



Pennsylvania
Department of Health

10/24/25

The State of Rural Health in Pennsylvania

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Secretary of Health

Susquehanna Valley Rural Regional Healthcare Summit

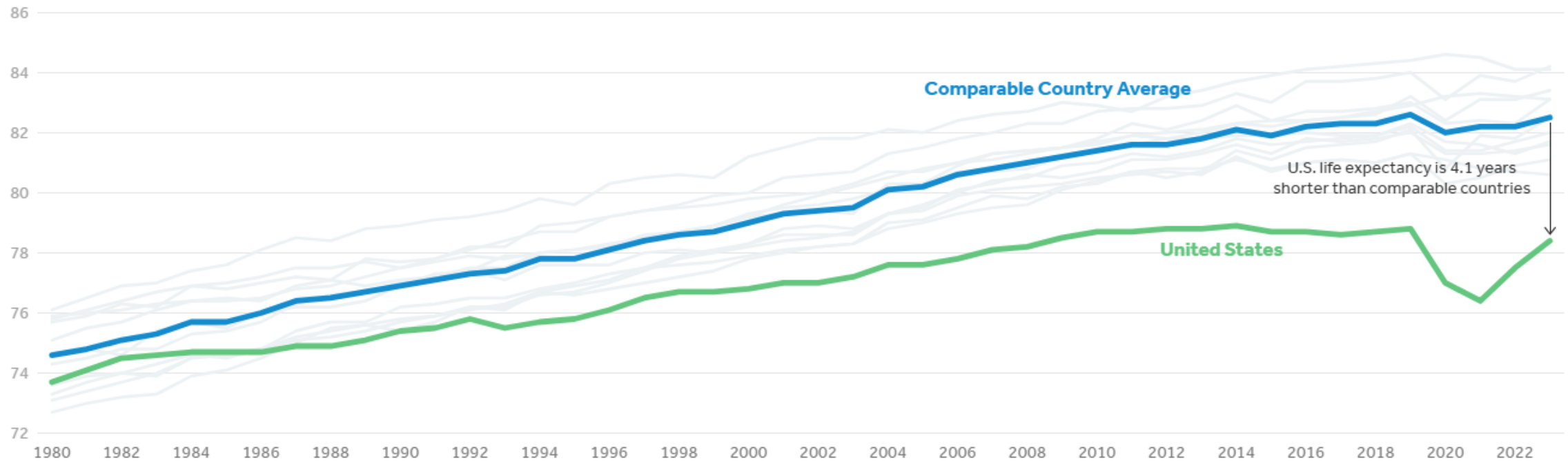
Outline

1. Explore health indicators for participating counties and compare them to PA
2. Review themes from community health needs assessments done by health systems in the region
3. Discuss DOH's work to improve rural health in PA



Life Expectancy: US vs. comparable countries

Life expectancy at birth, in years, 1980-2023



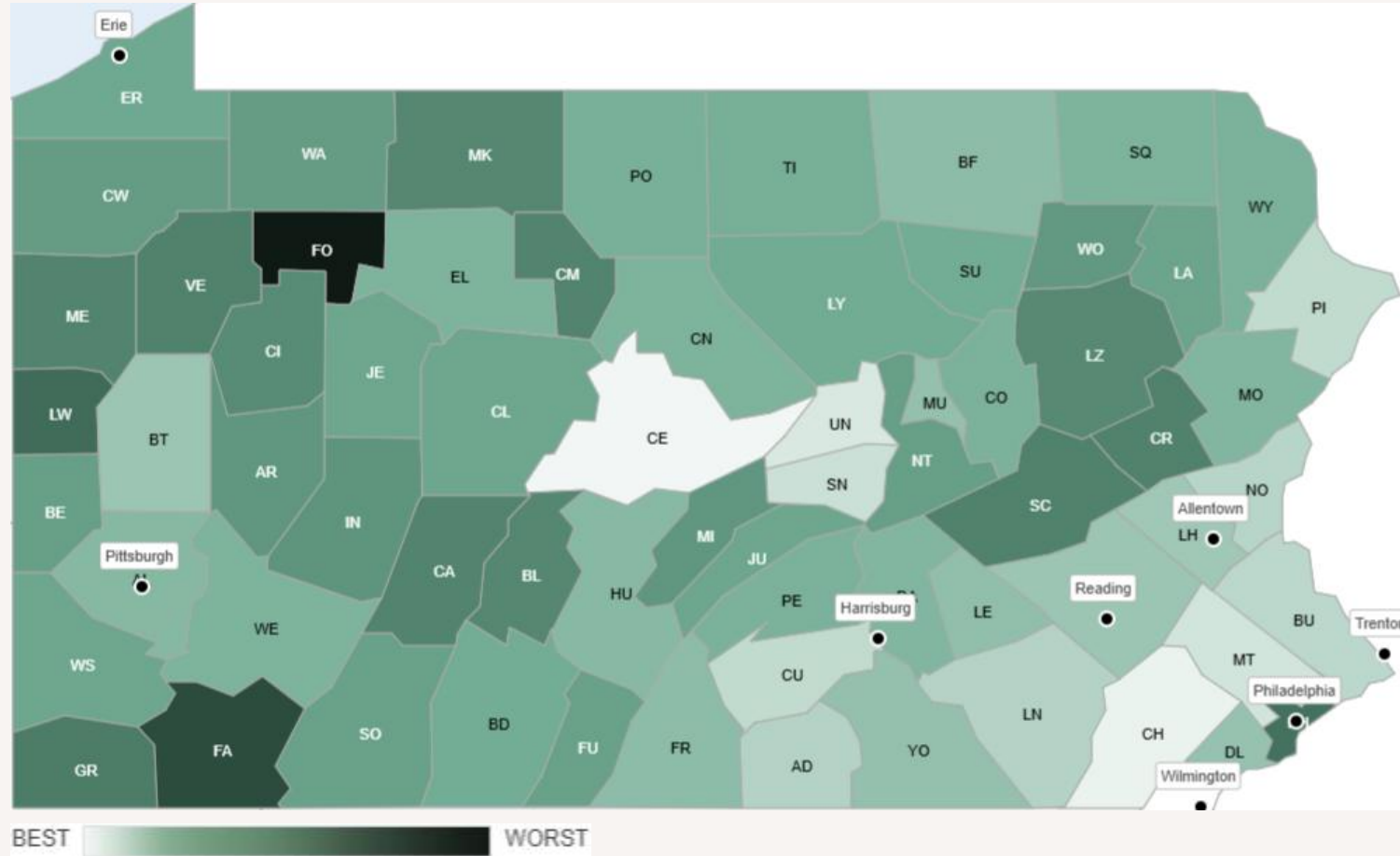
Notes: Comparable countries include Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, and the U.K. 2023 U.K. life expectancy data is only for England and Wales. See Methods [section](#) of "How does U.S. life expectancy compare to other countries?"

Source: KFF analysis of [CDC](#), [OECD](#), [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#), [German Federal Statistical Office](#), [Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare](#), [Statistics Canada](#), and [U.K. Office for National Statistics](#) data • [Get the data](#) • [PNG](#)

