

# Vermont's Maternal Health Innovation Program

Kicking-Off our Statewide Strategic Planning  
Process to Improve Maternal Health Outcomes

May 29 and June 3, 2025

*Hosted by the Division of Family Child Health (FCH)*



# Agenda


**Our hope is that you leave today feeling clear and inspired about this opportunity and can imagine your own role in it.**

- Welcome
- Background: Maternal Health Innovation Program & Strategic Plan
- Introductions
- Vision for the Future
- Data Reflection
- Strategic Planning: Ways to Participate & Timeline
- Close

# What to Expect Today

## Today we will:

- Present some information to you
- Invite your reflections & ideas in the chat and out loud, off mute (as much as you want to)



The insights and information you share today will help guide our series of deeper dives into the biggest challenges and opportunities we see in maternal health in Vermont – and how to improve maternal wellbeing.

# Content Warning

This is difficult content. Many of us have either personal experience of substance use or have family and friends impacted by substance use and other co-occurring issues including maternal death, suicide, intimate partner violence, and trauma.

We'd like to take a moment to acknowledge Vermont residents who died during and after pregnancy, their loved ones, and the community who cares for them.

We honor their voices in our data and their experiences guide our interventions.

This presentation contains references to themes that some people may find distressing. Please take the necessary precautions for your emotional safety and well-being. This may include stepping away while some or all content is being presented.

If you or someone you know need support, contact:  
The Suicide and Crisis Line at **988**  
Or Text VT to **741741**

# Maternal Health Innovation Program (MHI)

**Purpose:** To reduce maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity (SMM) in Vermont.

## Goals:

- 1. Improve access to care** that is comprehensive, high-quality, appropriate and ongoing throughout the preconception, prenatal, labor and delivery, and postpartum periods;
- 2. Enhance state maternal health surveillance and data capacity;** and
- 3. Identify and implement innovative interventions** to improve outcomes for populations disproportionately impacted by maternal mortality and SMM.

# FCH Maternal Health Innovation Team


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# MHI Program Opportunities

## Activities in progress:

- Establishing a VT Maternal Health Task Force (Goal 1)
- Building a data integration team (Goal 2)
- Exploring sustainable solutions for doula programming in VT (Goal 3)

## Activities just beginning:

- **Developing a 5-Year Maternal Health Strategic Plan (Goal 1)** 
- Conducting studies of priority populations' lived experiences (Goal 2)
- Assessing the maternal health data landscape (Goal 2)
- Establishing regional PQC partnerships (Goal 3)

# Maternal Health Strategic Plan

We have the opportunity to design a **5-year strategic plan** to guide the statewide maternal health care systems in improving access to care, data capacity, and program innovations that will improve outcome.

To design the strategic plan, we will:

- **Create a common vision** for all birthing people and families to thrive in VT,
- Become clear about **what we believe will work** to get there,
- Commit to a set of **actions** to move in that direction, and
- **Learn, adapt, and grow together.**





# Maternal Health Strategic Planning Overview

Create a **common vision** for all birthing people to thrive in VT

- Imagine our desired outcomes
- Look at data to see the gaps, disparities, and opportunity

Become clear about **what we believe will work** to get there

- Understand root causes
- Share ideas about what is and isn't working now, and what could

**Commit to actions** to move in that direction

- Identify the most effective strategies that can build on what works
- Understand what it will take to implement those strategies
- Pick performance measures that can help track progress

**Learn, adapt, and stick together** as we go over time

- Form and support a Maternal Health Task Force to support and offer guidance

# Maternal Health Strategic Planning Overview

**Our collective ideas about what works best to improve maternal health outcomes (the strategic plan!)**

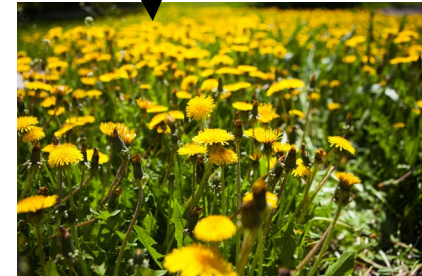
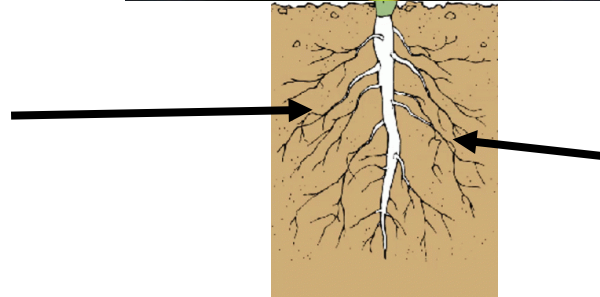
**Strategies named in the 5-year strategic plan to improve outcomes**

