

Religion, Spirituality, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and HIV

Where does the prejudice come from?

Presented by:

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Background

- Increasing number of individuals who identify as spiritual but not religious (SBNR) in the US (Pew, 2015)
- Increase in the number of individuals who identify with traditionally spiritual disciplines (e.g., Yoga).
- Significant number of individuals who have left traditional religious communities due to discrimination experienced because of their “non-heterosexual” sexual orientation.
- Increasing number of Millennials desire to reconcile faith and sexuality but feel excluded from religious organizations (Christian Post)

Background

- Non-heterosexuals in particular who have been emotionally, mentally, and spiritually traumatized, marginalized, and stigmatized by some faith communities.
- Focusing on spirituality can be a superlative means with which to approach uniquely marginalized and “hidden” populations such as racial and sexual minorities.
- Focusing on spirituality can provide adequate, culturally competent, and culturally sensitive professional resources to assist persons struggling to bring into sync their sexuality and spirituality.

Religion, Religiosity, and Sexuality

- ▶ What are your religious views regarding sexuality?
- ▶ *Where do these religious views come from?*
- ▶ *In what ways have these religious views changed or remained the same?*
- ▶ *Why or Why not?*

Dictionary Definitions: “Spirituality”



- ▶ The quality or fact of being spiritual.
- ▶ Incorporeal or immaterial nature.
- ▶ Predominantly spiritual character as shown in thought, life, etc.; spiritual tendency or tone.
- ▶ Often, spiritualities, property or revenue of the church or of an ecclesiastic in his or her official capacity.

[Circa 1400]

Dictionary Definitions: “Spirituality”

- ▶ Spirituality has long been dichotomized in our culture and society.
 - ▶ Married with religion or religious matters
 - ▶ Ethereal state of existence.
- ▶ These are un-embodied definitions of spirituality.
- ▶ Spirituality refers to anything relating to the Great Spiritual Director (God’s Holy Spirit)
- ▶ ***Spirituality refers to the embodied, ubiquitous, holy, authorized and inspirited entity that works in and through all of the universe-seen and unseen.***



Other Definitions: Spirituality

- ▶ African American Culture is a sociological construct that identifies the spirituality of a people as the soul (“placeless place”) of the people.

Black Spirituality

Communal
Participatory
Embodied
Socially
Conscious
Contemplative

Relational
Creative
Mystical
Holistic
Integrative
Ancestral*

*Theresa Taylor-Stinson, “Black Spirituality and the Art of Spiritual Direction,”

Presence, December, 2009, p.46.

Dictionary Definitions: “Religion”

- ▶ Set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, esp. when considered as the creation of a superhuman agency or agencies, usually involving devotional and ritual observances, and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs.
- ▶ Specific fundamental set of beliefs and practices generally agreed upon by a number of persons or sects: the Christian religion; the Buddhist religion.
- ▶ Body of persons adhering to a particular set of beliefs and practices: a world council of religions.
- ▶ Life or state of a monk, nun, etc.: to enter religion.
- ▶ the practice of religious beliefs; ritual observance of faith.

[Circa 1200]

Dictionary Definitions: “Morality”

- Conformity to the rules of right conduct; moral or virtuous conduct.
- Moral quality or character.
- Virtue in sexual matters; chastity.
- Doctrine or system of morals.

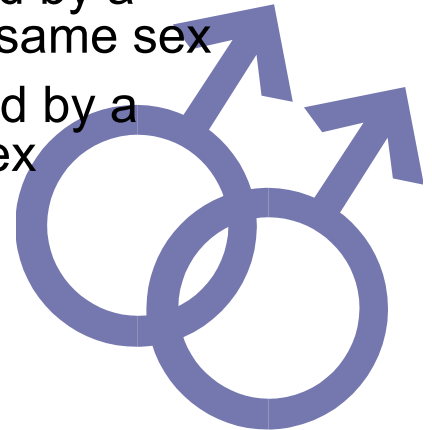
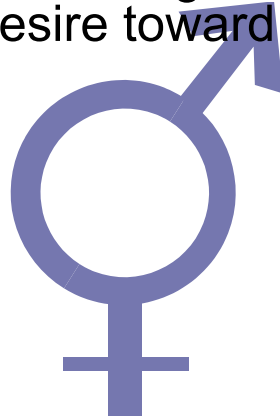
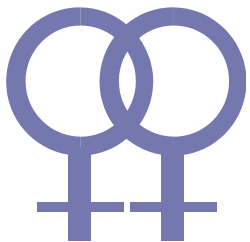


Dictionary Definitions: “Sexuality”

- ▶ Sexual character; possession of the structural and functional traits of sex.
- ▶ Recognition of or emphasis upon sexual matters.
- ▶ Involvement in sexual activity.
- ▶ An organism's preparedness for engaging in sexual activity.

[Origin: 1790–1800]

- ▶ Bisexual(ity) -1824 : possessing characters of both sexes : HERMAPHRODITIC
- ▶ Homosexual(ity) -1892 : of, relating to, or characterized by a tendency to direct sexual desire toward another of the same sex
- ▶ Heterosexual(ity) -1892 : of, relating to, or characterized by a tendency to direct sexual desire toward the opposite sex

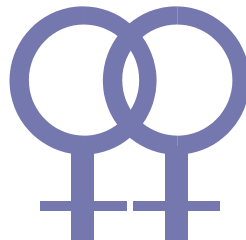
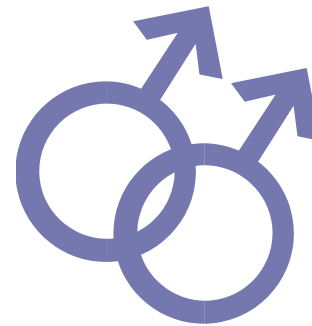
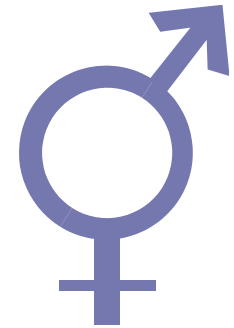


Spirituality and sexuality are intricately connected, infinitely complex, and both are gifts from God. Take a few minutes to answer the following questions; write down the first thing that comes to mind:

Sexuality	Spirituality
A good sexual experience sounds like:	A good spiritual experience sounds like:
A good sexual experience smells like:	A good spiritual experience smells like:
A good sexual experience tastes like:	A good spiritual experience tastes like:
A good sexual experience feels like:	A good spiritual experience feels like
A good sexual experience looks like:	A good spiritual experience looks like:

Understanding Sexual Identity Expression

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mtYuUL3OdUY>



Understanding Sexual Identity Expression

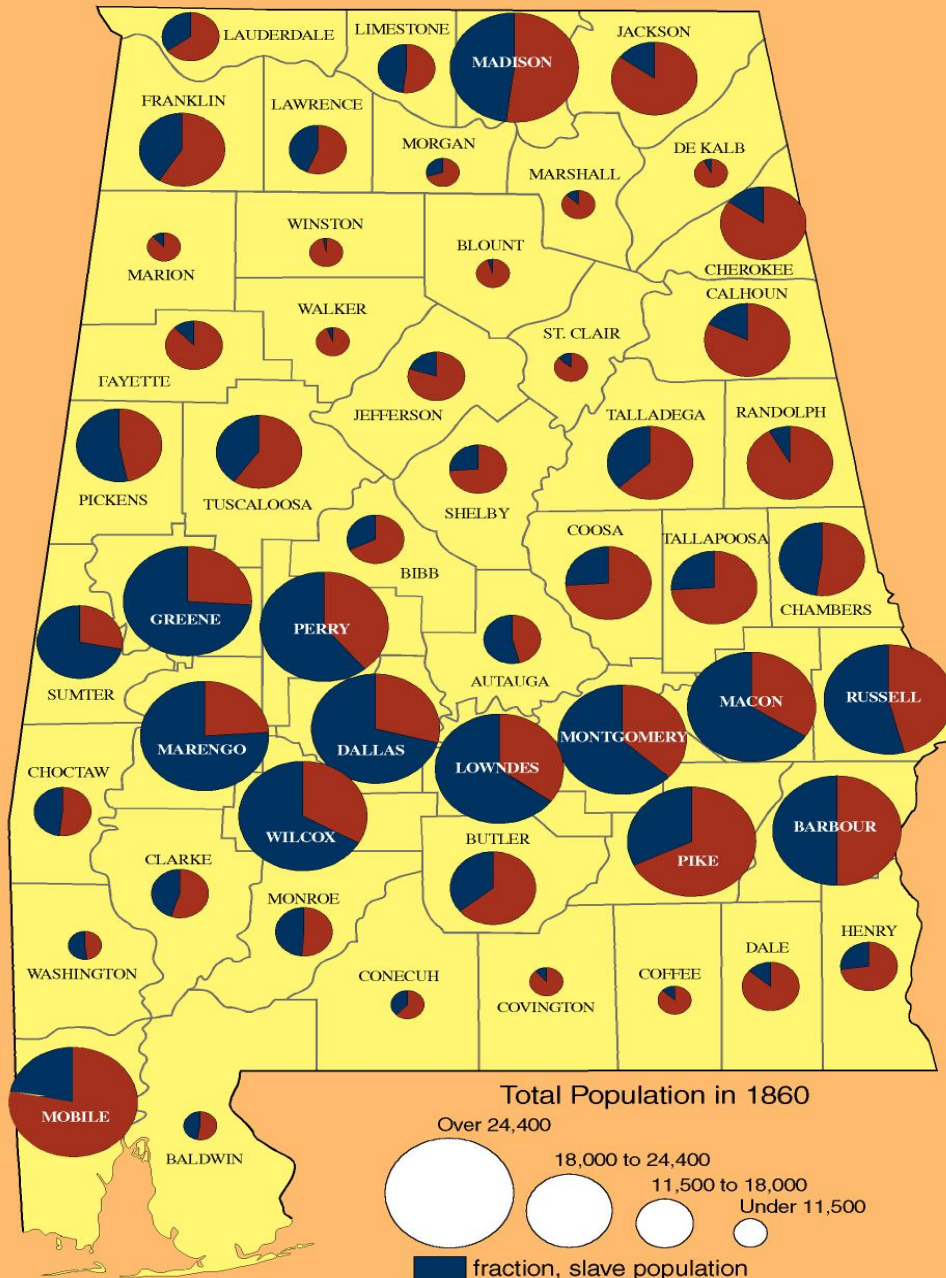


https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Sexual_identity_symbols

