

Down to the Bone: Racism, Disparities and Teen Sexual Health

*Barbara W. Sugland, MPH, ScD
Executive Director*



*Center for Applied Research
& Technical Assistance*



May 16, 2006

*UNM Continuing Education Conference Center
1634 University Blvd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87131*

Talking Points

- Review racial/ethnic disparities in teen sexual health
 - Sexual health = birth, pregnancy & sexually transmitted infections
- Correlation of disparities & inequality
- Share emerging framework
 - Linking racism & teen sexual behavior
- Suggested action steps
 - Policy, program & advocacy



Acknowledgements

Annie E. Casey Foundation

- **Structural Racism and Disparities in Adolescent Sexual & Reproductive Health**

Ford Foundation

- **Promoting the Sexual Health of Youth in Marginalized Communities**
- ***Unity Project* – Local Capacity Building for Equity and Teen Sexual Health Disparities**

CARTA Staff

- **Kimberly Ross, Anita Chandra, Michael Brice, Shameeka Jelenewicz, Kalisha Davis**

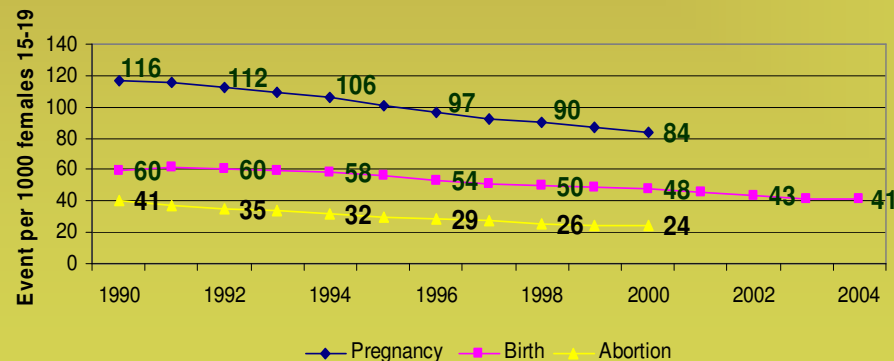


Teen Sexual Health: The Good News



- Substantial declines in teen birth, pregnancy & abortion rates
- Rates generally declined for all racial/ethnic groups
- Increases in contraceptive use

Rates of Teen Birth, 1990 - 2004
Rates of Teen Pregnancy and Abortion, 1990 - 2000

