

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
EST. 1875
PUBLIC HEALTH

Public Health and Beyond



What's Happening in Alabama?

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HLA: Healthcare Leaders Association
March 5, 2026

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The London Cholera Outbreak of 1854

- Dr. John Snow mapped out deaths from cholera in Soho, London, in 1854
- Showed a 14-fold increase in cholera cases in persons using local water
- Before the germ theory of disease existed!



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“The Great Sanitary Awakening”

REPORT
OF A
GENERAL PLAN
FOR THE
Promotion of Public and Personal Health,
DEVISED, PREPARED AND RECOMMENDED
BY THE
COMMISSIONERS
APPOINTED UNDER A
RESOLVE OF THE LEGISLATURE OF MASSACHUSETTS,
RELATIVE TO A
SANITARY SURVEY OF THE STATE
[By Lemuel Shattuck]
PRINTED AND S. NO.
BOSTON:
DUTTON & WENTWORTH, STATE PRINTERS,
NO. 21, CORNHILL STREET.
1850.

Lemuel Shattuck

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So, what is “Public Health” anyway?

- The science and practice of improving the health and survival of populations
- Key areas include epidemiology, outbreak control, environmental health, health promotion & education, and health policy



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Who is doing public health in Alabama?

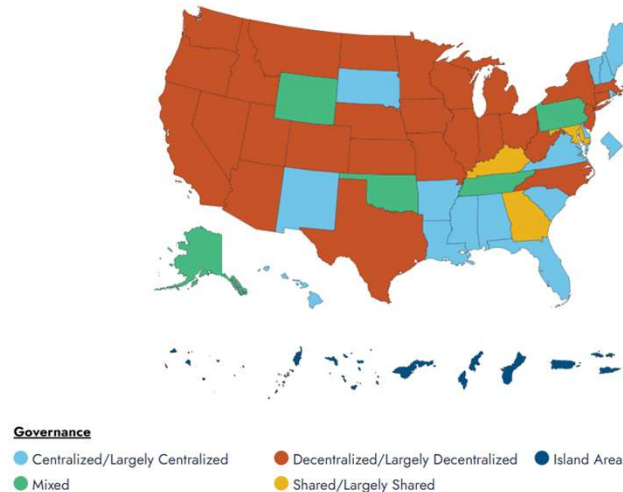
- Governmental (federal, state & local)
- Health care providers and facilities
- Academia
- Nonprofits, community-based organizations and faith-based initiatives
- Commercial & industrial employers
- No national PH system, only a nation-wide PH system... “patchwork quilt”

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“If you’ve seen one health department...”

- Mix of centralized and decentralized systems
- Over 3,400 local health departments
- 59 separate states, U.S. territories, freely-associated states and D.C.
- Variety of funding mechanisms and regulatory authority

Characteristics of US States and Island Area Public Health Agencies, 2022
Governance



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How is ADPH different?

Primary responsibility for sixty-five counties

Two quasi-independent metro health departments (Jefferson & Mobile)

Separate Medicaid and environmental agencies in Alabama

No Medicaid expansion

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ADPH Public Health Districts

The map shows Alabama divided into 17 public health districts, each color-coded and labeled with its name. The districts are: Northern (pink), Northeastern (teal), West Central (light green), Jefferson (yellow), East Central (orange), Southwestern (red), Southeastern (blue), and Mobile (dark blue).

