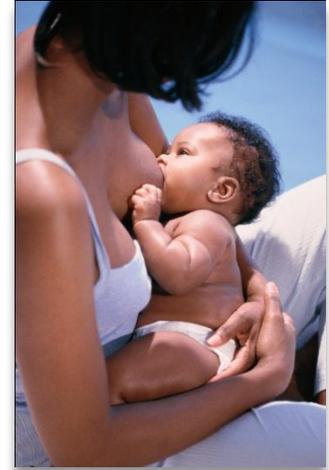


## **Breastfeeding Initiation and Duration at 4 weeks**

### **Background**

In January 2011, U.S. Surgeon General Regina M. Benjamin issued *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding*, which highlighted current research on the health, psychosocial, economic, and environmental effects of breastfeeding and outlined steps family members, health care providers, researchers, employers, and communities can take to encourage and support breastfeeding.<sup>1</sup> In 2010, HHS released *Healthy People 2020*, which provides updated national breastfeeding objectives for 2020, including to increase the proportion of infants who are ever breastfed to 81.9%, who are breastfed at 6 months to 60.6%, who are breastfed at 12 months to 34.1%, who are exclusively breastfed at 3 months to 46.2%, and who are exclusively breastfed at 6 months to 25.5%.<sup>2</sup>



Breastfeeding is associated with numerous health benefits for infants and mothers.<sup>3-5</sup> Although U.S. breastfeeding rates are increasing, rates remain relatively low among some groups of women, particularly those who are young, black, at or below the federal poverty level, and have less than a college education.<sup>6-8</sup> Women cite a number of challenges with breastfeeding, including pain, difficulty initiating, concerns about infant satisfaction or satiety, inadequate milk production, the need to return to work, and an overall lack of breastfeeding support.<sup>9-10</sup>

PRAMS data on breastfeeding indicators can be useful for states to assess their own progress and to develop population-level strategies that promote breastfeeding in their communities as called for in *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding*.

### **PRAMS Questions**

Q1: Did you ever breastfeed or pump breast milk to feed your new baby, even for a short period of time? Response options are Yes and No.

Q2: Are you currently breastfeeding or feeding pumped milk to your new baby? Response options are Yes and No.

Q3: How many weeks or months did you breastfeed or pump milk to feed your baby? Response options are \_\_\_ Weeks, \_\_\_ Months, and \_\_\_ Less than 1 week.

Findings from women who delivered a live-born infant in 2009 in any of the 29 PRAMS states that met the response rate threshold of 65%\* are included in this report.

### **Findings in Brief**

In 2009, 79.3%<sup>†</sup> of women who delivered a live-born infant reported initiating breastfeeding in the early postpartum period. The prevalence of breastfeeding initiation was highest among women who were 35

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\*The 29 PRAMS states that met the response rate threshold of 65% in 2009 include: AK, AR, CO, DE, GA, HI, IL, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, MS, MO, NE, NJ, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, TN, TX, UT, VT, WA, WV, WI, and WY.

<sup>†</sup>95% confidence intervals (CI) for all percentages are included in the figures and tables.

years of age and older (84.3%), Hispanic (87.3%), other race/ethnicity (86.5%), those who had more than a high school education (86.7%), and women who reported private, other, or no insurance coverage during pregnancy and at delivery (Figure 1; Table 1). In contrast, the prevalence of breastfeeding initiation was lowest among women who were younger than 20 years of age (67.7%); black non-Hispanic (65.1%); women with a high school education (70.2%); and women who reported Medicaid as their source of insurance coverage during pregnancy and at delivery (Figure 1; Table 1).

More than half (57.7%) of women surveyed reported breastfeeding at 4 weeks (Figure 2). The prevalence of breastfeeding at 4 weeks was highest among women who were 35 years of age and older (65.6%); Hispanic (63.2%) or of “other” race (66.0%), and those who had more than a high school education (65.6%). The prevalence of breastfeeding at 4 weeks varied by insurance coverage, and was higher for women who reported a non-Medicaid source of insurance during pregnancy and at delivery (Figure 2; Table 2). The lowest prevalence of breastfeeding at 4 weeks was among women who were younger than 20 years of age (42.3%); black, non-Hispanic (42.1%), and who had a high school education (47.9%). Prevalence also was lower among women who reported having Medicaid as their insurance source during pregnancy (45.9%). Similarly, those who reported Medicaid as their source of insurance at delivery had lower prevalence of reporting breastfeeding at 4 weeks (48.0%).

