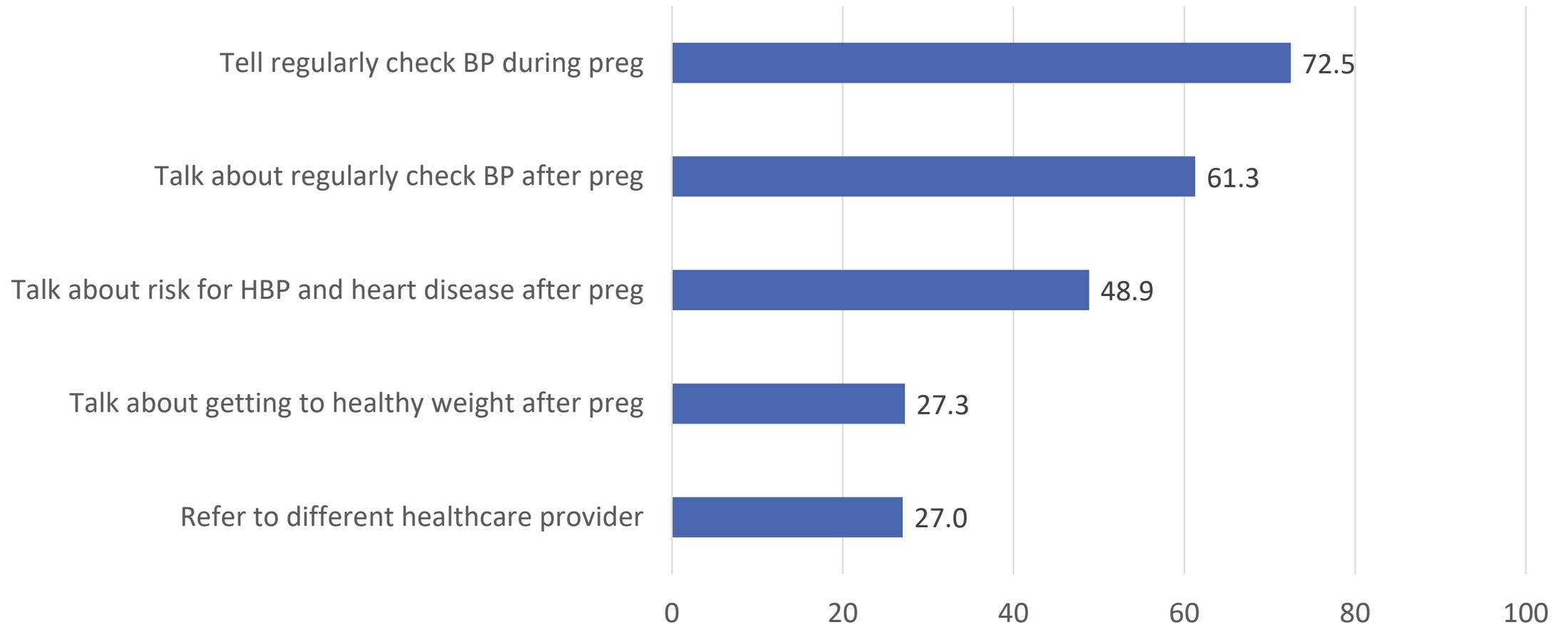
During the 3 months before you got pregnant, did you have any of the following health conditions...?

- High blood pressure or hypertension (**4.5%**)

During your most recent pregnancy, did a health care provider tell you that you had any of the following health conditions...?

- High blood pressure (that *started* during this pregnancy), pre-eclampsia, or eclampsia (**22.3%**)