Peterson-KFF
Health System Tracker

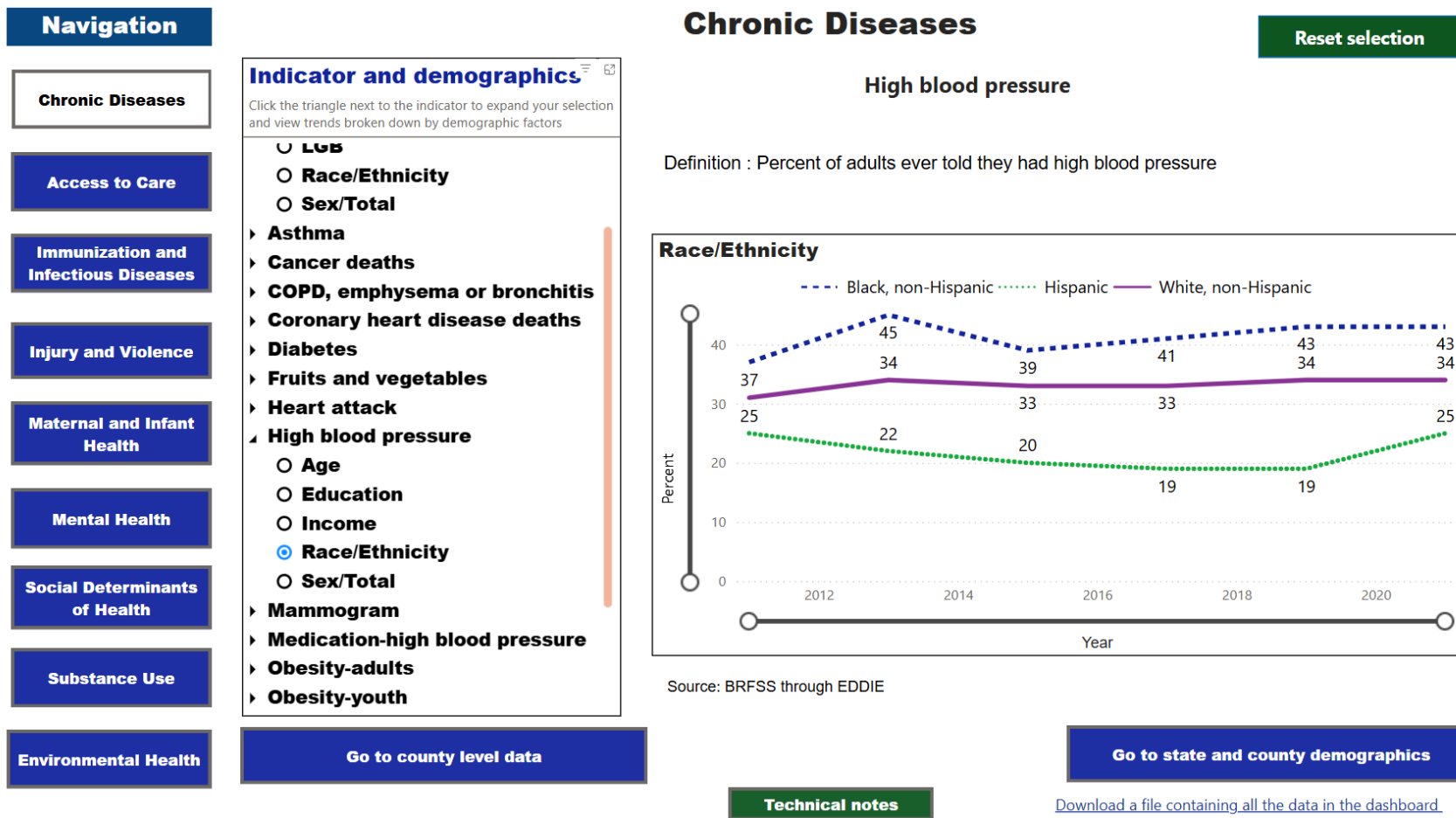


Life expectancy varies greatly across PA



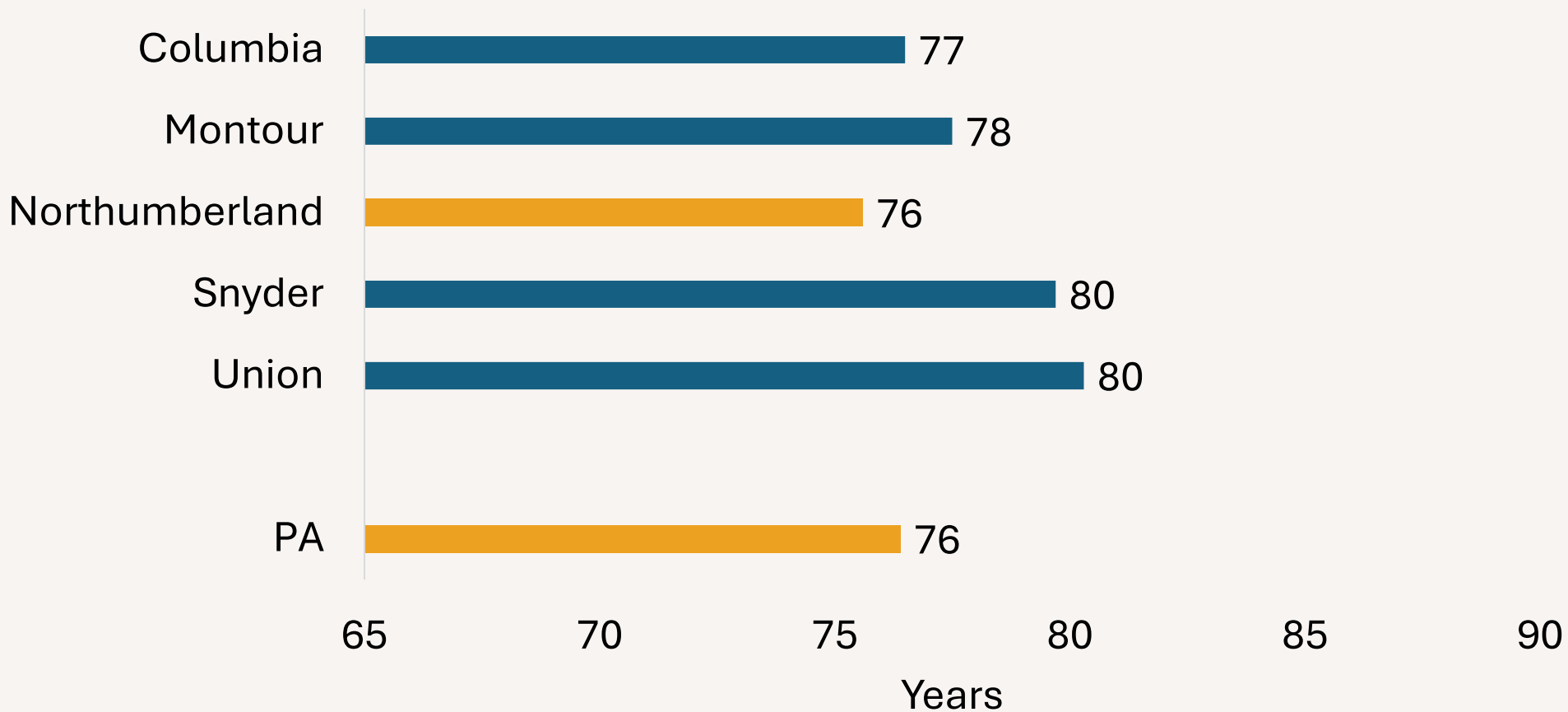
Average life expectancy in PA = 76.9 years (2020-22)