### Public Health Implications

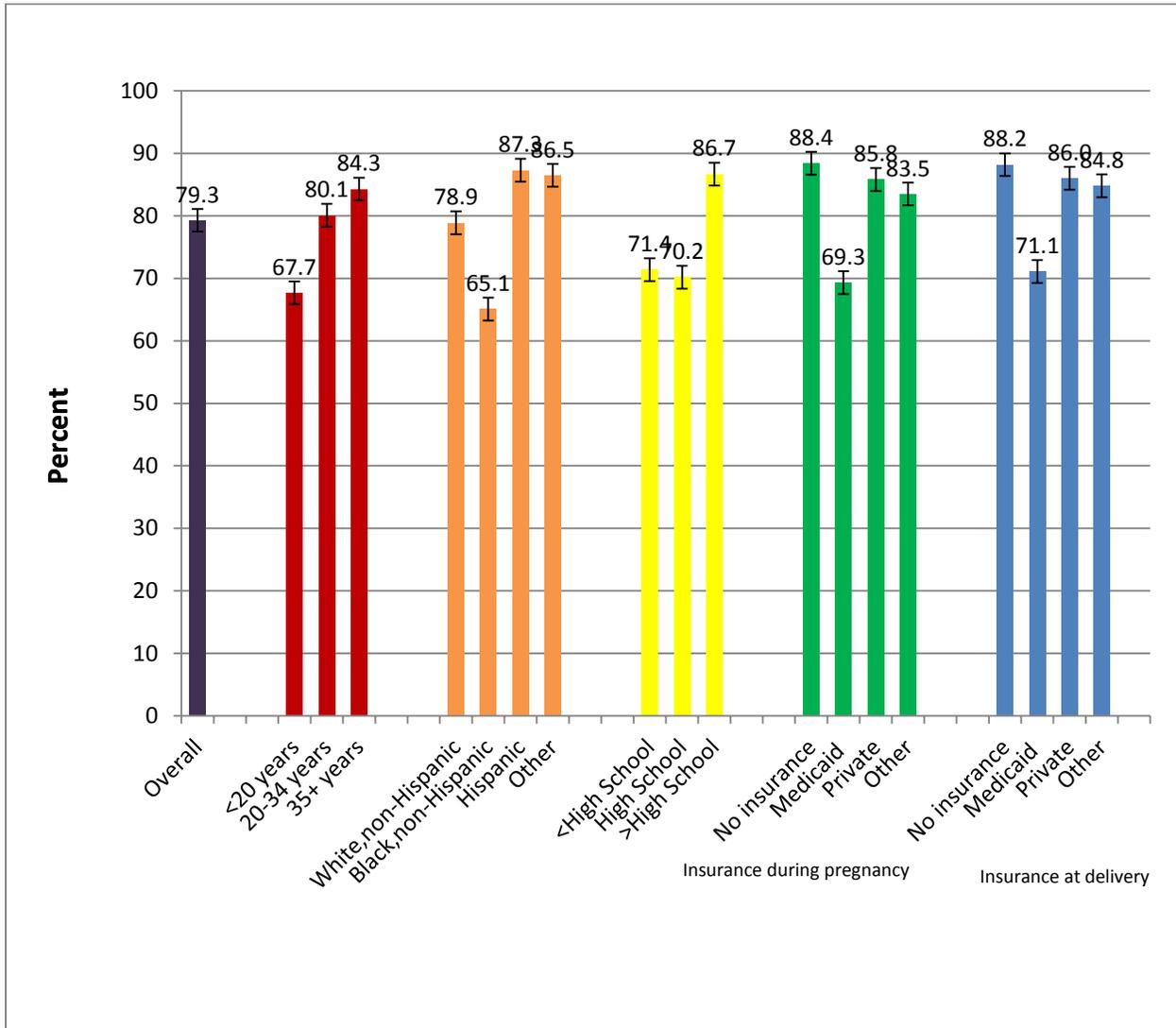
The 2009 PRAMS data show that the breastfeeding initiation rate in 29 participating states (79.3%) is close to the *Healthy People 2020* target of 81.9%. Approximately 58% of women reported breastfeeding at 4 weeks, which is slightly lower than the *Healthy People 2020* target of 60.6% target for breastfeeding at 6 months, suggesting that women experience challenges in meeting guidelines for breastfeeding duration. Differences by demographic groups in both breastfeeding initiation and breastfeeding at 4 weeks show that increased efforts are needed to reach the *Healthy People 2020* objectives. PRAMS data on breastfeeding indicators can be useful for states to assess their own progress and to develop population-level strategies that promote breastfeeding in their communities.

