

Humanitarian crisis hits home:

Unaccompanied children (UAC) at  
the Southern U.S. Border....and NYC

Susan Blank, MD, MPH

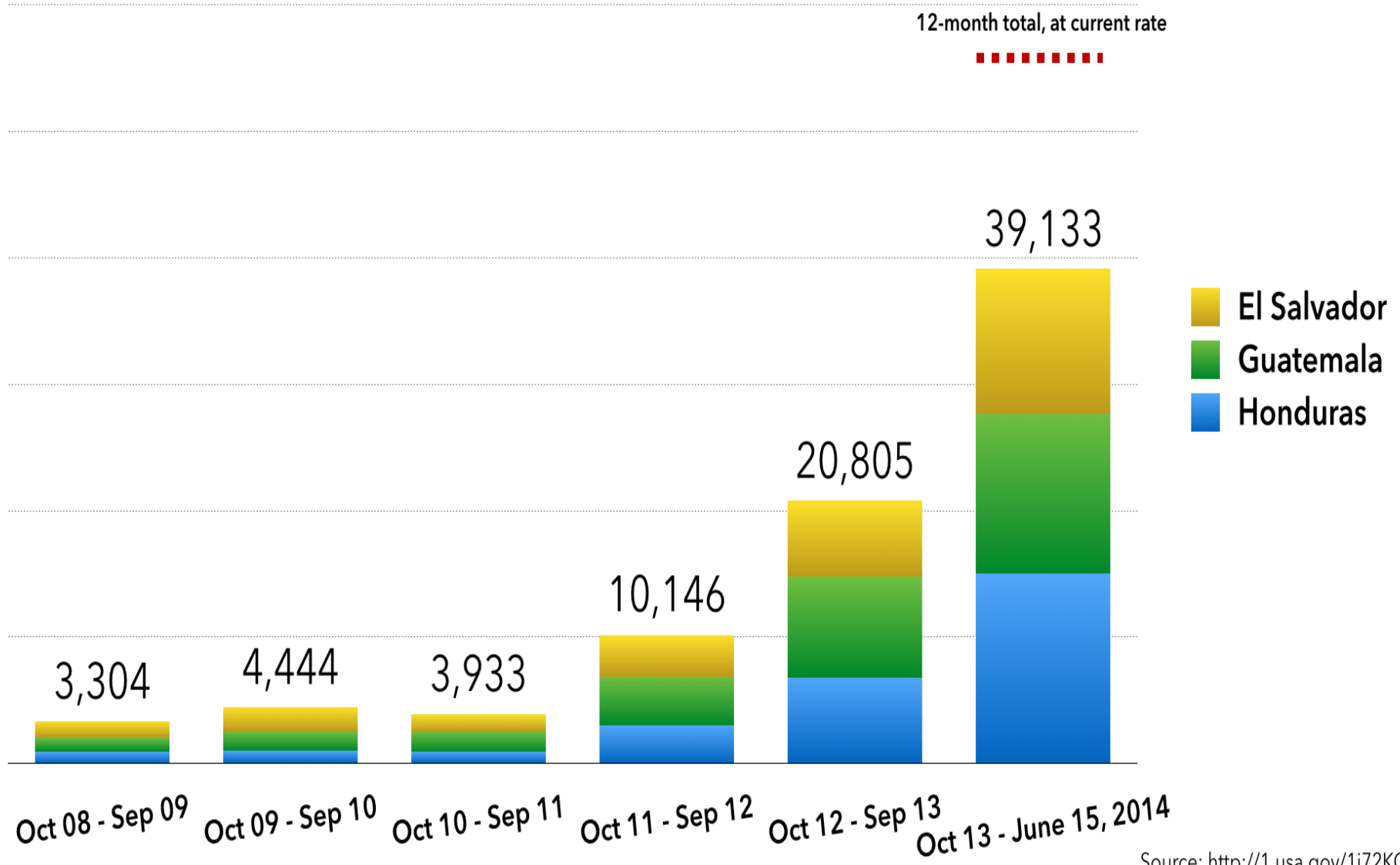
Assistant Commissioner

Bureau of STD Control & Prevention

# Unnaccompanied Children (UAC)

- The crisis and its environmental factors
- Epidemiology of arriving UAC
- Added dangers of the journey north
- Surrender/apprehension at U.S. Border
- .....then what....???