State Health Assessment (SHA) provides picture of health across PA



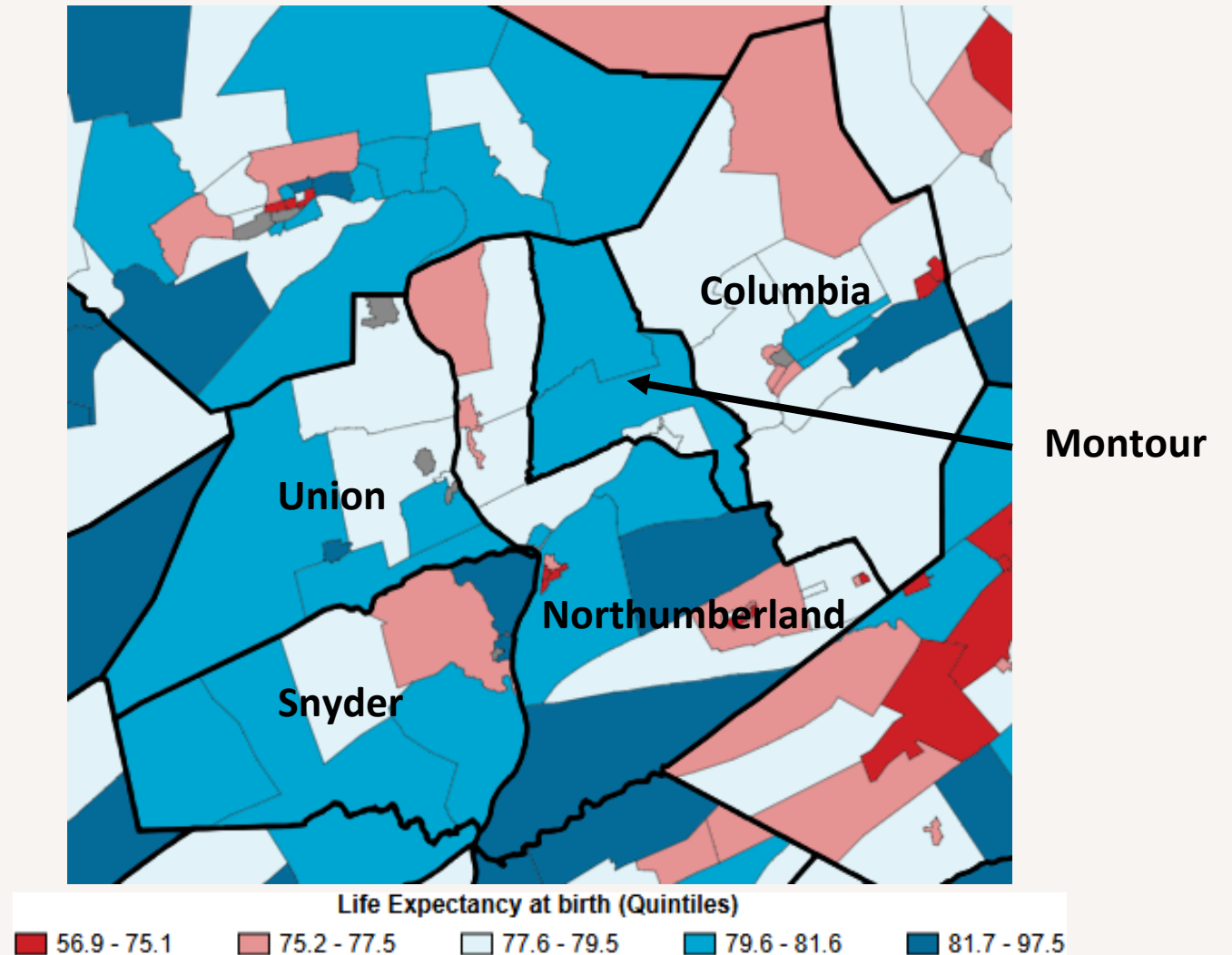
Regional Health Indicators

Life expectancy in this region varies by 4 years

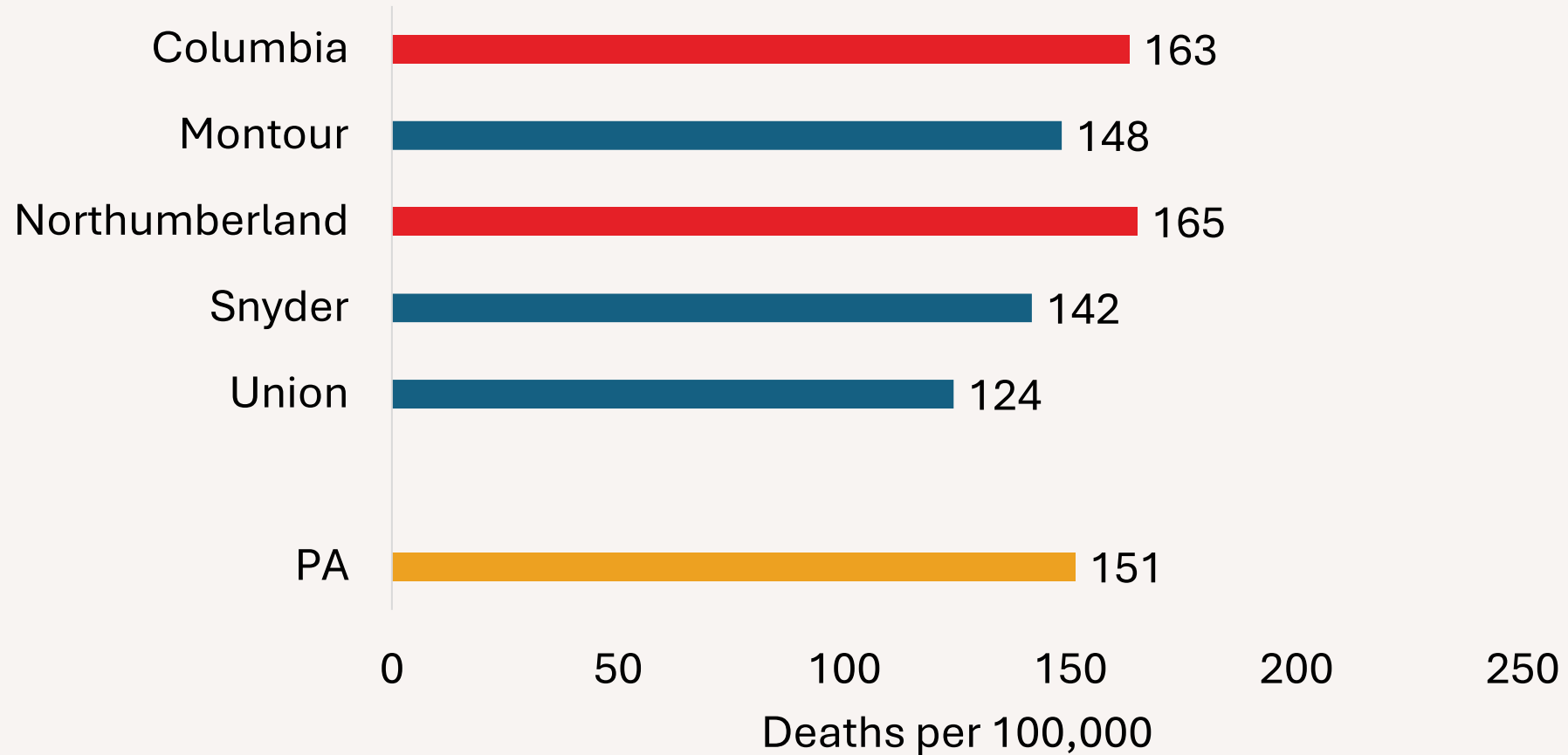


Differences by census tract more pronounced

Range of LE by
census tract:
70–88 years



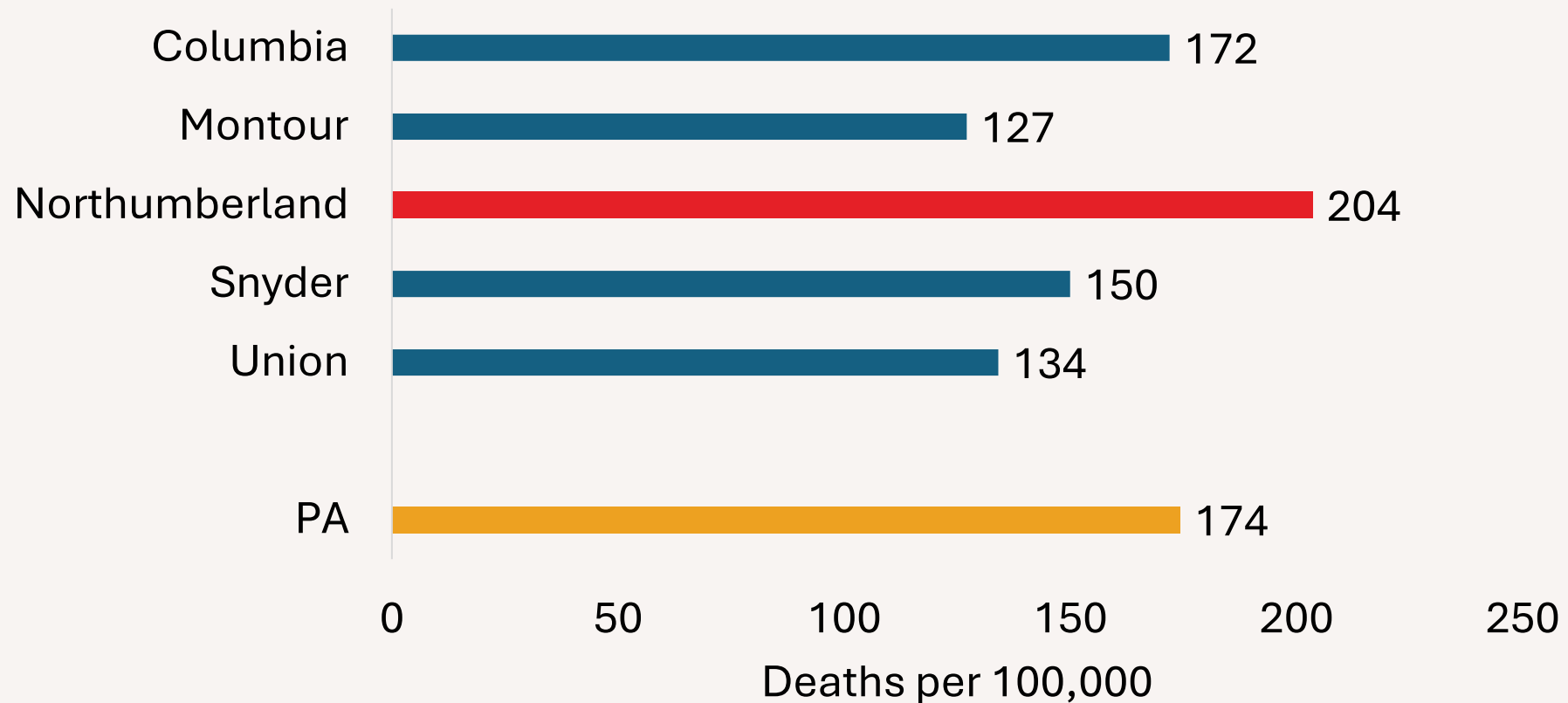
Cancer deaths per 100,000 people, 2019–2023*



*Age-adjusted

Source: [DOH County Health Profiles](#) 9

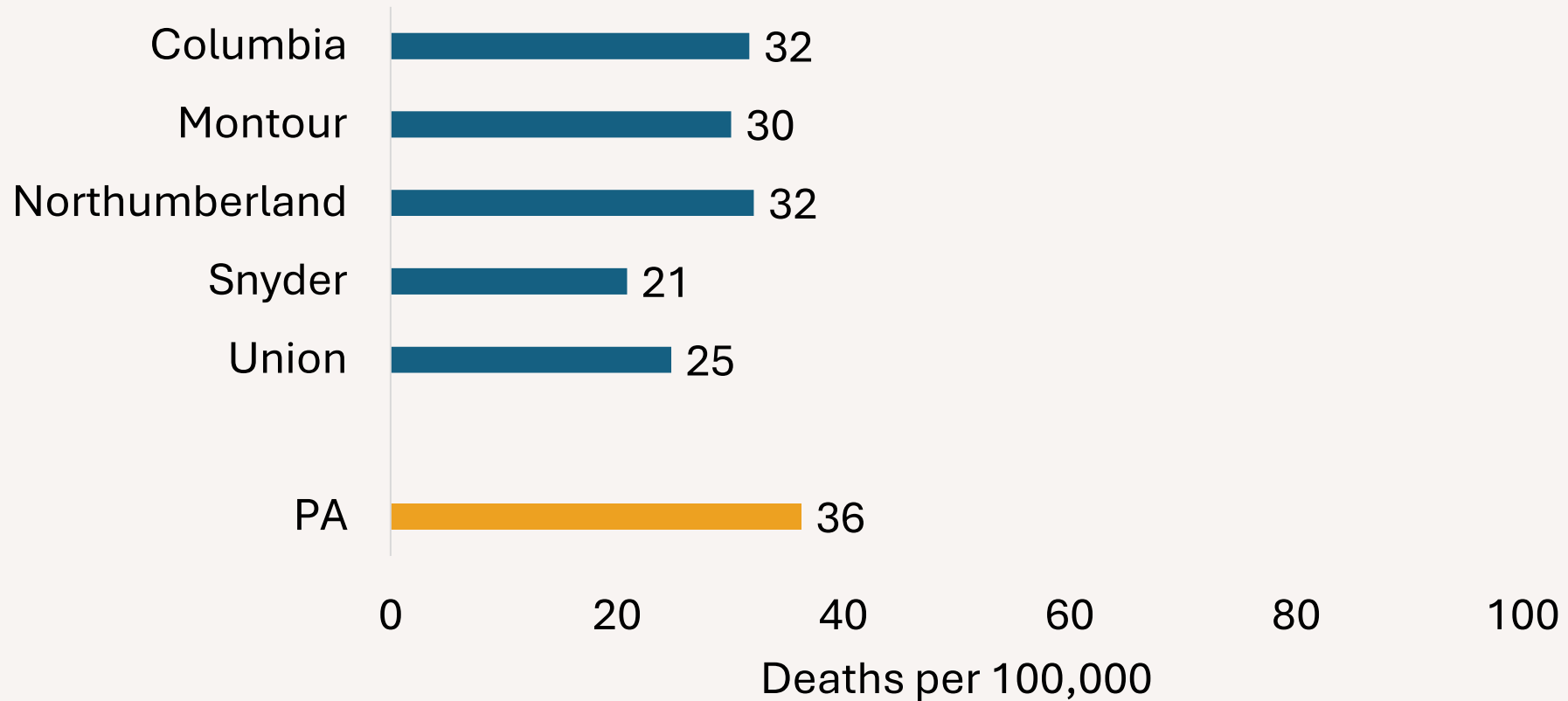
Cardiovascular deaths per 100,000 people, 2019–2023*



