

Engaging Public Health Agencies in the Research Enterprise: Practice-based Research Networks

 **PUBLIC HEALTH**
Practice-Based Research Networks
National Coordinating Center

UAMS

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Why study public health practice?

“The Committee had hoped to provide specific guidance elaborating on the types and levels of workforce, infrastructure, related resources, and financial investments necessary to ensure the availability of essential public health services to all of the nation’s communities. However, such evidence is limited, and there is no agenda or support for this type of research, despite the critical need for such data to promote and protect the nation’s health.”

—Institute of Medicine, 2003



The benefits and challenges of practice-based research

context

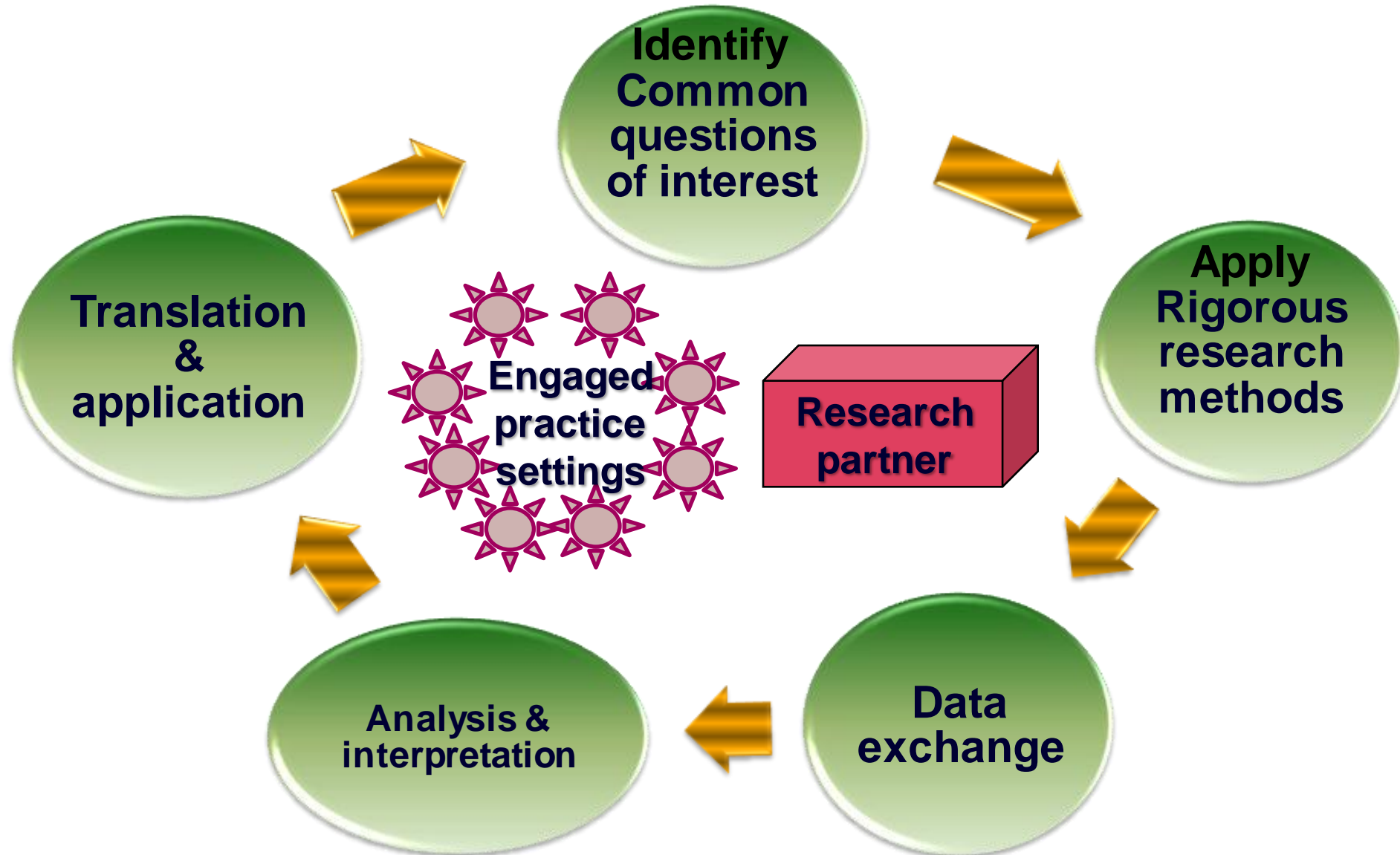


Mechanisms

Outcomes

- Posing questions that are relevant to practice
- Engaging practitioners in research design to:
 - ✓ Understand differences in practice settings
 - ✓ Accurately measure agencies, activities & outcomes
 - ✓ Translate and adopt findings into practice