Things done by a health care provider to help manage high blood pressure



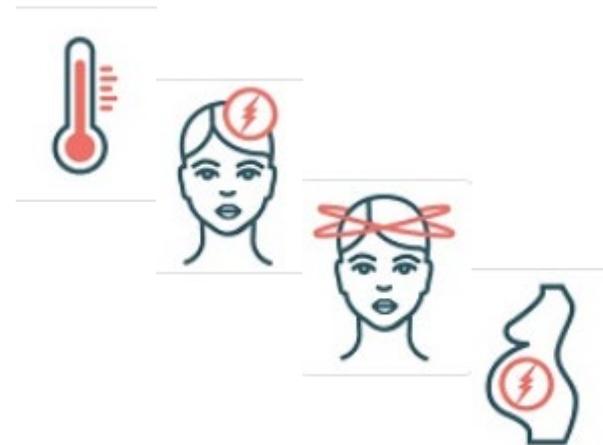


Warning signs

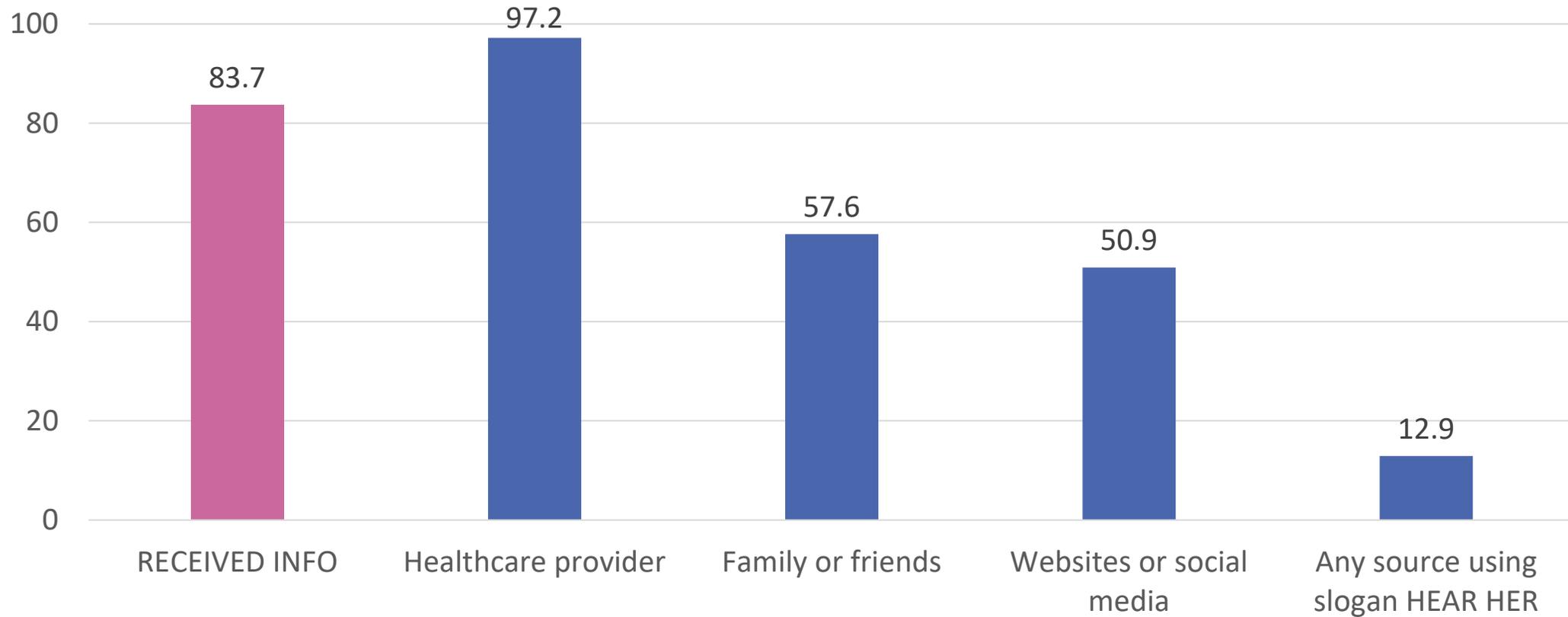
During your most recent pregnancy, did you get information about “warning signs” you should watch for during and after your pregnancy that require immediate medical attention?

Some of these include:

- ✓ Fever
- ✓ Frequent or severe headaches
- ✓ Dizziness
- ✓ Severe stomach pain



Received info about “warning signs” during pregnancy from...



CDC HEAR Her Warning Signs Poster

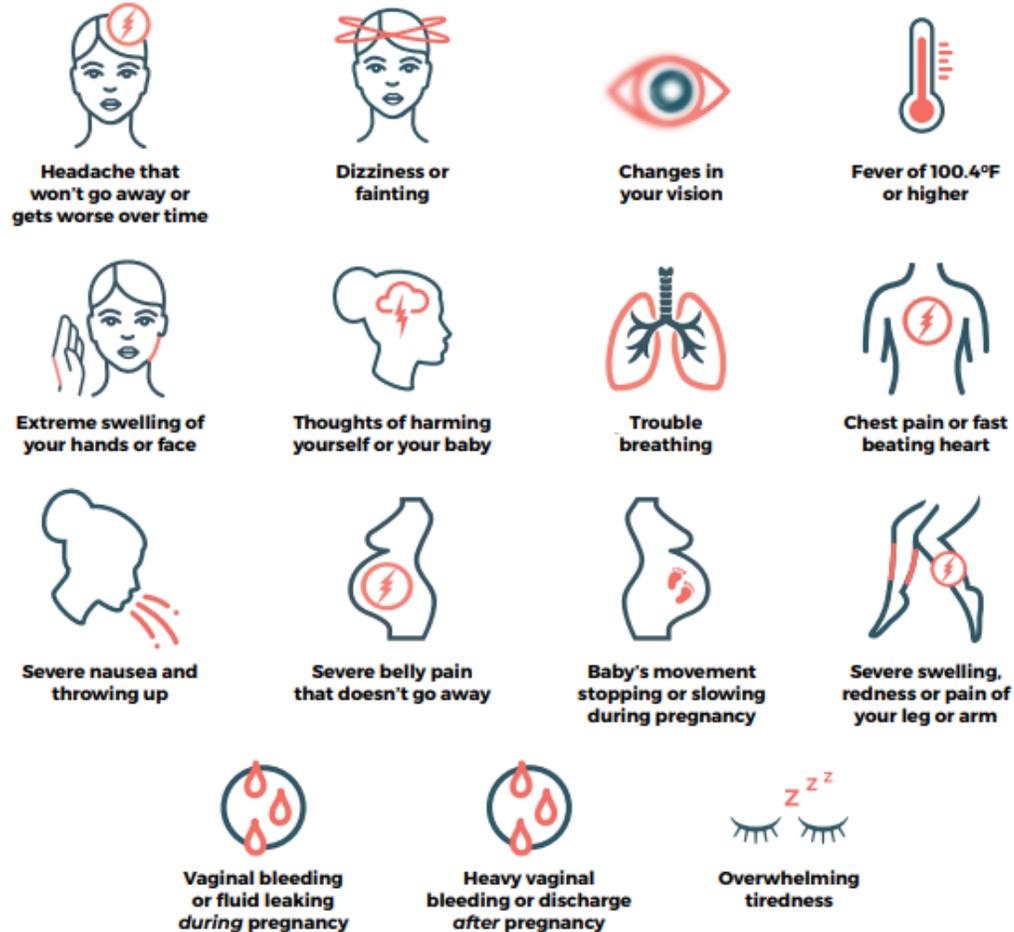
Available at
<https://www.cdc.gov/hearher/maternal-warning-signs/>

Learn the Warning Signs

It could help save a life

Pregnant now or within the last year?

Get medical care right away if you experience any of the following symptoms:



These could be signs of very serious complications. If you can't reach a healthcare provider, go to the emergency room. Be sure to tell them you are pregnant or were pregnant within the last year.



Learn more at
cdc.gov/HearHer



HEAR[®]
HEAR HER CONCERNS

Social Determinants of Health (12 months before baby was born)



FOOD SECURITY

- How often did this happen...?
 - Worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more
 - The food I bought just didn't last, and I didn't have money to get more

LACK OF TRANSPORTATION

- Did lack of transportation keep you from ...?
 - Going to medical appts // other appointments or work // doing errands

HOUSING

- Did any of the following happen ...?
 - Evicted or forced to move // Did not have regular place to sleep // Homeless or slept outside or in a car or shelter

Sharing their stories...