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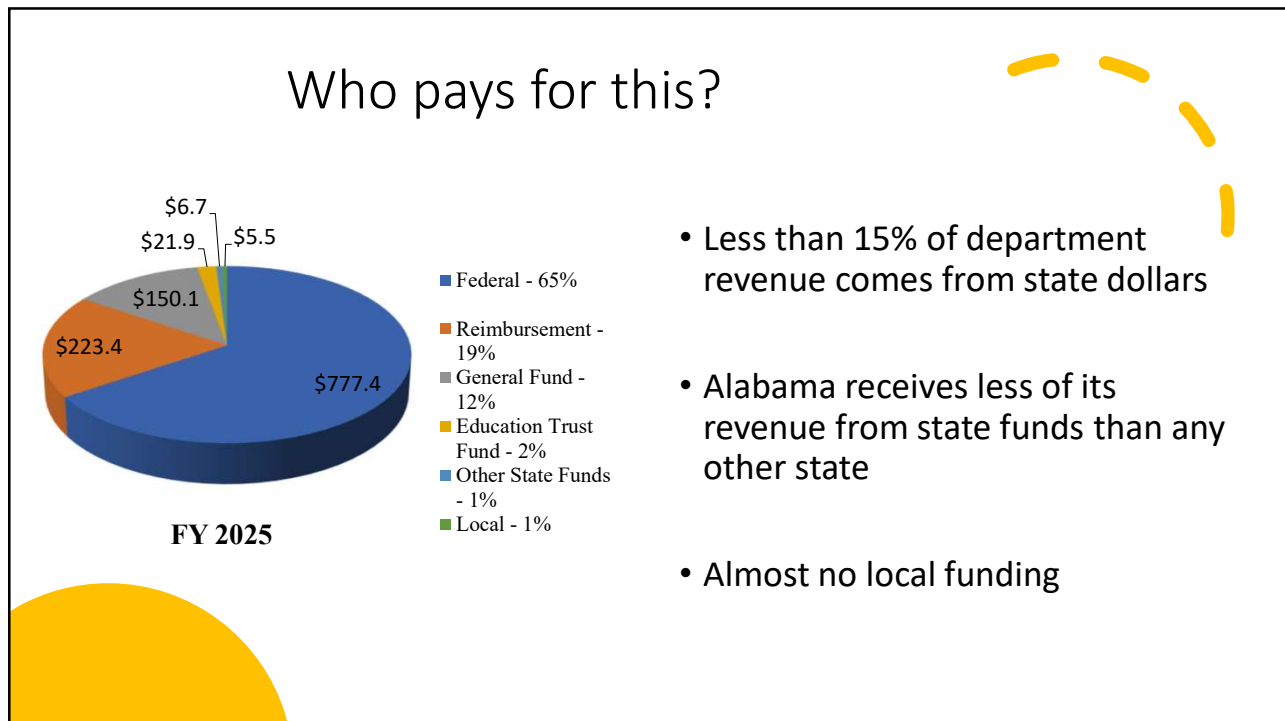
Clinical
Services

- Immunizations for children (VFC)
- Disease control (STIs, tuberculosis)
- Family planning
- Home health
- Children’s Health Insurance Program (All Kids)
- NO primary care services (except Jefferson & Mobile counties)