Terms to Avoid

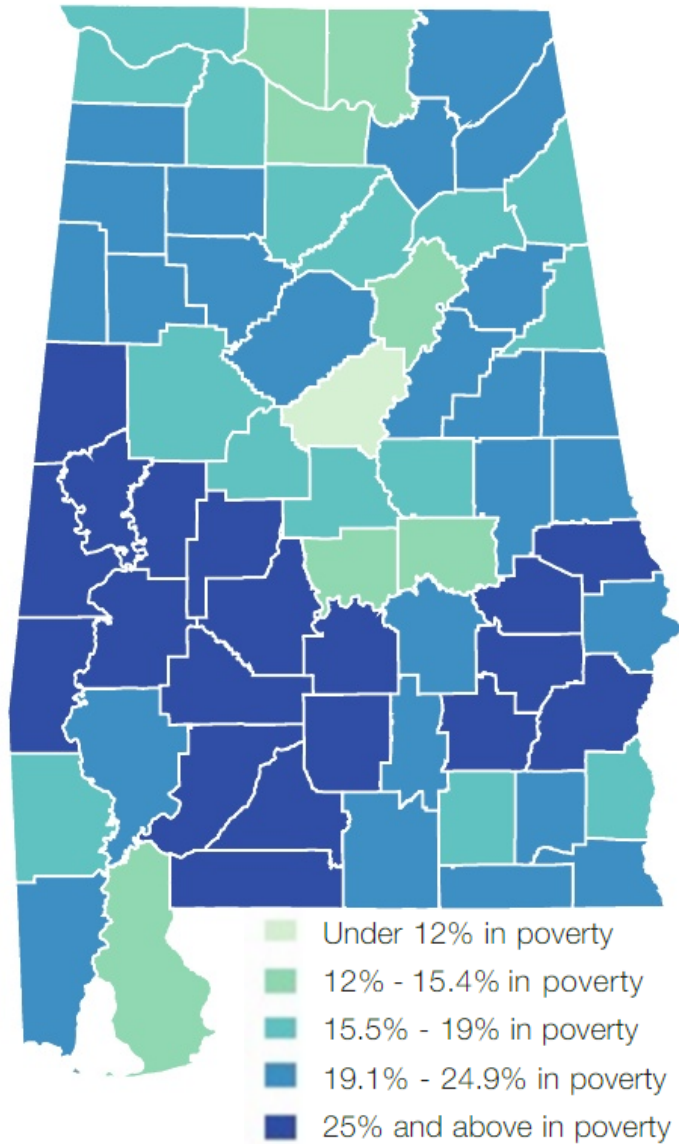
- ▶ Homosexual: See **gay, lesbian**
- ▶ Sexual preference: See **sexual orientation.**
- ▶ Transgendered/A transgender/Tranny: See **transgender.**
- ▶ Sex change: See **gender affirmation surgery.**

Plantation Culture 1860



Produced by the Cartographic Research Lab at the University of Alabama for Robert J. Norrell's *The Alabama Journey*. It is used here with his permission.

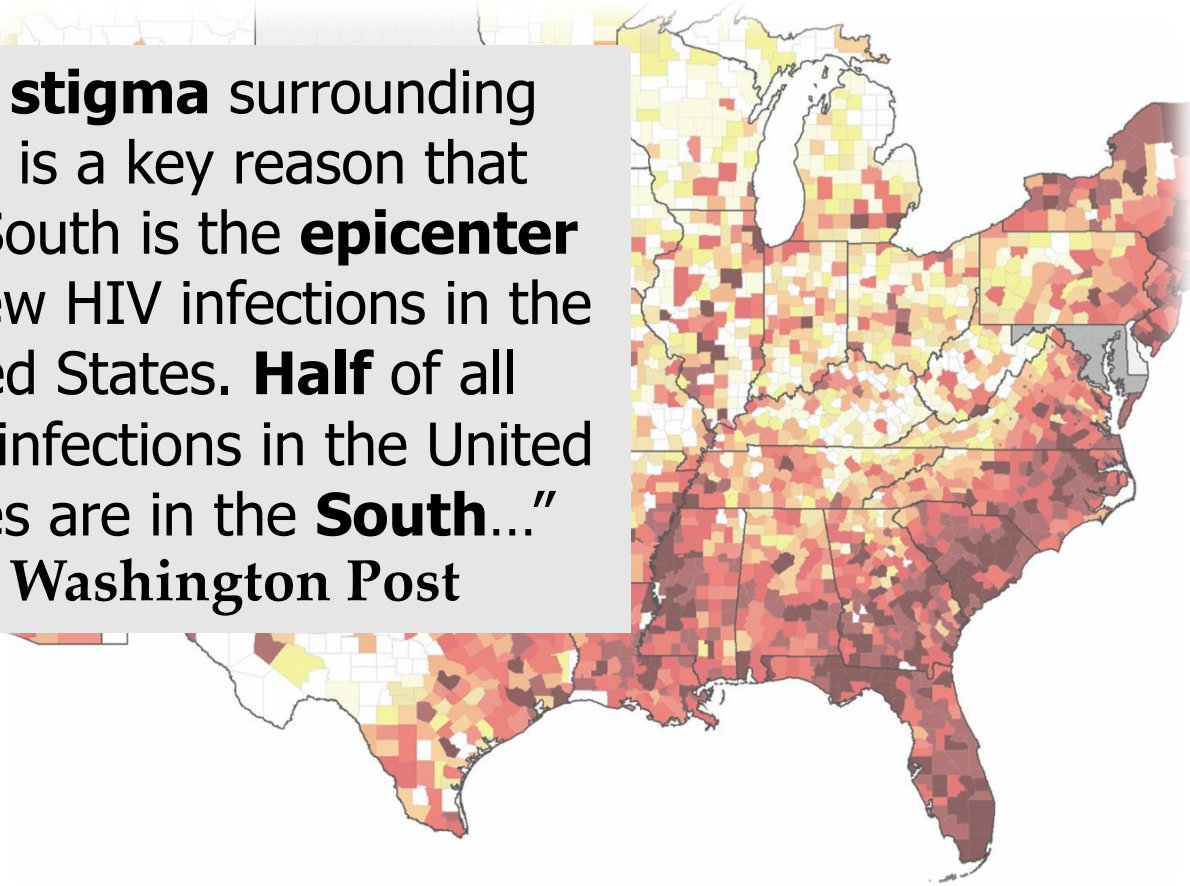
Poverty in Alabama 2016



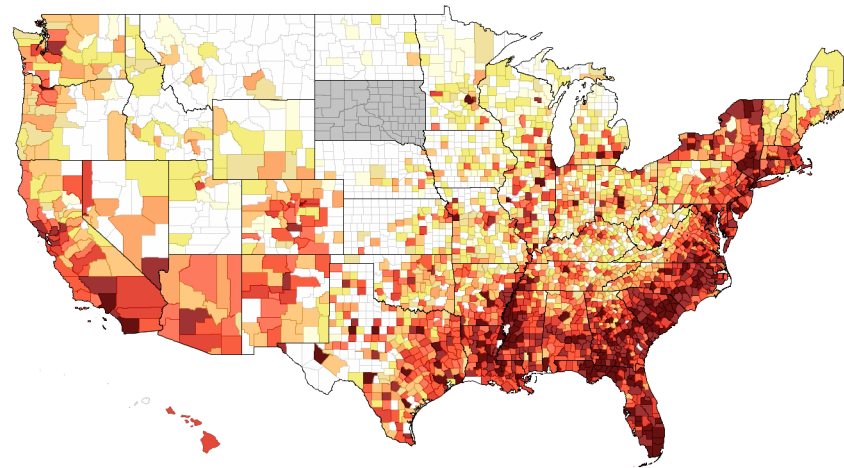
Source: AlabamaPossible.org

HIV Burden in the South

“The **stigma** surrounding AIDS is a key reason that the South is the **epicenter** of new HIV infections in the United States. **Half** of all new infections in the United States are in the **South...**”
-The Washington Post



Rates of Persons Living with Diagnosed HIV, by County, 2013



Rates of Persons Living with Diagnosed HIV, by County, 2013



Data not shown *

Data not released to AIDS Vu **

Rates displayed are the number of cases per 100,000 people.

*Data not shown to protect privacy because of a small number of cases and/or a small population.

**State health department, per its HIV data re-release agreement with CDC, requested not to release data to AIDS Vu.

NOTE: There are no county-level maps for Alaska, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico because there are no counties in these states.