**Everyone's participation in the strategic planning process**

**All of your experiences and insights about how maternal health system of cares are working now in Vermont**

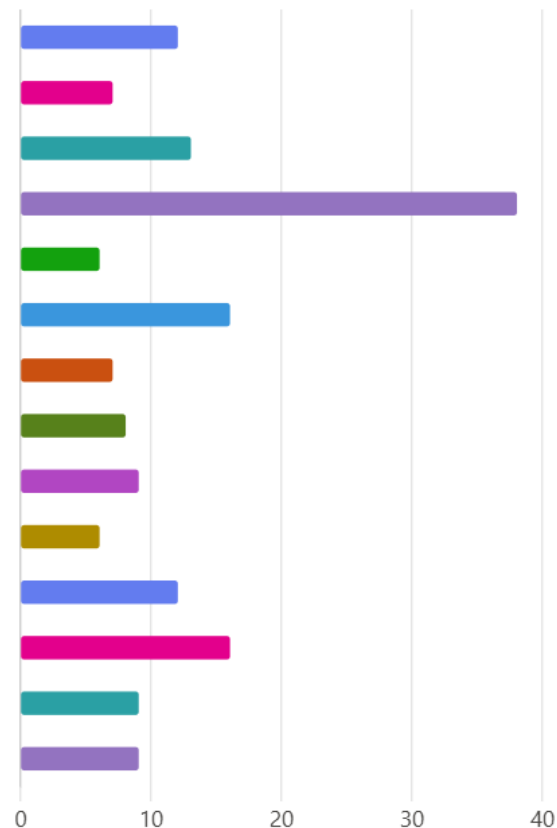
**Your roles & footholds in systems of care and your communities**

**Strategies taking root in regions and at the state level over the next 5 years**



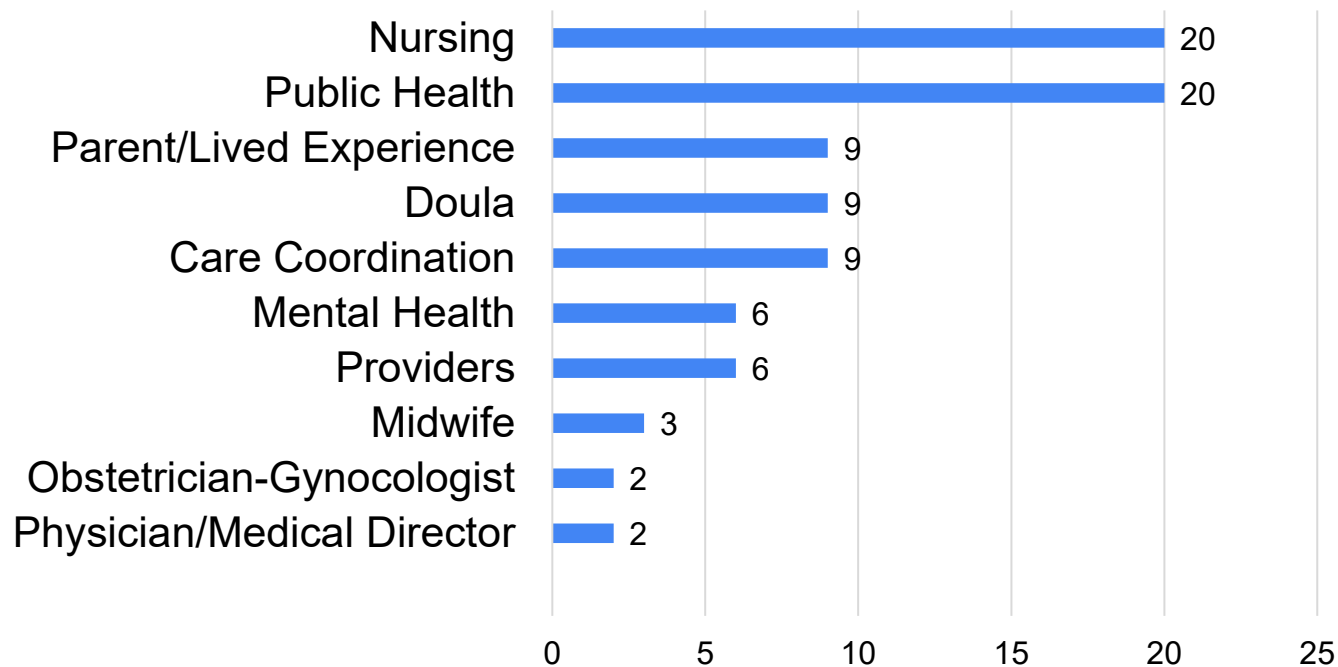
# Who are we together?