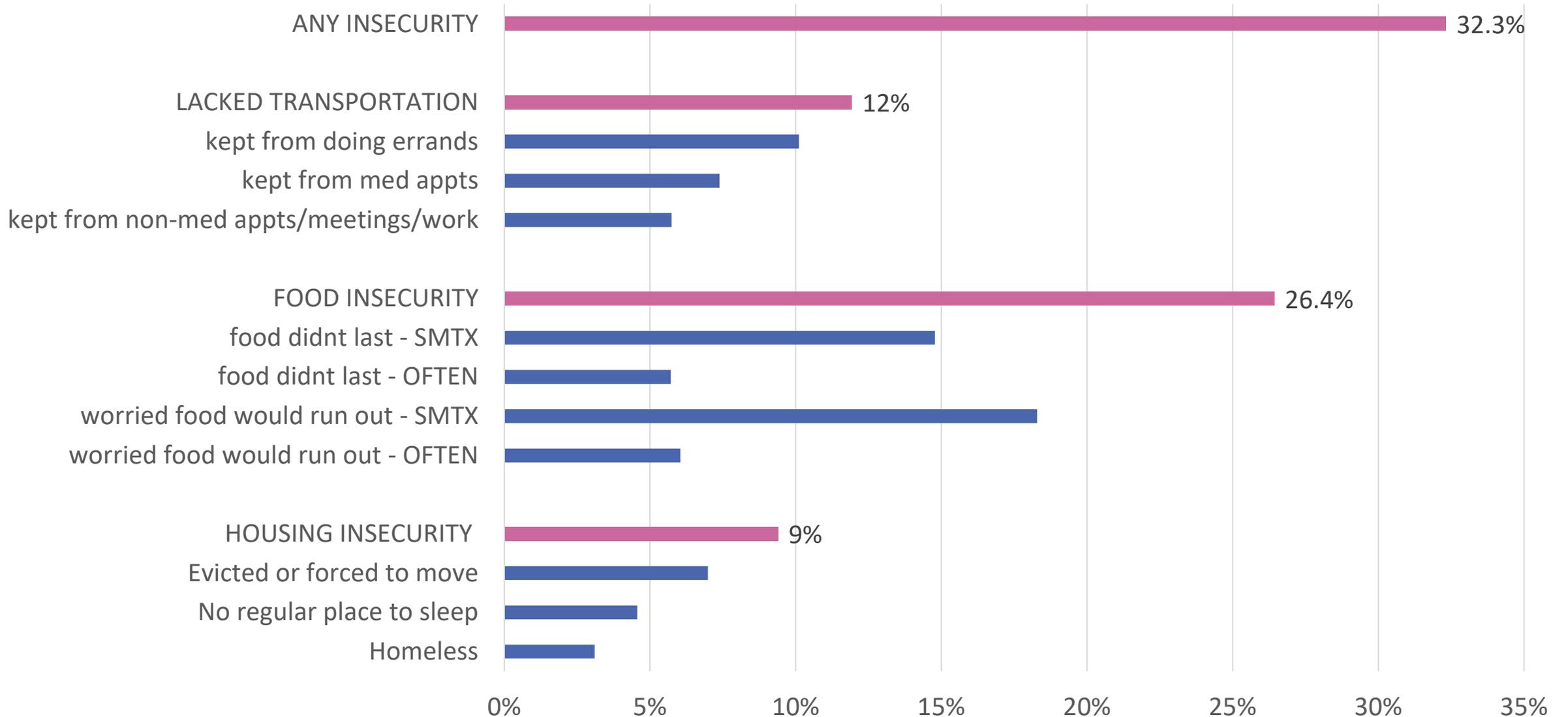


“Trouble paying for rent and paying for food. Right now I have no roof and no food. I'm staying at a cousin's house.”

“It was difficult when my family lost food stamps eligibility. It would be helpful to have an adjustment period where u receive a reduced amount so a family can have time to adjust the budget to provide enough food on the table. I work hard to provide for my family and it's getting harder and harder to see the dream of being a home owner become reality for us one day.”