# U.S. Apprehensions of Unaccompanied Minors from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, 2009-June 15, 2014



# Why - Statutory Environment, U.S.

2008 (Bush) law:

- due process (including asylum/deportation hearing) for victims of sex trafficking & unaccompanied children < 18 yrs
- Applies to those from countries *not* contiguous with U.S.

# Why - Statutory Environment, U.S.

- Health & Human Services (HHS) is charged to provide the least restrictive custodial care through time of asylum/deportation hearing
  - housing
  - medical care
  - legal representation / child advocacy
- Shelters under HHS contract is default; ideally UAC can stay with a sponsor (i.e. relative) until hearing

# Why - Statutory Environment, U.S.

- Deportation hearings  $\geq$  1-2 yrs later
- Smuggling/ trafficking industry profiting:  
long period to deportation as “permiso”,  
or free pass to stay

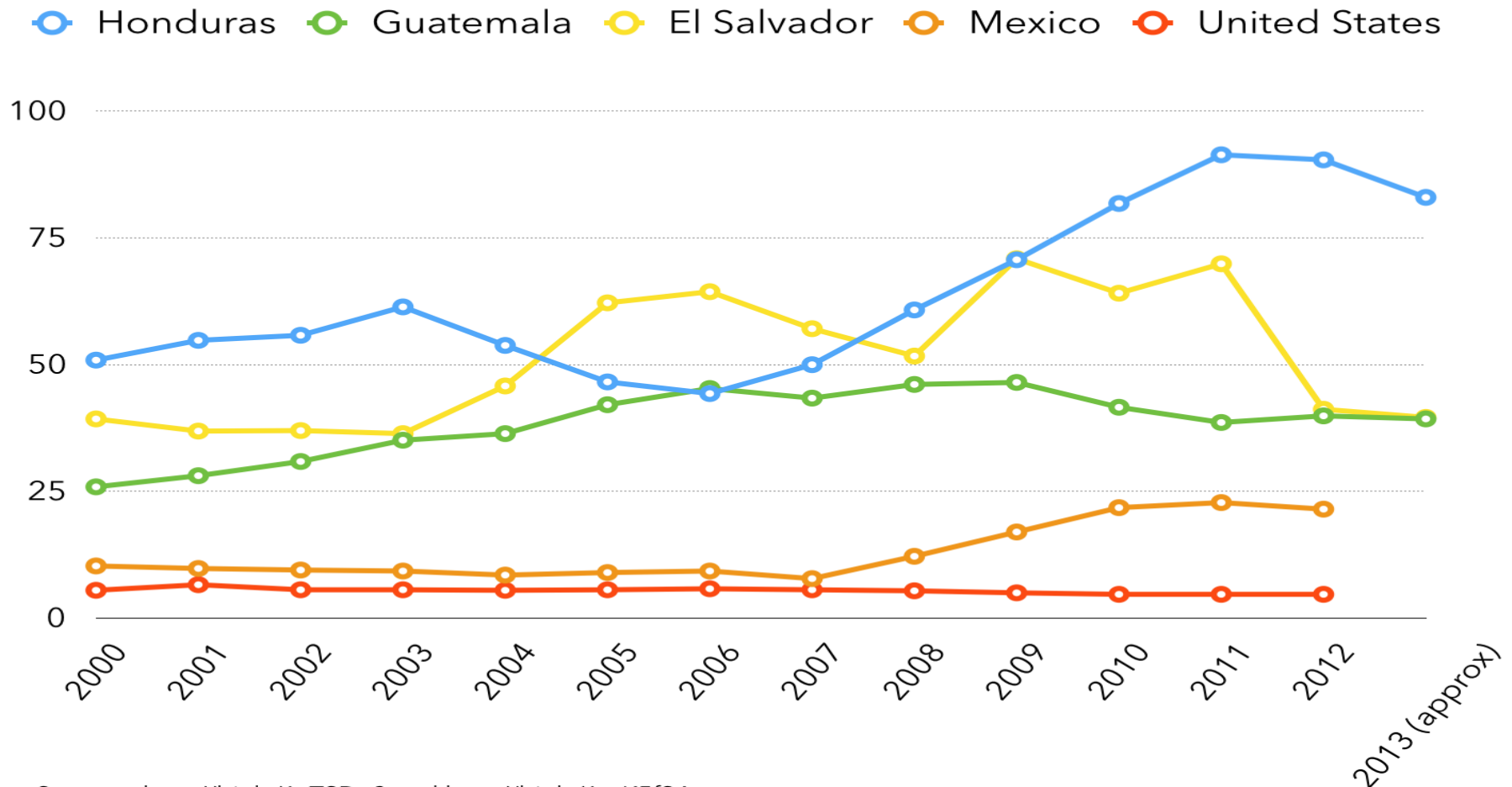
# Why – Local Environment, Central America

