
“Functions and Services of State Health Agencies”

David R. Gifford, MD, MPH
Director, Rhode Island Department of Health

Pursuing Excellence in Public Health

APHA Annual Meeting

November 2007



Understanding State Public Health: Goals and Activities

Goals

- Promote analysis of relationship between infrastructure and health outcomes.
- Provide evidence for policy decisions.
- Assure consistent messages.
- Enhance public support for state public health services.
- Develop processes to deliver the message to constituencies.

Activities

- Build the necessary data set needed to gain a comprehensive understanding of state public health agency functions and infrastructure.
- Develop a description of state public health that articulates its meaning, value and importance.
- Market state public health to improve understanding among public health constituents, policy makers, funders and the public.
- Align efforts with the Voluntary National Accreditation Program.



Overarching Questions

- What are the commonalities that exist among state public health agencies? i.e. services offered, organizational structure, oversight provided.
- What makes state public health unique? What are the functions of a state public health agency that are not shared by local, county or regional public health agencies?
- What are the functional boundaries of state public health agencies? What public health service gaps exist among SPHAs?
- What do SPHAs look like across the nation? What are SPHAs activities and priorities?
- What is the SPHA's relationship to local health departments?
- What is the size of SPHAs across the nation?



Survey Development

- with assistance from Public Health Foundation

- Survey tools consulted:
 - NACCHO Profile of Local Health Agencies
 - Survey of State Public Health Agencies (Les Beitsch, collected in 2001)
 - ASTHO State Public Health Workforce Survey (2007)
 - ASTHO Environmental Health Program Survey (2006)
 - Characteristics of a State and Local Health Agency (Fitzhugh Mullan & J. Smith, 1988)

- Vetting Process
 - ASTHO Management Committee
 - USPH Taskforce
 - ASTHO Staff
 - 35 Public Health Practitioners and researchers through Google Documents
 - Piloted by 2 former state health officials and 1 former deputy secretary



Survey Subheadings

- Respondent Information
- Activities
- Organization for Federal Initiatives
- SPHA Descriptors
- SPHA Personnel
- State Organizational Structure
- Agency Mission
- SPHA Scope of Work
- Planning and Quality Improvement
- Relationship with Local Public Health Agencies
- SPHA Training
- Emergency Preparedness Infrastructure
- Partnership and Collaboration
- SPHA Performance Activities
- SHO Qualifications and Experience



Survey Administration

- Survey is completed:
 - Via the web
 - By state health agency staff
- Respondents
 - 39 states have started the survey
 - 11 states have completed the survey

Survey Results: High SHA Participation (>75%)

Category	Activities
#1 Vaccine Inventory Management	Childhood immunizations
#5 Registry Maintenance	Childhood immunization
#12 Regulation, Inspection and Licensing	Food service establishments
#10 Epidemiology and Surveillance Activities	Cancer incidence, environmental health, injury, perinatal events or risk factors, chronic disease, vital statistics, behavioral risk factors, injury, environmental health, communicable/infectious diseases
#9 Data Collection and Analysis	Vital records and statistics, morbidity data, reportable diseases
#14 Environmental Health Activities	Food safety education
#18 Preparedness Response	Bioterrorism event response, communicable disease outbreak response, natural disaster response, nuclear disaster response
*Based on Preliminary Results/Partial Response	



Survey Results: Low SHA Participation (<10%)

Category	Activity
#3 Screening	Tuberculosis, asthma
#4 Laboratory Services	Food borne illness testing
#6 Treatment	Blood lead, breast and cervical cancer, coronary heart disease, asthma, diabetes
#7 MCH Services	Obstetrical care, primary care for children
#8 Clinical health services	Comprehensive primary care for adults, disabled, domestic violence victims services, mentally ill, sexual assault victims; Home health care, correctional health, child protection services/medical evaluation
#12 Regulation, Inspection, Licensing Services	Housing (inspections)
#14 Environmental Health Activities	Land use planning, vector control, outdoor air quality regulations, noise pollution control
#15 Public Health Activities	Agriculture regulation, needle exchange, State health planning and development, State tuberculosis hospitals
#17 Access to Health Care	Health insurance regulation
*Based on Preliminary Results/Partial Response	



