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A Landscape Assessment of Family-Servicing Organizations in Vermont: Highlighting the Importance of Lived Experience in Advocacy and Policy

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A landscape assessment of family-serving organizations in Vermont

Highlighting the importance of lived experience in advocacy and policy

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Introduction

The voices of those with lived experiences (LE) have a key role in advancing health equity and eliminating disparities within maternal and child health (MCH).¹

People with lived experiences are those who have a personal connection to, involvement in, and/or personal identification with the community population the organization aims to serve.

Current literature reports the value of engaging people with lived experiences to inform operations that will better serve and advocate for those they represent.²

The goal was to assess the landscape of family-serving organizations and pathways to engage people with lived experiences across the state of Vermont.

- Evaluate the presence of individuals with lived experience influencing MCH serving organizations³
- Assess MCH service availability
- Identify characteristics of MCH serving organizations that engage in policy making and advocacy⁴

Methods

Phase 1: internet search targeting MCH topics and contribution from Vermont Department of Health to collect qualitative and quantitative data on MCH serving organizations

- 74 organizations were categorized based on: (1) zip codes of office locations and (2) zip codes in which each organization provides services
- Exclusively federally funded organizations were excluded

Phase 2: telephone interviews with 10 organizations that reflected a range of groups and identities

Descriptive statistical analysis of Phase 1 data was conducted

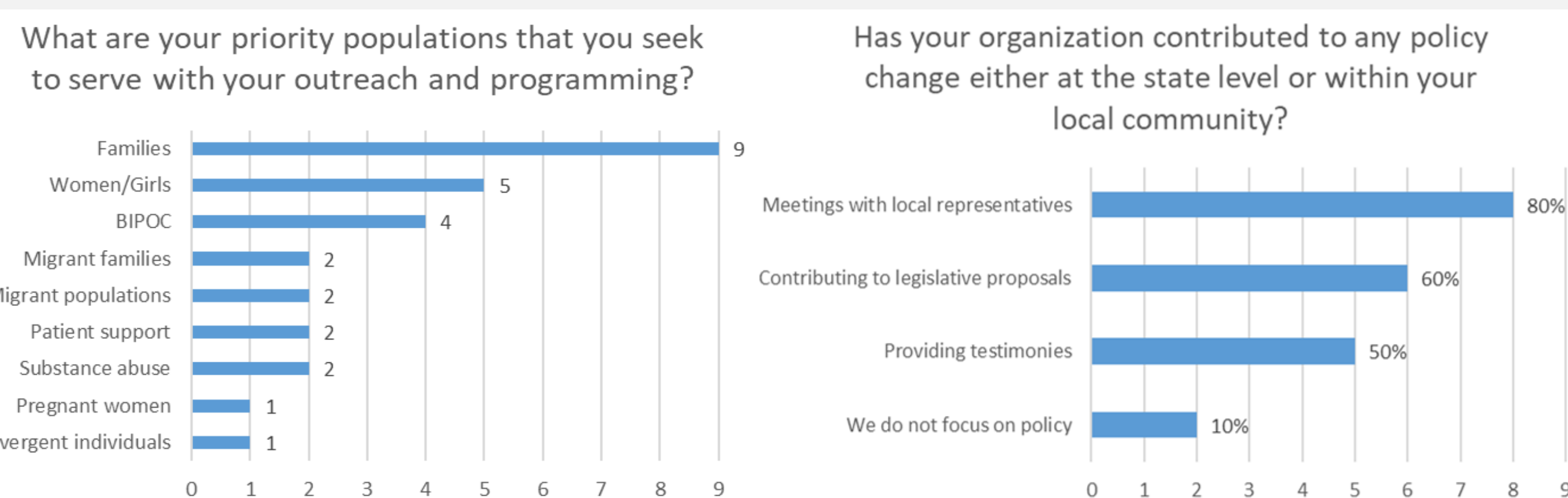


Fig. 1: A survey assessing priority populations and policy contribution by Vermont organizations