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**Figure 1. Breastfeeding initiation stratified by selected maternal demographics, 29 States.\* PRAMS 2009**



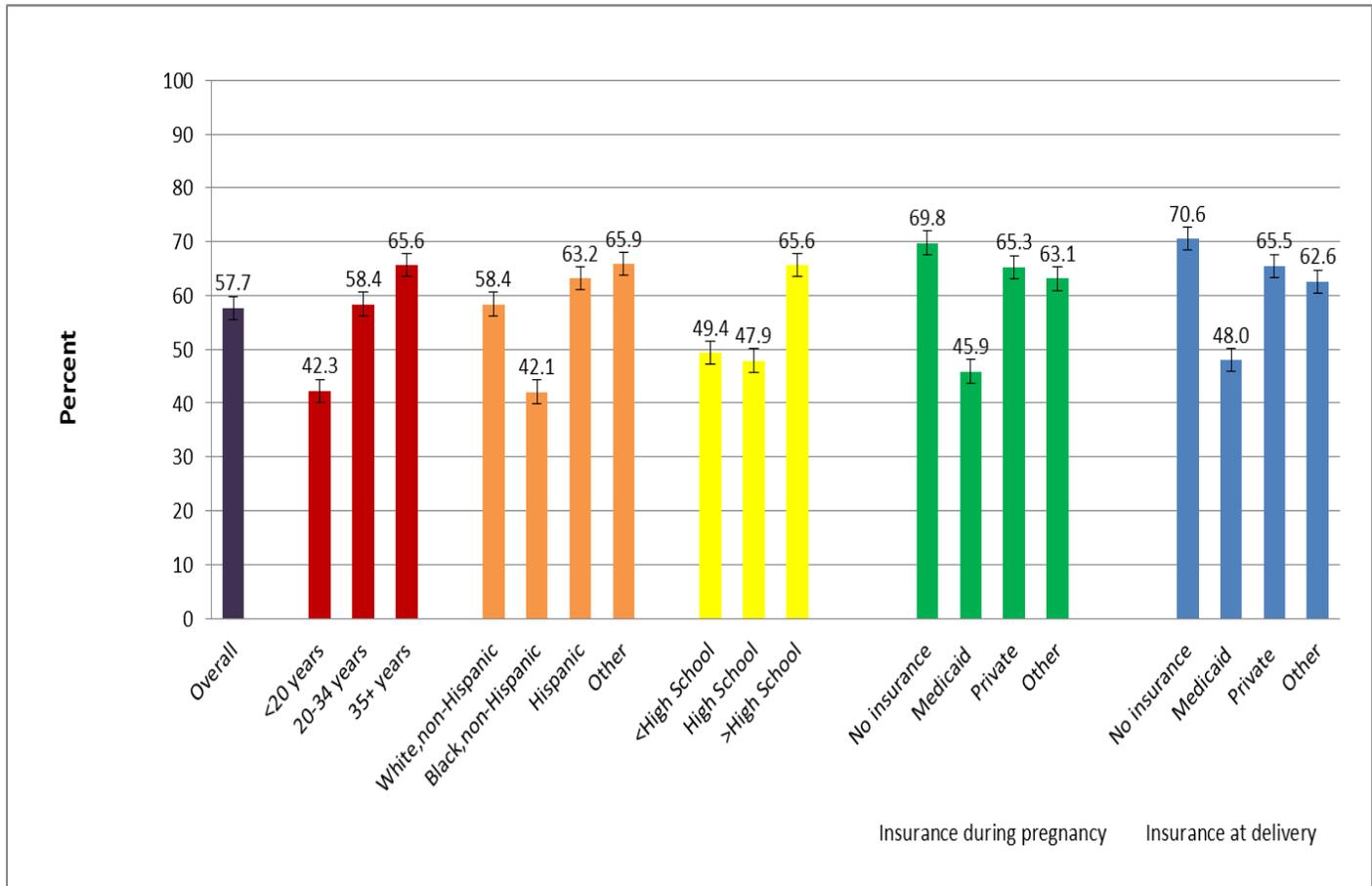
\*The 29 PRAMS states that met the response rate threshold of 65% in 2009 include: AK, AR, CO, DE, GA, HI, IL, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, MS, MO, NE, NJ, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, TN, TX, UT, VT, WA, WV, WI, and WY.