---- PRAMS respondents

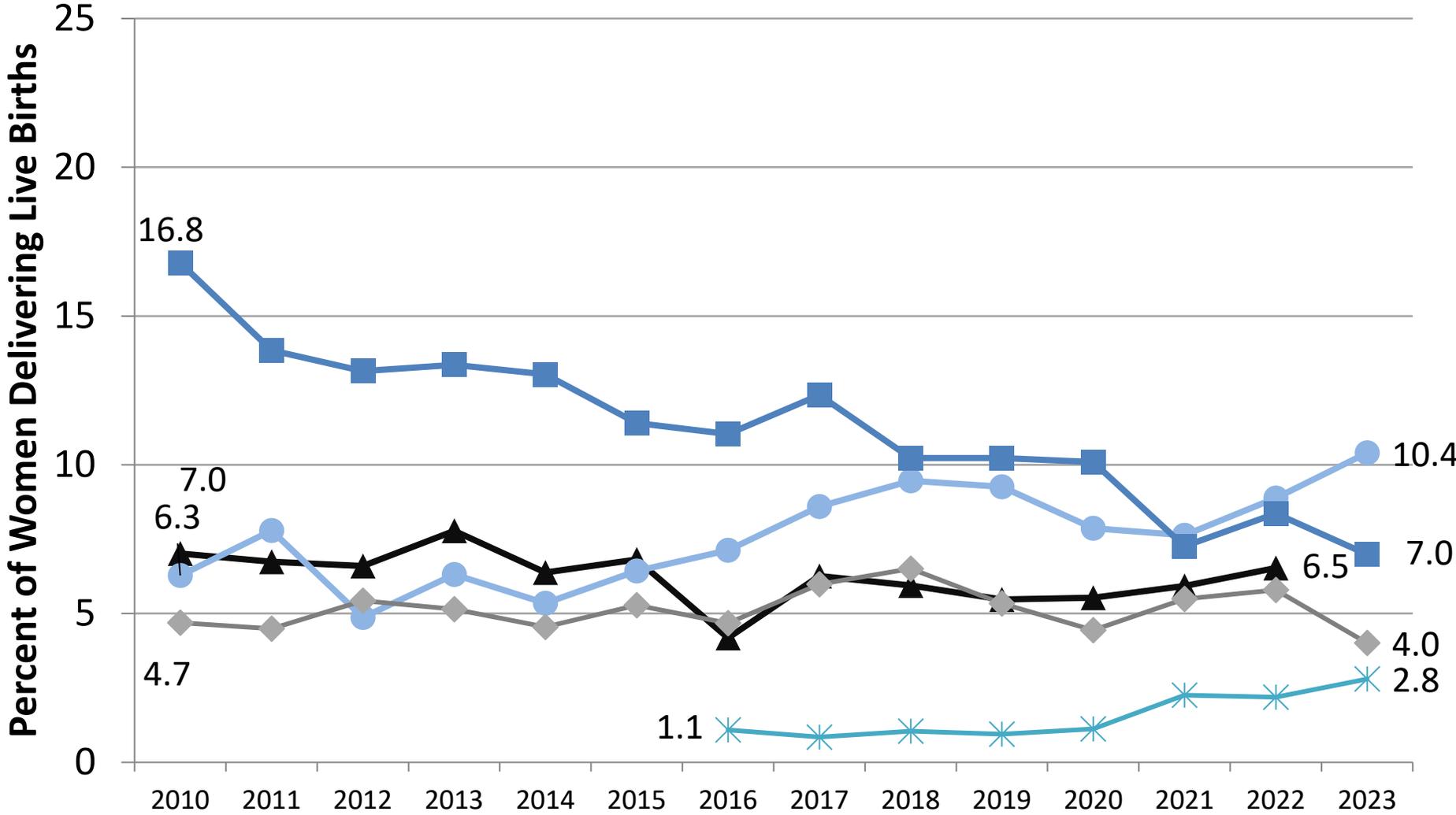
Social Determinants of Health 12 months before delivery



Prenatal Substance Use

Alaska, 2010-2023

Data Source: PRAMS, Alaska Division of Public Health



▲ Alcohol, last 3 mo ● Marijuana ■ Cigarettes, last 3 mo ◆ Chew * E-cigs, last 3 mo

Prenatal alcohol use



Data collection on Alaska’s birth certificate ended in 2012

PRAMS is now the primary population-based data source for prenatal alcohol use for Alaska

The Phase 9 PRAMS survey (starting in 2023) changed the manner it asks about alcohol use:

- Divides pregnancy into trimesters
- The first 3 months “*includes the time before knowing you were pregnant*”

Last 3 mos = 3.6%

Any prenatal alcohol use (2023) = 29.0%

The next questions are about drinking alcohol. A drink can be 1 glass of wine, can or bottle of beer or hard seltzer, shot of liquor, or mixed drink.

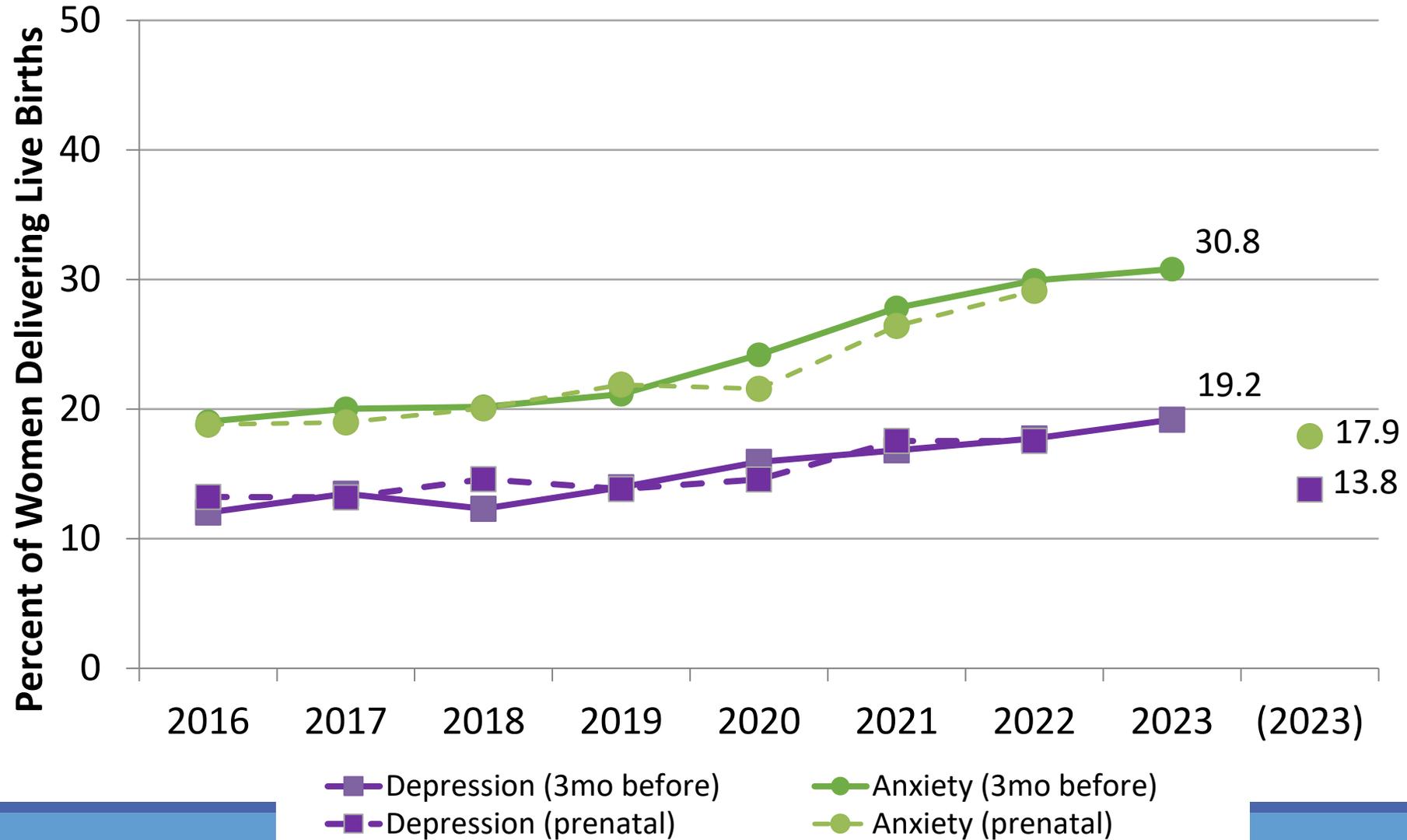
30. During your most recent pregnancy, did you have any alcoholic drinks during...?
For each one, check No or Yes.