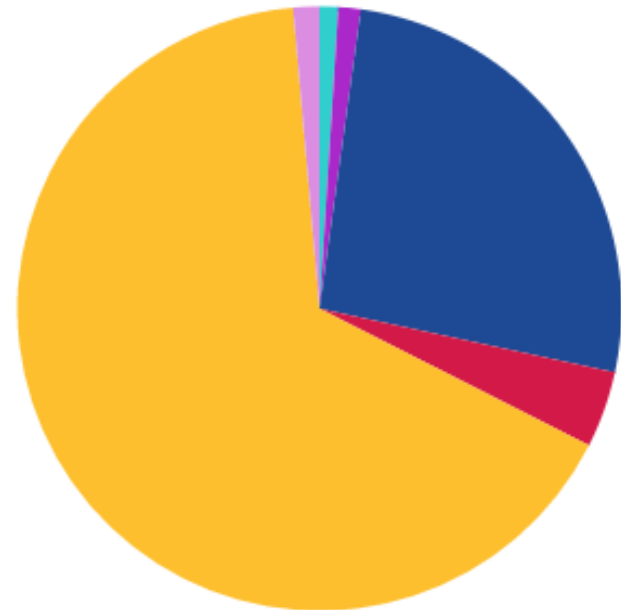
Alabama Demographics, 2013

Total Population

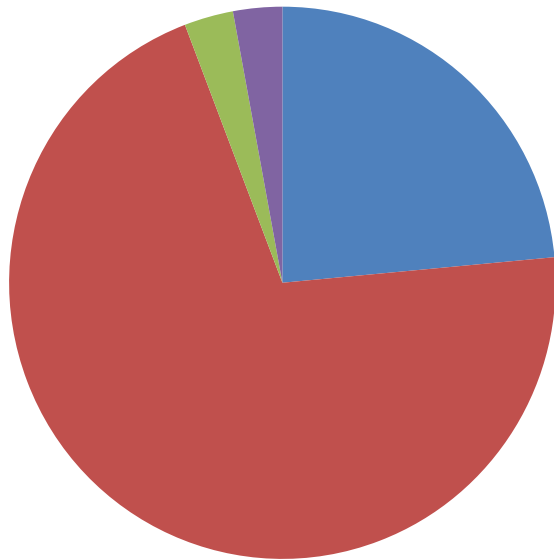
4,833,722

State Population by Race/Ethnicity

- American Indian / Alaska Native (0.6%)
- Asian (1.2%)
- Black (26.3%)
- Hispanic / Latino (4.1%)
- White (66.4%)
- Multiple Race (1.4%)



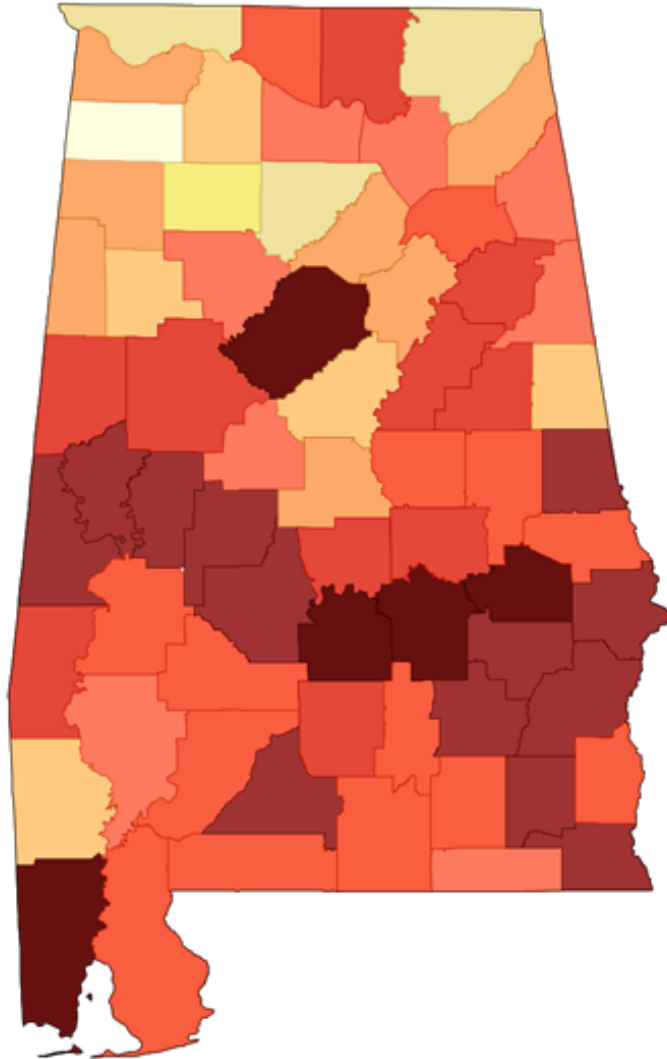
Alabama HIV/AIDS Demographics, 2014



71% of newly diagnosed HIV cases and 70% of all persons living with HIV identified as Black/African-American.

■ White ■ Black ■ Hispanic ■ Other

Source: ADPH.org/AIDS



Alabama Highlights

Prevalence

- Number of people living with diagnosed HIV in 2013: 12,025
- Rate of people living with diagnosed HIV in 2013 per 100,000 people: 297
- 72% of people living with diagnosed HIV in 2013 were men, and 28% were women.
- 65% of people living with diagnosed HIV in 2013 were black, 3% Hispanic/Latino, and 28% white.

New Diagnoses

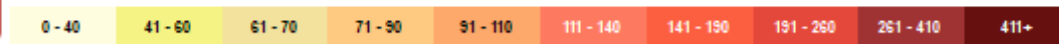
- Number of new HIV diagnoses in 2014: 699
- Rate of new HIV diagnoses in 2014 per 100,000 people: 17

Mortality

- Number of deaths of people with diagnosed HIV in 2013: 288
- Rate of deaths of people with diagnosed HIV per 100,000 people: 7