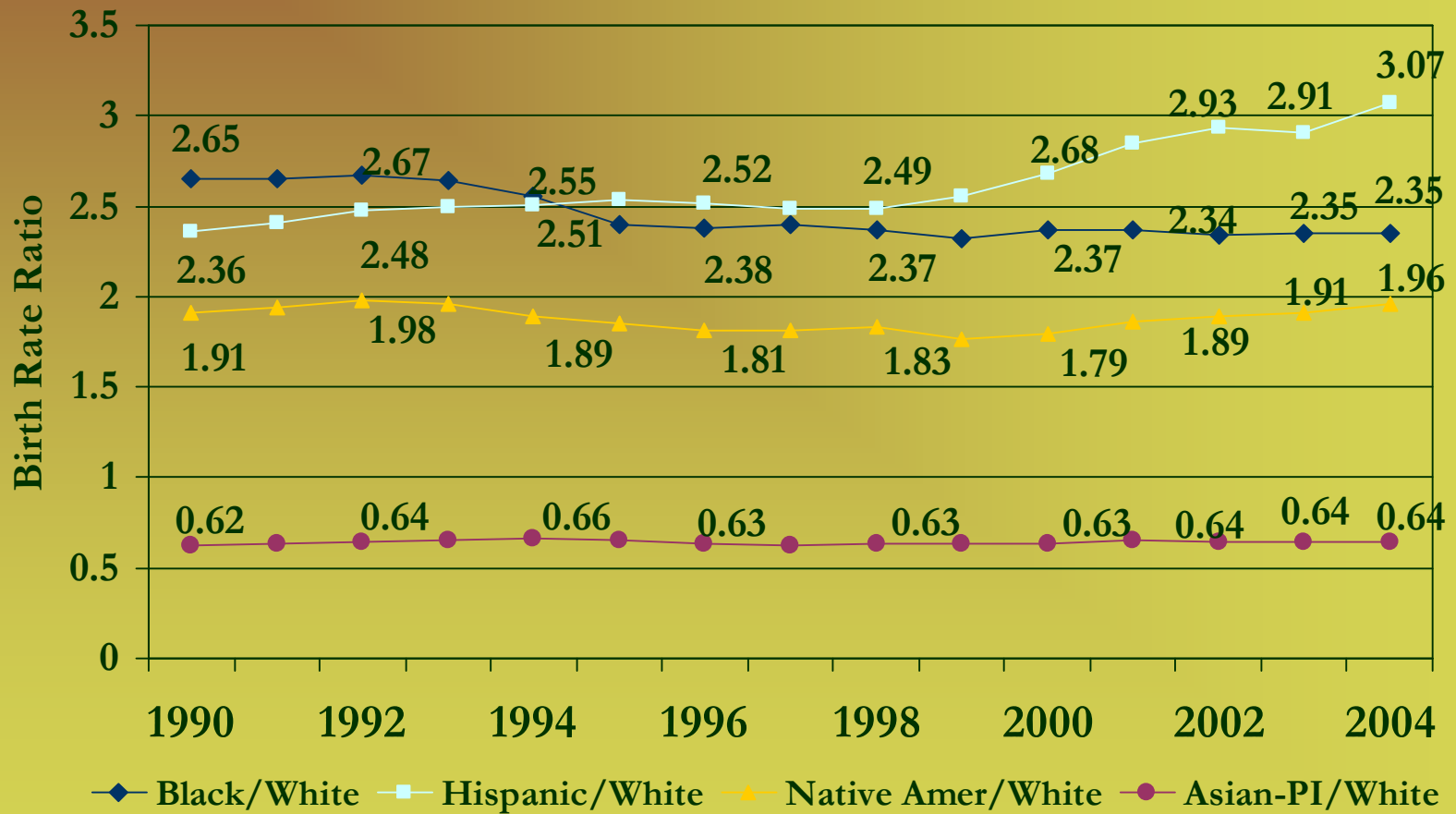


Teen Sexual Health: The Not So Good News

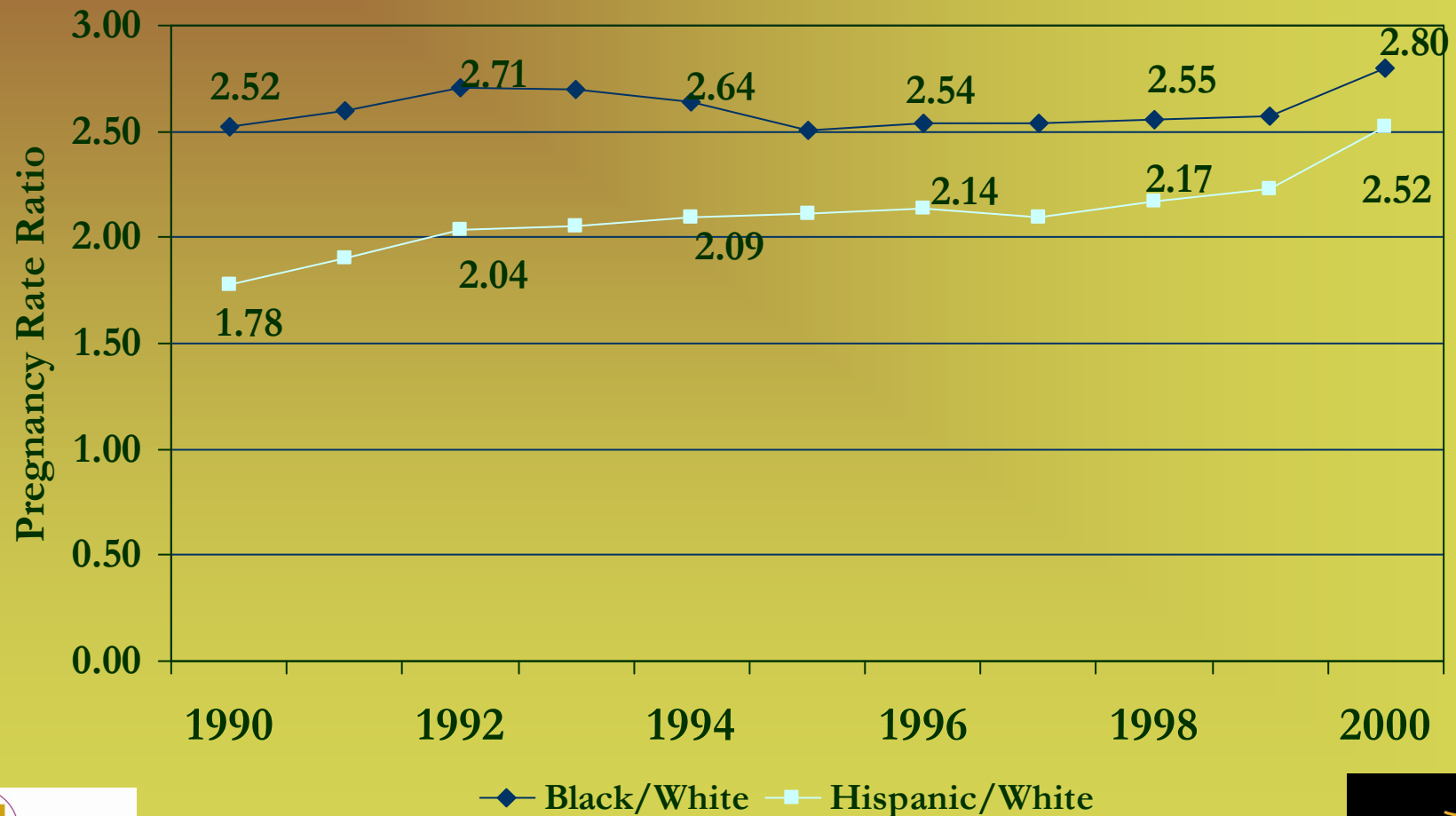
- Rate of decline in TBR may be slowing
- Slowest rate of decline for Hispanics & Native Americans
- Slight increase in teen birth rates for Hispanic girls (2003-2004)
 - 82.3/1000 to 82.6/1000
- Rates still significantly higher among teens of color
- Progress around STDs is mixed
 - Chlamydia rates increased 40% for female teens;
 - Rates doubled for male teens
 - Gonorrhea rates dropped 21% from highest point (1998);
 - Current rates are ~ 12% higher than 1996
 - HIV/AIDS among 13-24 yr olds increased 21% (1999 & 2003)
 - STD rates are higher among youth & young adults of color
 - 6 fold difference African Amer to White females