SHA Involvement in Public Health Activities: Immunizations

Number & Percentage of states and their partners reporting selected public health activities							
	State Public Health Agency	Other State Govt Agencies & Contracts	Any Local Entity	Federal Govt	Other NonGovt	No Entity	Modal # Providers
(Q1) Immunizations Inventory Management	# States (%)	# States (%)	# States (%)	# States (%)	# States (%)	# States (%)	# States
Adult	20 (77)	7 (27)	13 (50)	5 (19)	12 (46)	1 (4)	3
Childhood	20 (77)	8 (31)	10 (39)	3 (11)	10(38)	0 (0)	1
International	3 (11)	2 (8)	12 (46)	2 (8)	15 (58)	1 (4)	1
(Q2) Immunization Administration	# States (%)	# States (%)	# States (%)	# States (%)	# States (%)	# States (%)	# States
Adult	12 (46)	13 (50)	19 (72)	4 (15)	18 (69)	0 (0)	2
Childhood	11 (42)	14 (53)	18 (69)	1 (4)	21 (81)	0 (0)	2
International	4 (15)	3 (12)	15 (64)	2 (8)	20 (76)	1 (4)	2
Based on Preliminary Results/Partial Response - 26 States reporting 9/24/07							



Survey Results: Screening

	State Public Health Agency	Any Local Entity	Non Governmental Entity
Newborn Screening	46%	15%	77%
Other Public Health Screenings	42%	11%	61%
Other Cancers	42%	19%	73%
HIV	27%	61%	77%
Asthma	7%	31%	81%
Based on Preliminary Results/Partial Response - 26 States reporting 9/24/07			