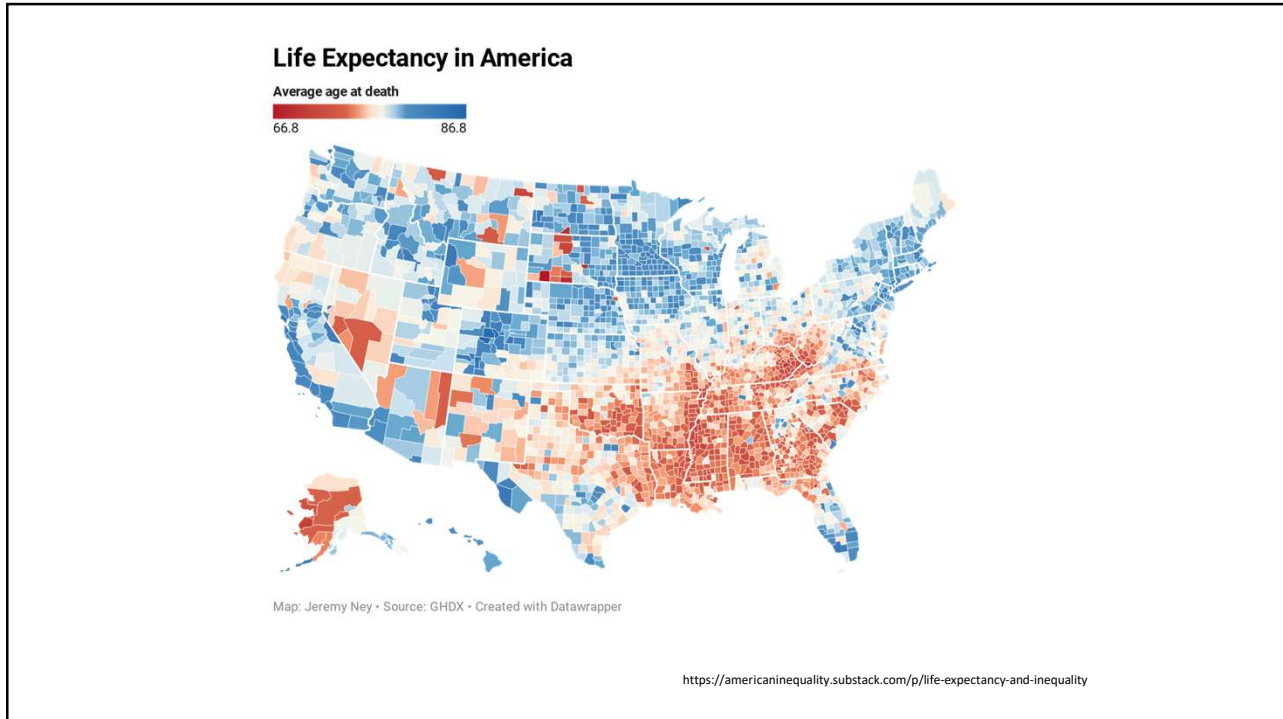
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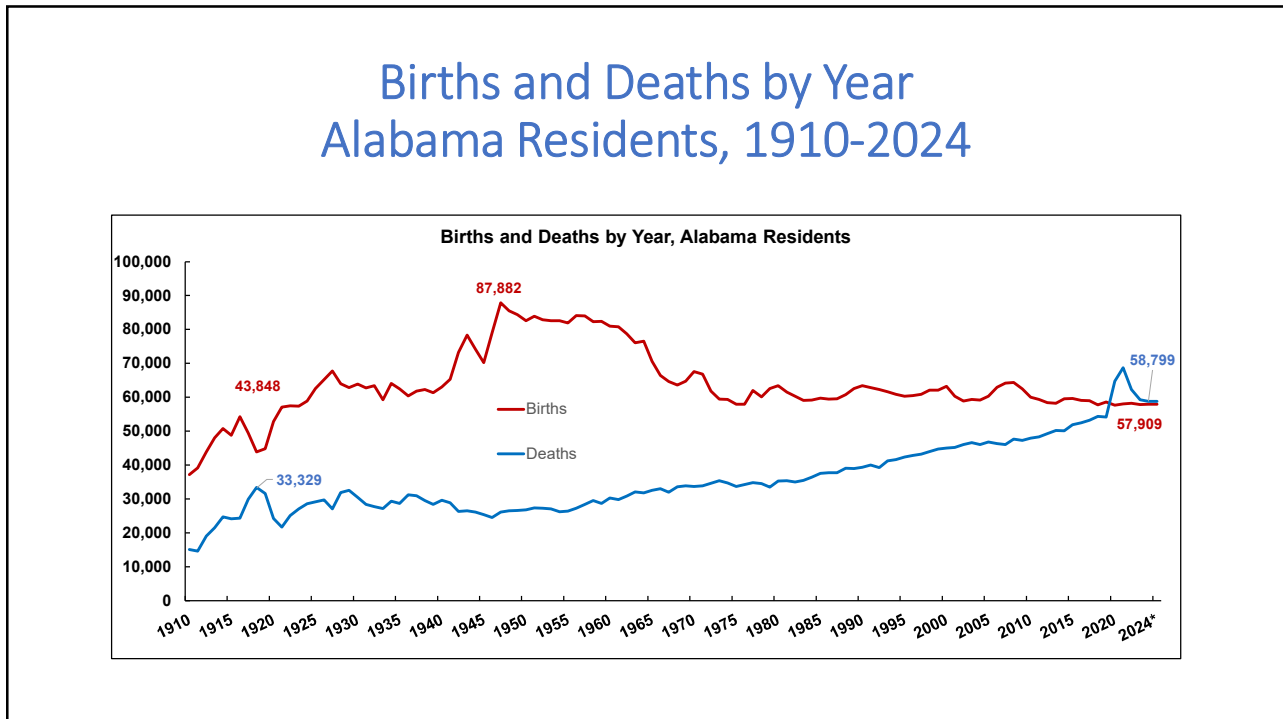
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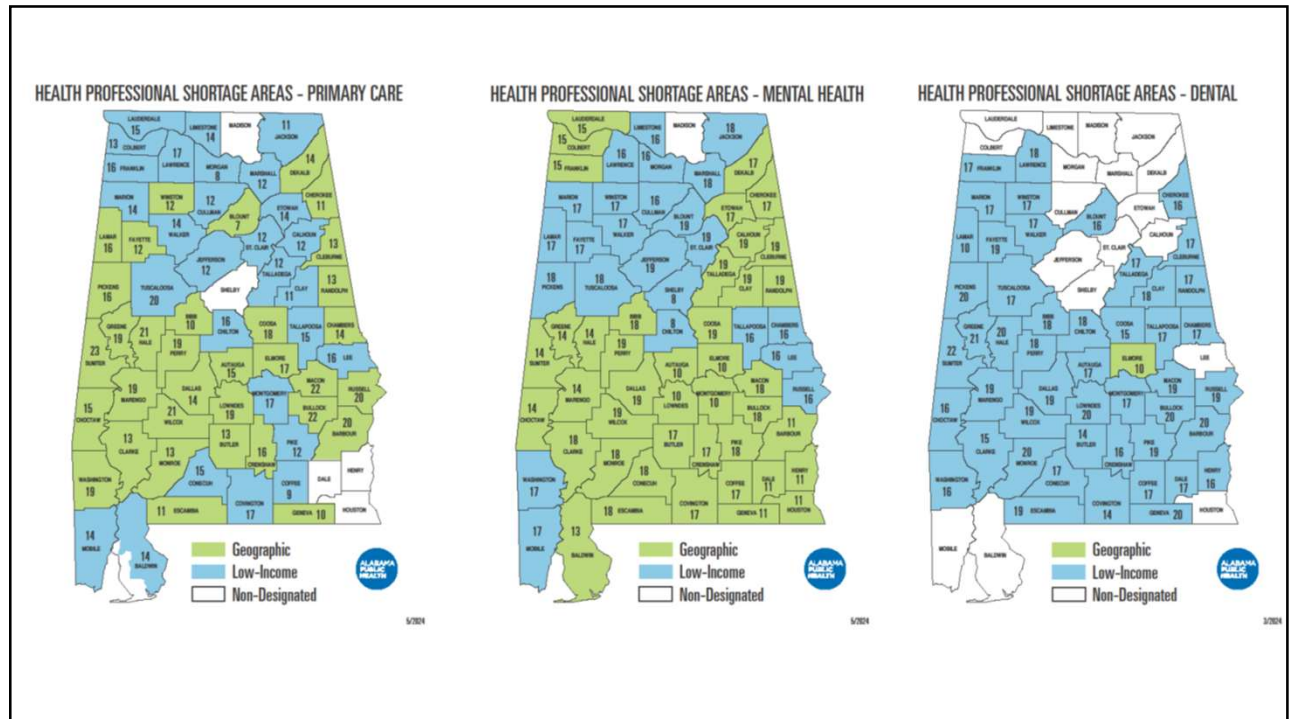