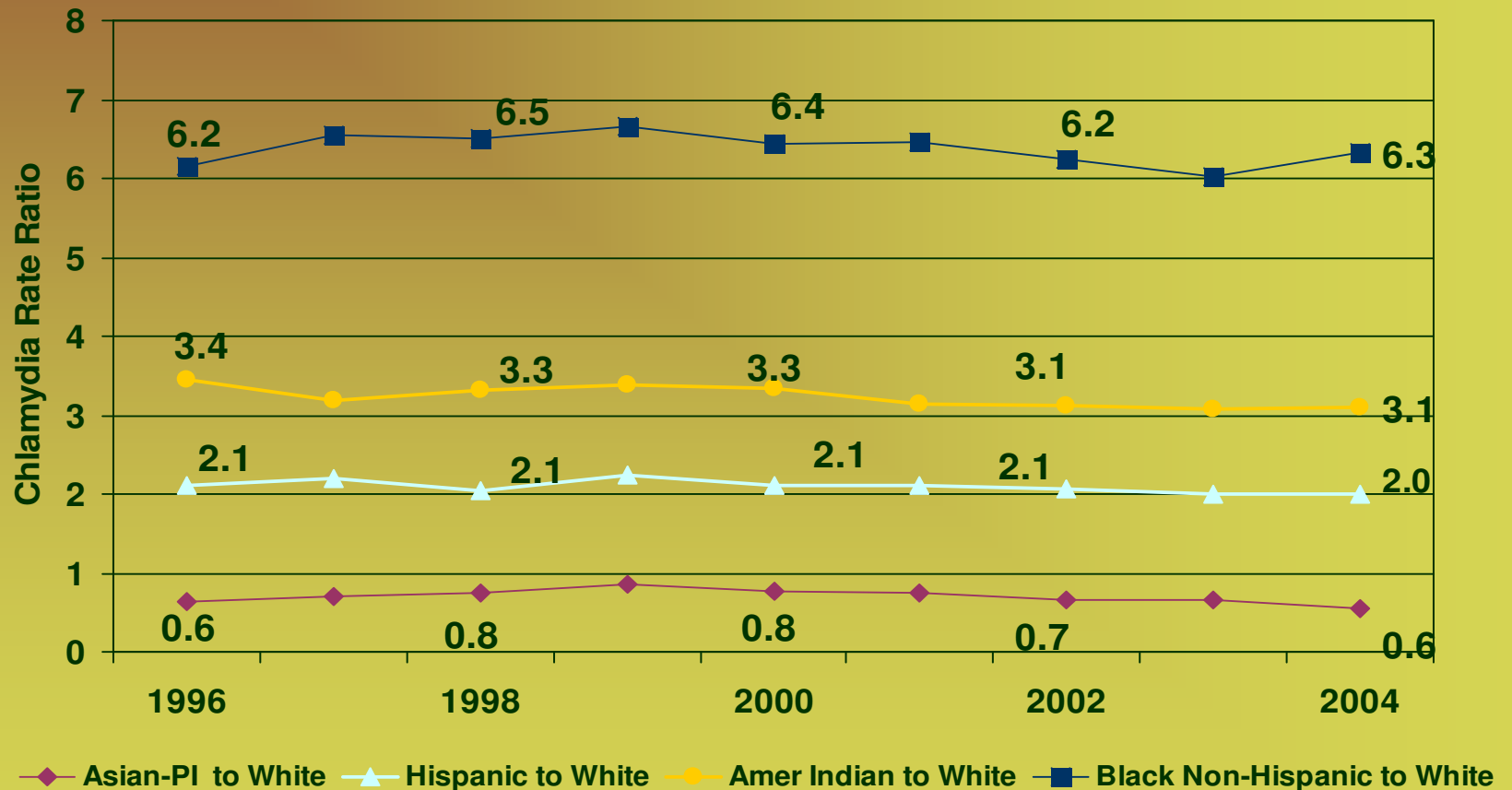
Disparity in Teen Birth Rates Ratio Non-Whites to Whites 1990 - 2004