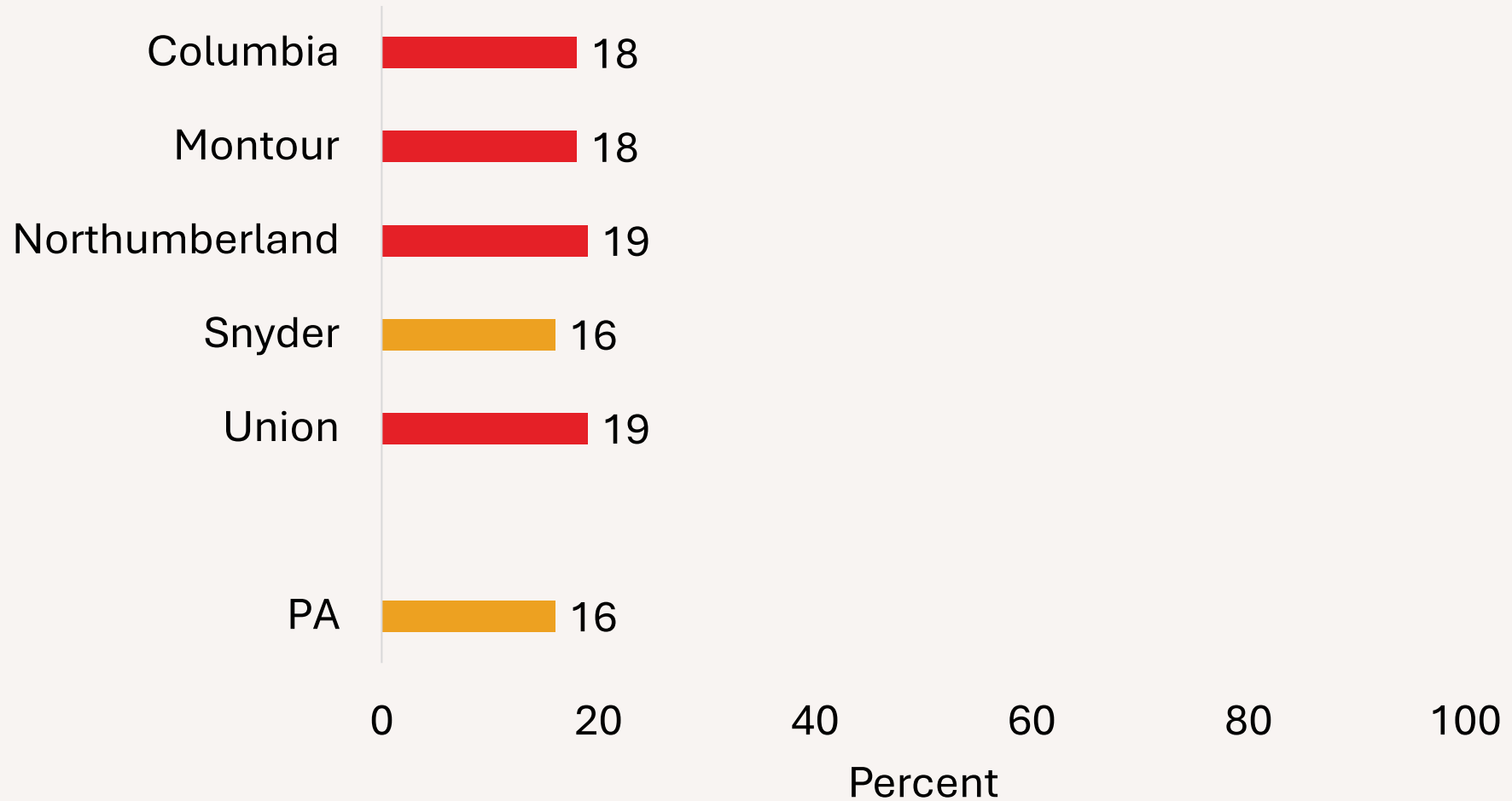
*Age-adjusted

Source: [DOH County Health Profiles](#)

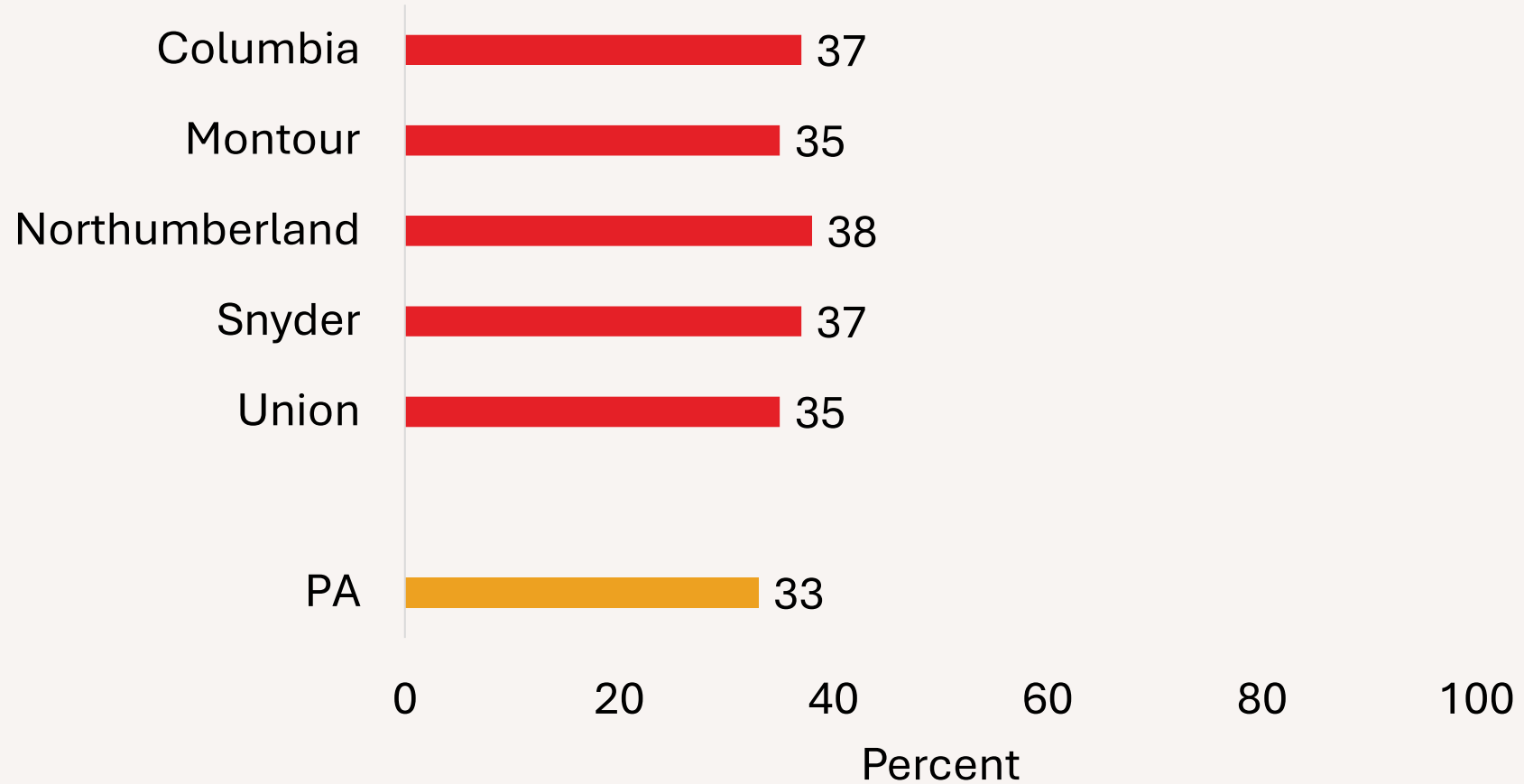
Cerebrovascular deaths per 100,000 people, 2019–2023*