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Alabama's Public Health Challenges

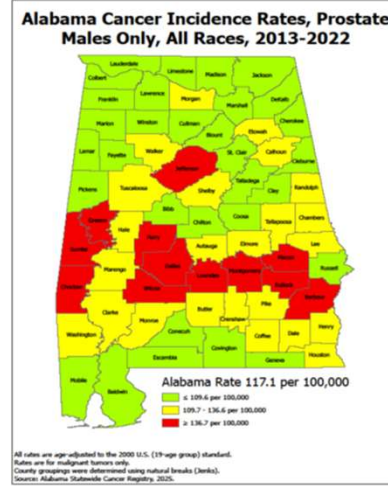
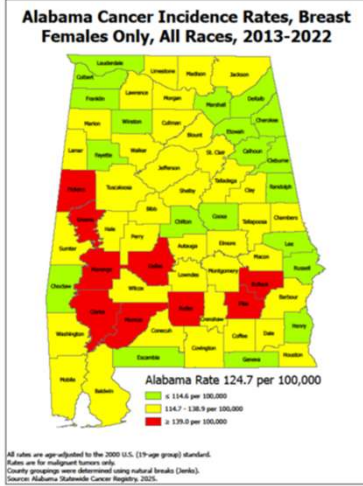
- Poverty
- Prevalence of chronic diseases
- Lack of access to care
 - Shortage of health care providers & aging provider workforce
 - Hospital closures & loss of obstetrical services
 - Transportation barriers, especially in rural areas
 - No Medicaid expansion
- Health literacy

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“The same map...”