	No	Yes
a. The first 3 months of pregnancy (1 st trimester)? <i>This includes the time before knowing you were pregnant</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. The second 3 months of pregnancy (2 nd trimester)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. The last 3 months of pregnancy (3 rd trimester)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Maternal Mental Health

Alaska, 2016-2022, 2023

Data Source: PRAMS, Alaska Division of Public Health



Sharing their stories...



I experience Hyperemesis Gravidarum during my last two pregnancies, so I am extremely ill for 90% of the pregnancy....it has highly contributed to my anxiety.

My depression is severe and have mood swings. Sometimes it's bearable because I've learned to live with it, but sometimes it's too much for me. I don't like taking antidepressants because I don't see them as helpful

I was provided amazing care during my entire pregnancy, but particularly postpartum when I struggled with postpartum depression and anxiety. I was prescribed medication but ended up not taking it and doing well over time. I had anxiety before this pregnancy as well. The anxiety started after my first pregnancy and never really went away.

Mental health



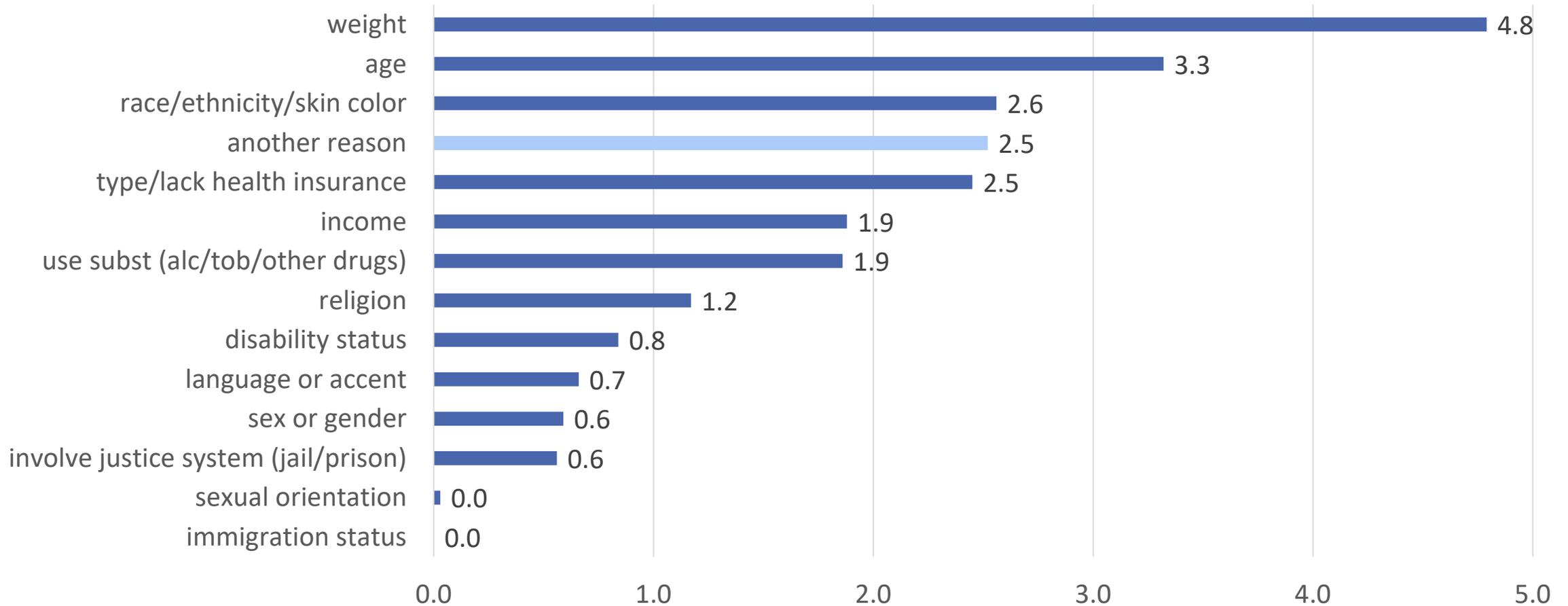
- Health care provider asked you a series of questions, in person or on a form to know if you were feeling, down, depressed, anxious, or irritable
 - During pregnancy (84%)
 - After pregnancy (86%)
- Postpartum depressive symptoms (16.0%)
 - Based on Always or Often responses to feeling down, depressed or hopeless/ little interest or little pleasure in doing things
- Postpartum anxiety symptoms (24.5%)
 - Based on Always or Often responses to feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge/ not able to stop or control worrying

PRAMS Quote



“The way a patient is treated during perinatal care and during labor drastically affects how a mother feels about giving birth/being pregnant and their health. Improving the treatment can drastically help health too.”

Discrimination while getting healthcare during or after pregnancy



Weight-related Comment



Pregnancy was hard but there isn't anything anyone can do. they made me feel terrible for being overweight and having diabetes. it was frustrating and made me cry. what they wanted me to eat, I would throw up. I felt judged. they made me feel bad even when actively trying to eat right. I threw up so much that my water broke. I just wished that they were more understanding.