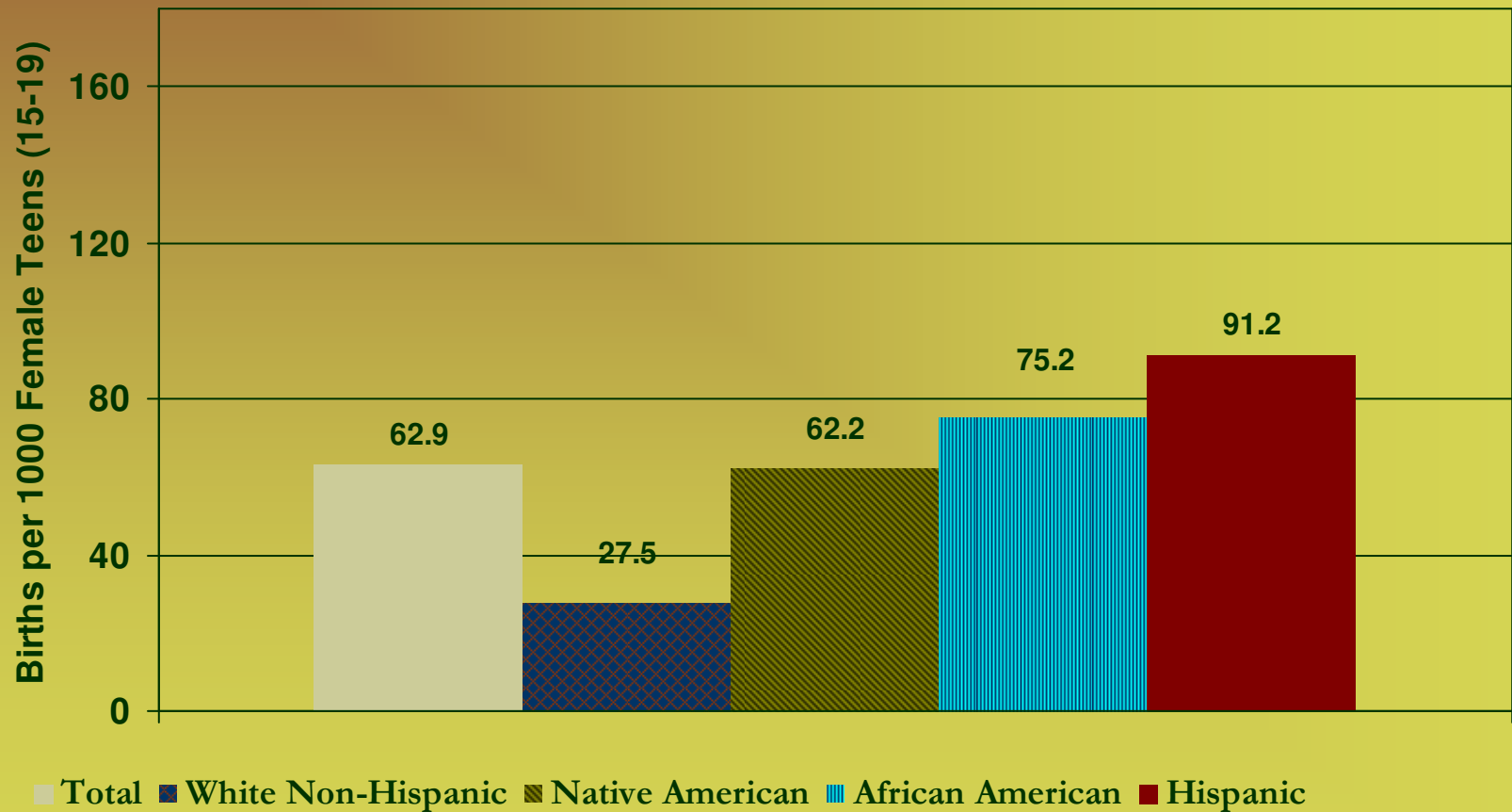
Disparity in Teen Pregnancy Rates Ratio Non-Whites to Whites 1990 - 2000



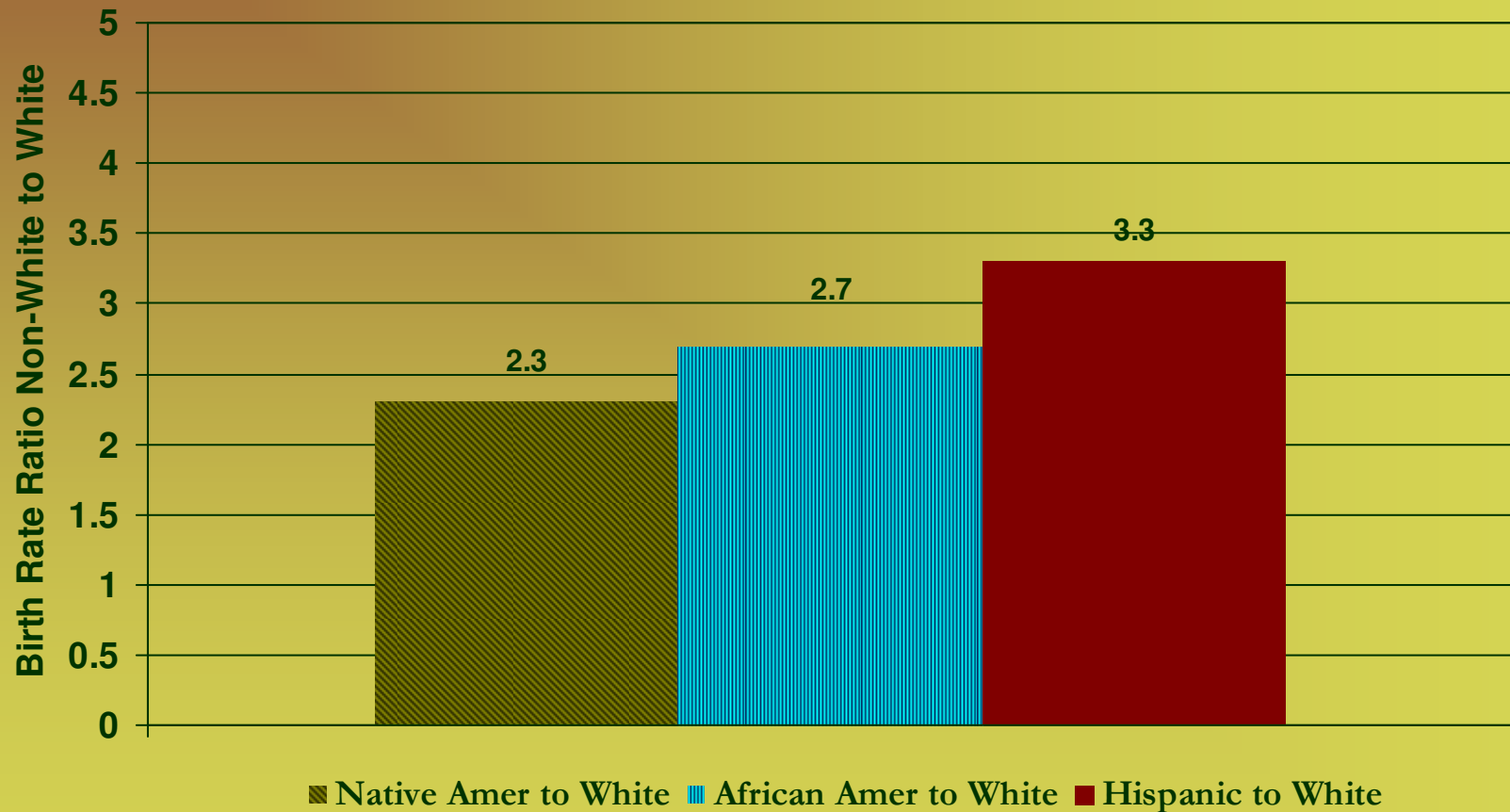
Disparity in Teen Chlamydia Rates Ratio Females Non-White to White 1996 – 2004