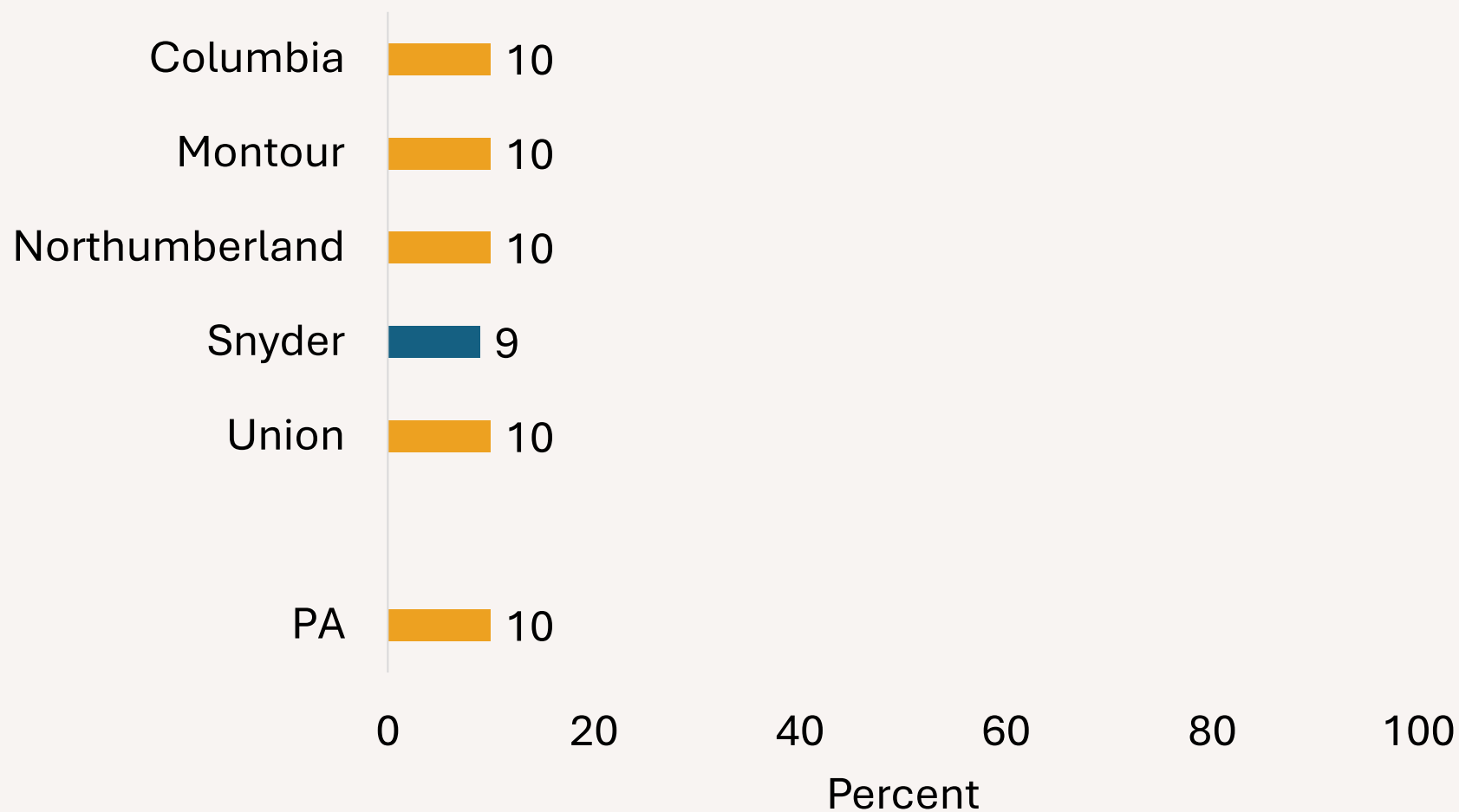
Cigarette smoking prevalence among adults, 2022



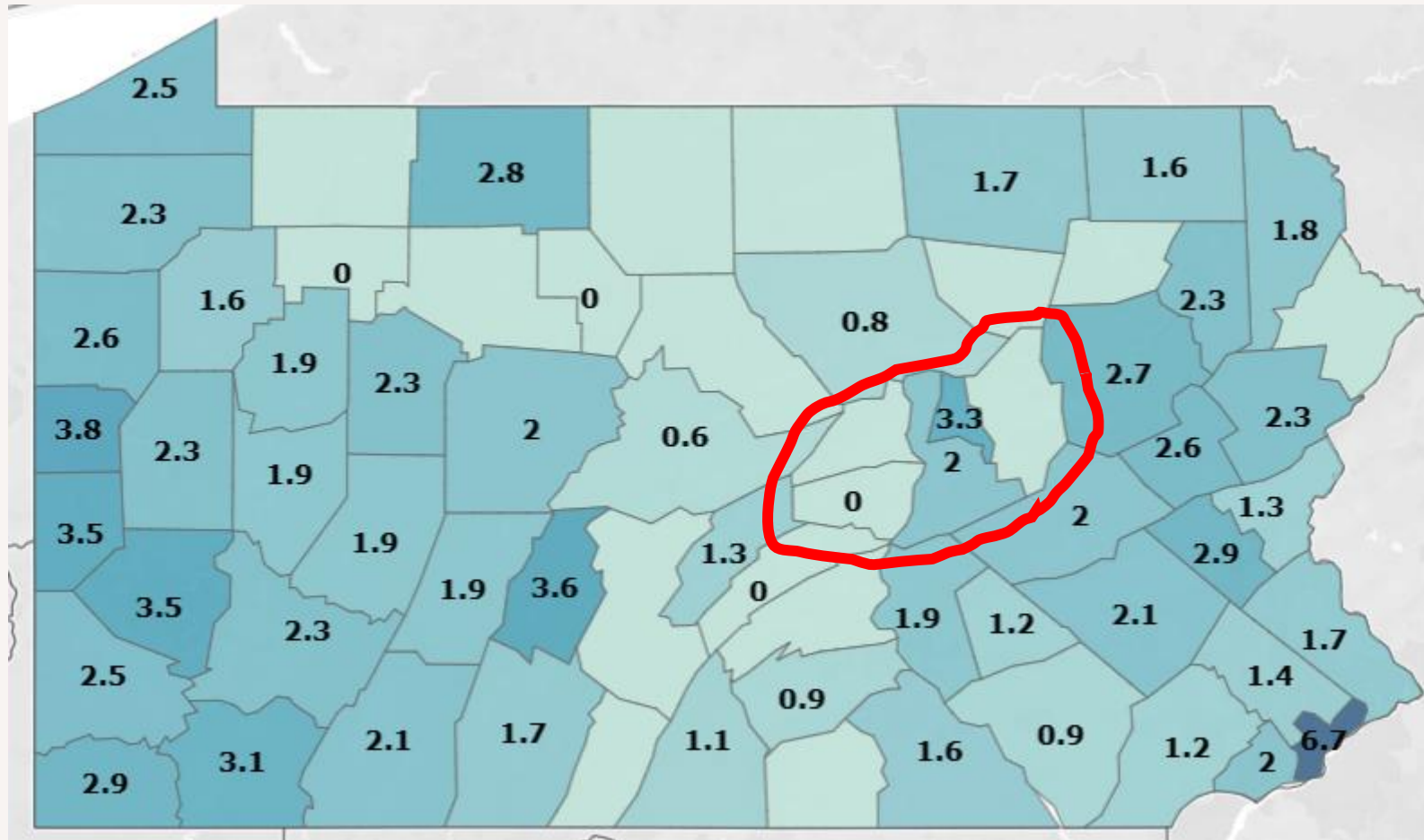
Obesity prevalence among adults, 2022



Diabetes prevalence among adults, 2022



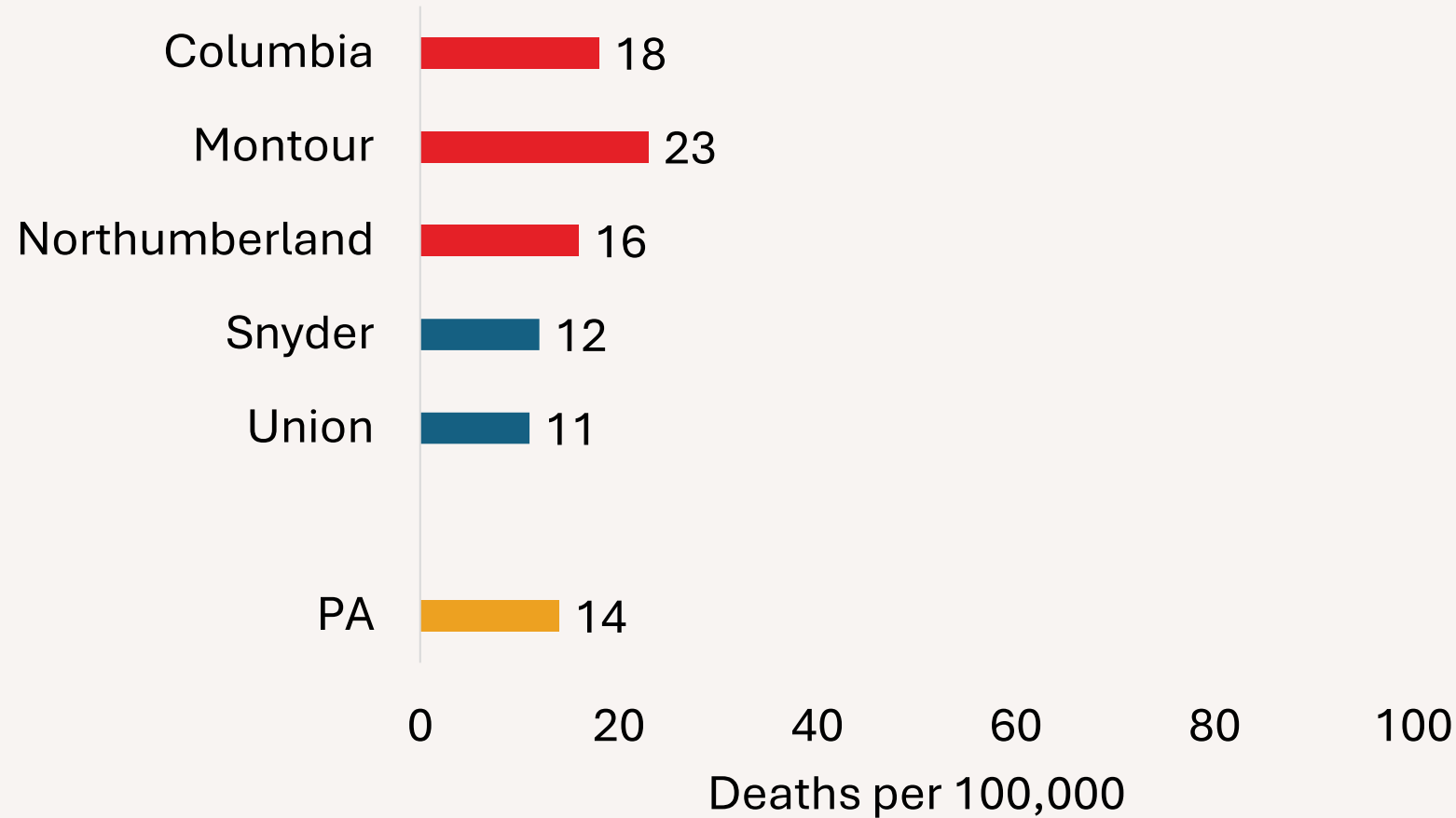
Drug overdose deaths per 10,000 people, 2024