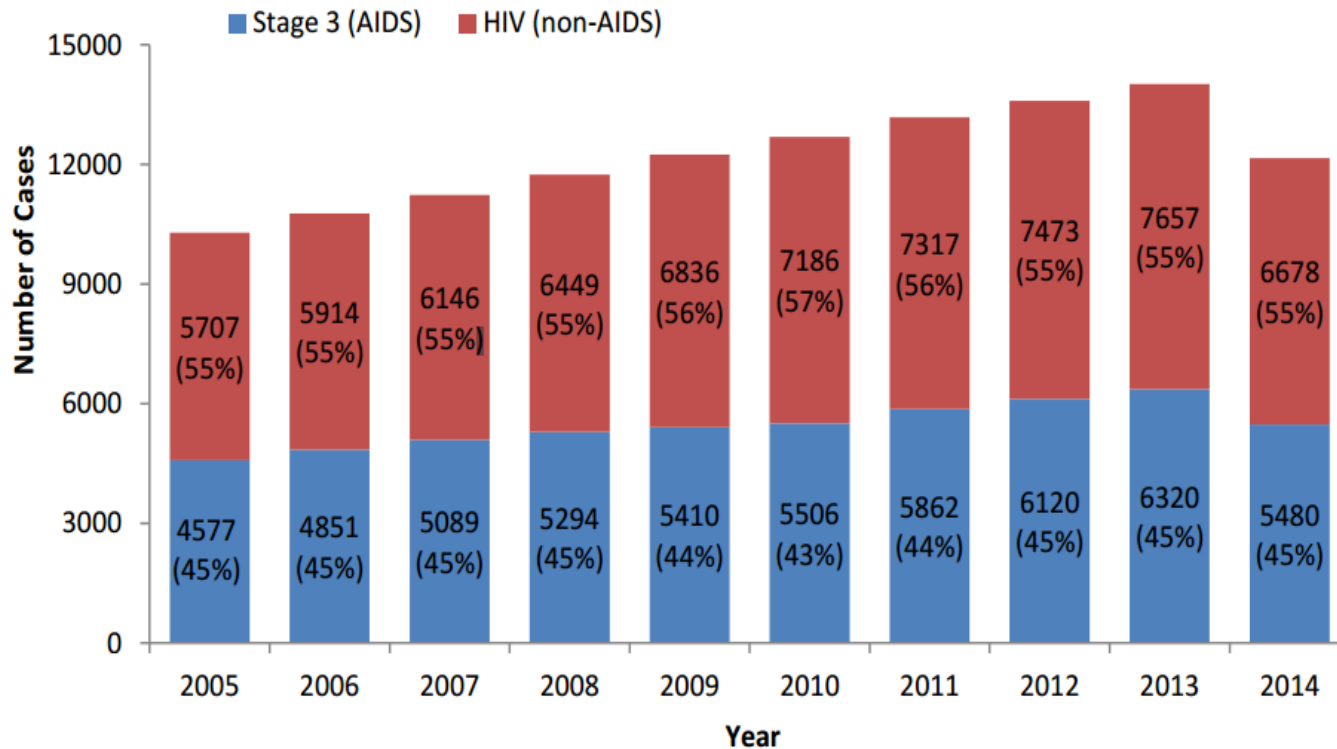


Alabama - Rates of Persons Living with Diagnosed HIV, 2013



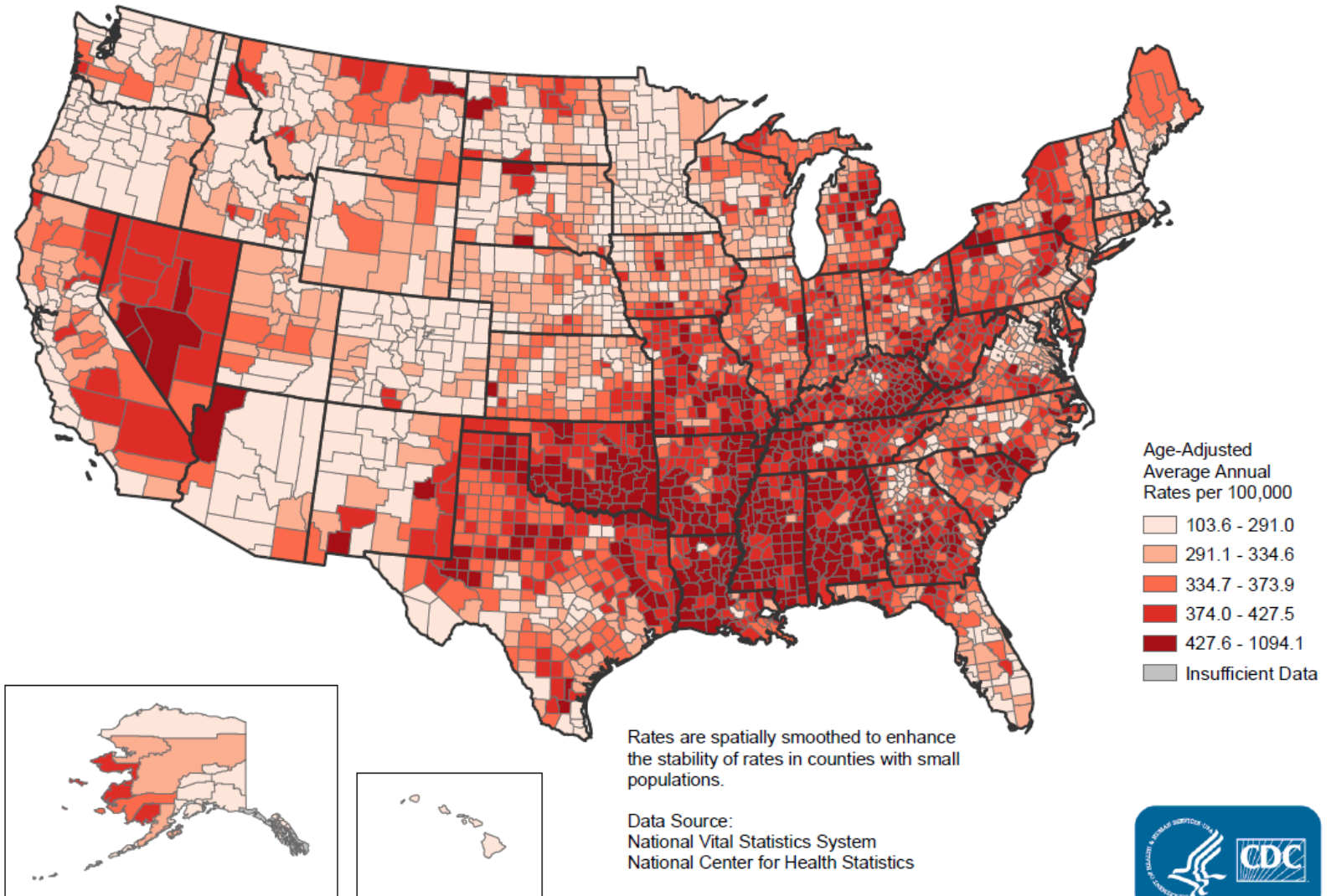
Recent Trends: 2005-2014

Figure 2. Persons Living with HIV (non-AIDS) and AIDS, Alabama 2005-2014



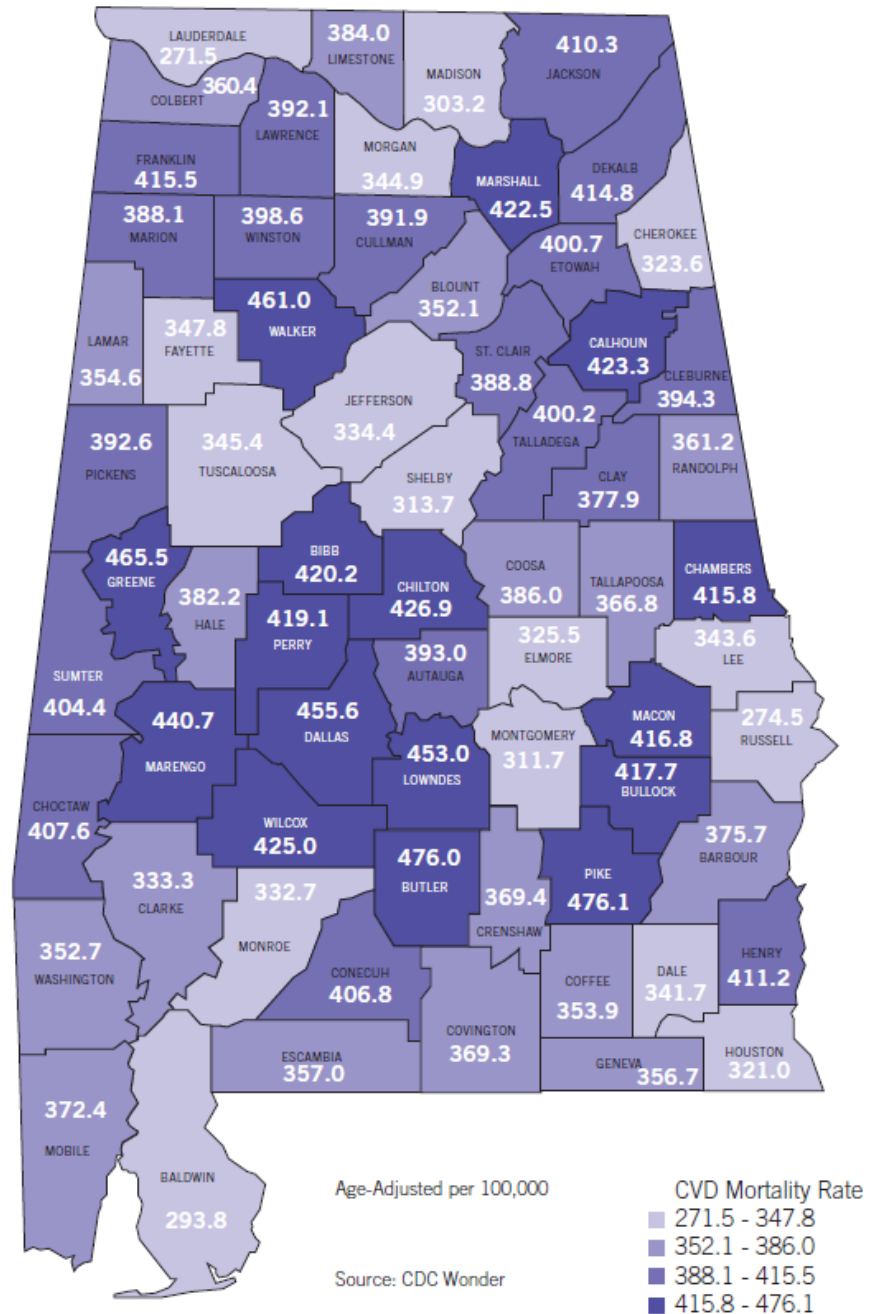
Source: ADPH.org/AIDS

Heart Disease Death Rates, 2011-2013 Adults, Ages 35+, by County



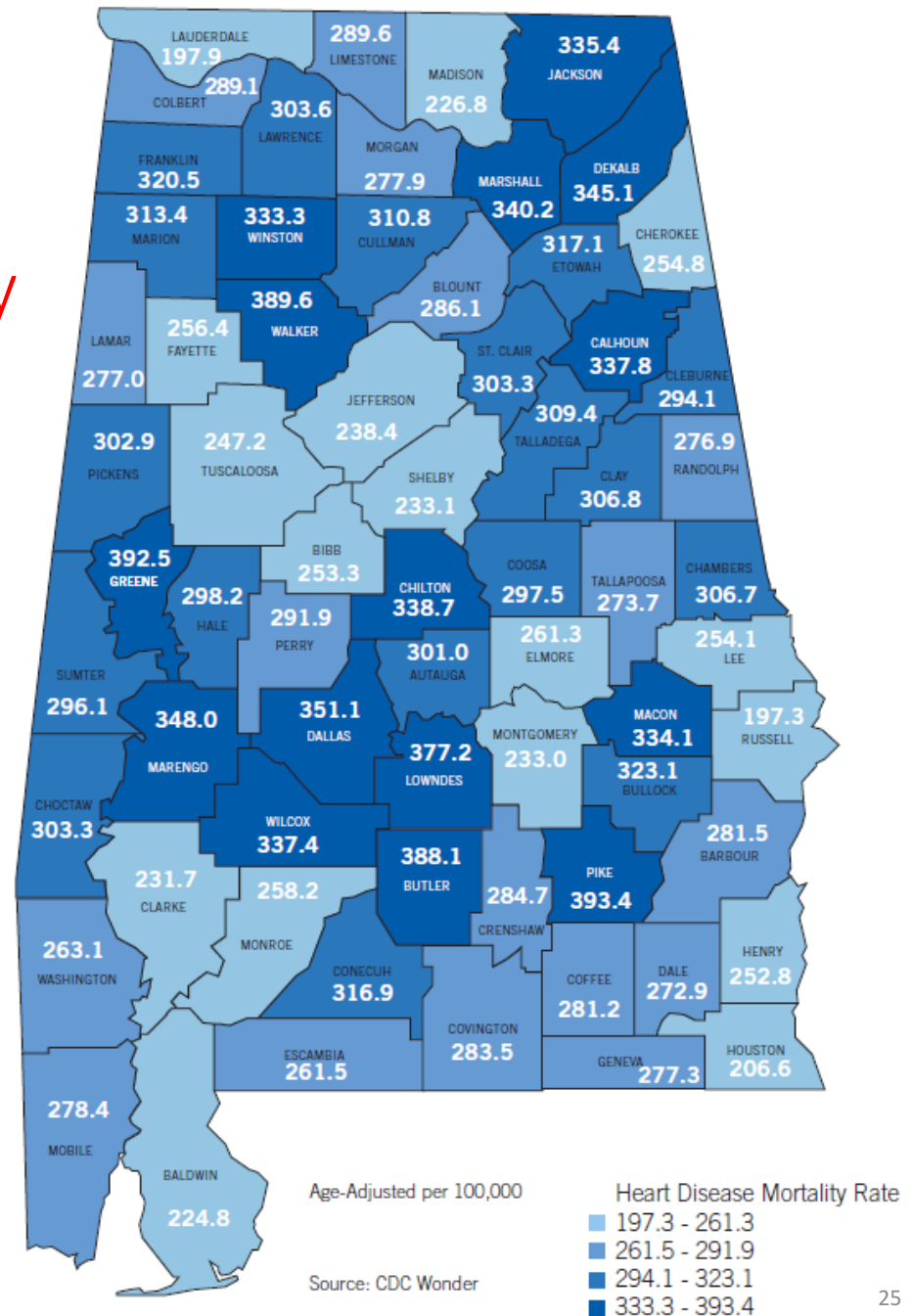
CVD Mortality Rate by County 2002-2006

Source:
http://www.adph.org/cvh/assets/2010_HeartDiseaseStroke_Alabama_Burden.pdf