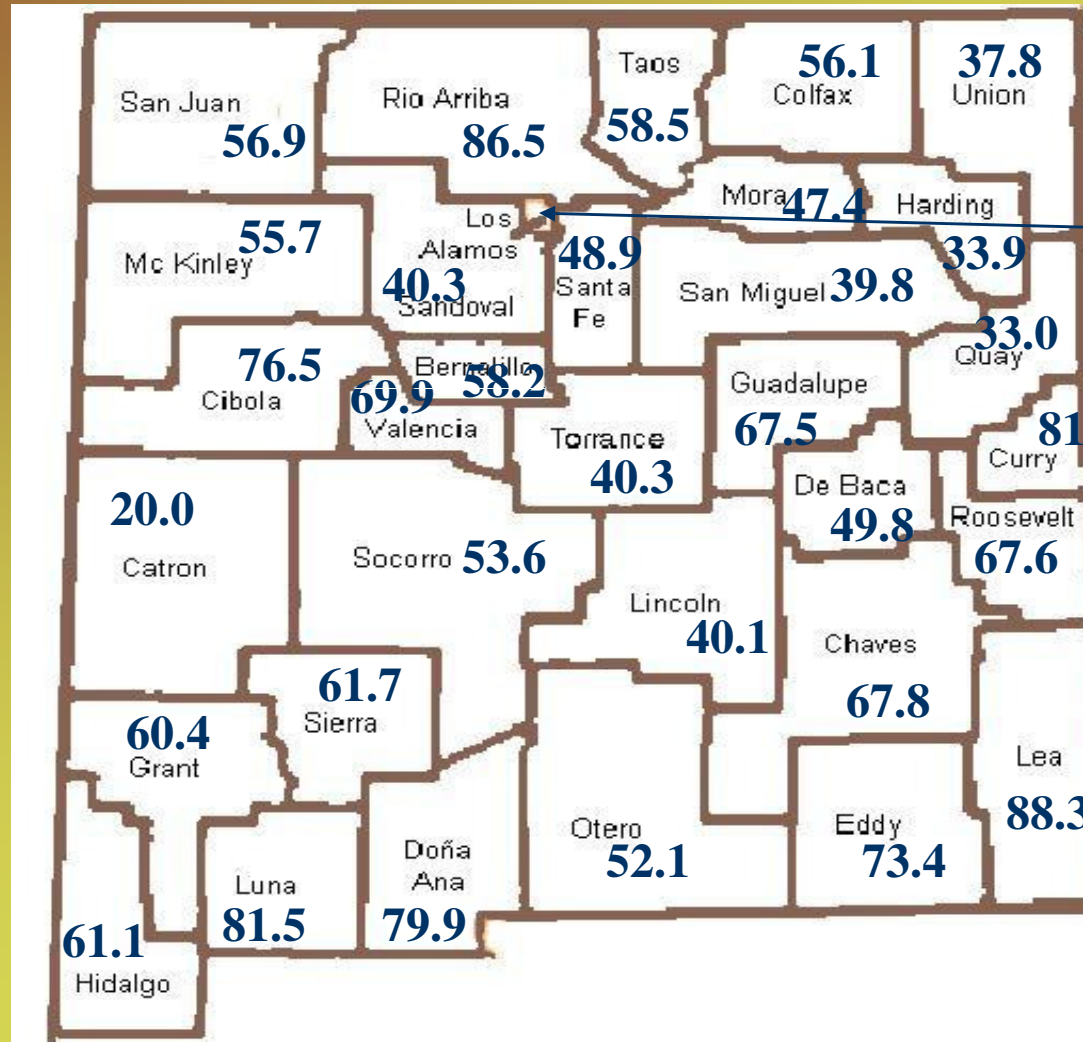
Teen Birth Rates - 2001 New Mexico Total and by Race/Ethnicity