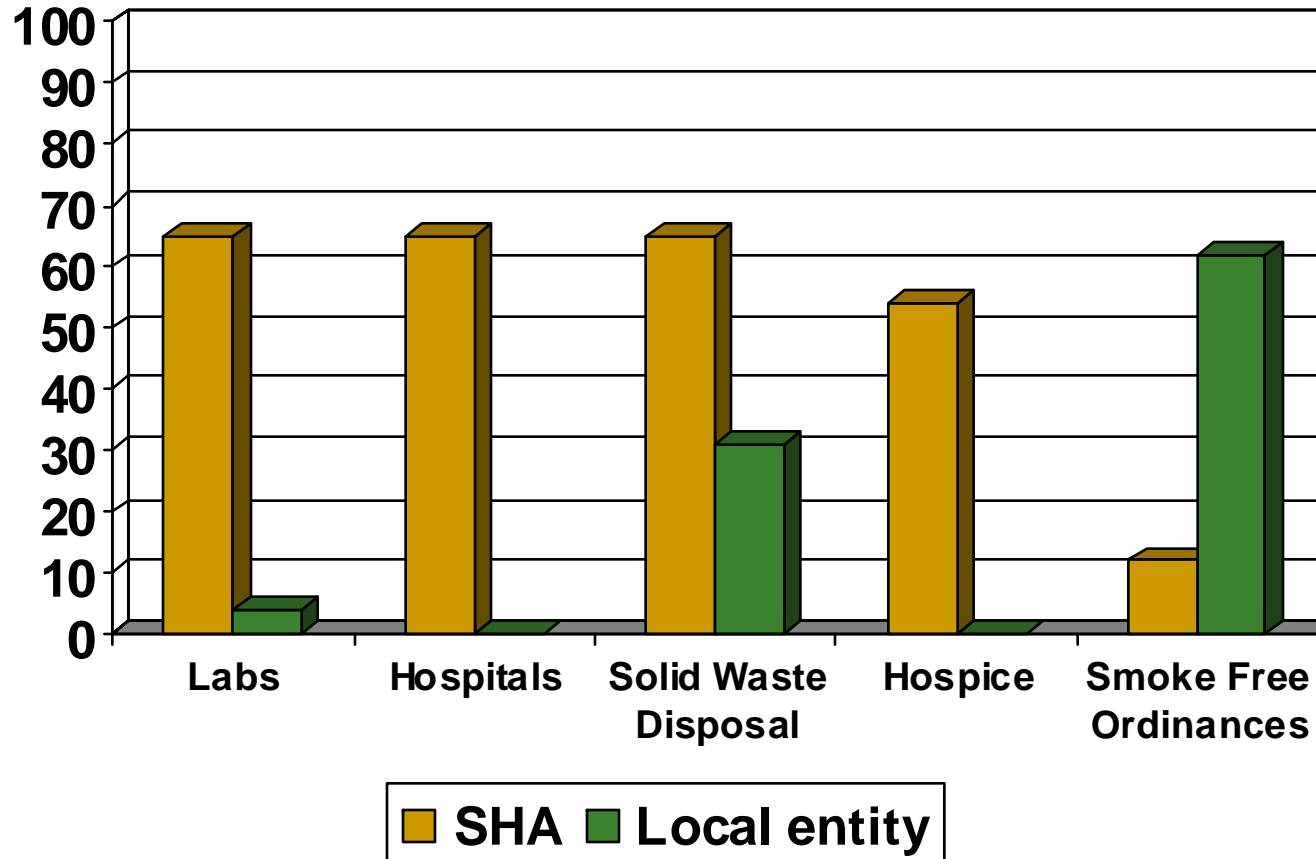


Survey Results: MCH Services

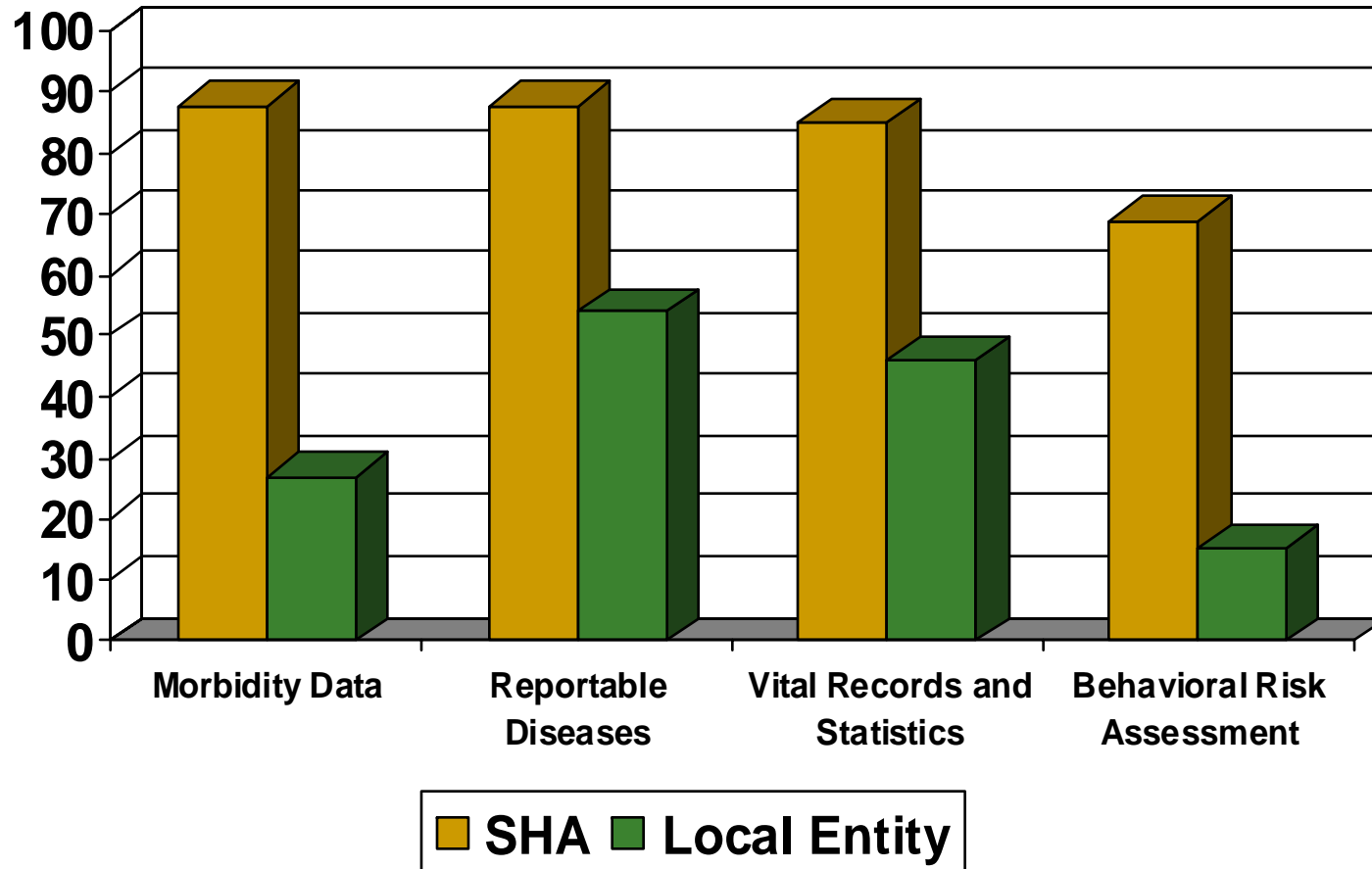
	State Public Health Agency	Any Local Entity	Non Governmental Entity	Modal # Providers
Early Intervention Services for Children	35%	35%	61%	2
EPSDT	31%	42%	65%	3
Family Planning and Prenatal Care	27%	54%	69%	3
Primary Care for Children	8%	35%	73%	2
School Health Services (non-clinical)	27%	62%	42%	3
Based on Preliminary Results/Partial Response - 26 States reporting 9/24/07				