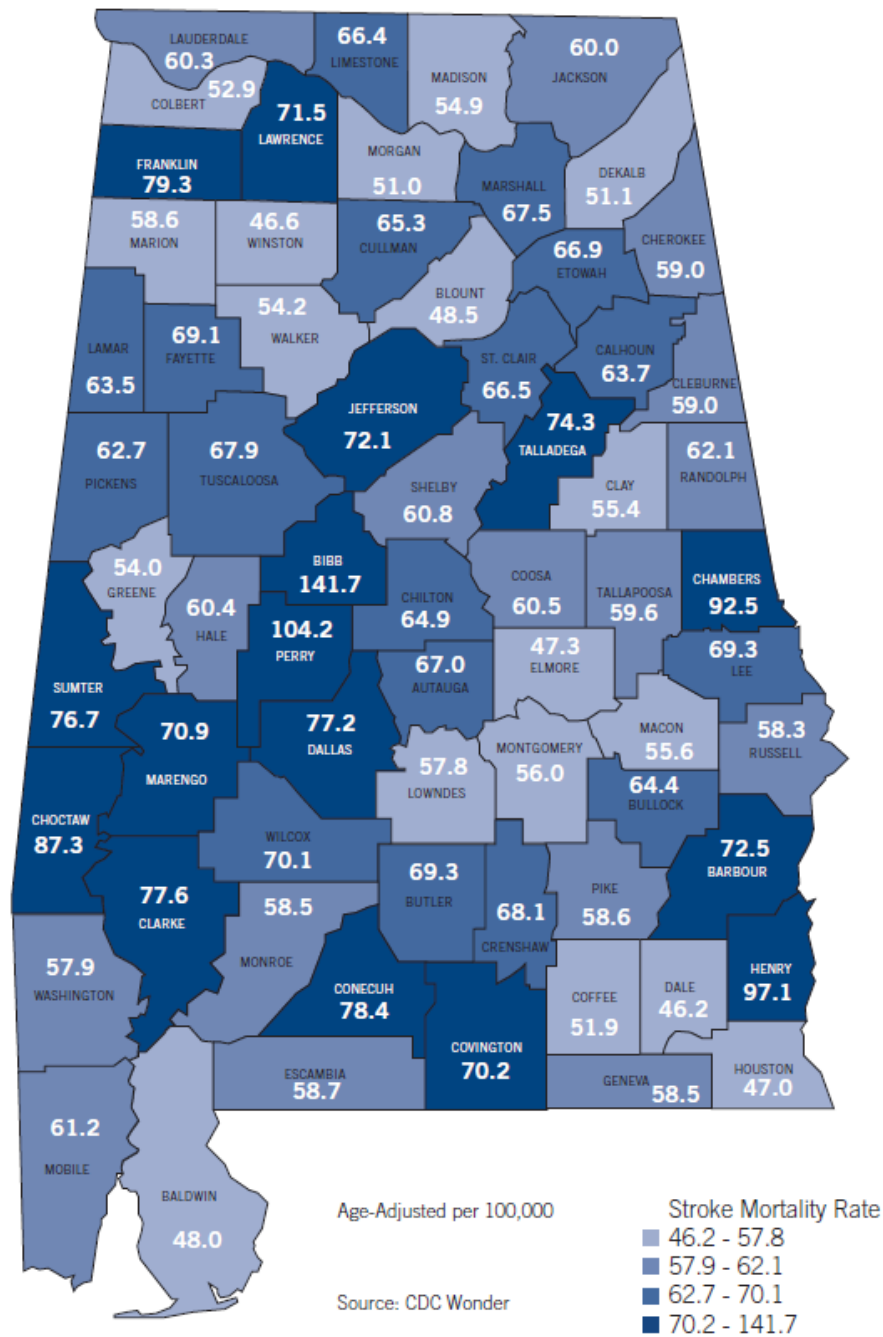
Heart Disease Mortality Rate by County 2002-2006

Source:
http://www.adph.org/cvh/assets/2010_HeartDiseaseStroke_Alabama_Burden.pdf