## **Gangs**

- Drug smuggling  
(Marijuana > Cocaine >> Heroin)
- Violence
- Impeded economic opportunities
- Impeded school opportunities

# Violence of local environments

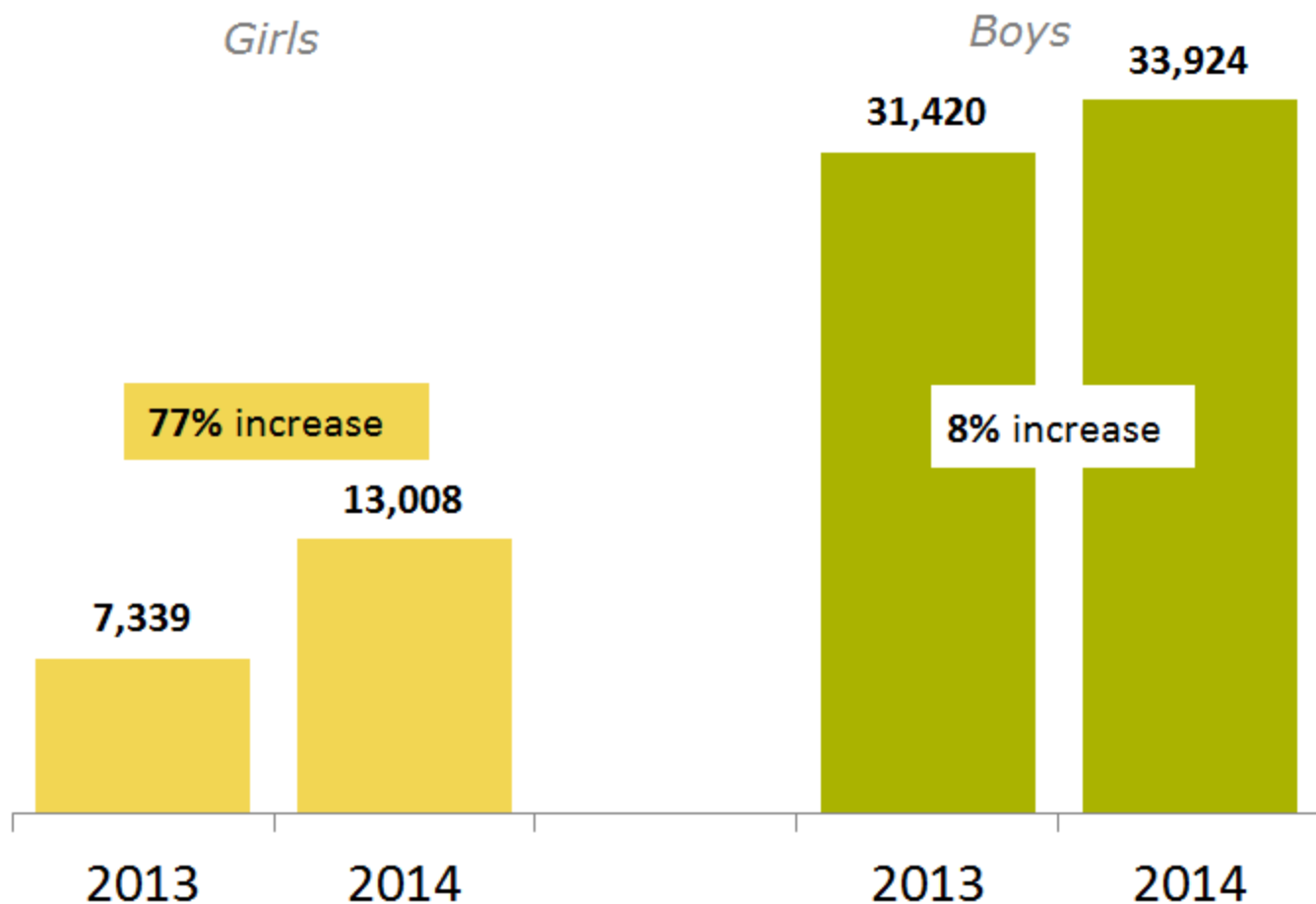