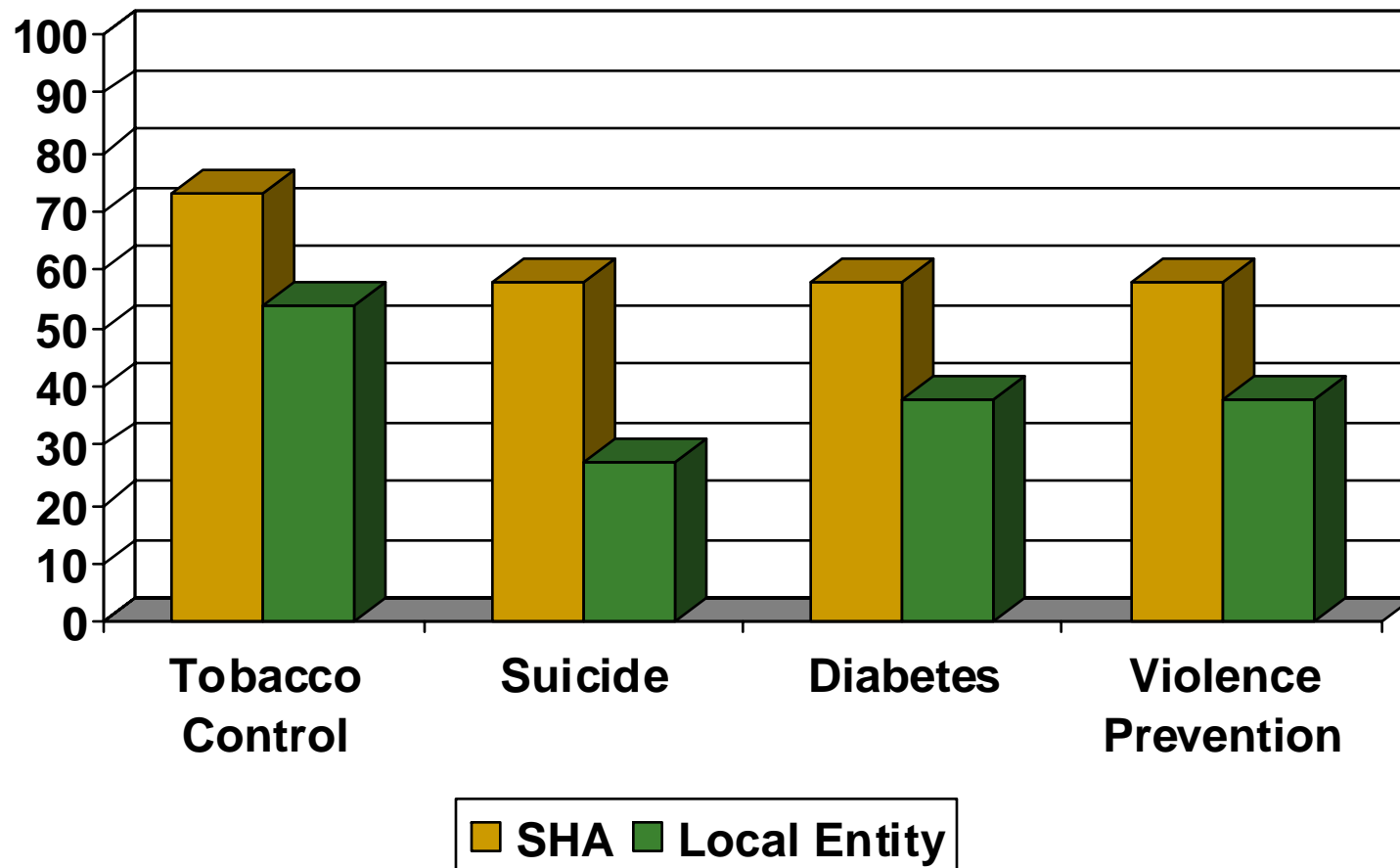
Survey Results: Regulatory Activities



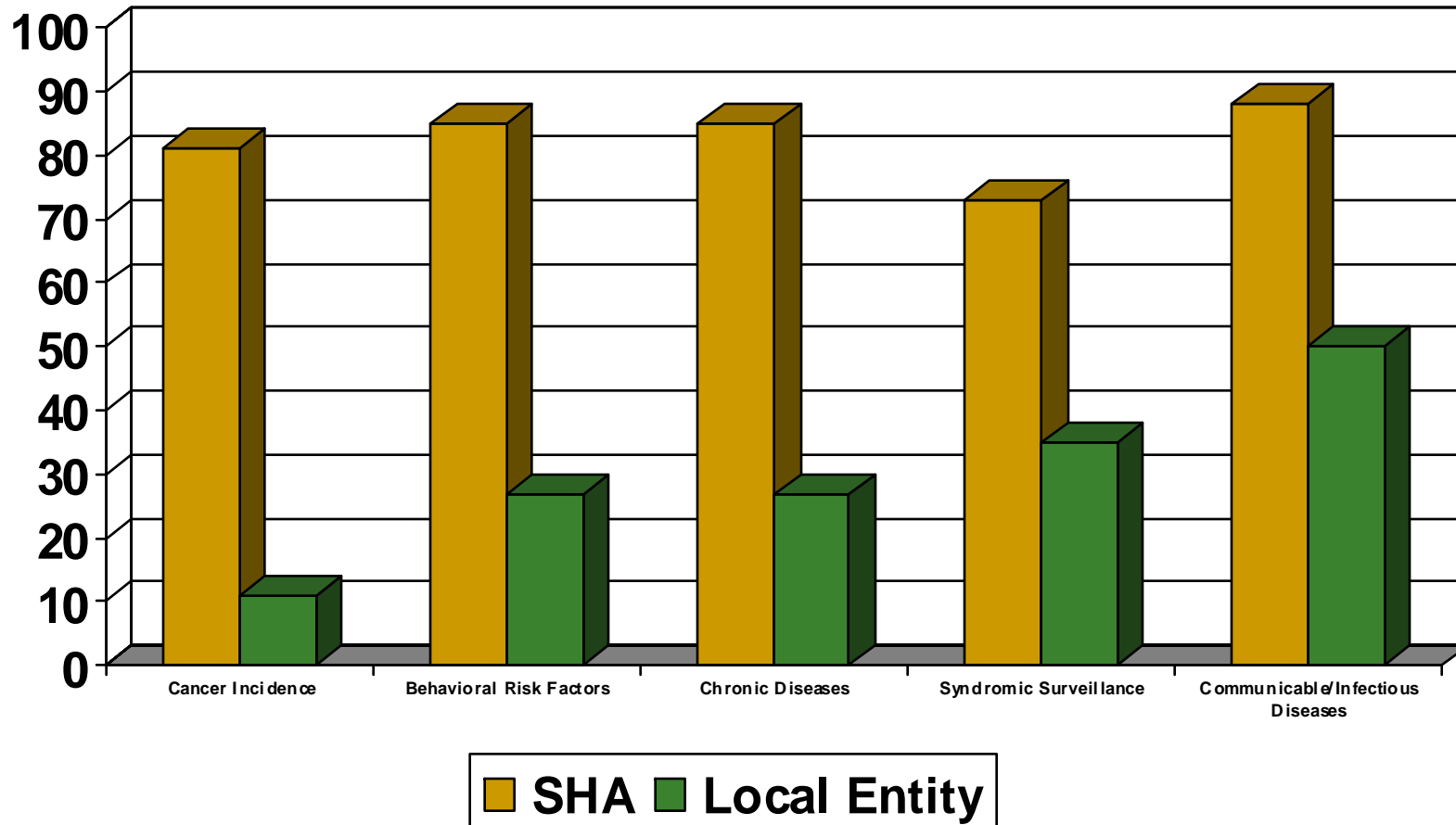