● Addison	12
● Bennington	7
● Caledonia	13
● Chittenden	38
● Essex	6
● Franklin	16
● Grand Isle	7
● Lamoille	8
● Orange	9
● Orleans	6
● Rutland	12
● Washington	16
● Windham	9
● Windsor	9



# Who Are We Together?

## Identified Roles



# Who Are You?

## Introductions:

In the chat, please share:

- your name and pronouns
- why did you come today?

Also in the chat, please share:

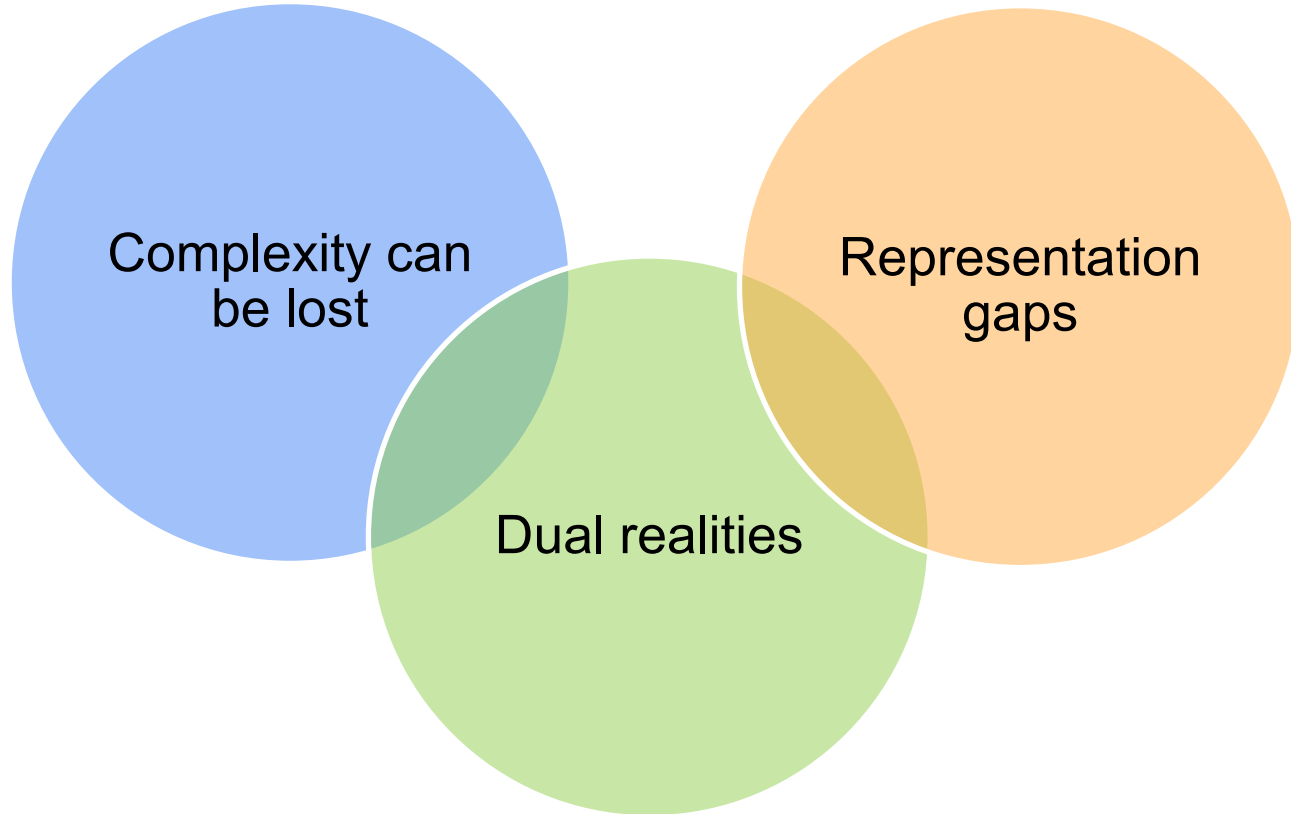
- 3 words that describe how you want all birthing people to BE, FEEL, or EXPERIENCE in Vermont
  - *Example: “I want all birthing people to feel connected to people who they trust.”*