## Homicides Per 100,000 people



Sources: <http://bit.ly/1xTSDu3> and <http://bit.ly/1mK5fS4>

# More Unaccompanied Girls Encountered at the Border

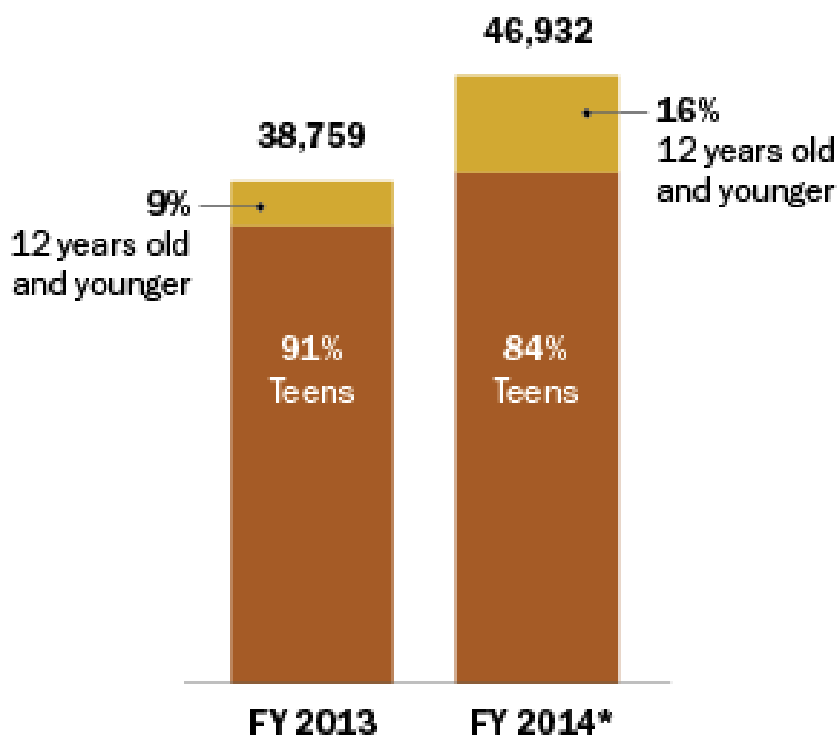
*Apprehension of Unaccompanied Children on the U.S.-Mexico Border  
by gender, 2013-2014*