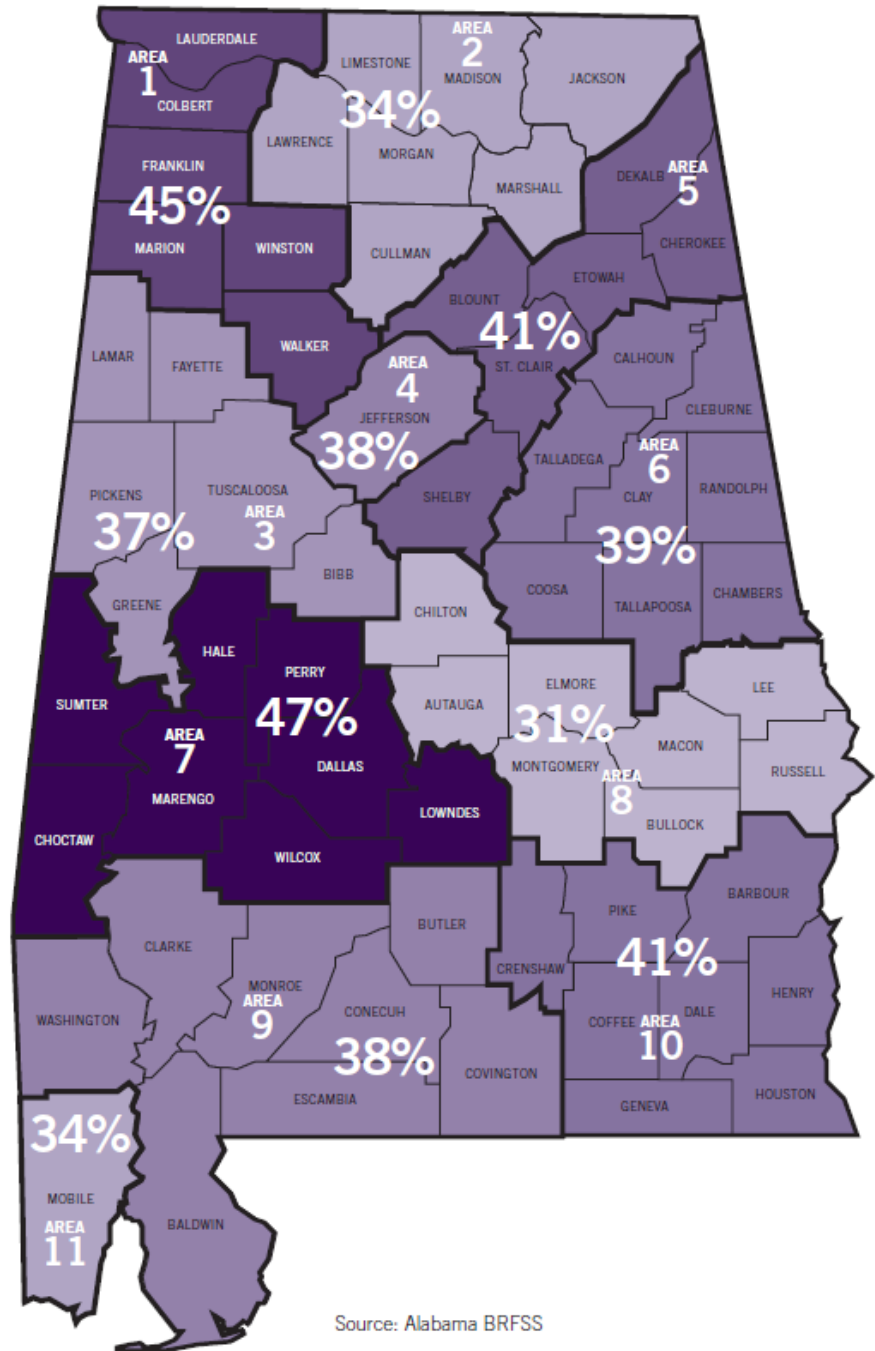


Stroke Mortality Rate by County 2002-2006

Source:
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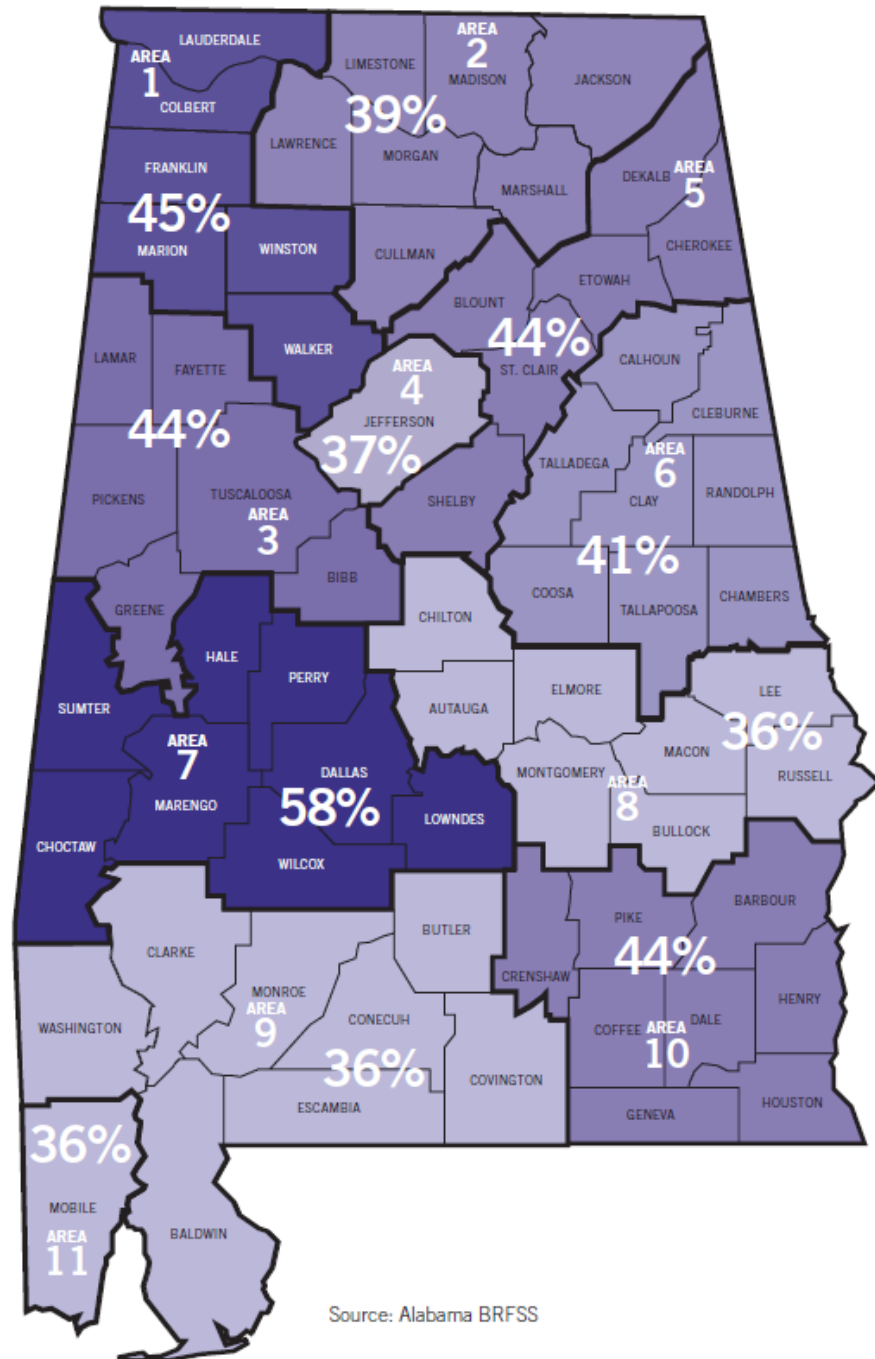
Percentage of Adults with High Blood Pressure in Alabama by Public Health Area 2009



Source:
http://www.adph.org/cvh/assets/2010_HeartDiseaseStroke_Alabama_Burden.pdf

Source: Alabama BRFSS

Percentage of Adults with High Cholesterol in Alabama by Public Health Area 2007

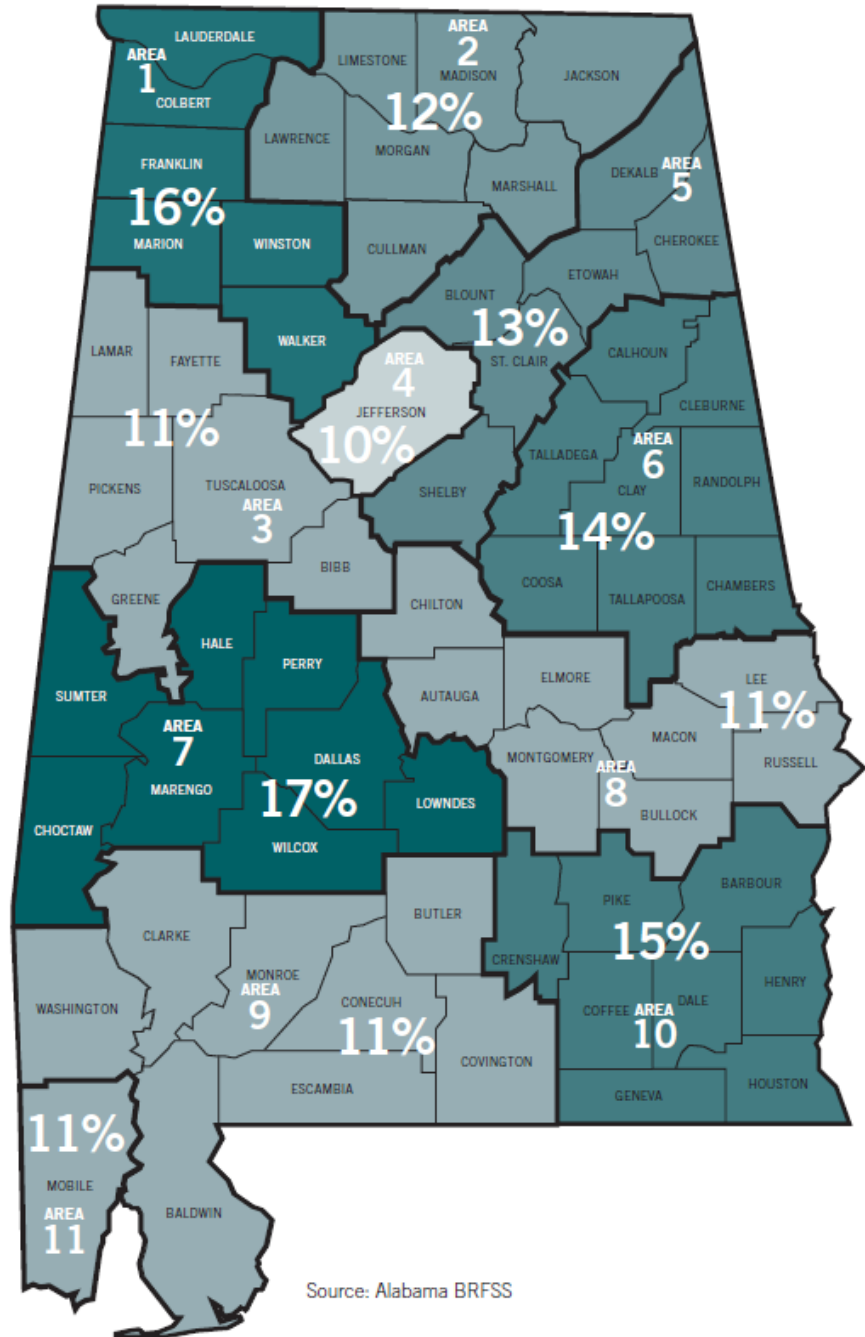


Source:
http://www.adph.org/cvh/assets/2010_HeartDiseaseStroke_Alabama_Burden.pdf

Source: Alabama BRFSS

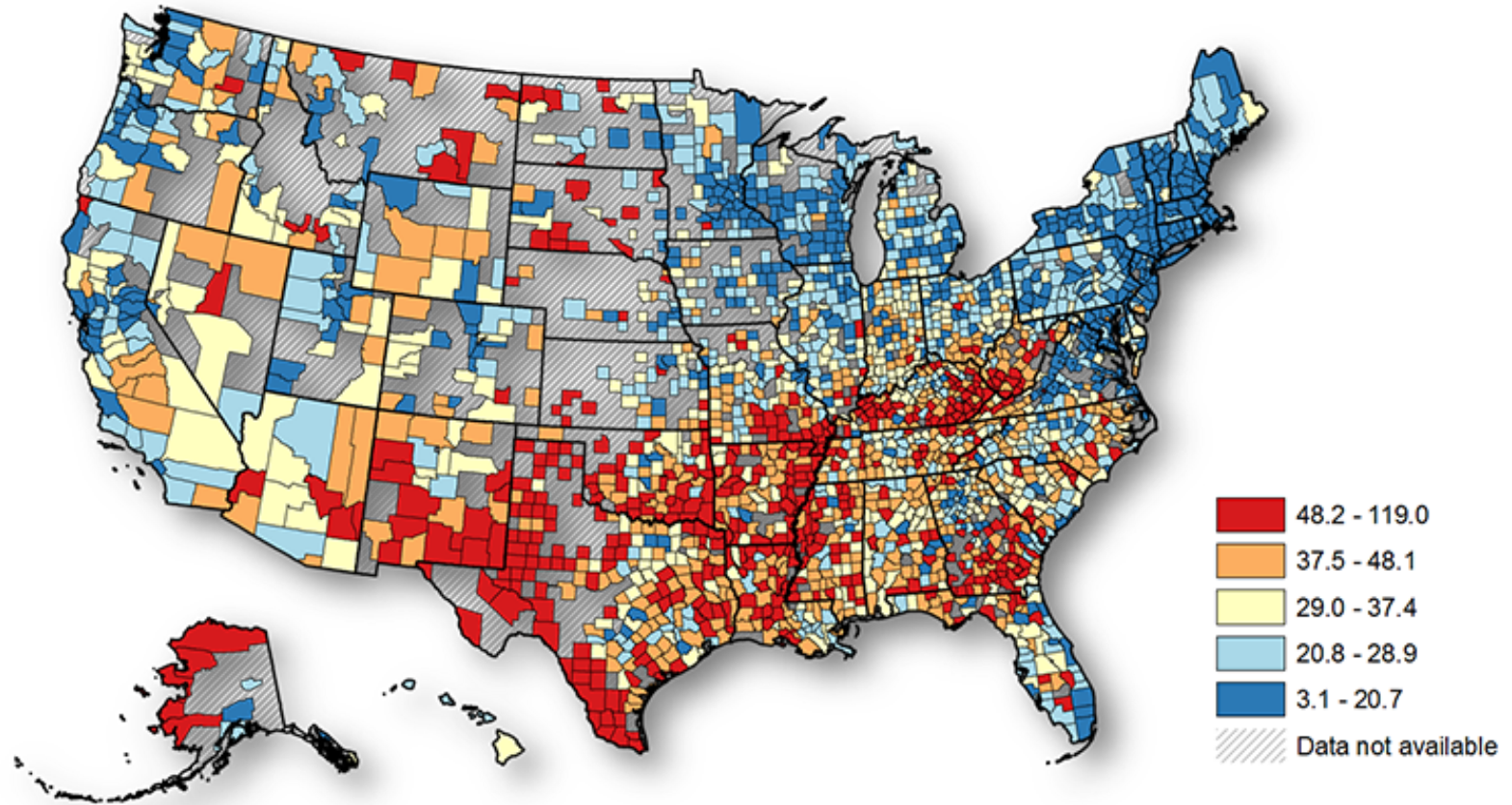
Percentage of Adults with Diabetes in Alabama by Public Health Area 2009