Age-related comment

“I have chronic disabilities and have been responsible for my own care for the past decade ... and was treated poorly due to my <younger> age.

I was talked down to and treated as if i wasn't capable of managing my family. I was also treated poorly by some health-care workers when they were under the impression that i was unwed or single. I'm married and had to make that clear before receiving decent care in many situations due to their incorrect assumptions.”

Social Support by Socio-eco levels, postpartum



Who would help you if a problem came up? For example, if you needed to borrow \$50 or if you got sick and had to be in bed for several weeks.

- **Interpersonal** (spouse/partner, parents/in-laws, other family, friends)
- **Community** (religious community, neighbors)
- **Institutional** (formal community group, e.g. YMCA, B&G Club, etc.)

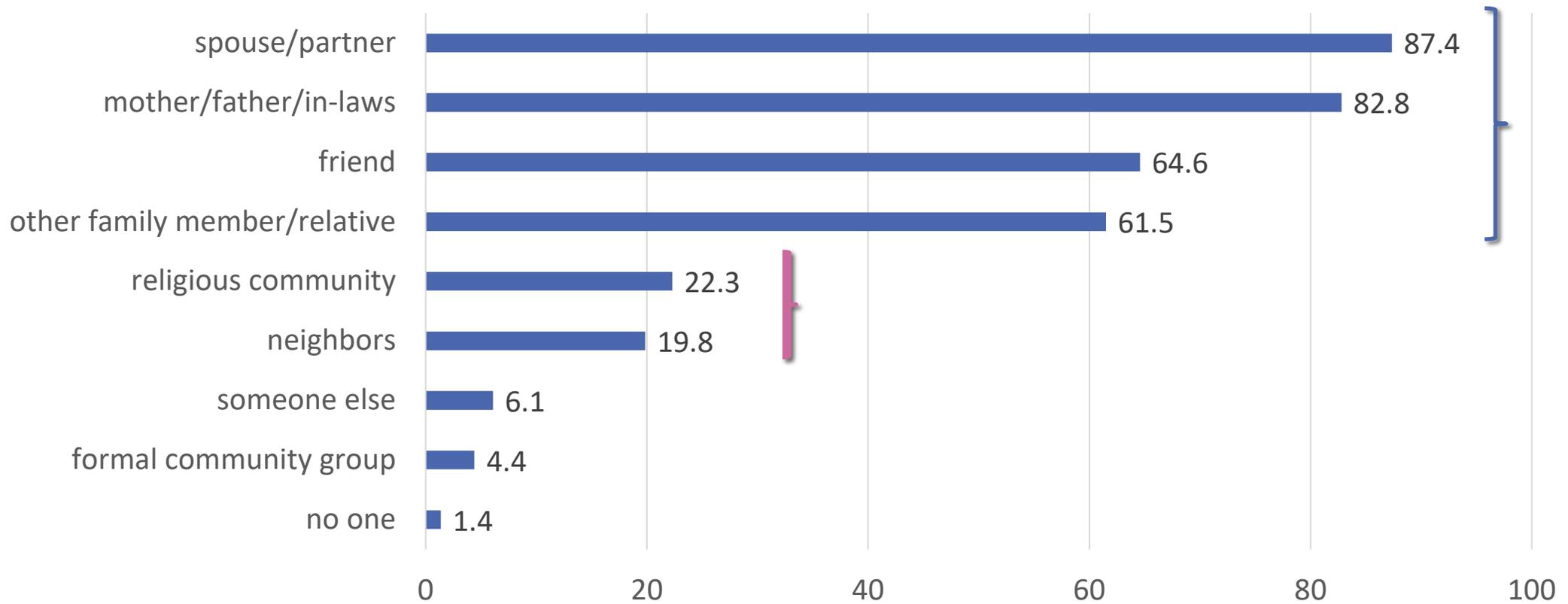
Sharing her story...



“Most of my pregnancy my husband was gone for military training. This has a big impact on us. It was very challenging taking care of my other child while sick and pregnant and not living close to family and friends.”

-- PRAMS respondent

Socio-eco level support postpartum



Only 2% did not have family support, removing friend support also from remainder of interpersonal, left the 1.4% w no support.

Social Support Postpartum



- Alaska's Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Program Plan 2025-2029 features PRAMS data as one of its indicators
 - All 5 kinds of help indicated below
- Would you have the kinds of help below if you needed it?
 1. Someone to loan me \$50
 2. Someone to help me if I were sick and needed to be in bed
 3. Someone to talk with about my problems
 4. Someone to take care of my baby
 5. Someone to help me if I were tired and feeling frustrated with my new baby
- Scorecard found here <https://health.alaska.gov/Commissioner/Pages/MentalHealth/default.aspx>

Strong social support system, postpartum





PRAMS Resources



Alaska Resource List for New Parents

(2 pages)

Finalized in Sept 2024

Available at
<https://www.alaskahha.org/it-takes-all-of-us>

Alaska Resource List for New Parents		
Alaska 2-1-1	https://alaska211.org Information about health and human services available in Alaska.	Dial 2-1-1 or 1 800 478-2221
Help Me Grow Alaska	https://helpmegrowak.org Family support specialists who help connect families to services and resources for free, including during pregnancy through early adulthood of the child.	1-833-464-2527
Advocacy for Domestic Violence Victims & Directory of Shelters https://law.alaska.gov/department/criminal/shelter-directory.html Statewide and community-based crisis lines and shelter information.		
Best Beginnings/Imagination Library www.bestbeginningsalaska.org Offers free online early learning activities and activity guides within Alaska. The Imagination Library sends children under age 5 free age-appropriate books each month. Sign up on website.		907-297-3300 (Anch)
Breastfeeding https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding See La Leche League (LLL) of Alaska on Facebook or national LLL breastfeeding information at https://llusa.org/bfinfo/		
Car Seat Safety Checks https://safealaskans.org/services/car-seats/ Free car seat checks. Anchorage-based, with other statewide services.		907-929-3939
Child Care Resources and Referral Services (thread) www.threadalaska.org Offices in Anchorage, Wasilla, Kenai, Fairbanks & Juneau. Offering online childcare search tool, connections to childcare assistance, interpreter services and more.		1 800 278-3723
Clare House www.cssalaska.org/our-programs/clare-house Emergency 24-hour shelter and progressive housing for women with children and expectant mothers (over age 18) in Anchorage.		907-563-4545
Community Health Centers https://alaskapca.org/map/ (statewide) Provides comprehensive primary care services including medical, dental, vision. They		

Postcard for birthing facilities



FRONT

Be on the lookout for this survey when your baby is about 2 months old...