Results

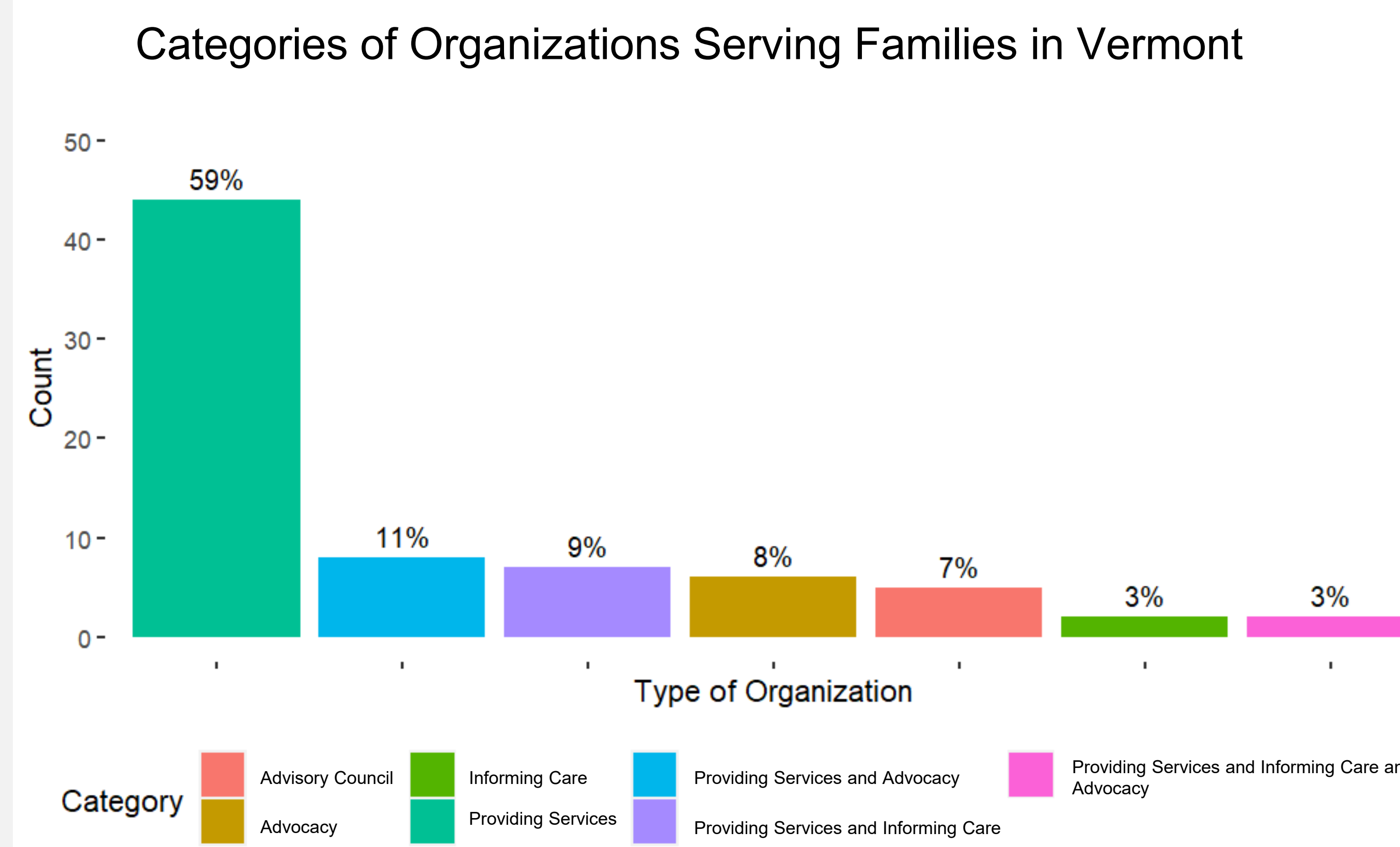


Fig. 2: Categories of MCH serving organizations in Vermont