Disparity in Teen Birth Rates New Mexico - 2001 Non Whites to White



New Mexico Teen Birth Rates By County

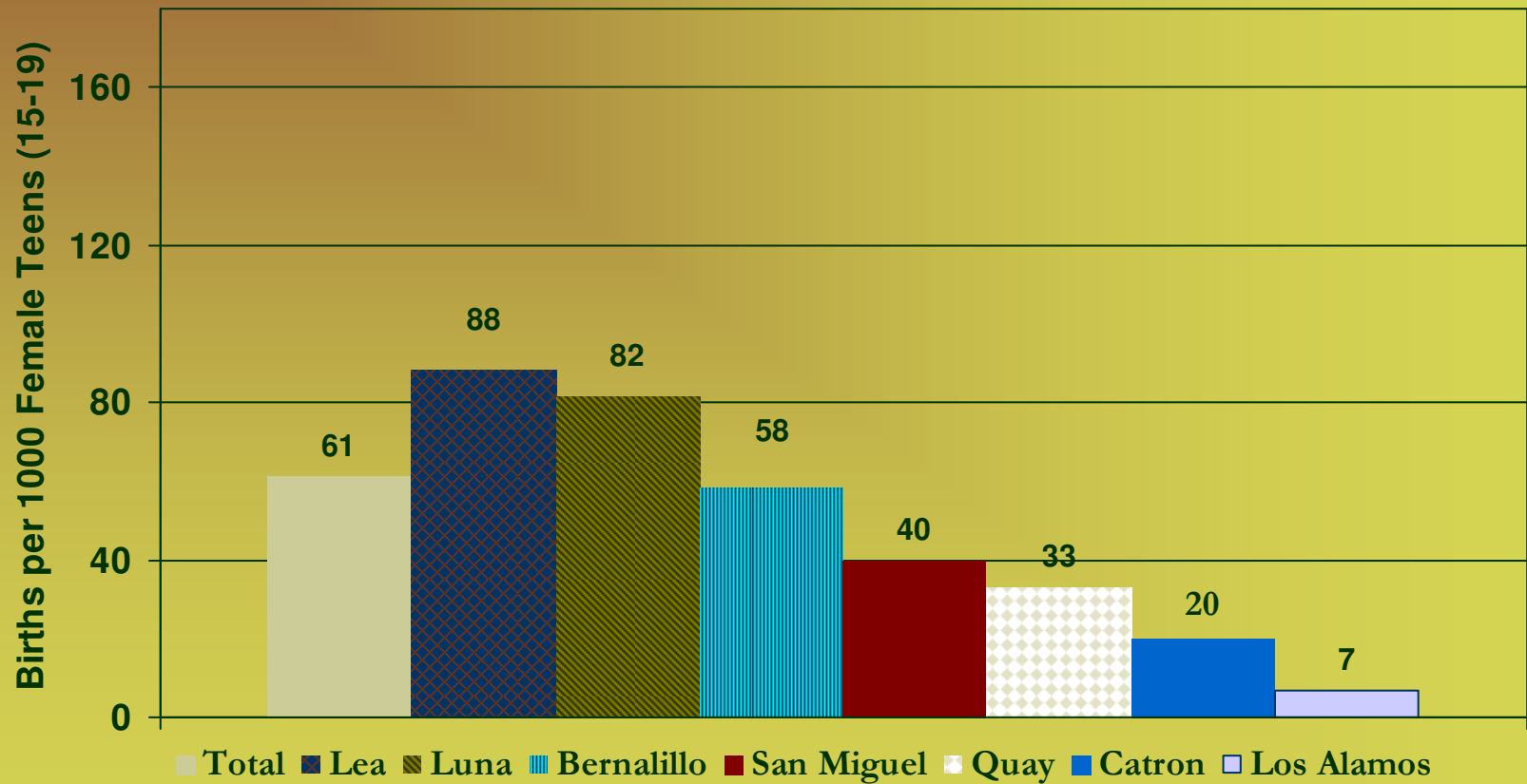


State Total
61.1/1000

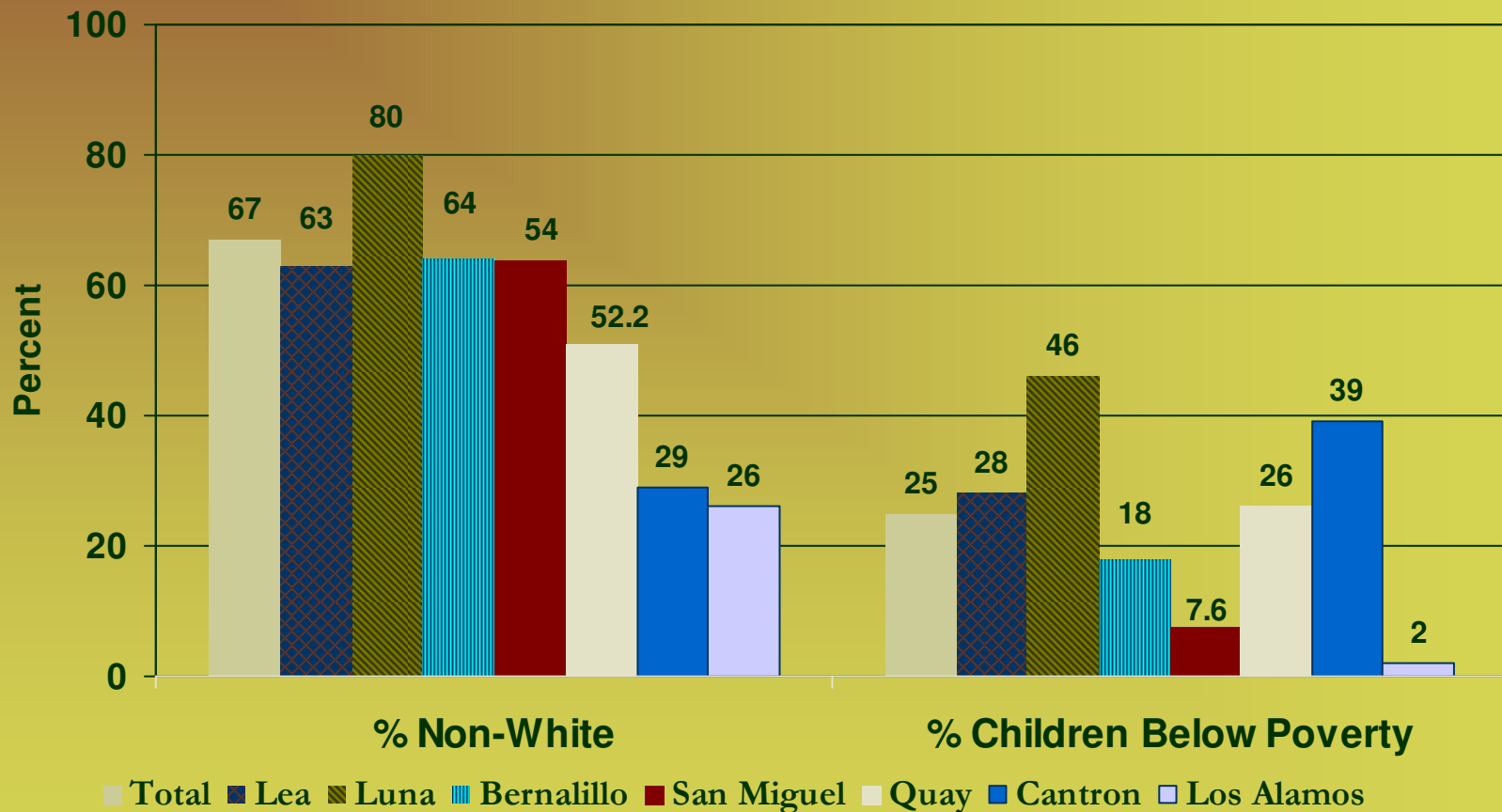
Los Alamos
6.9



Teen Birth Rates New Mexico Total - 2003 and Selected Counties



Population Diversity (2004) & Child Poverty (1999) Selected Counties

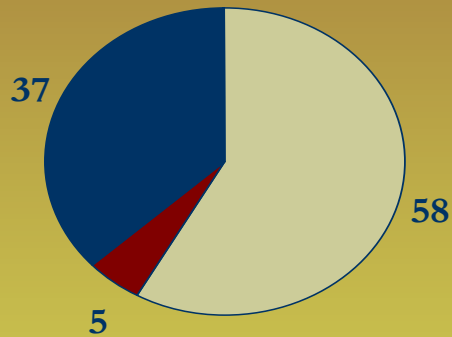


Participation in School Lunch Program - 2004 Selected Counties

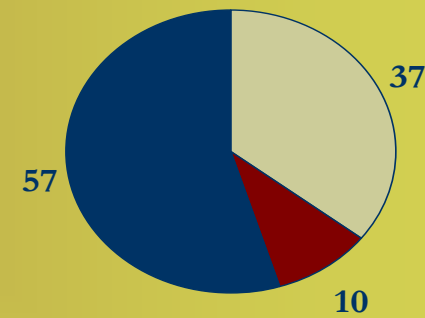
Quemado Independent Schools

Reserve Independent Schools

Catron County



□ Pay ■ Reduce ■ Free

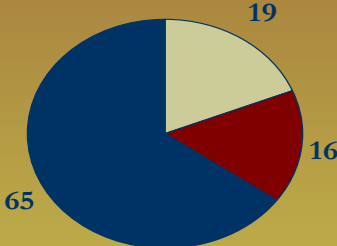


□ Pay ■ Reduce ■ Free



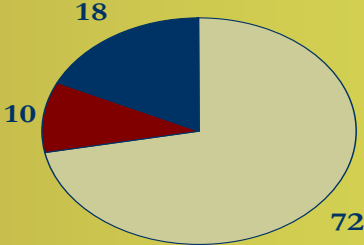
Participation in School Lunch Program - 2004 Selected Counties

House Municipal Schools



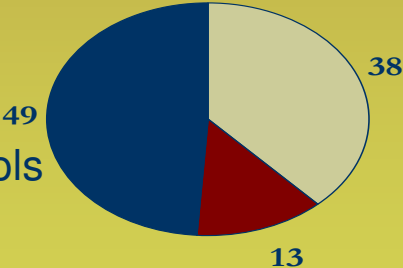
□ Pay ■ Reduce ■ Free

Logan Municipal Schools



□ Pay ■ Reduce ■ Free

Quay County



□ Pay ■ Reduce ■ Free

San Jon Municipal Schools



Linking Structural Racism & Sexual Health Disparities

Question Posed by CARTA:

“Are teen sexual health disparities a reflection of individual choices, or the range of choices from which one is allowed to select”?

Question Posed by Aspen Institute

Roundtable on Community Change,

Structural Racism and Community Building, 2004

“How is it that a nation legally committed to equal opportunity for all – regardless of race, creed, national origin, or gender – continually reproduces patterns of racial inequality?”

What is Structural Racism?