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A PICTURE OF THE LOSS OF RURAL OBSTETRICAL SERVICE IN ALABAMA 1980 TO 2025



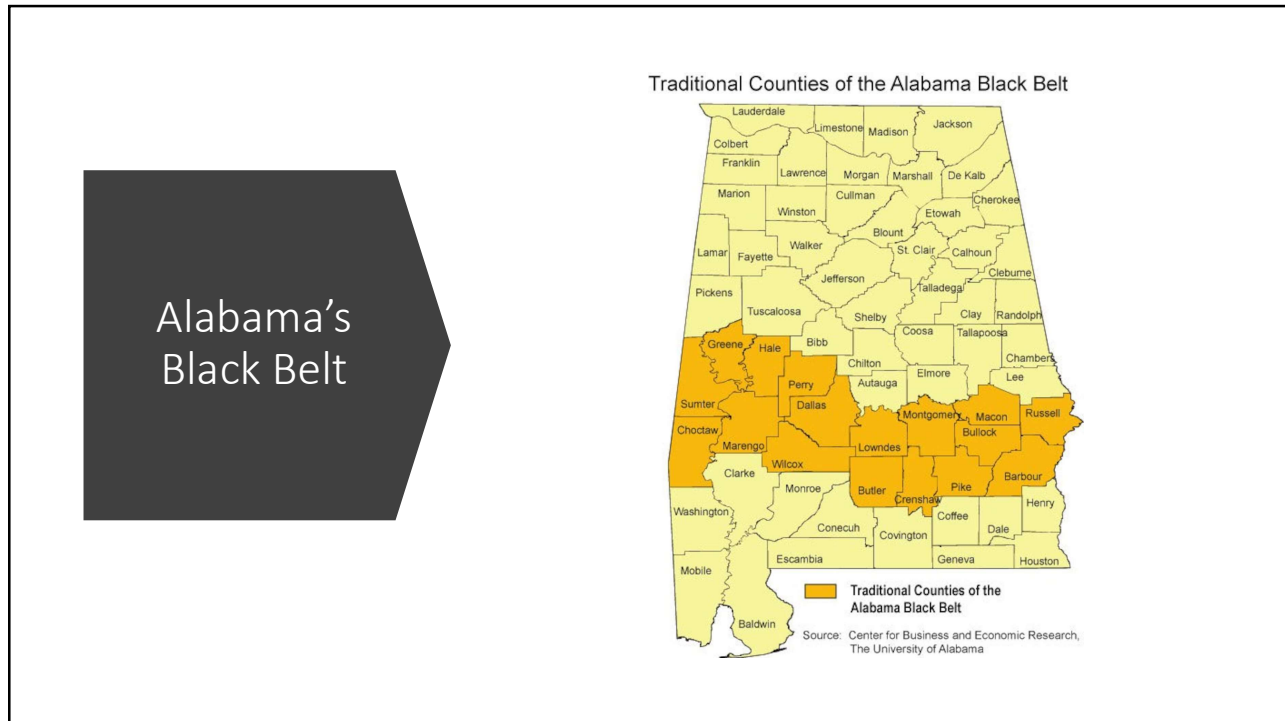
45 of the 67 counties currently considered RURAL had hospitals providing obstetrical service in 1980



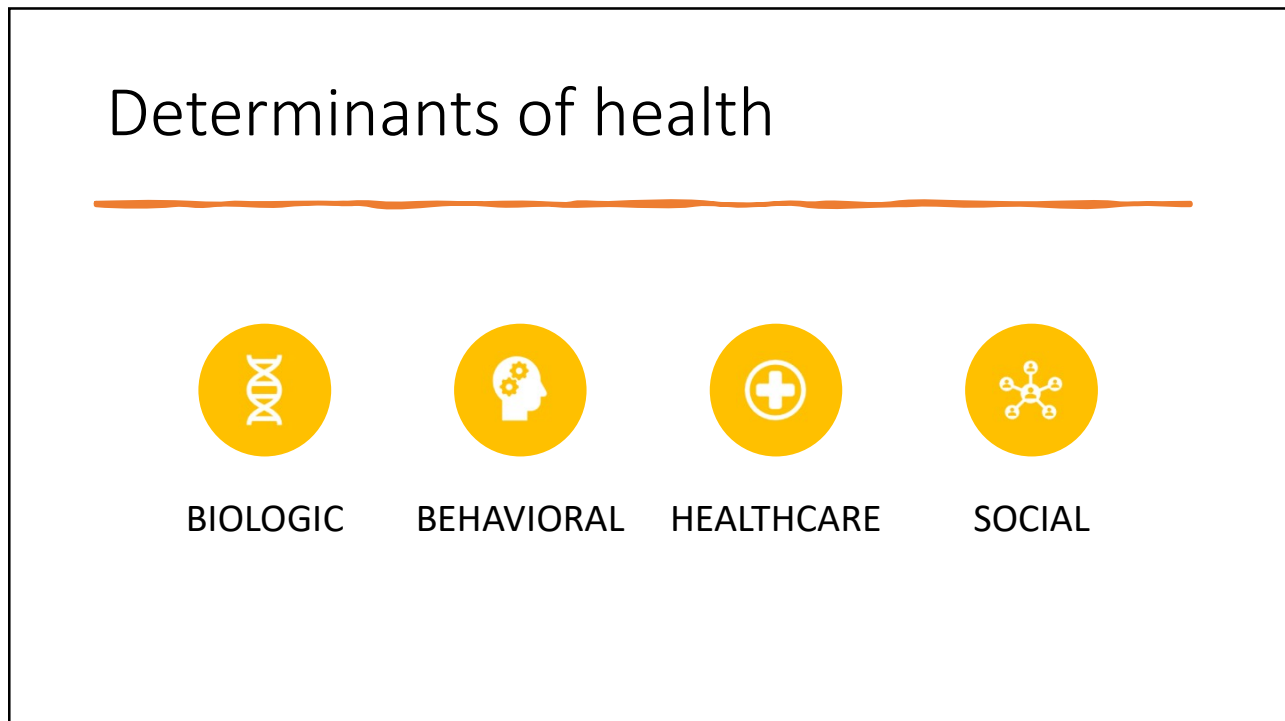
15 of the 67 counties currently considered RURAL had hospitals providing obstetrical service TODAY