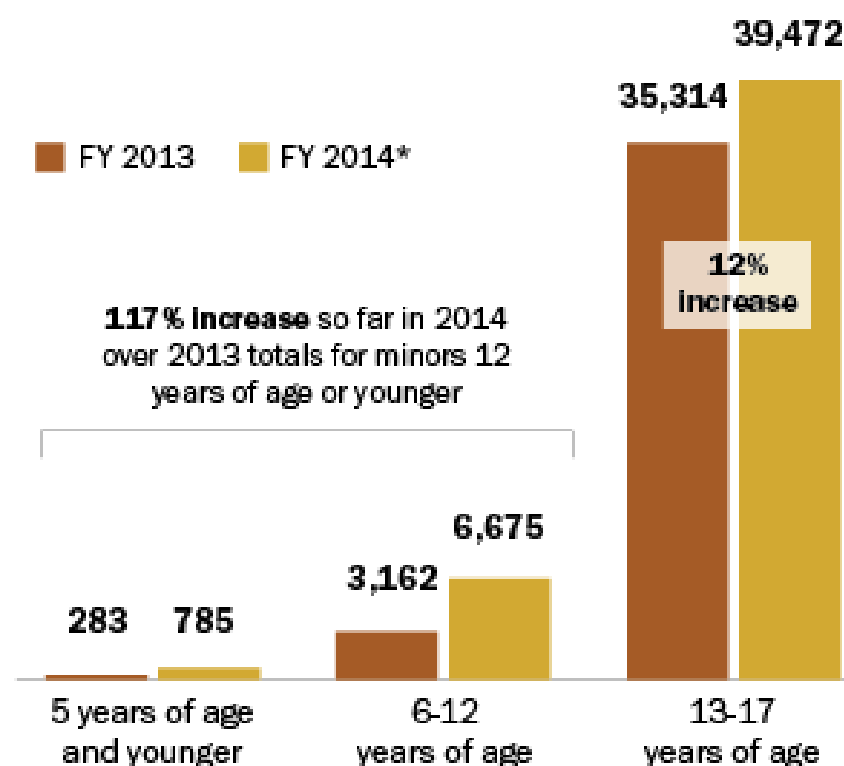
Source: Pew Research Center

# Crossing the U.S.-Mexico Border, Without Parents, at Increasingly Younger Ages

*Total apprehensions of unaccompanied minors at the border*



*Apprehensions of unaccompanied minors at the border, by age*



Note: Fiscal Year 2013 is Oct. 1, 2012 - Sept. 30, 2013. \*Fiscal Year 2014 data is Oct. 1, 2013 - May 31, 2014.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Enforcement Integrated Database records

# La Bestia (The Beast)



# Migrating Atop La Bestia (The Beast)



# La Bestia's Unaccompanied Children



# La Bestia's Unaccompanied Children



# La Bestia's Unaccompanied Children



# Desert Crossing





# Unaccompanied Children at the Southwest Border

At the direction of the President, a Unified Coordination Group is leveraging Federal resources to address the humanitarian situation associated with the influx of unaccompanied children entering the U.S. across the southwest border. This chart depicts the general process to enhance capacity resulting from federal coordination.



\* Note: This chart only shows interagency process to address the humanitarian situation.

DoD is providing temporary shelter to assist HHS including JB Lackland, NB Ventura County and Ft. Sill.