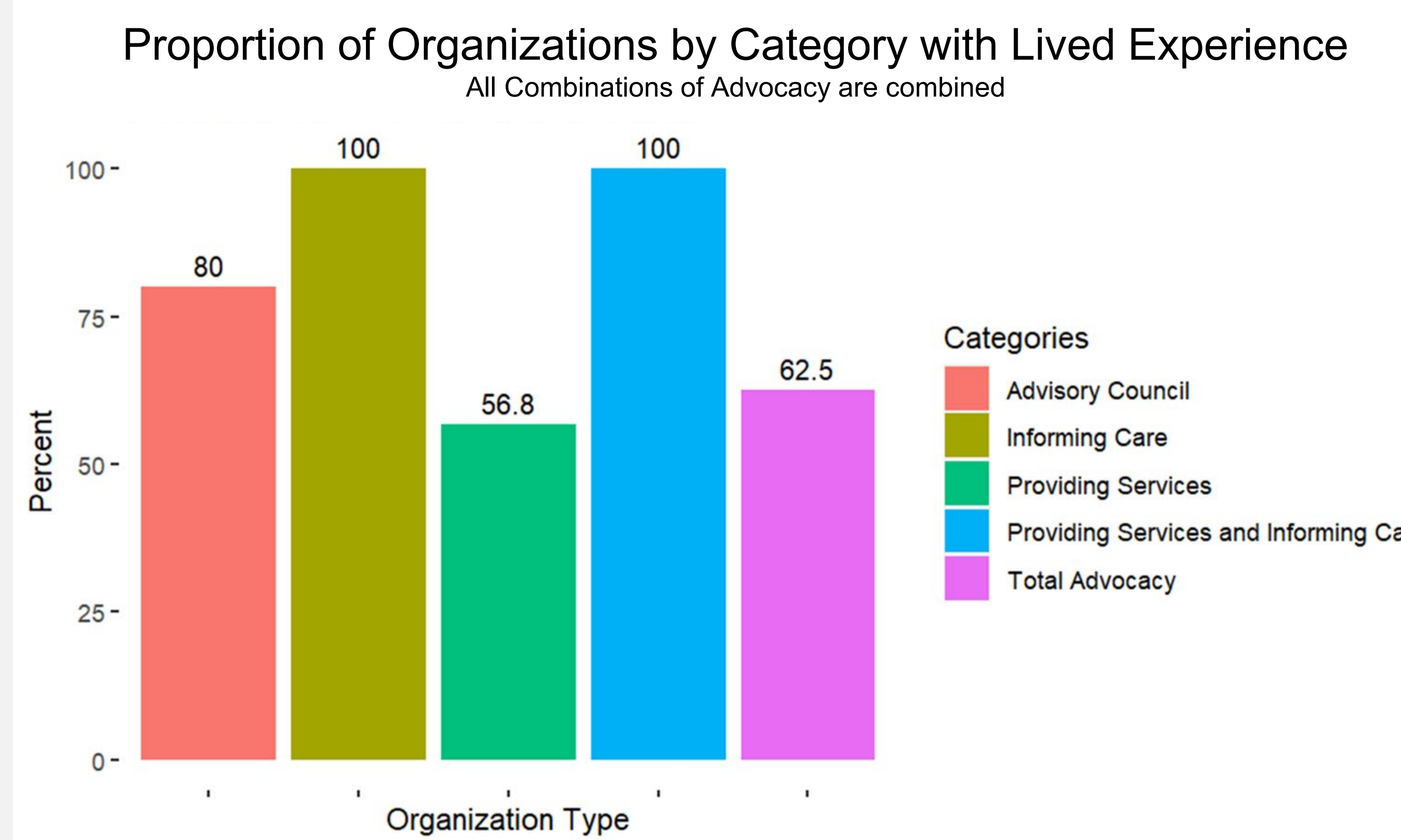
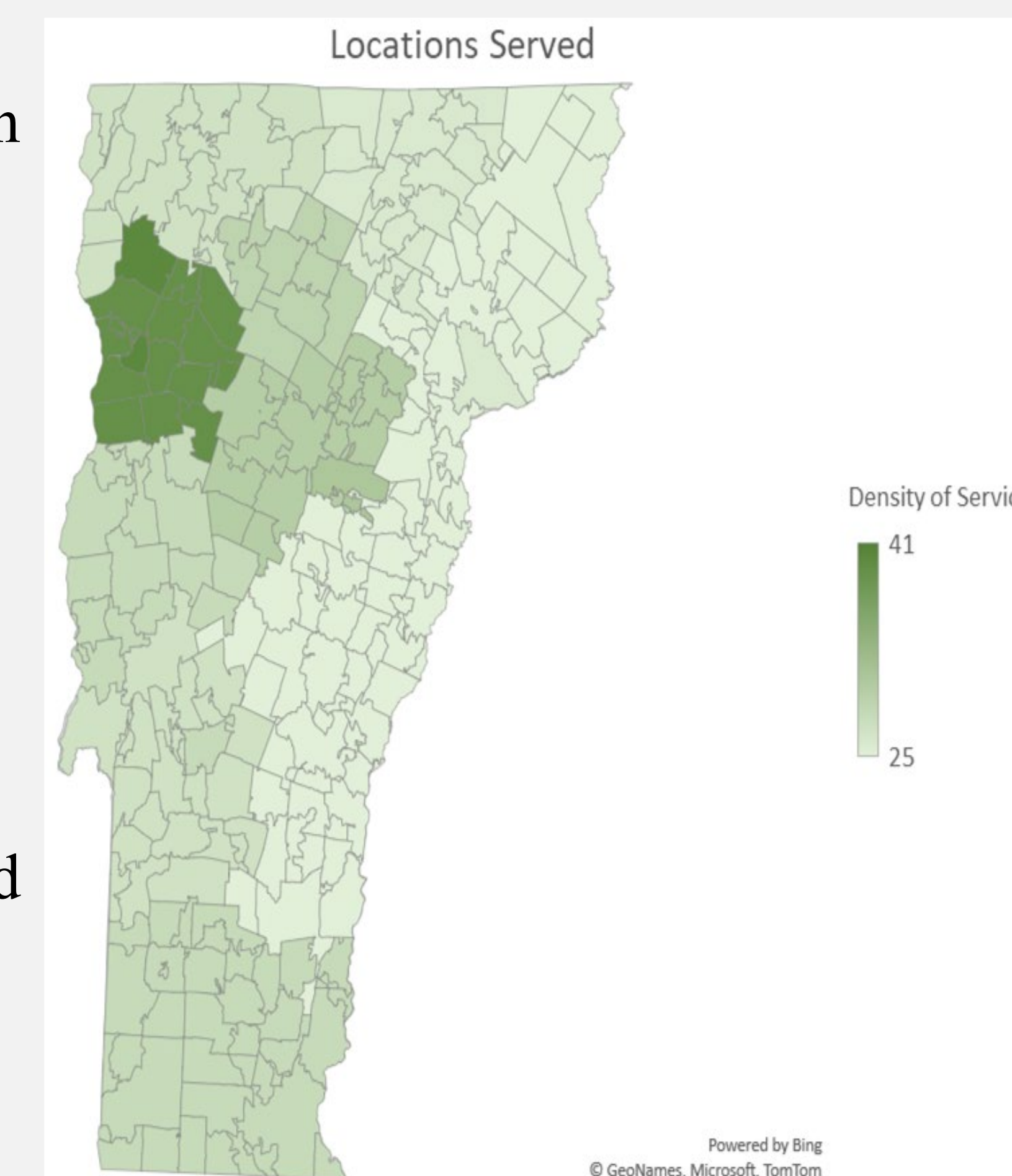