Produced by the Alabama Department of Public Health, Office of Primary Care and Rural Health, March 17, 2025. The defining of counties as rural or urban is based upon a definition that is used by the Alabama Rural Health Association.

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Hot Topics in Alabama

- Infant mortality
- Measles and other vaccine preventable diseases
- Black Belt wastewater issues
- Rural Health Transformation Grant & federal funding changes

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Infant Mortality



I.M. RATE INVOLVES MANY ASPECTS OF HEALTH CARE AND POLICY



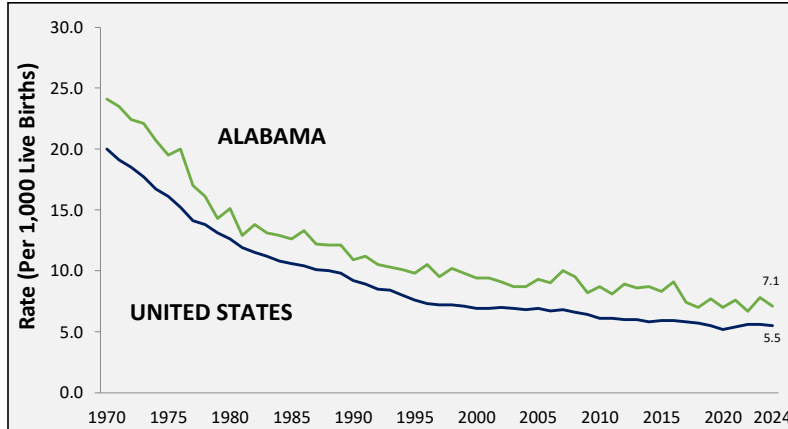
COMPARE "APPLES TO APPLES" ACROSS STATES AND COUNTRIES



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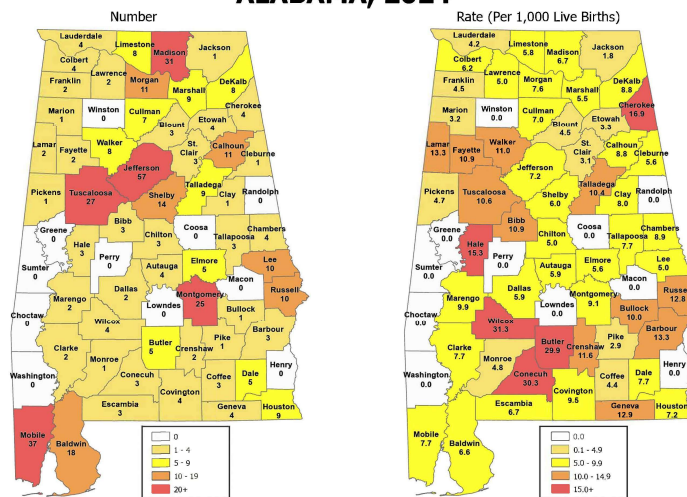
Infant Mortality Rates Alabama & USA¹, 1970-2024