Source:
http://www.adph.org/cvh/assets/2010_HeartDiseaseStroke_Alabama_Burden.pdf



Source: Alabama BRFSS

The Deep South Has the Highest Teen Birth Rates in the Nation



Source: www.cdc.gov/teenpregnancy

The Deep South Has the Highest Teen Birth Rates in the Nation

Alabama is among the top 10

Rank	State
1	Mississippi
2	New Mexico
3	Arkansas
4	Texas
5	Oklahoma
6	Louisiana
7	Kentucky
8	West Virginia
9	Alabama
10	Tennessee
11	South Carolina
12	Arizona

Source: www.guttmacher.org, 2014

Teen Pregnancy

Teen birth rate (births per 1,000 women age 15-19), 2014

Age	Alabama	United States
15-19	32	24.2
15-17	14.5	10.9
18-19	58.4	43.8

Source: National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 64, No. 12, December 23, 2015

Teen Pregnancy

Percent of births to women under 20 by race/ethnicity, 2014

Race	Alabama	United States
Non-Hispanic, White	54%	40%
Non-Hispanic, Black	38%	22%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	2%
Asian or Pacific Islander	1%	2%
Hispanic	8%	35%

Source: National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 64, No. 12, December 23, 2015

Health Equity

Attainment of the highest level of health possible for all people. Achieving health equity requires valuing everyone with focused and ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of health disparities and health care disparities

Health Inequity

Health Inequity—Differences in health status between more and less socially and economically advantaged groups, caused by *systematic* differences in social conditions and processes that effectively determine health. Health inequities are *avoidable*, *unjust*, and therefore *actionable*.



Health equity and structural racism:

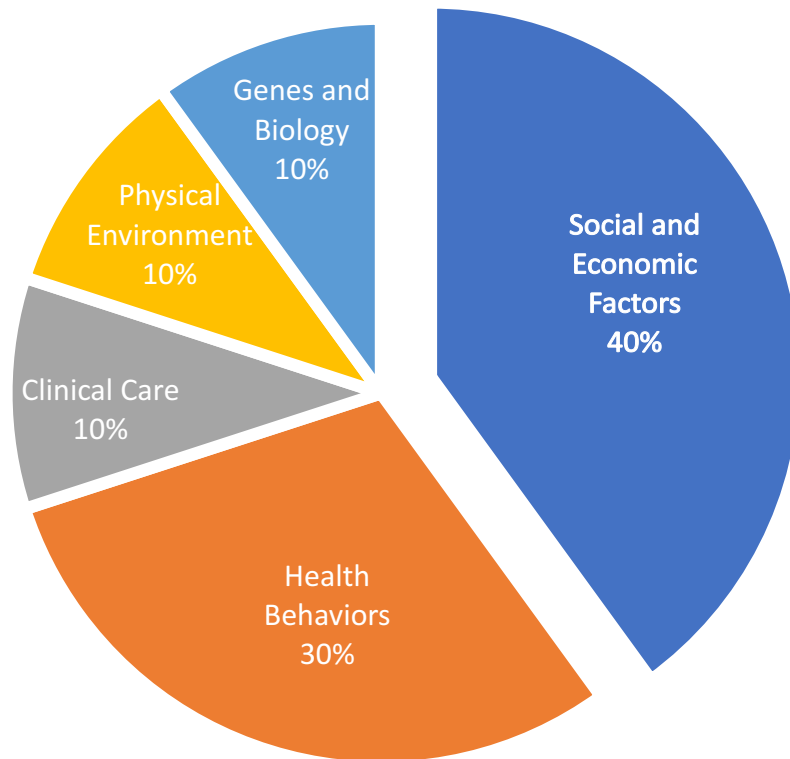
- Structural racism is the normalization of an array of dynamics — historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal — that routinely advantage white people while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color and American Indians.

The Unequal opportunity of Race

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vX_VzI-r8NY

Consider What Creates Health

Determinants of Health



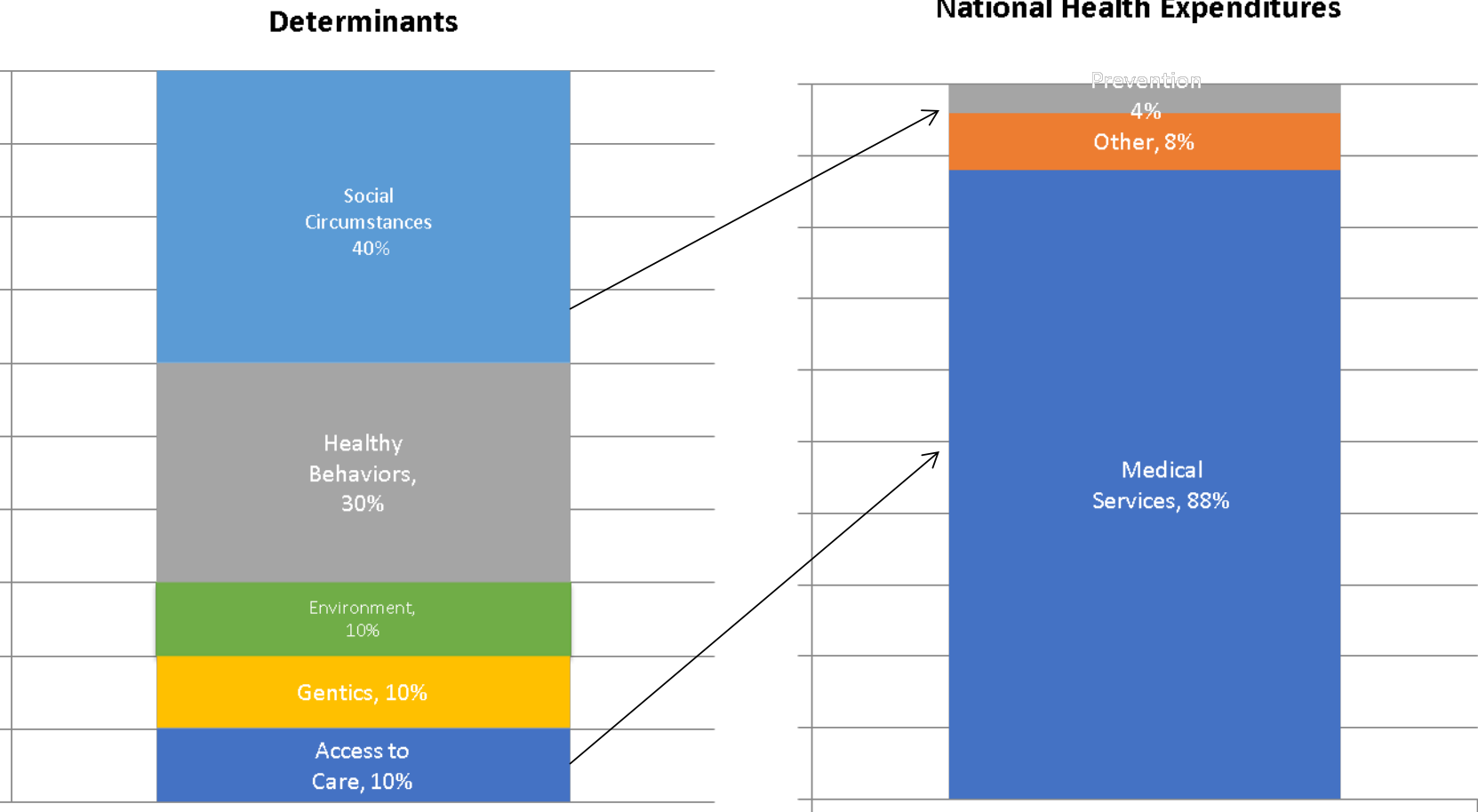
• Necessary conditions for health (WHO)

- ☀ Peace
- ☀ Shelter
- ☀ Education
- ☀ Food
- ☀ Income
- ☀ Stable eco-system
- ☀ Sustainable resources
- ☀ **Mobility**
- ☀ Social justice and equity

Determinants of Health Model based on frameworks developed by: Tarlov AR. *Ann N Y Acad Sci* 1999; 896: 281-93; and Kindig D, Asada Y, Booske B. *JAMA* 2008; 299(17): 2081-2083.