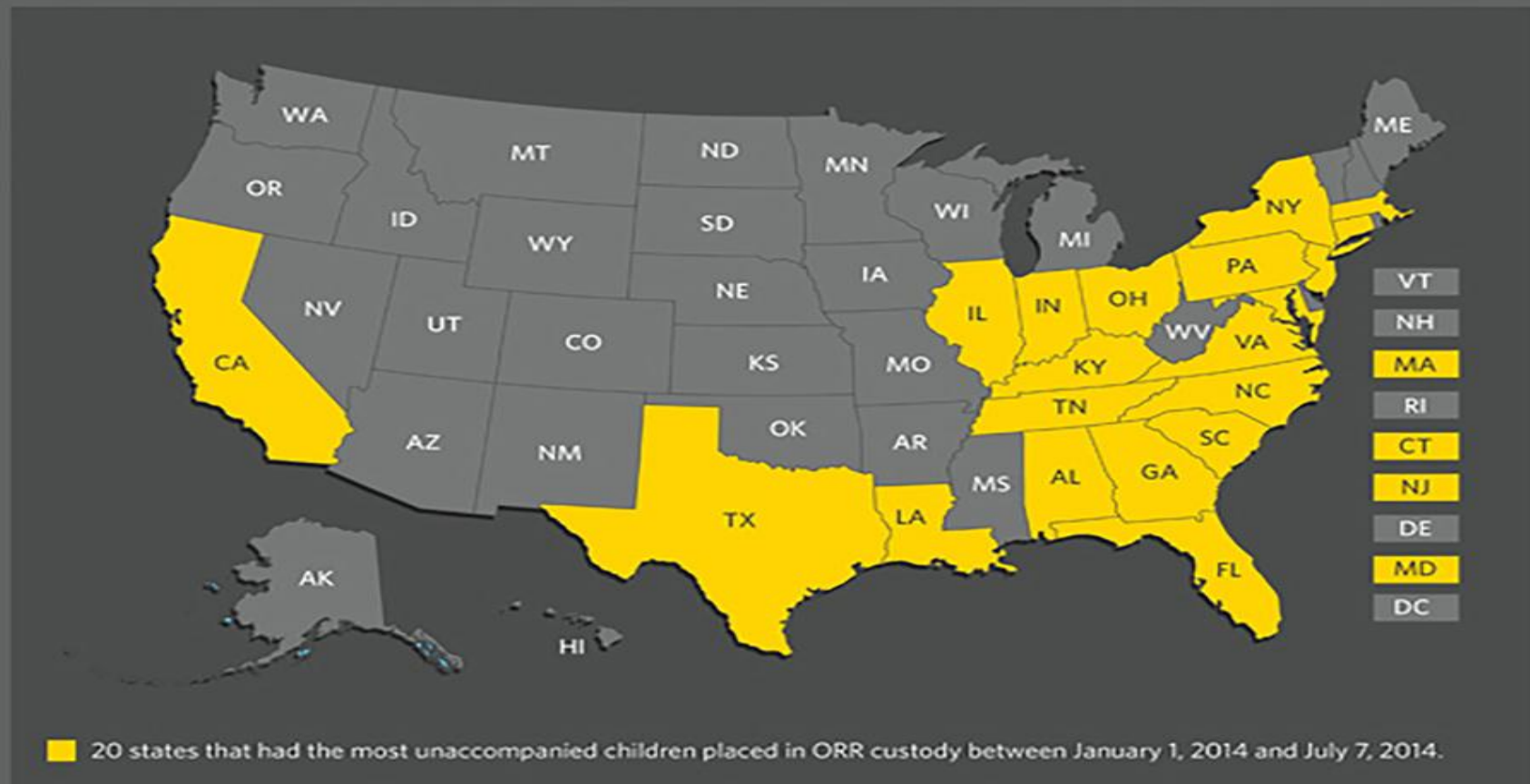


Males  
16-17



## Unaccompanied Immigrant Children Released to Sponsors

When immigration authorities apprehend a child who is not accompanied by a parent or guardian, the child is transferred to the care and custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). ORR cares for the children in shelters around the country until they can be released to a sponsor, typically a parent or relative, who can care for the child while their immigration case is processed. The map below shows the 20 states that had the most unaccompanied children placed in ORR custody between January 1, 2014 and July 7, 2014.