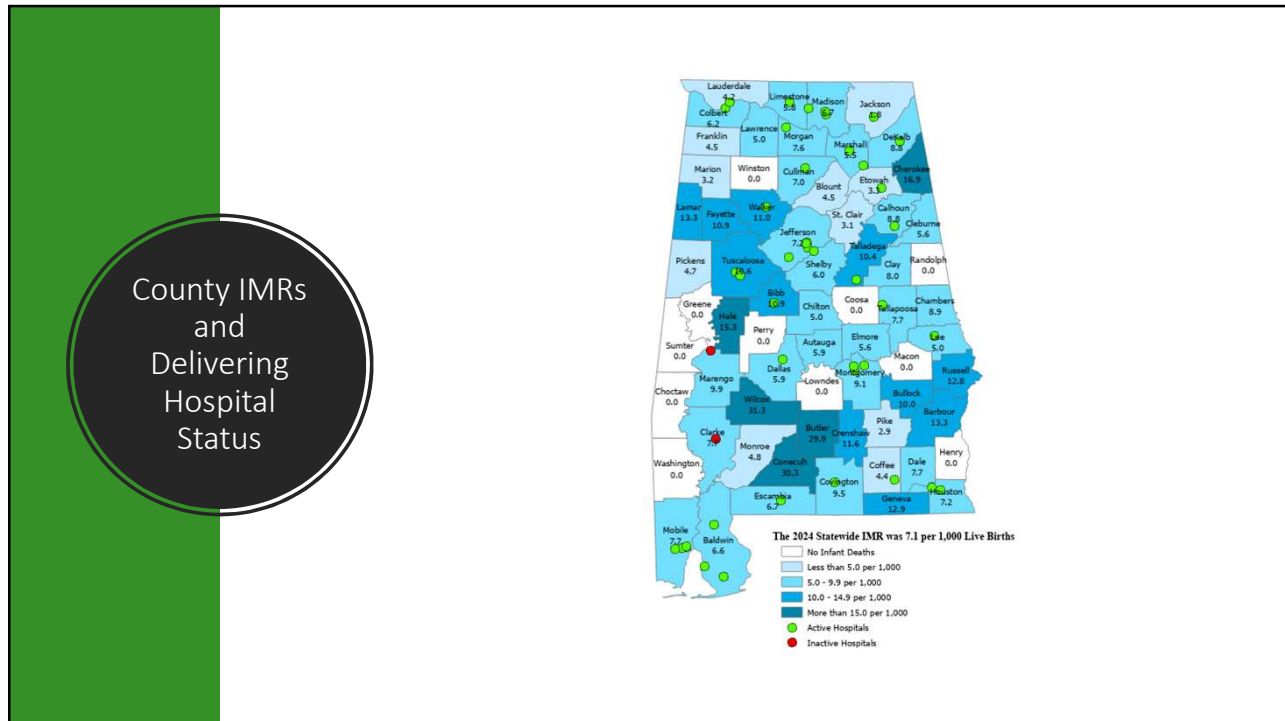
¹ 2024 national data is provisional.

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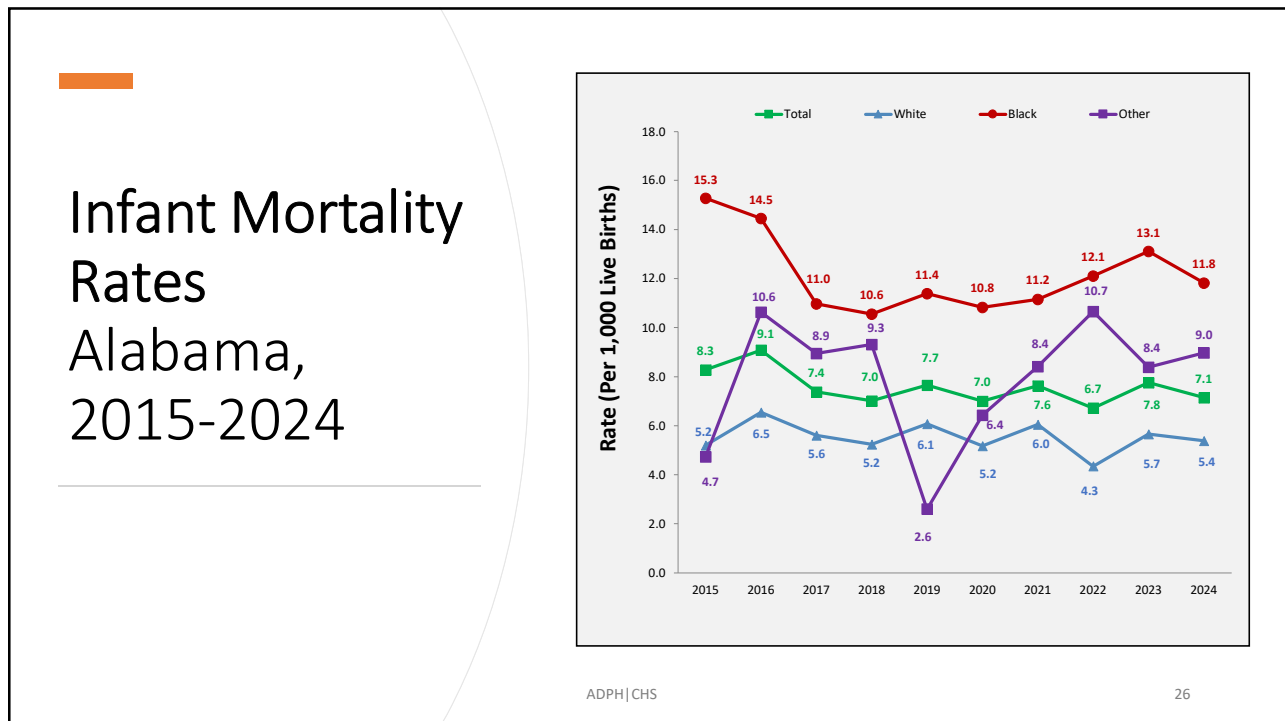
INFANT MORTALITY BY COUNTY OF RESIDENCE ALABAMA, 2024