# What Do You Think?

Come off mute or write in the chat:

- How would you know if that were true? What would it look like, feel like, sound like? What stories would we be telling about pregnancy, birthing, postpartum, new parenthood?
- To what extent do you think birthing people are experiencing those things right now? *All* birthing people? Be specific.
- Do you think it's better now than it has been before? For who? Why or why not?

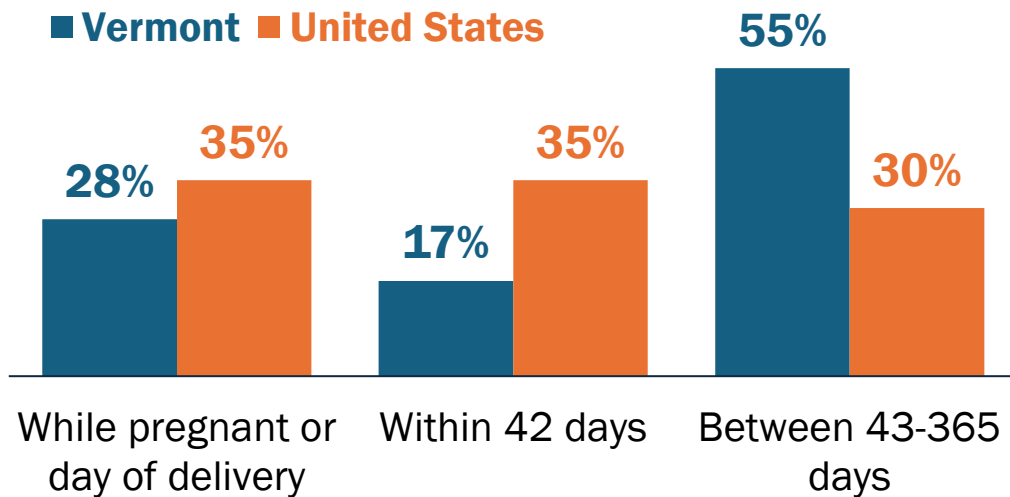
# A Note About Data



# What We're Seeing

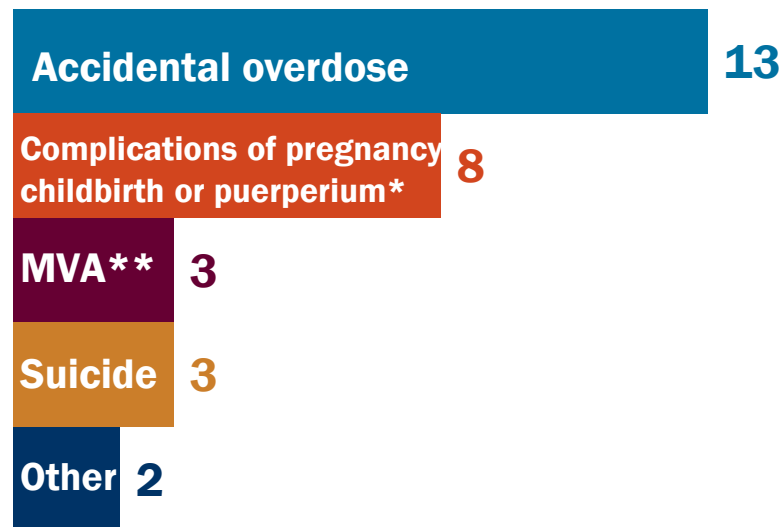
**In Vermont, the period after OB care has been identified as a time of increased risk.**

The full year after a birth is a key period for support.