- Social, economic and political structures that support racial hierarchy & inequality (Kirwan Institute, 2004)
- Racial inequality and bias built into the economic and social structure of a society.
One race/ethnic group afforded a superior position and receives greater political, economic and social rewards than others. (CARTA, 2004)



Examples of Structural Racism

- Discriminatory Lending
 - Redlining
- Wage discrimination
- Media conglomerates that control messages & images
 - Racial profiling
- Institutional Bias

Pathways of Impact



Adapted from figure by Barbara Reskin at: <http://faculty.washington.edu/reskin/>



Pathways of Impact



Adapted from figure by Barbara Reskin at: <http://faculty.washington.edu/reskin/>



Structural Racism Matters for Teen Sexual Health

Structural Racism

- Residential Segregation
- School Segregation
- Occupational Segregation
- Interpersonal Bias
- Negative media messages
- Institutional bias

Critical Elements of Adolescent Development

Identity

Intimacy & Trust

Industry

Impedes

Protects

Teen Sexual Behavior

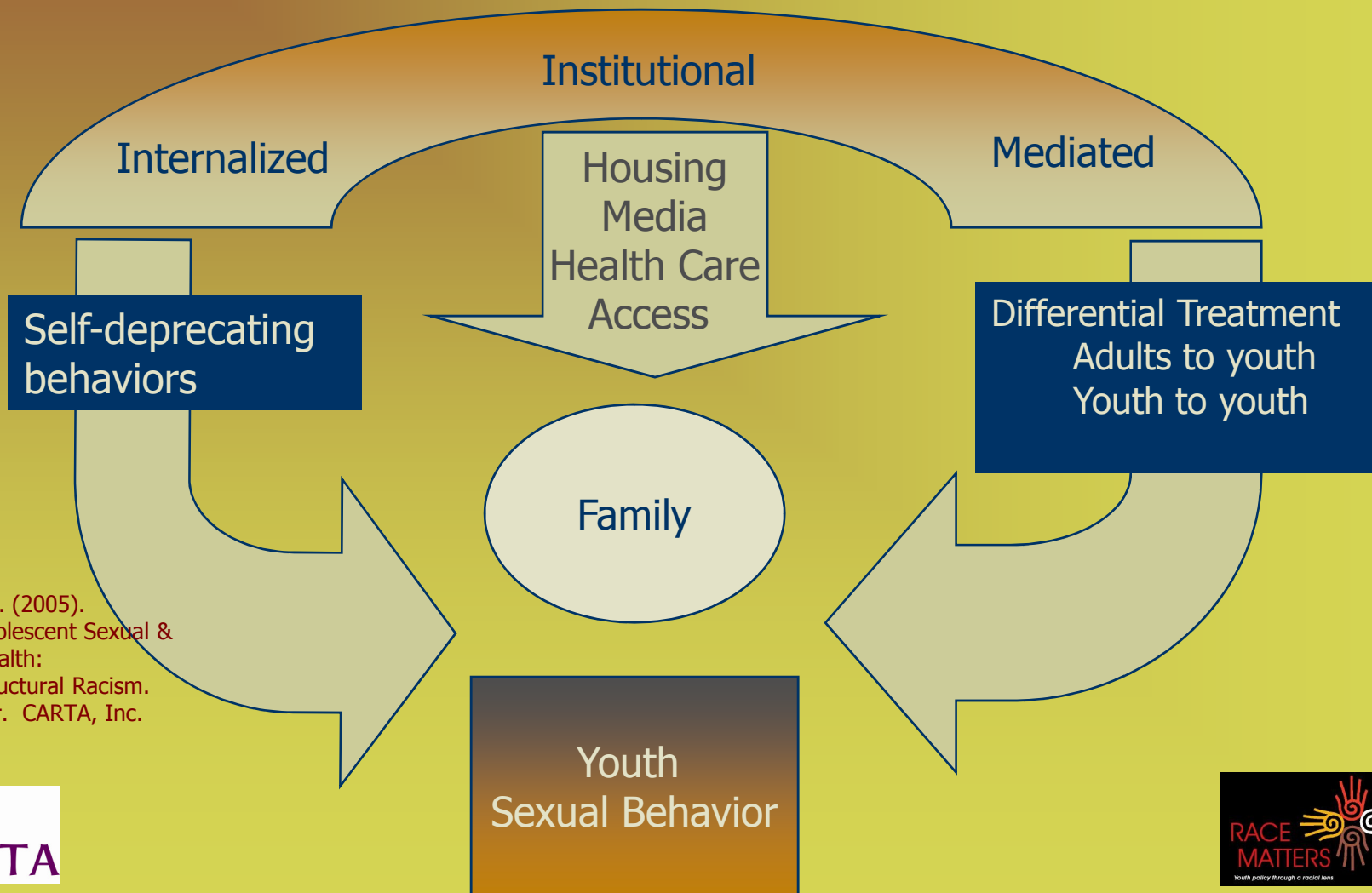


Sugland, B., Innocent, M.A., Ross, K. et al. (2005). Disparities in Adolescent Sexual & Reproductive Health: The Case for Structural Racism. Discussion Paper. CARTA, Inc. Baltimore, MD.



CARTA Structural Racism Framework Adapted from C. Jones (2000)

Jones, C.P. (2000). Levels of racism: A theoretic framework and a gardener's tale. American Journal of Public Health, 90, 1212-1215.



Sugland, B, et al. (2005).
Disparities in Adolescent Sexual &
Reproductive Health:
The Case for Structural Racism.
Discussion Paper. CARTA, Inc.
Baltimore, MD.



Action Steps

- Shift focus/emphasis of teen sexual health work
 - Pay attention to disparities
 - Advocate for data to document and monitor progress

- Shift emphasis on individual interventions
 - Racism & power analysis with youth
 - Engaging parents/families around raising youth of color in white world

- Healing racism & addressing privilege
 - Personally mediated – whites & non-whites
 - Internalized – addressing personal responsibility in context
 - Youth and adults



Action Steps

- Greater attention macro vs. individual
 - Institutional, organizational & staff interventions
 - Racism & power analysis
- Interventions/reforms in disciplines outside of teen sexual health
 - education, juvenile justice, social services, workforce
- Increased research & evaluation to quantify link
- Surface examples from local practice where efforts underway
 - **“Eyes on the Prize”**