Fig. 3: A comparison of organizations with lived experiences and types of services provided. χ^2 analysis indicated significant difference in proportion of LE across categories of organization ($p < .001$)

65% of the evaluated organizations had people with lived experience

25 organizations that contained people lived experiences provided direct services

Landscape assessment: concentration of MCH serving organizations in Chittenden County, compared to rural areas, identifying potential for MCH serving organizations to expand their distribution



Discussion and Conclusion

Phase 2: organizations appear to most often engage in public policy through meeting with local representatives and contributing to legislative proposals.

Organizations including people with LE seem to engage in more advocacy and public policy experience than those without LE.

Both phases of data collection support what is presented in current literature.

Inclusion of people with LE can better inform the operations and policy development of MCH serving organizations.

Limitations of our study include bias associated with a web-based search, response bias and small sample size through conducted phone interviews. This research cannot establish a causative link.

References

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Youth can come as they are, with all of their trauma, and can find a vent/emotional space instead of just a work space

We consistently work with the community to ensure feedback and that our programs think about all individuals since there is no default, there is no one right way to participate or play

We prioritize creating a positive space for families and children to connect based on their backgrounds

We provide a youth driven space where they work on issues that impact them, anywhere from emotional connection to activism and community advocacy

We work with childhood educators to address education shortages and diversify our field so the people who are working with our children reflect the population we aim to serve

Without our services, children would be interviewed at the police station. This way, we can provide trauma-informed care