\*Note: At the time of data collection, 36 states were reporting maternal deaths.

**Accidental overdose** was the leading cause of death in the 29 maternal mortality cases from 2012 to 2023.



\*puerperium = 6-to-8-week period following childbirth

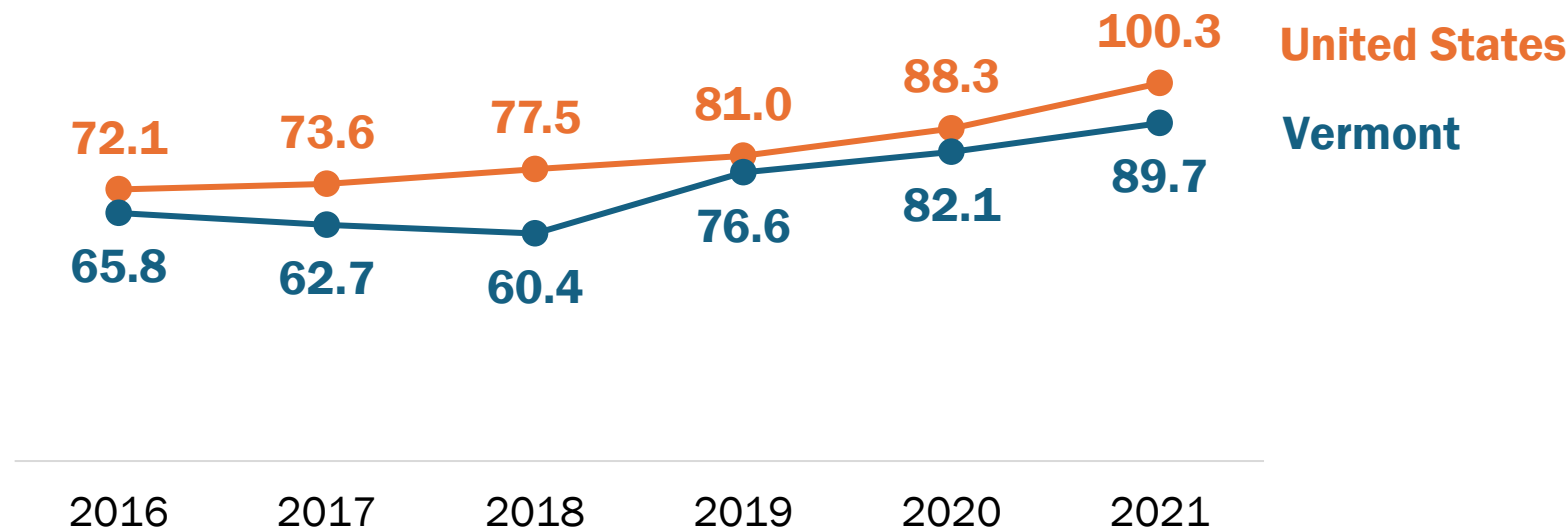
\*\*MVA = Motor vehicle accident



# What We're Seeing

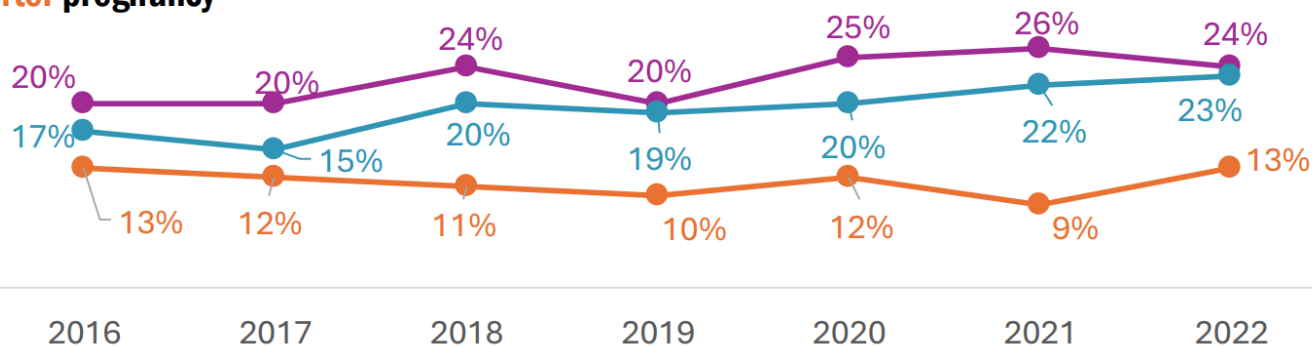
**The rate of significant life-threatening maternal complications during delivery increased from 2016 to 2021.**