**Table 1. Prevalence of breastfeeding initiation stratified by selected maternal demographics, 29 States,\* PRAMS 2009**

|                                   | Prevalence of Breastfeeding Initiation |                         |
|-----------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
|                                   | Percent (%)                            | 95% Confidence Interval |
| <b>Overall</b>                    | 79.3                                   | 78.6-80.0               |
| <b>Maternal age</b>               |  |                         |
| <20 years                         | 67.7                                   | 64.9-70.4               |
| 20-34 years                       | 80.1                                   | 79.2-80.8               |
| 35+ years                         | 84.3                                   | 82.5-85.9               |
| <b>Maternal race/ethnicity</b>    |  |                         |
| White, non-Hispanic               | 78.9                                   | 78.0-79.8               |
| Black, non-Hispanic               | 65.1                                   | 63.1-67.1               |
| Hispanic                          | 87.3                                   | 85.4-89.0               |
| Other                             | 86.5                                   | 84.4-88.4               |
| <b>Maternal education</b>         |  |                         |
| <High School                      | 71.4                                   | 69.2-73.4               |
| High School                       | 70.2                                   | 68.6-71.8               |
| >High School                      | 86.7                                   | 85.9-87.5               |
| <b>Insurance during pregnancy</b> |  |                         |
| No insurance                      | 88.4                                   | 85.6-91.4               |
| Medicaid                          | 69.3                                   | 67.9-70.6               |
| Private                           | 85.8                                   | 84.9-86.6               |
| Other                             | 83.5                                   | 79.6-86.8               |
| <b>Insurance at delivery</b>      |  |                         |
| No insurance                      | 88.2                                   | 82.8-92.0               |
| Medicaid                          | 71.1                                   | 69.8-72.3               |
| Private                           | 86.0                                   | 85.2-86.8               |
| Other                             | 84.8                                   | 80.7-88.1               |

\*The 29 PRAMS states that met the response rate threshold of 65% in 2009 include AK, AR, CO, DE, GA, HI, IL, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, MS, MO, NE, NJ, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, TN, TX, UT, VT, WA, WV, WI, and WY.

**Figure 2.** Any breastfeeding at 4 weeks postpartum, stratified by selected maternal demographics, 29 States,\* PRAMS 2009



\*The 29 PRAMS states that met the response rate threshold of 65% in 2009 include: AK, AR, CO, DE, GA, HI, IL, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, MS, MO, NE, NJ, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, TN, TX, UT, VT, WA, WV, WI, and WY.

**Table 2. Prevalence of breastfeeding at 4 weeks postpartum stratified by selected maternal demographics, 29 States,\* PRAMS 2009**

|                                   | Prevalence of Breastfeeding<br>at 4 weeks |                         |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
|                                   | Percent (%)                               | 95% Confidence Interval |
| <b>Overall</b>                    | 57.7                                      | 56.8-58.6               |
| <b>Maternal age</b>               |   |                         |
| <20 years                         | 42.3                                      | 39.4-45.3               |
| 20-34 years                       | 58.4                                      | 57.4-59.4               |
| 35+ years                         | 65.6                                      | 63.3-67.8               |
| <b>Maternal race/ethnicity</b>    |   |                         |
| White, non-Hispanic               | 58.4                                      | 57.4-59.4               |
| Black, non-Hispanic               | 42.1                                      | 40.1-44.2               |
| Hispanic                          | 63.2                                      | 60.6-65.7               |
| Other                             | 66.0                                      | 63.4-68.5               |
| <b>Maternal education</b>         |   |                         |
| <High School                      | 49.4                                      | 47.0-51.8               |
| High School                       | 47.9                                      | 46.1-49.7               |
| >High School                      | 65.6                                      | 64.5-66.7               |
| <b>Insurance during pregnancy</b> |   |                         |
| No insurance                      | 69.8                                      | 64.4-74.9               |
| Medicaid                          | 45.9                                      | 44.4-47.4               |
| Private                           | 65.3                                      | 64.2-66.4               |
| Other                             | 63.1                                      | 57.9-67.9               |
| <b>Insurance at delivery</b>      |   |                         |
| No insurance                      | 70.6                                      | 64.1-76.5               |
| Medicaid                          | 48.0                                      | 46.6-49.4               |
| Private                           | 65.5                                      | 64.3-66.6               |
| Other                             | 62.6                                      | 80.7-88.1               |

\*The 29 PRAMS states that met the response rate threshold of 65% in 2009 include: AK, AR, CO, DE, GA, HI, IL, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, MS, MO, NE, NJ, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, TN, TX, UT, VT, WA, WV, WI, and WY.