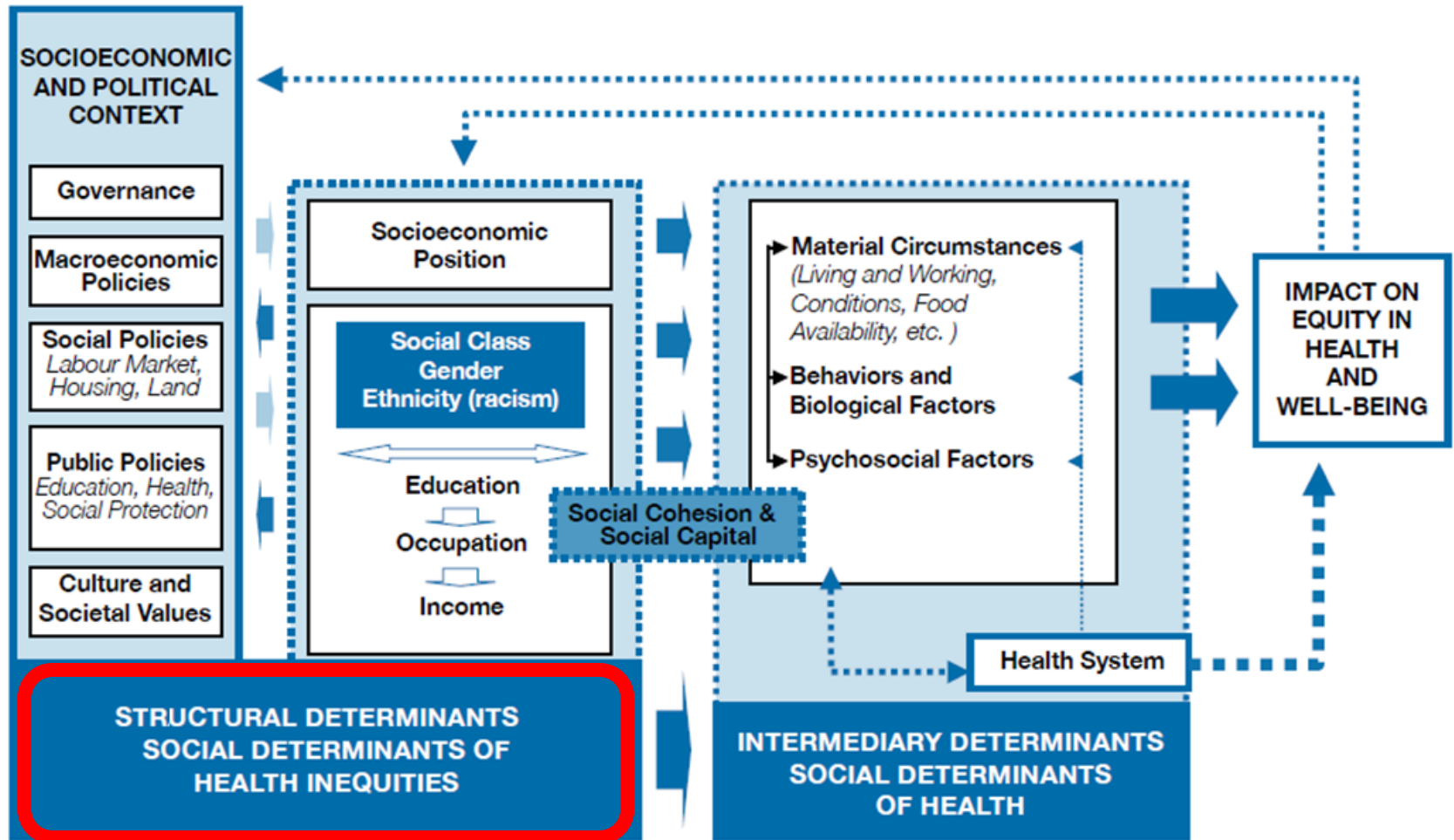
World Health Organization. Ottawa charter for health promotion. International Conference on Health Promotion: The Move Towards a New Public Health, November 17-21, 1986 Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, 1986. Accessed July 12, 2002 at <<http://www.who.int/hpr/archive/docs/ottawa.html>>.

Spending Mismatch: Health Care and Other Key Determinants of Health



Source: NEHI, 2012

Promote a Health in All Policies approach with health equity as the goal



Research: Link with Religion, Spirituality, and Health

- Religiosity among Black MSM who used crack and cocaine was also associated with higher levels of risky behavior and may increase risk of HIV and STD infection (*Klobin, et., al., 2006; Parsons, 2003; Reisner, et., al., 2009; Stall, et. al, 2003*).
- Research found that unprotected anal intercourse, (UAI), and polysubstance use, were associated with higher religiosity scores, and lower levels of these risk behaviors were associated with higher spirituality scores (Watkins, et. al, 2015).

Sexuality & the Spirit

Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas captures from Christian ethicist, James Nelson, in her book, Sexuality and the Black Church, sexuality is more than who one has sex with.

“Sexuality is a sign, symbol, and the means of our call to communication and communion. This is the most apparent in regard to other human beings and other body-selves. The mystery of our sexuality is the mystery of our need to reach out to embrace others both physically and spiritually...[Sexuality] is who we are as body-selves who experience the emotional, cognitive, physical, and spiritual need for intimate communion-**human and divine.**”

Sexuality & the Spirit

- “If God wants to relate to the whole person and be known by the whole person, then our sexuality must clearly be part of what we bring to authentic relationship with God. Many Christians cannot accept theoretically that sexuality is positive and is the most important part of nature—thus we can bring into God’s presence.”
- Those that shared sexuality and engaged in sexual discussion experienced more authentic and healthy relationships with self and others.

(Jo Anastasiadis, “Whisperings of Intimacy: Sexuality, Spirituality, and Spiritual Direction,” *Presence*, December 2009, p.20).

Sexuality & the Spirit

- Sexual stories can affect relationships with God and others as sexual sensations and images occur considerably with in one's prayer life.
- Because one's prayer life is at the center of spiritual direction, it is pertinent to incorporate ones spirituality and sexuality into spiritual direction practice, as God can and does speak to us in our sexual selves.*

(Ferder and Heagle. "Your Sexual Self," *Presence*, May,1992)

Sexuality & the Spirit

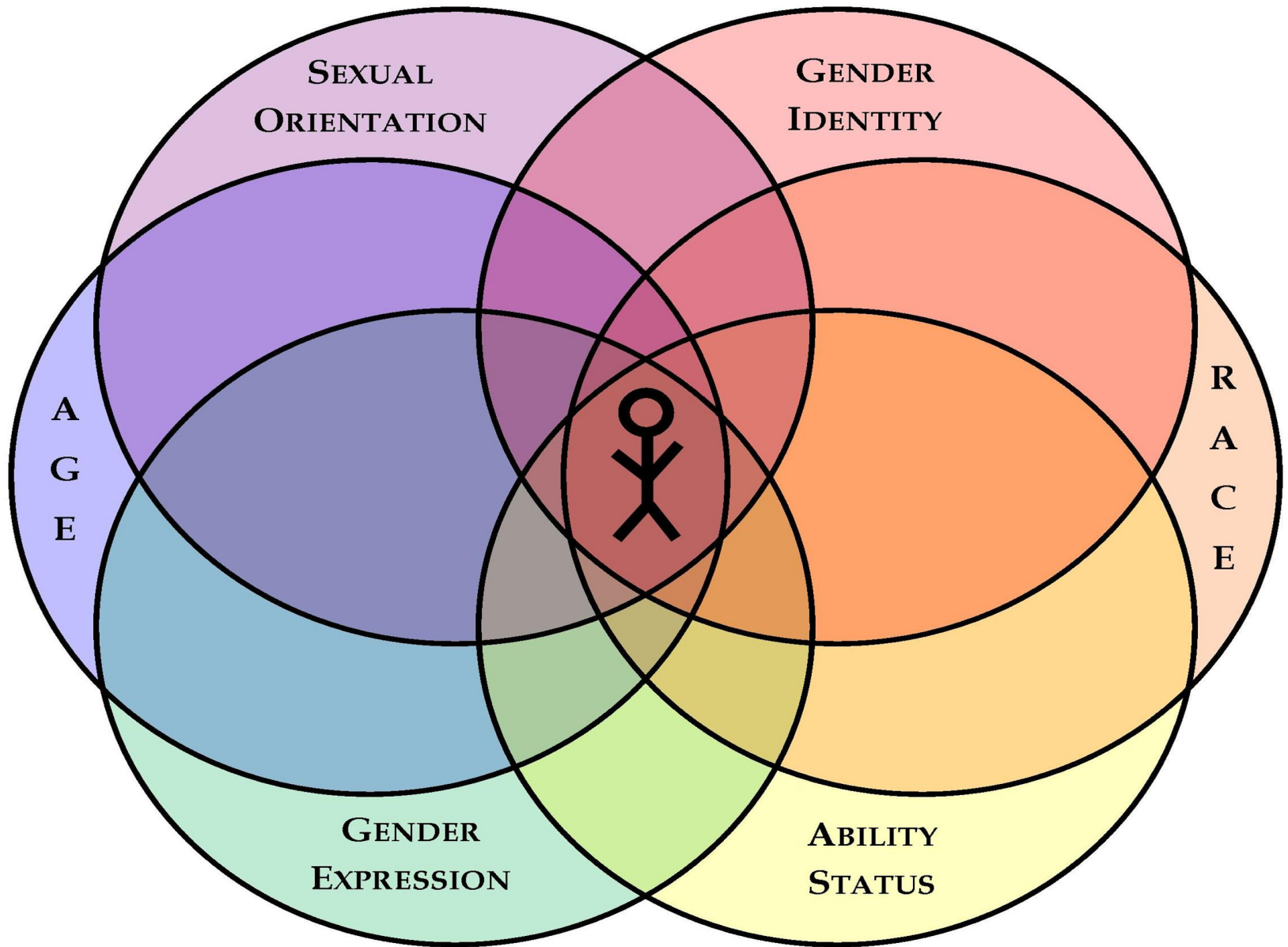
- Addressing spirituality provides the vehicle to address the whole person-mind, body (sexuality), soul, and emotional self in order to guide an individual towards a deeper and meaningful relationship with God or Higher Power.
- Addressing an individual's sexuality can also have more positive results and perpetrate a richer and more effective spiritual direction relationship.
- Research has shown nearly ½ of those who discussed their sexuality perceived the discussion as negative; however, those individual's who shared their sexuality by engaging in sexual discussion and shared their experiences developed stronger, more authentic and healthy relationships with themselves and others. *

*Jo Anastasiadis, Whisperings of Intimacy: Sexuality, Spirituality, and Spiritual Direction, December 2009, p.20-21.

Ibid, 22-23.

Conclusion

- Not advocating a sole focus on an individual' s sexual orientation or sexuality.
- Perhaps the lack of discussion of sexuality in health care settings has further exacerbated the over focus on sex and the genesis of negative views of sex and sexuality, namely the castigation and vilification of “non-heterosexual” persons.
- Incorporating a germane discussion on an individual' s sexuality will open up a more authentic, pervasive, and in many cases (especially among persons of color and Millennials) necessary discussion of how one experiences and perceives Spirituality
- Religious attitudes which articulate racial, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation bias, prejudice, and discrimination have persisited specifically around HIV prevention and treatment and must be ameliorated to enhance effective treatment



WHEN THE HEART and MIND WORK TOGETHER



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- Collins, J. *Health Equity*. Partners for a Healthier Community, Inc. Presented at the Western Massachusetts Health Equity Summit, 2013.
- Medical AIDS Outreach

Questions & Comments