Rate per 10,000 delivery hospitalizations



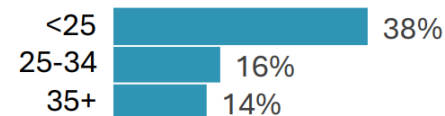
# What We're Seeing

Depression **before** and **during** pregnancy, and symptoms that can lead to depression **after** pregnancy



Depression during pregnancy in 2022

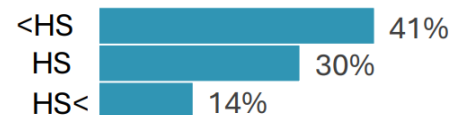
## Age



## Insurance



## Education



\*HS = high school

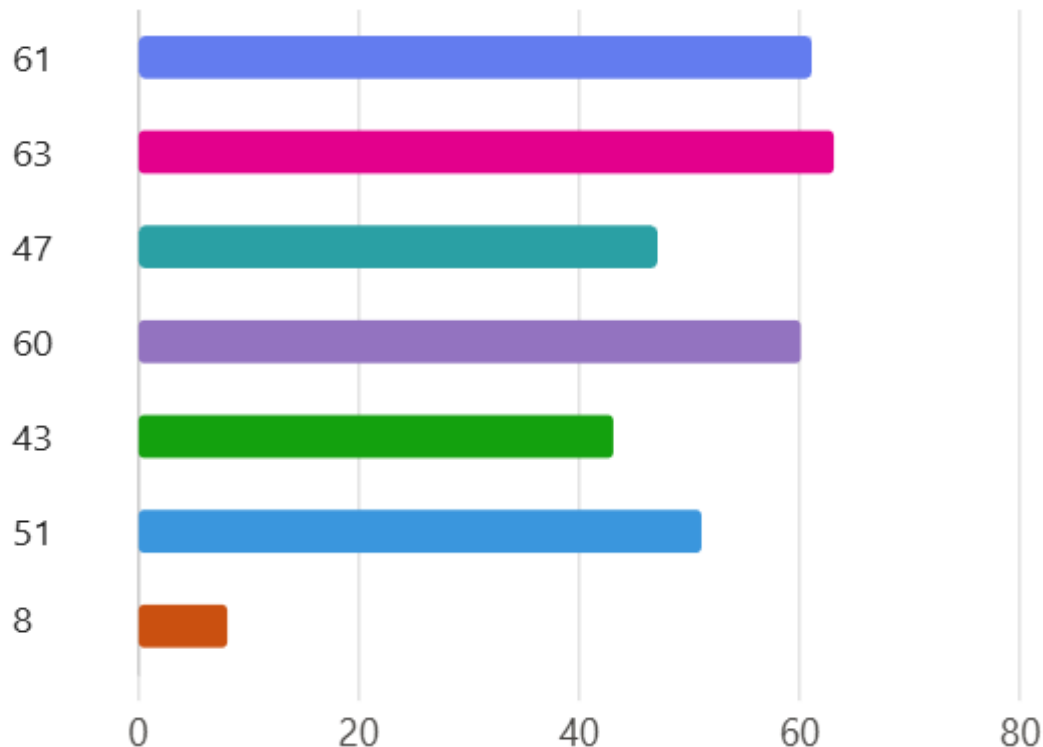
# What Do You Think?

Come off mute or share in the chat:

- What comes up for you when you look at this data?
- Does this seem to resonate with what you are experiencing happening in your region? What do you notice in your region?
- Do you feel like there is enough attention being focused on these issues in your region? Do you see any ideas for how to improve wellbeing during and after pregnancy taking root?

# Your Ideas

- Perinatal Quality
- Perinatal Mental Health
- Perinatal Substance Use
- Community Based Services
- Data and Evaluation
- Policy
- Other



# Your Ideas

Come off mute or share in the chat:

- What is **one specific issue** you're aware of in the maternal health system you hope is addressed by this strategic plan?
- What is **one specific strategy for improving the maternal health system** you hope to learn more about or see considered in this strategic planning process?