Survey Results: Data Collection



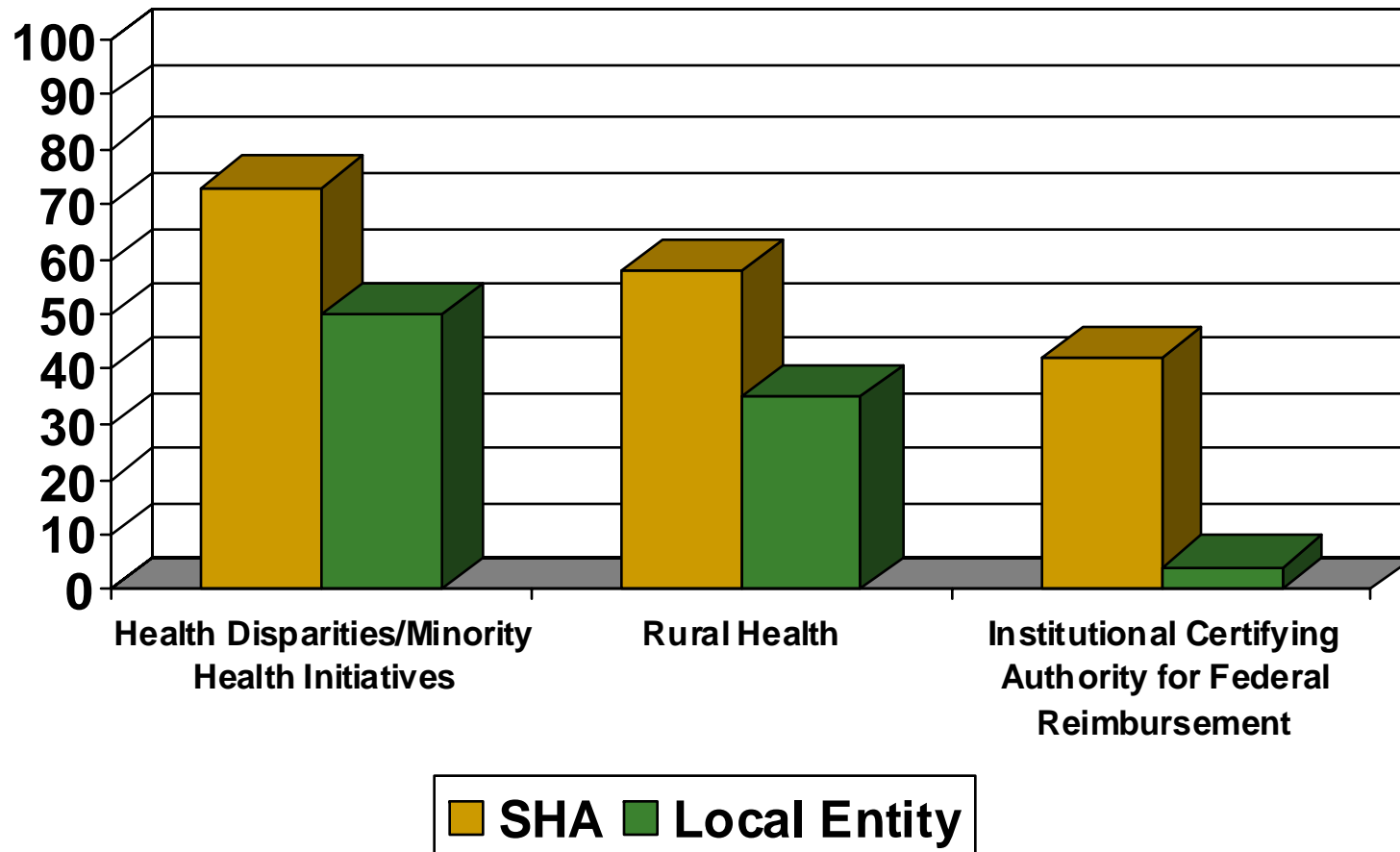
Survey Results: Population-based Primary Prevention