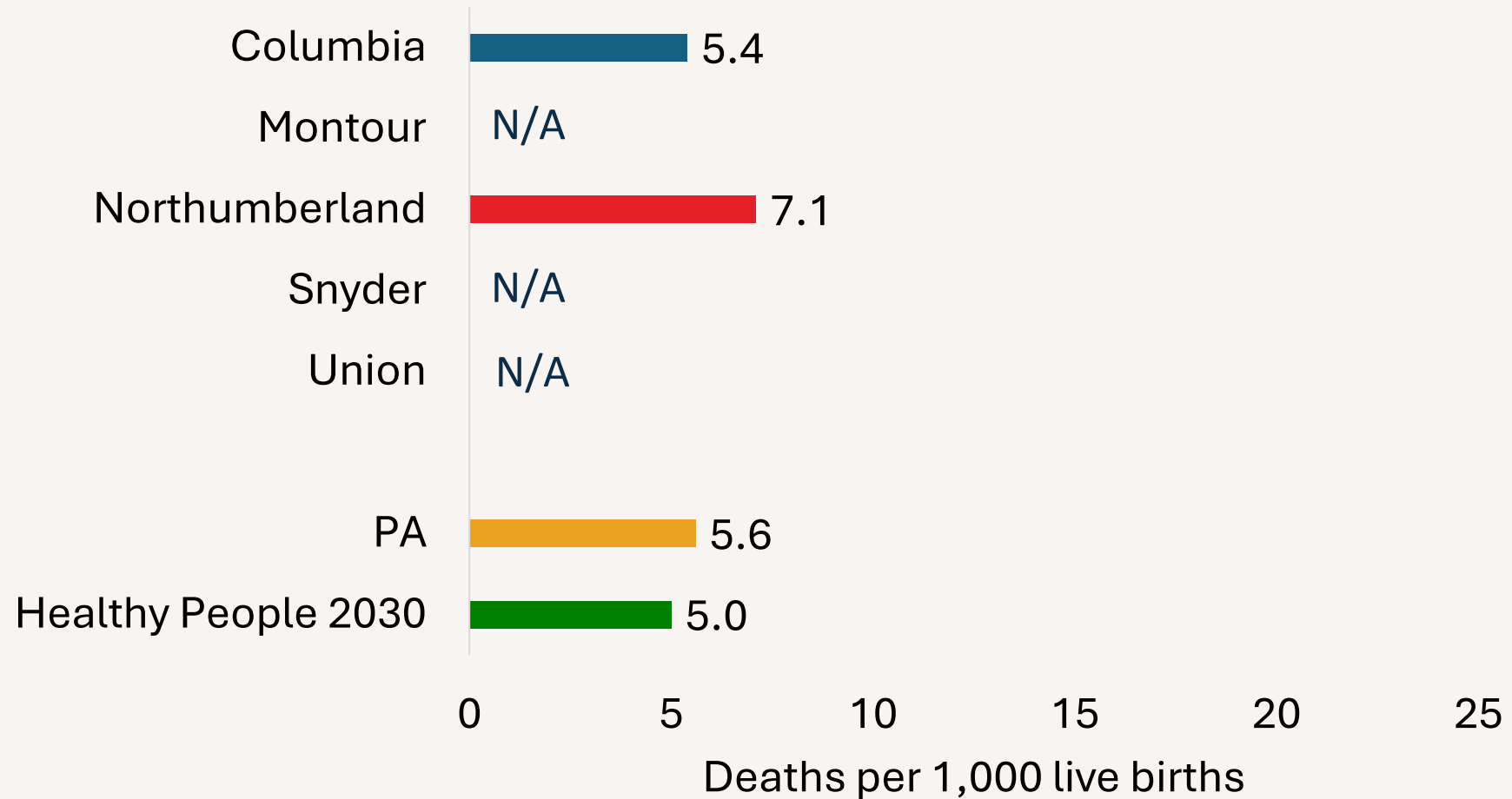
PA average:
2.5 deaths per
10,000 people



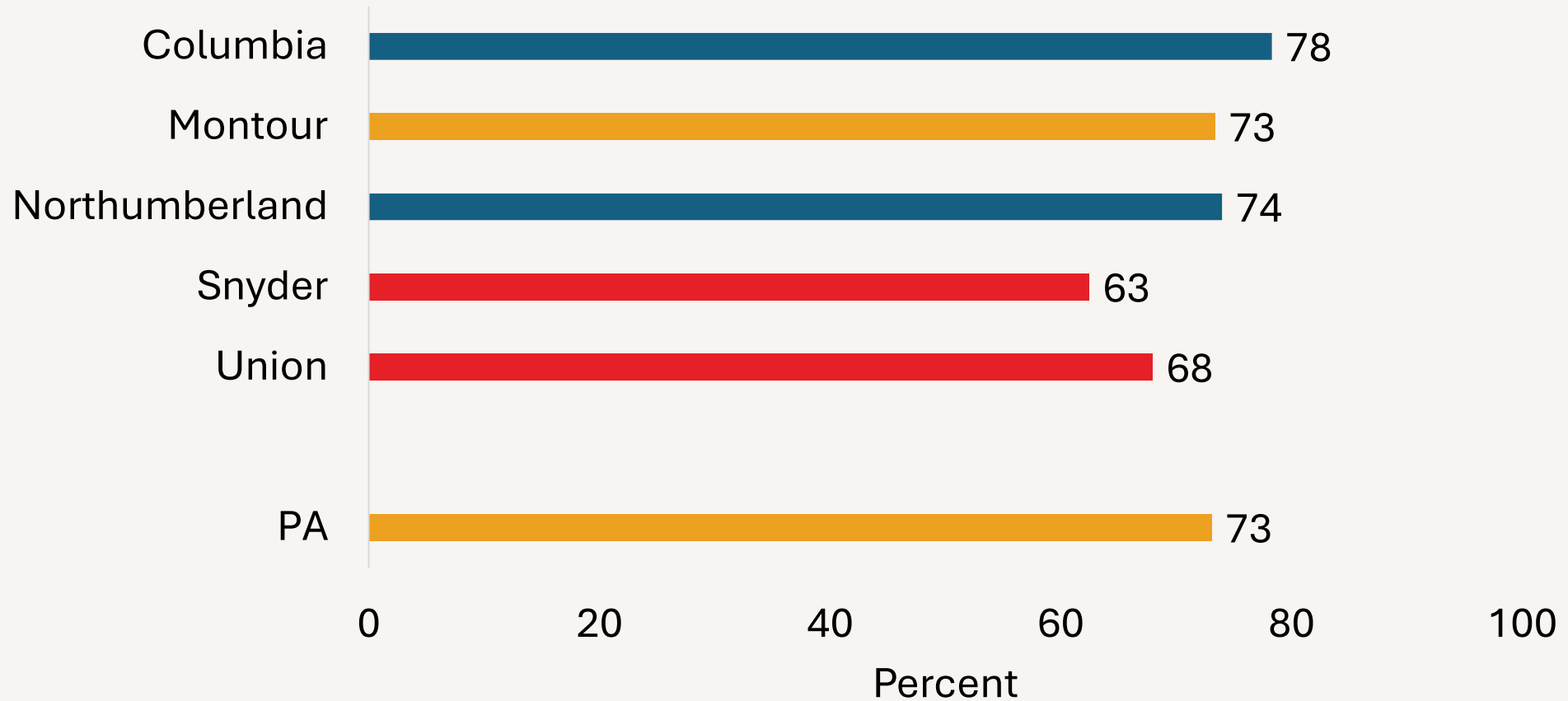
Suicides per 100,000 people, 2018–2022*



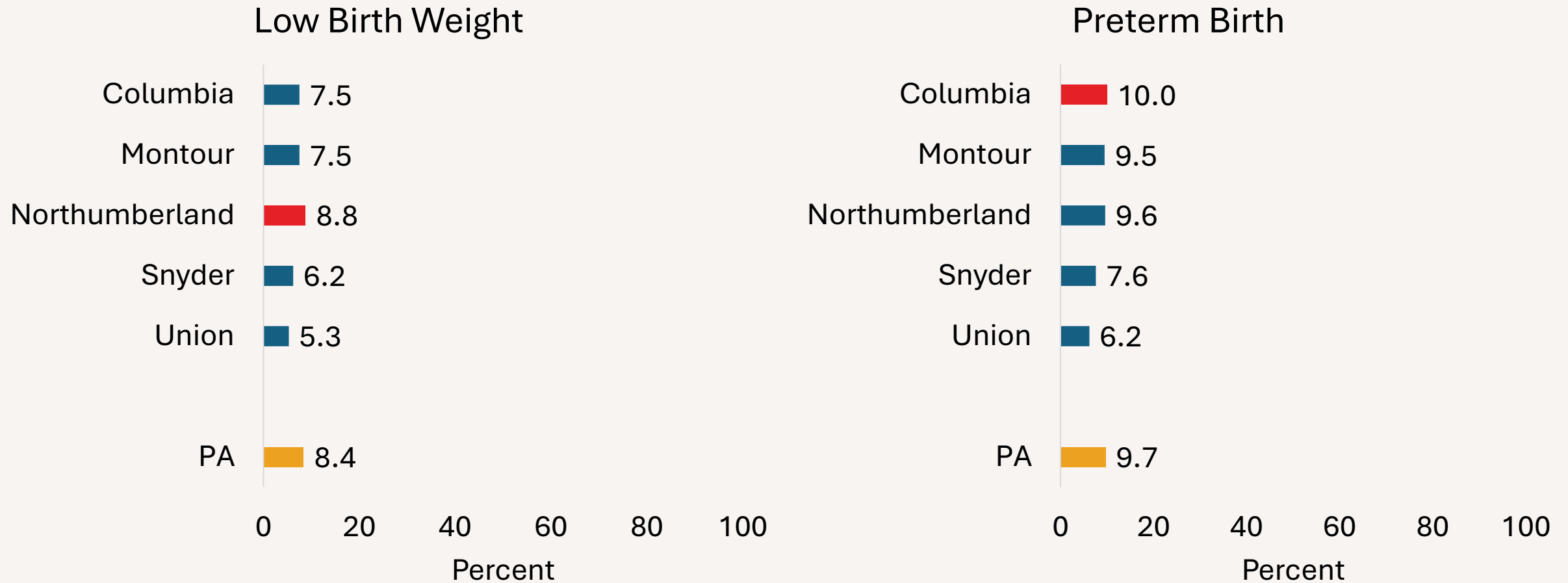
Infant deaths per 1,000 live births, 2019–2023