# Maternal Health Strategic Planning Overview

Create a <b>common vision</b> for all birthing people to thrive in VT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Imagine our desired outcomes</li><li>● Look at data to see the gaps, disparities, and opportunity</li></ul>
Become clear about <b>what we believe will work</b> to get there	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Understand root causes</li><li>● Share ideas about what is and isn't working now, and what could</li></ul>
<b>Commit to actions</b> to move in that direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Identify the most effective strategies that can build on what works</li><li>● Understand what it will take to implement those strategies</li><li>● Pick performance measures that can help track progress</li></ul>
<b>Learn, adapt, and stick together</b> as we go over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Form and support a Maternal Health Task Force to support and offer guidance</li></ul>

# Emerging Principles



Broad and inclusive engagement of partners and community members



Clear and transparent roles, responsibilities, and opportunities to engage



Creative, thoughtful, relational ways of inviting ideas



Equity-centered



Qualitative & quantitative data

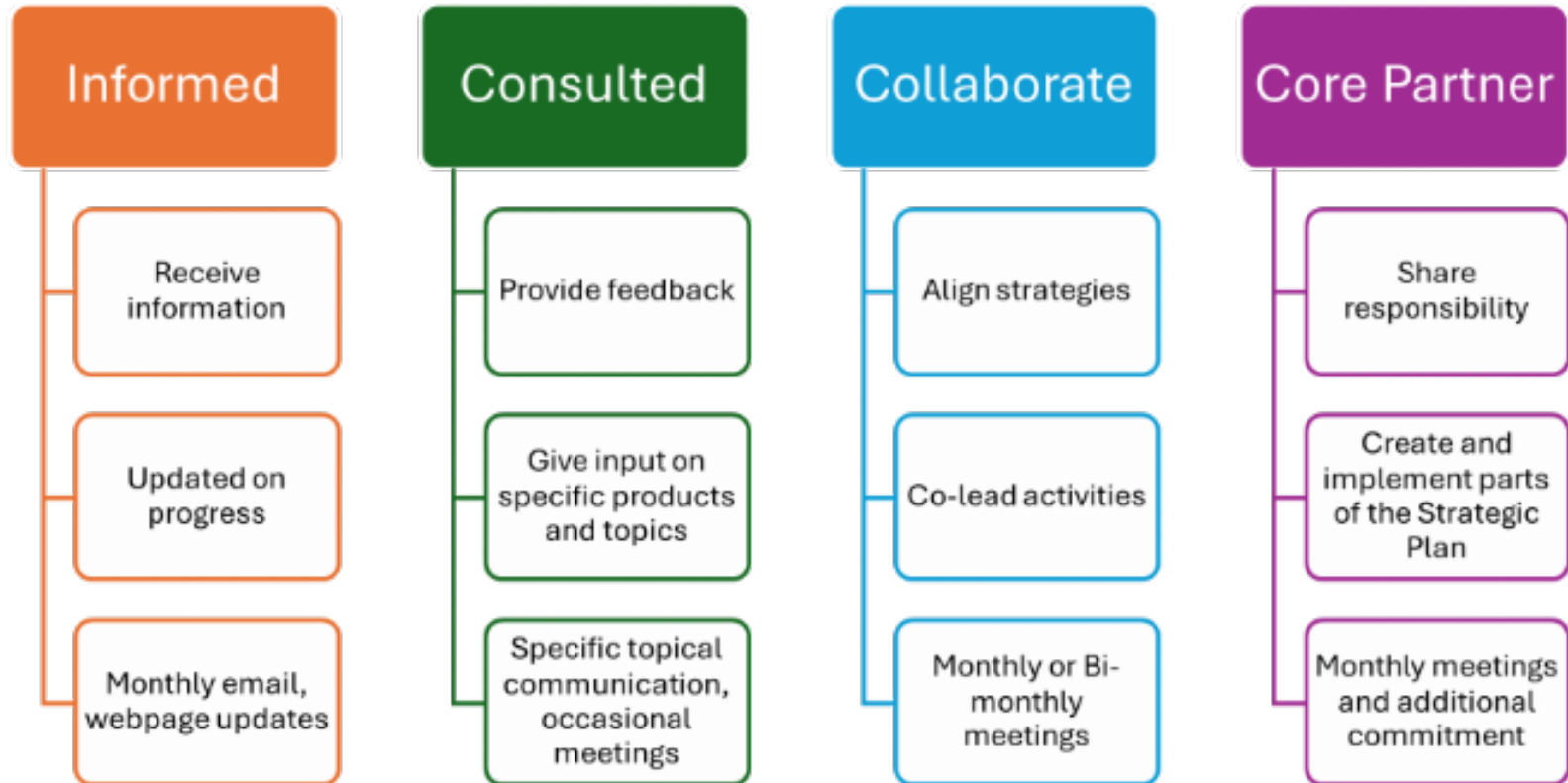


Clear decision-making processes and roles



Asset-based, designed to build from existing momentum

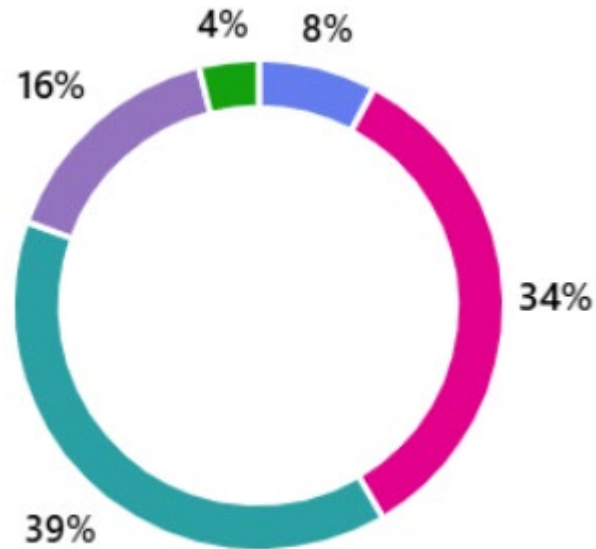
# Levels of Engagement





# Levels of Engagement

● Informed	6
● Consulted	26
● Collaborate	30
● Core Partner	12
● Other	3



# Core Methods of Engagement



<b>Strategic Planning Workshops</b> (some virtual, at least one in person)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Virtual and in-person meetings to workshop the fundamental strategic planning questions and incorporate your questions, insights, and ideas</li></ul>
<b>Interview / Conversation</b> (likely virtual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Individual or group conversation with members of the FCH team and/or consultants to help us understand your current experience, insights, and ideas</li></ul>