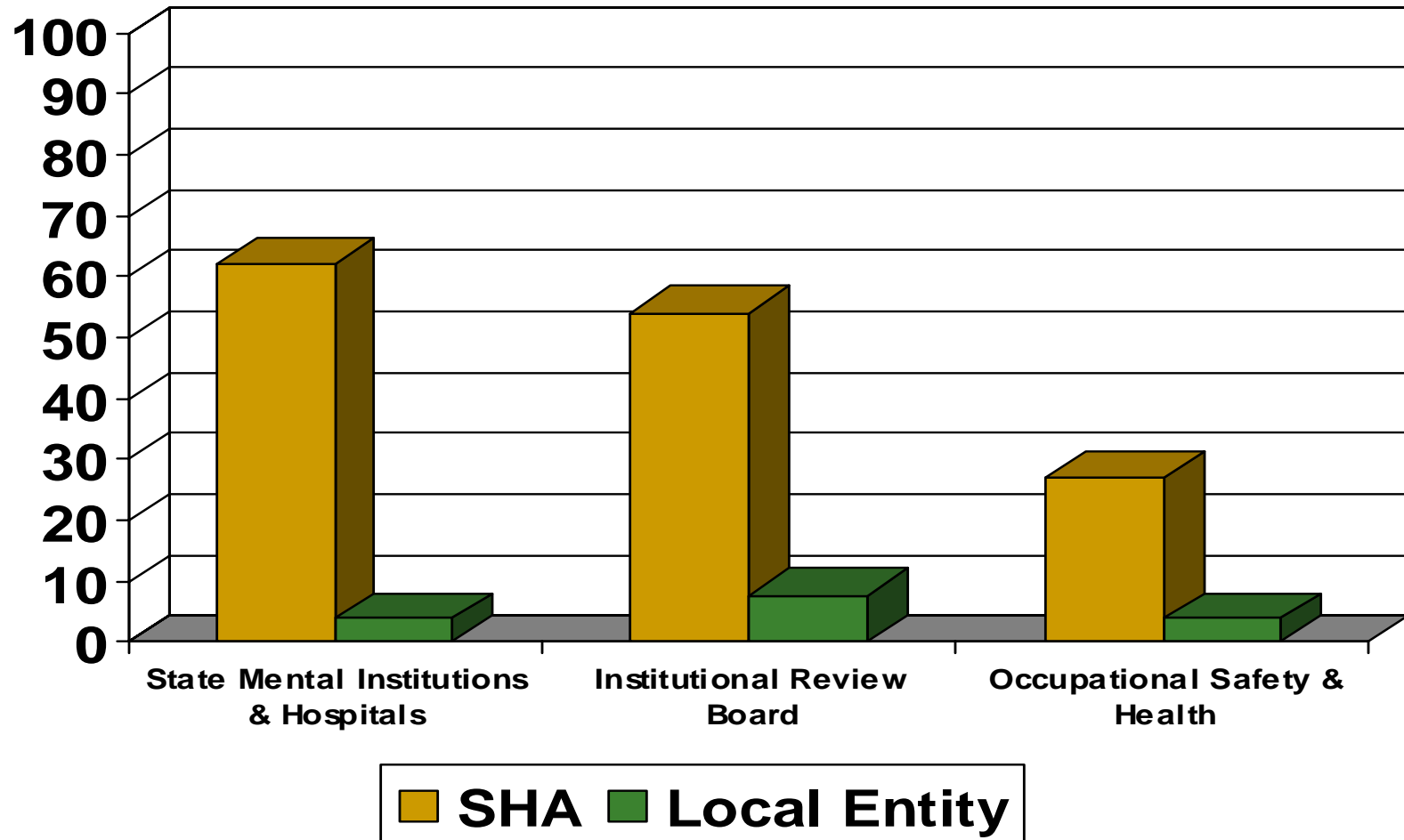
Survey Results: Epidemiology and Surveillance



Survey Results: Access to Care



Survey Results: Other Public Health Activities



Survey Results: Modal Number

Preparedness Response Participation	
Activity	Agencies Providing Services
Bioterrorism Emergency Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ State agency■ Local entity■ Non-Governmental agency■ Federal agency
Chemical Disaster Response	
Natural Disaster Response	
Nuclear Disaster Response	
Based on Preliminary Results/Partial Response - 26 States reporting 9/24/07	



David Gifford, MD, MPH
Director
Rhode Island Department of Health
David.Gifford@health.ri.gov