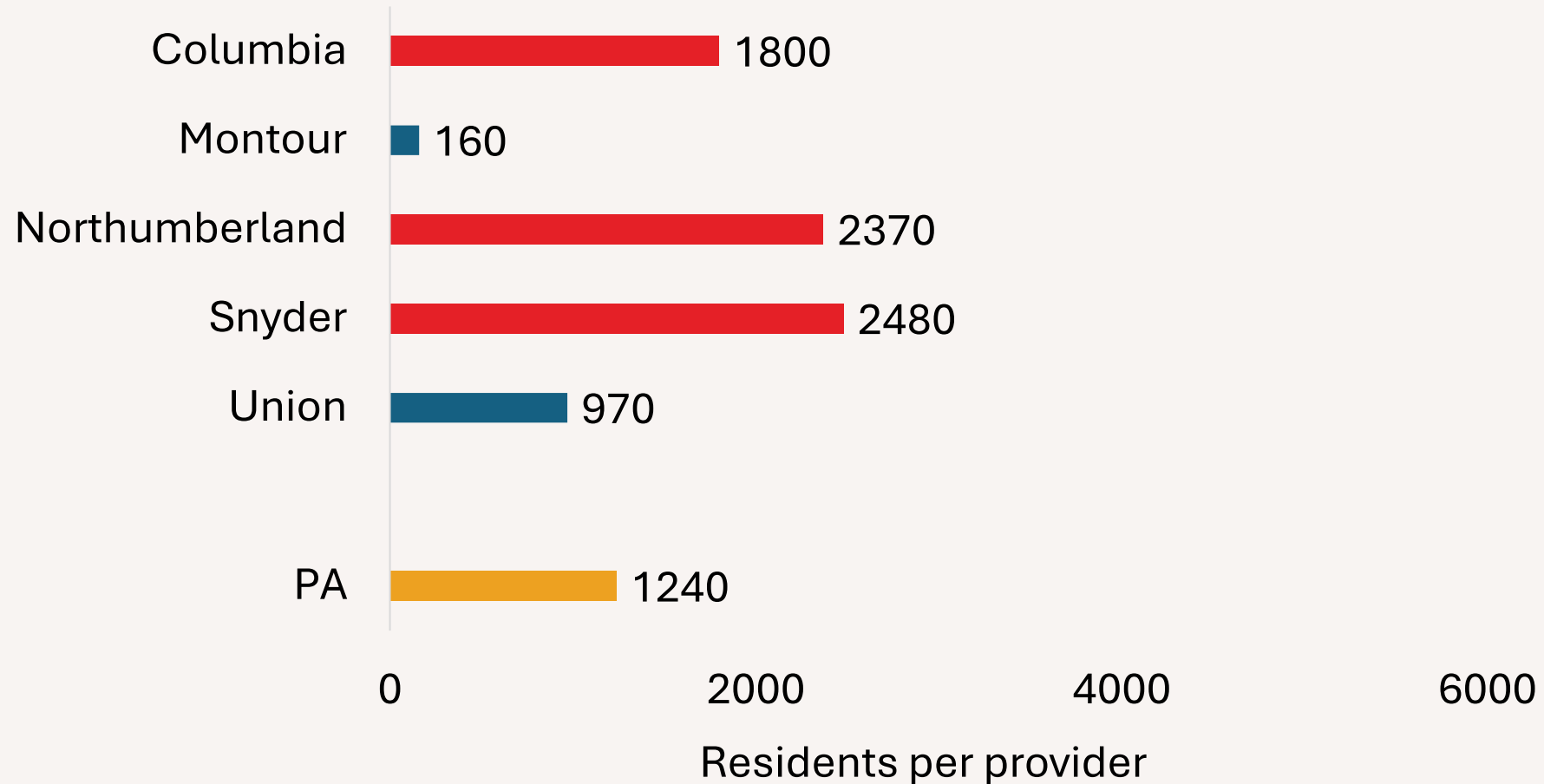
Prenatal care in 1st trimester, 2019–2023