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ADPH|CHS

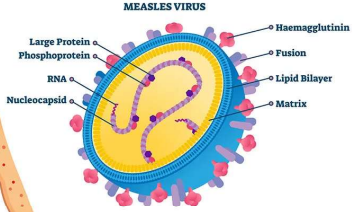
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MEASLES

MEASLES is a Highly Contagious Infectious Disease Caused by the Measles Virus


The Measles VACCINE is Effective at Preventing the Disease









MEASLES VIRUS


- Large Protein
- Phosphoprotein
- RNA
- Nucleocapsid
- Haemagglutinin
- Fusion
- Lipid Bilayer
- Matrix


SYMPTOMS





-  **Fever**
-  **Red, Blotchy Rash First Appears on the Forehead**
-  **Red Inflamed Eyes**
-  **Runny Nose**
-  **Hacking Cough and Sore Throat**
-  **Koplik's Spots Inside the Mouth**


COMPLICATIONS

 **Pneumonia**

 **Severe Diarrhea**

 **Encephalitis**

 **Blindness**

 **Ear Infection**

Measles is back...!!!

- The MOST infectious disease
- Over 2,200 cases in 47 jurisdictions in 2025 in the USA
- Highly preventable with vaccination
- Loss of measles elimination status

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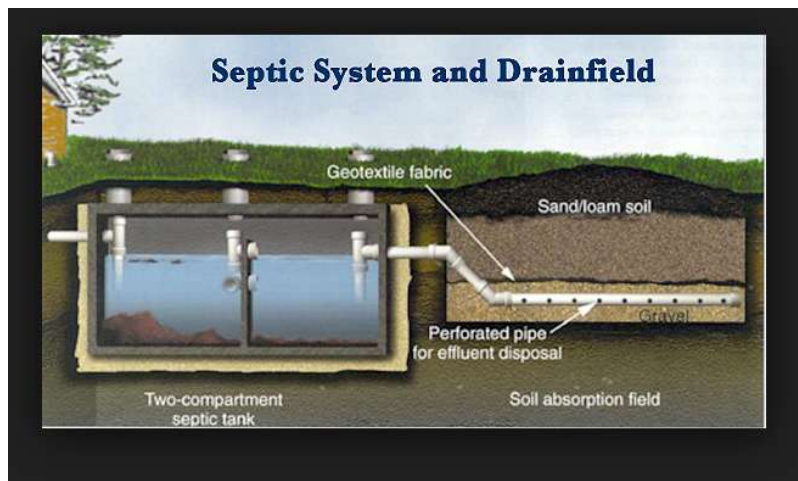


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Black Belt Wastewater Issues

- Black Belt soil not conducive to conventional septic systems
- “Straight-piping” is a common practice
- HHS Office of Civil Rights / Department of Justice inquiry
- Installation of engineered systems on private property

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Rural Health Transformation Program

-  Created by Congress in 2025 to address rural health issues
-  Fifty billion dollars to be distributed among 50 states over 5 years
-  Alabama has received an award of \$203 million for 2026
-  Funding programs around rural hospitals, EMS, maternal & fetal health, mental health and others

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