Alaska PRAMS
Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System
A survey of the health of mothers and babies in Alaska

You are unique... so is your story.
Please share it with us.

BACK

CONGRATULATIONS
on the birth of your newborn!

You can make a difference!
For example, responses to Alaska's PRAMS survey...

- are used to inform and train teachers about the impact of substance use on Alaskan children.
- and**
- contributed to Alaska's extension of postpartum Medicaid coverage from 60 days to 1 year.

If you are selected to receive a PRAMS survey, please share your story!

Best wishes,
Alaska PRAMS

PRAMS postcard added to Swaddle Me bags

Initiative to reach every new parent in Anchorage.

Distributed to all Anchorage birthing hospitals and several birthing centers.

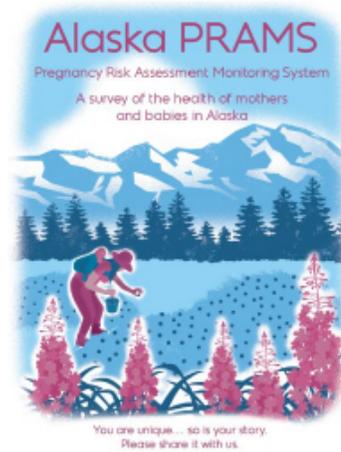
<https://www.picak.org/swaddle-me>



FAQs for Health Care Providers

Questions Commonly Asked About PRAMS

For Health Care Providers



What is PRAMS?

PRAMS (Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System) is a joint research project between the Alaska Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Our purpose is to find out why some babies are born healthy, and others are not. To do this, our questionnaire asks recent mothers questions about their behaviors and experiences around the time of their pregnancy. Each year in Alaska there are hundreds of babies born with serious health problems. Some of these babies will not survive their first year of life. No matter how a pregnancy went, answers received will help us learn more about ways to improve the chances for future mothers and babies in Alaska.

How can health care providers help?

If one of your patients asks you about PRAMS or tells you that they received a letter or email from PRAMS, encourage them to respond! Mention that not all mothers are selected for PRAMS, and though it is voluntary, their response is unique and will directly help other mothers in Alaska. You can put up PRAMS posters in your office or give out “Be on the lookout...” postcards to your patients. You can also help answer their questions about PRAMS by using the information in this handout.

How have responses from Alaska PRAMS been used? Some examples include...

- Training birthing center, maternity care, and WIC staff for supporting successful breastfeeding outcomes through the Alaska Breastfeeding Initiative
- Raising awareness about maternal mental health, <https://www.alaskahha.org/it-takes-all-of-us> (See Holly Brooks’ video)
- Contributing key issues data to Alaska’s Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault to monitor trends and enhance intervention efforts <https://dps.alaska.gov/CDVSA/Resources/Alaska-Dashboard>.

Will answers be kept private?

Yes—all answers are kept completely private and will only be used only for maternal and child health research. All answers will be grouped together. In reports, no participants are identified by name.

Phase 9 Posters Available



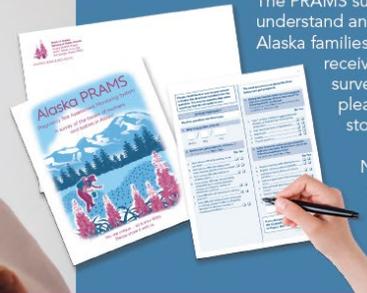
Mothers...



Just 25 minutes of your time will help improve the lives of young Alaskans.

The PRAMS survey helps us understand and better serve Alaska families. If you receive a PRAMS survey in the mail, please share your story!

Now available online! See your letter for details.



Alaska Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS Project)
Alaska Department of Health, Division of Public Health
1-888-269-3470



Thanks, Mom!



Answers about your pregnancy and new baby will help improve the lives of young Alaskans.

If you receive the PRAMS survey in the mail, please share your story and mail it back or complete it online. Alaska moms and babies will benefit from your response!



Alaska Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS Project)
Alaska Department of Health, Division of Public Health
1-888-269-3470