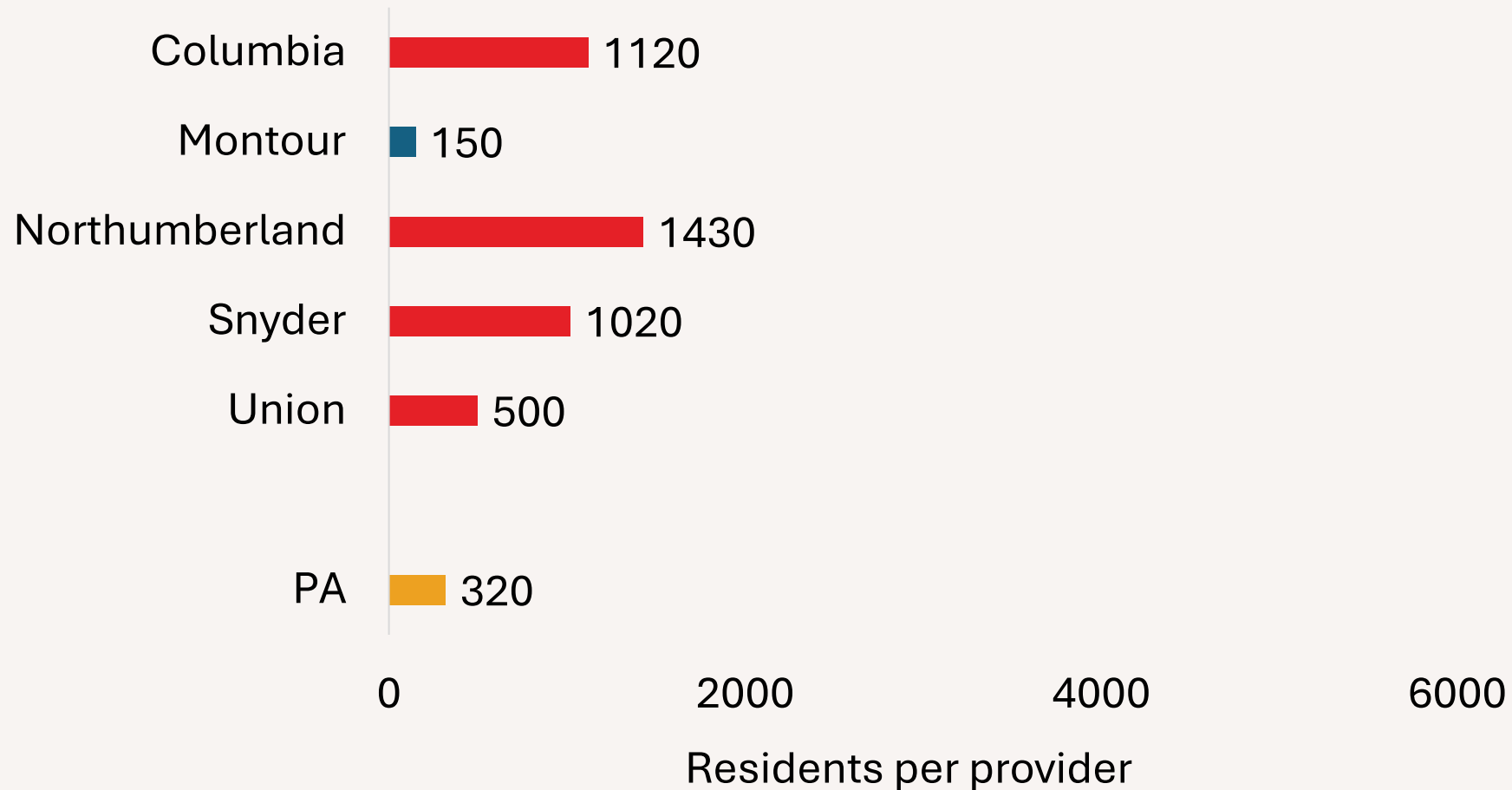
Birth statistics, 2019–2023



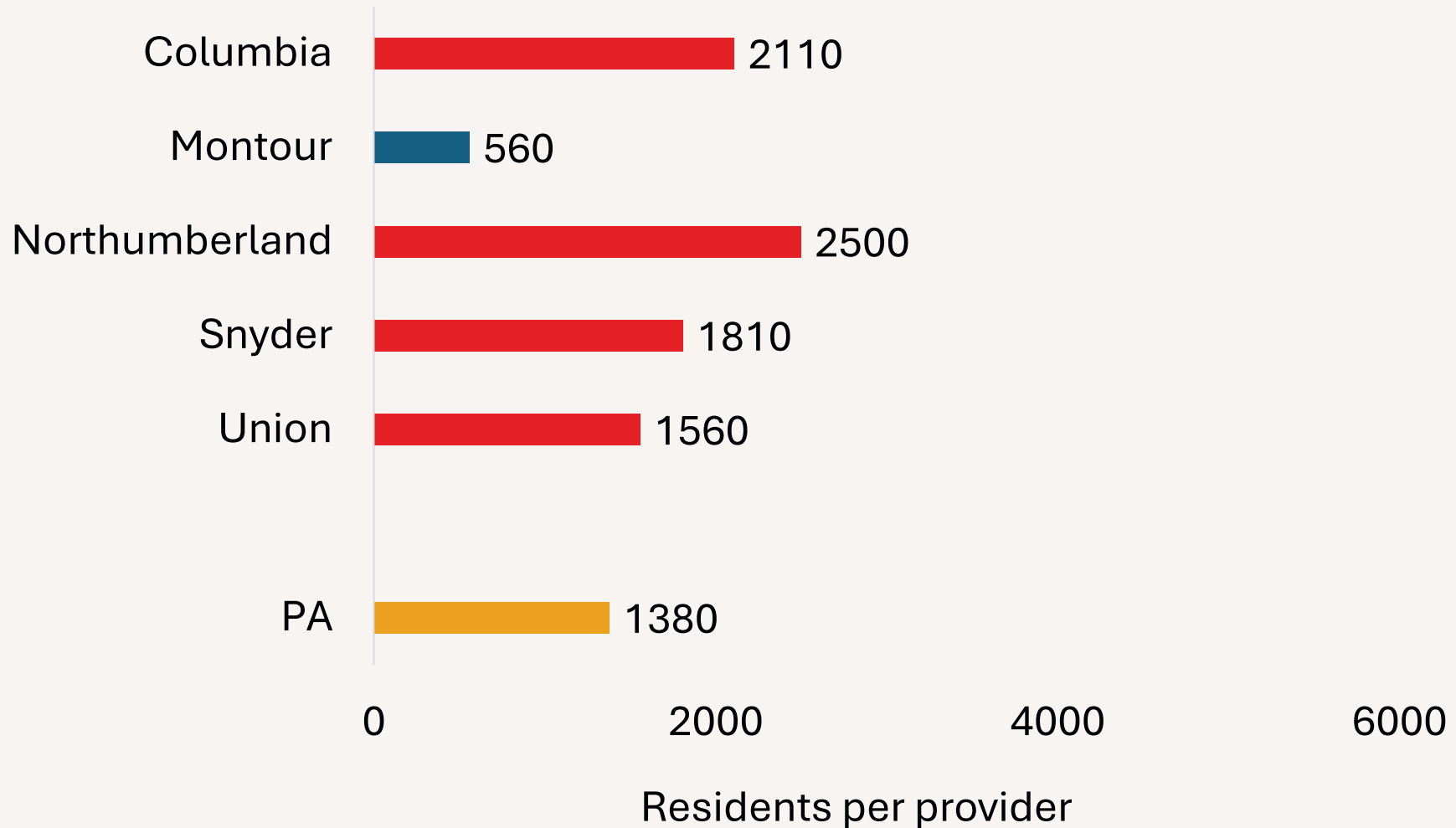
Resident to primary care provider ratio, 2022



Resident to behavioral health provider ratio, 2025



Resident to dentist ratio, 2023



Key takeaways from health indicators



Community health needs assessments

Health System	Community Health Priorities	Year
Geisinger Bloomsburg and Shamokin Hospitals and Geisinger Medical Center	Access to care, chronic disease prevention and management, mental health and substance use disorders	2024
WellSpan Evangelical	Same as above, partnered with Geisinger on the assessment	2024



Rural health challenges in PA

Workforce

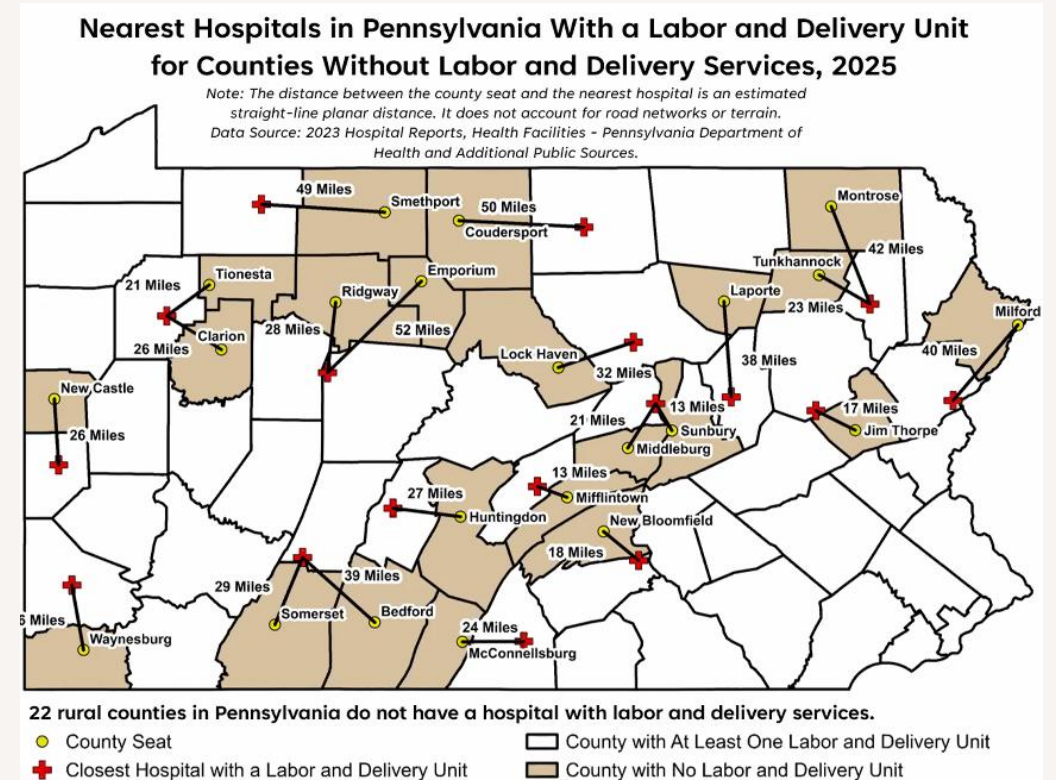
Financial
models

EMS

Opioid
epidemic

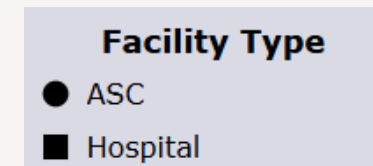
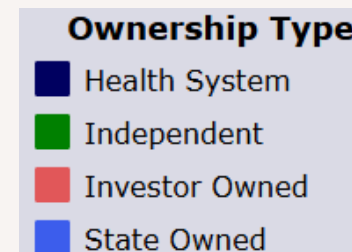
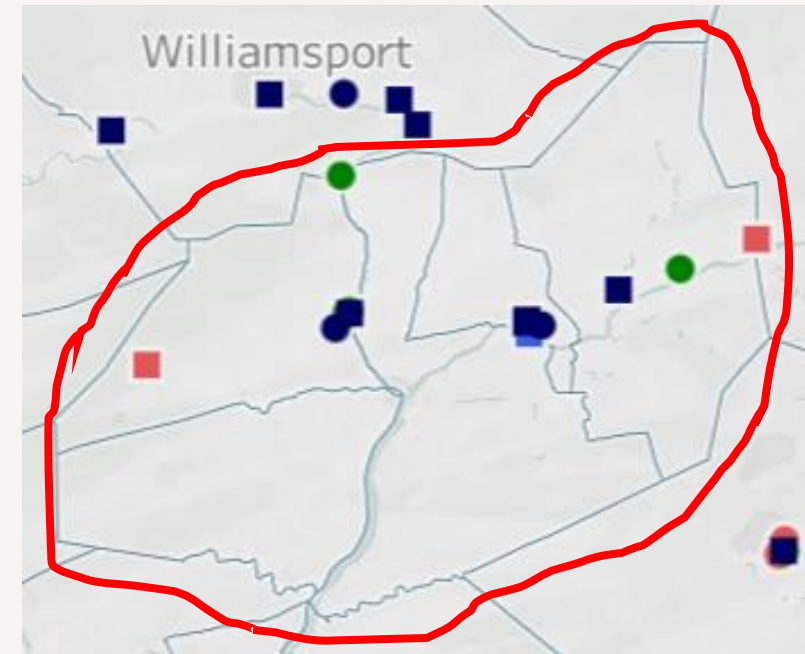
Behavioral
health

Distance to
care



Addressing rural health needs in PA

- Rural Health Transformation Program
- Regional rural health care summits
- [DOH Primary Care Office](#)
- EMS workforce
- Hospital regulations and flexibilities
- Work with RHRCA on payment models



Conclusions

- Health indicators were mixed compared to the state average for the 5 counties
- DOH plays critical role in advancing health across Commonwealth
- DOH efforts to improve rural health include
 - Workforce initiatives
 - Improving maternal and child health
 - Modernizing and improving flexibility in health care regulations
- Takes all of us working together to develop effective and lasting solutions

Thank you



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Additional Resources

State Health Centers

- **Columbia County:** 327 Columbia Blvd, Suite 2, Bloomsburg, PA 17815
- **Montour County:** 489 Church St., Danville, PA, 17821
- **Northumberland County:** 320 Chestnut St., Suite 2, Sunbury, PA 17801
- **Snyder County:** 435 State School Rd., Room 123, Selinsgrove, PA 17870
- **Union County:** 1610 Industrial Blvd., Suite 100, Lewisburg, PA, 17837



DOH Resources

- [County health profiles](#)
- [Enterprise Data Dissemination Informatics Exchange \(EDDIE\)](#)
- [Health statistics home page](#)
- [Health facility annual surveys](#)
- [State Health Assessment \(SHA\)](#) and [dashboard](#)
- [State Health Improvement Plan \(SHIP\)](#) and [dashboard](#)



Roles of DOH

- Study the distribution and causes of disease (epidemiology)
- Educate the public on healthy behaviors and disease prevention
- Prevent and respond to outbreaks and health emergencies
- Provide safety net clinical services (e.g., state health centers)
- Assure safe delivery of quality health care (e.g., regulations)
- Coordinate emergency medical services (EMS)
- Provide Vital Records services (birth, death and fetal)
- Direct Medical Marijuana Program