<b>Job Shadow / Site Visit</b> (in person)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opportunity to learn more about current strategies to improve maternal health across the state experientially, meet others in the field, and share back what you learn to support strategic planning</li></ul>

# What Do You Think?

We welcome anyone to come off mute and share your perspective on **one or both** questions:

- How could a statewide maternal health strategic plan be helpful to you?
- How do you want to use this strategic plan to deepen relationships and connections across the maternal health system?

# Timeline & Monthly Focus Area

April	May	June	July	August	Sept
<b>Process Design</b> (Internal)	<b>Desired Outcomes; Data + Current Experience</b>  *Virtual kick-off May 29, June 3  *Other virtual engagement TBD		<b>Root Causes; What Works + Doesn't</b>  *In-person workshop on <b>July 30</b> in Waterbury	<b>Strategies &amp; Actions; Draft Plan</b>  *Virtual and other types of engagement TBD	<b>Reviews &amp; Edits; Submit Plan</b>  *Regular support & monitoring begins

# Questions & Comments



# Next Steps

## Everyone, at any desired participation level:

- Fill out the form
- Expect to hear back from FCH with an invitation to participate in engagement events that will be scheduled between June - September.

## Questions about engagement?

- Send an email to Emily Smith at [Emily.J.Smith@vermont.gov](mailto:Emily.J.Smith@vermont.gov) and we will follow up to better understand your capacity and how best to support your participation.

Vermont Maternal Health Strategic  
Planning Interest Form



# In-person Strategic Planning Summit

## When?

- July 30th, 9:00am-3:00pm

## Where?

- Waterbury State Office Complex
- 280 State Street, Waterbury, VT  
05671-8360

## Register

- [Click here to register](#)

## MHI Landing Page

- [Click here](#) for more details on grant activities and the strategic planning process



Thank you!