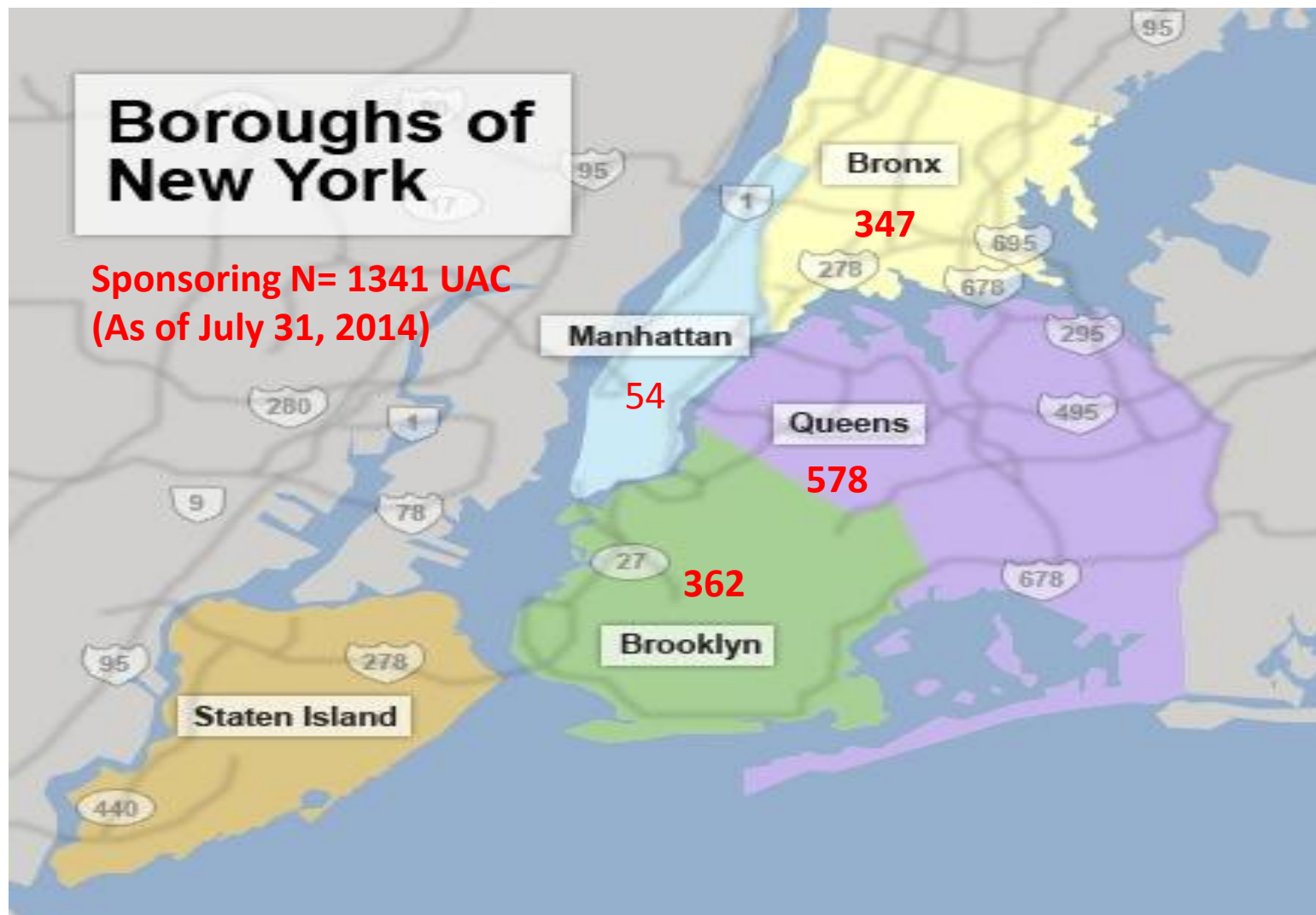


Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

© 2014 The Pew Charitable Trusts

# Boroughs of New York

Sponsoring N= 1341 UAC  
(As of July 31, 2014)



# Emerging Public Health Issues, Unaccompanied Child Migrants, NYC

- Follow-up needs
  - communicable disease prevention / tx (immunization,TB)
  - trauma/mental health issues/ pregnancy
  - health insurance enrollment assistance
  - legal assistance / advocacy
- Yet unresolved
  - access to medical record information collected upon arrival
  - local reporting requirements
  - consent issues – record release

Suggests need for federal database accessible by local medical and public health authorities.

# Acknowledgements

- Bureau of STD Control
  - Jessica Borrelli
- Primary Care Access & Planning
  - Rishi Sood
  - Tanya Shah

Flotsam and Jetsam

# Thanks !



[sblank@health.nyc.gov](mailto:sblank@health.nyc.gov)