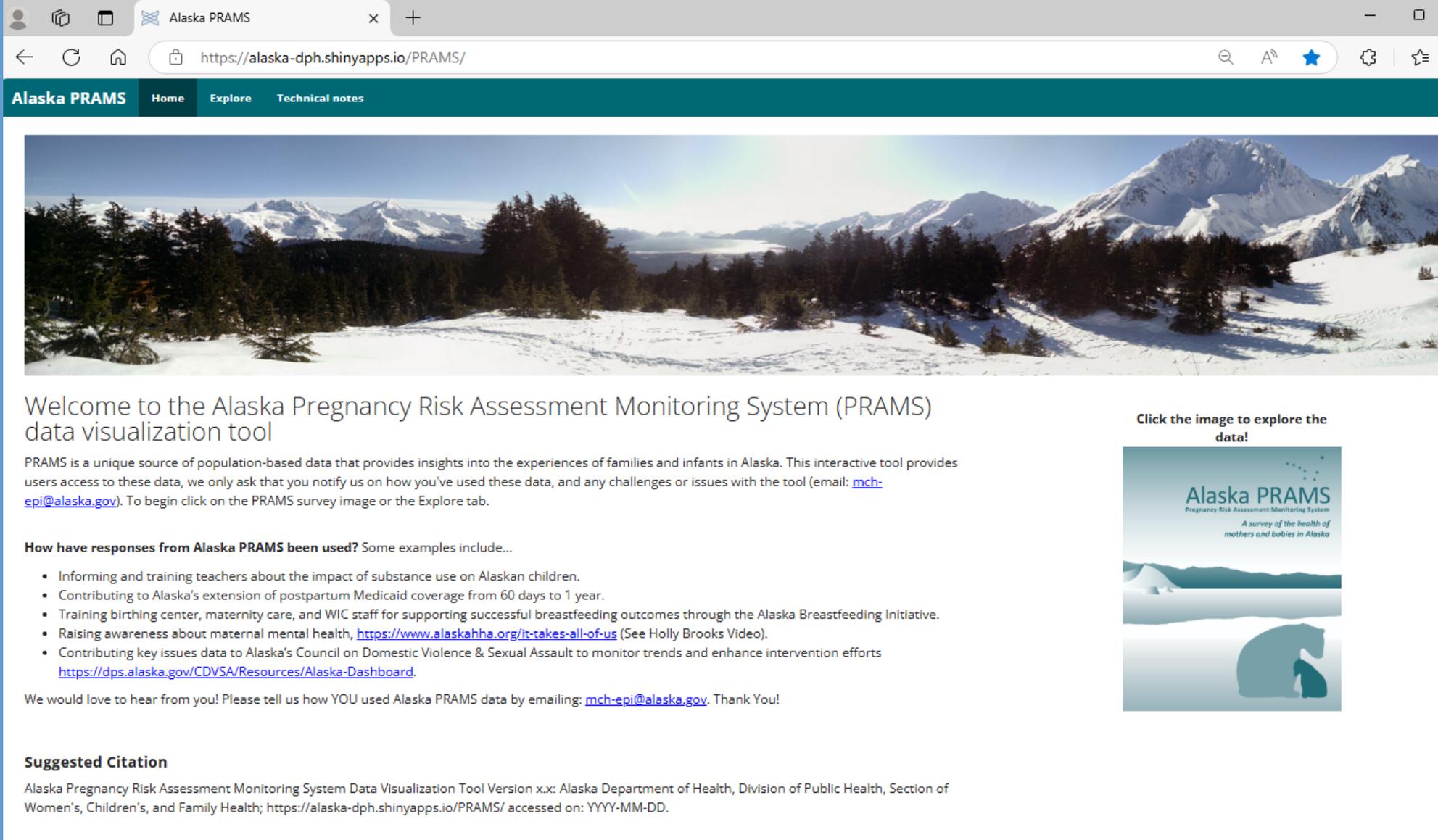


PRAMS Rshiny App

[https://alaska-
dph.shinyapps.io
/PRAMS/](https://alaska-dph.shinyapps.io/PRAMS/)

Complete Phase
8 years (n= 7)

2016 - 2022



Alaska PRAMS Home Explore Technical notes

Welcome to the Alaska Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) data visualization tool

PRAMS is a unique source of population-based data that provides insights into the experiences of families and infants in Alaska. This interactive tool provides users access to these data, we only ask that you notify us on how you've used these data, and any challenges or issues with the tool (email: mch-epi@alaska.gov). To begin click on the PRAMS survey image or the Explore tab.

How have responses from Alaska PRAMS been used? Some examples include...

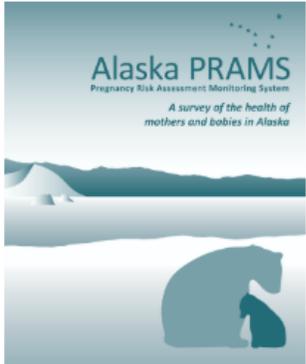
- Informing and training teachers about the impact of substance use on Alaskan children.
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- Contributing key issues data to Alaska's Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault to monitor trends and enhance intervention efforts <https://dps.alaska.gov/CDVSA/Resources/Alaska-Dashboard>.

We would love to hear from you! Please tell us how YOU used Alaska PRAMS data by emailing: mch-epi@alaska.gov. Thank You!

Suggested Citation

Alaska Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System Data Visualization Tool Version x.x: Alaska Department of Health, Division of Public Health, Section of Women's, Children's, and Family Health; <https://alaska-dph.shinyapps.io/PRAMS/> accessed on: YYYY-MM-DD.

[Click the image to explore the data!](#)



[Back to top](#)

Version: 0.1.2 | Released 2025-02-25

Questions or Comments? Email Us: mch-epi@alaska.gov

[Credits & Disclaimer](#)



Ways to help PRAMS



- ❖ Put up posters where pregnant or moms with newborns will see them
- ❖ Distribute the FAQ for health care providers to your staff so they can be more aware of the program and be able to answer questions if asked
- ❖ Distribute birthing facility postcards to those who've recently delivered
- ❖ Talk to pregnant or moms with newborns about the possibility they could be selected for PRAMS and the importance of filling it out
- ❖ If you see a DOH social media post about it in the future, repost!

Celebrating YOU as a maternal-child health care provider!



My trust in my doctors have always kept me safe. Having the knowledge that they will always have what's best for me and my baby has kept me in an okay spot when things were unknown.

My birthing experience was stellar. <Clinic Name> and <Hospital> really made me feel comfortable and listened to. I was able to make informed decisions in a judgment-free atmosphere. The nursing staff and midwives were impeccable.

Having a midwife made my pregnancy so much better. They made me feel heard and comfortable. Made it easy to understand things and let us know what our choices/rights are with labor.

My ob/gyn doctor took such good care of me and my baby. She made recommendations but always respected my wishes during pregnancy as well as during labor.

More KUDOS!



I felt really heard and taken care of by all midwives and doctors before, during and after pregnancy. Our baby needed to be in the NICU for a few days and the support we got there was amazing!

I felt very supported by my PCP pre-natally and my doctor and nurses during my baby's birth.

I was very thankful for my healthcare providers during this time of pregnancy and birth. I was not near my mom, so I appreciated all of the support I received from my primary care provider as well as the staff who ended up being present at delivery.

Thank you for working to improve public health!



Thank you!

Kathy.Perham-Hester@alaska.gov