The Logic of PBRNs



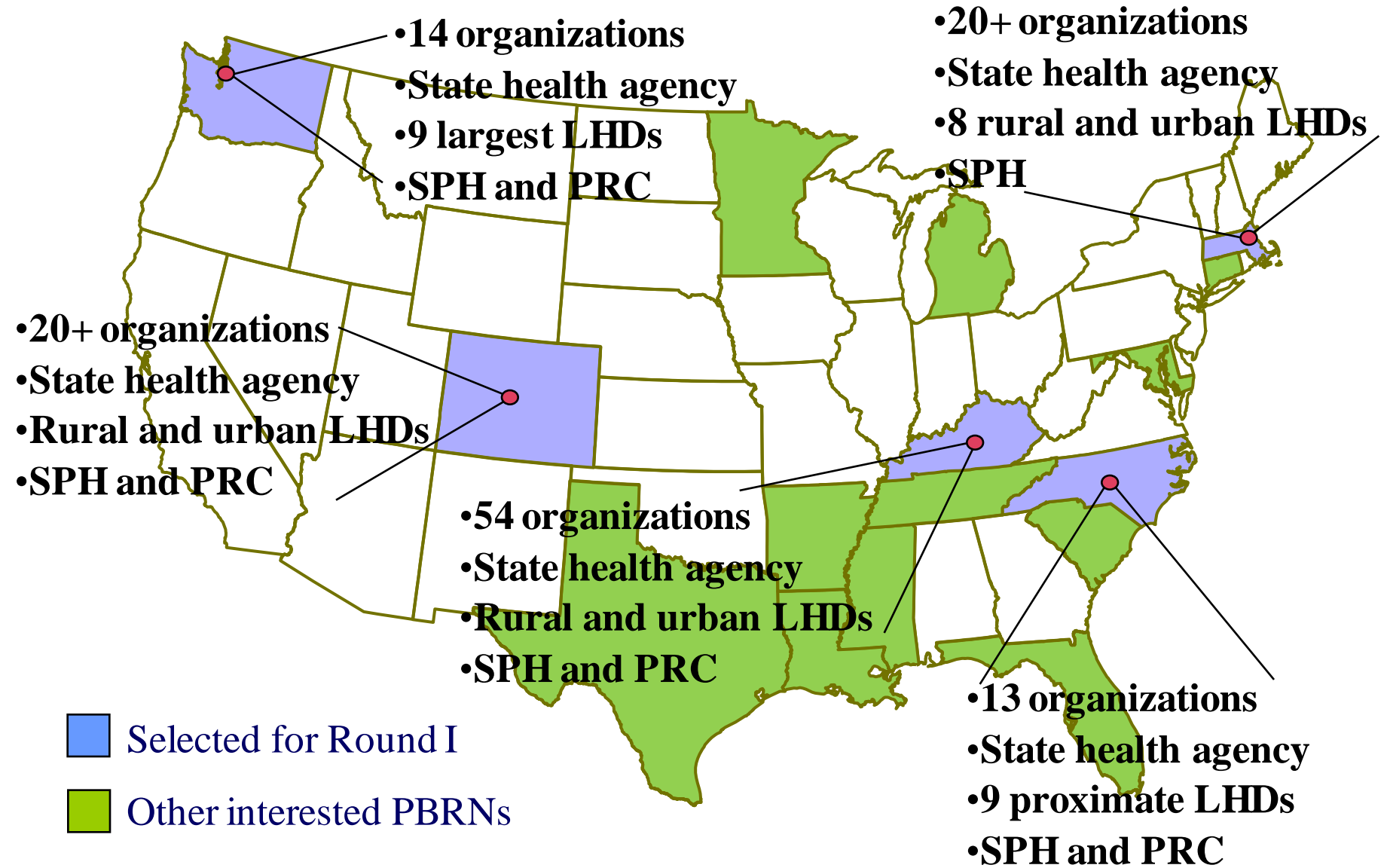
Key elements of a Public Health PBRN

- ☑ State or local agency to serve as lead convener
- ☑ Multiple practice settings available for study
- ☑ Champion within each practice site
- ☑ Research partner with design and analysis expertise
- ☑ Regular communication among participants
- ☑ Feasible and relevant initial research projects
- ☑ Dedicated staff time for research facilitation

Examples of PBRN studies

- ***Comparative case studies***: document processes, identify scope and scale of problems, examine innovations
- ***Large-scale observational studies***: document practice variation across public health settings; identify causes & consequences of variation
- ***Adoption/diffusion studies***: identify the pace and patterns through which evidence-based practices are adopted, and factors that facilitate and inhibit adoption
- ***Quality improvement studies***: evaluate strategies for improving program operations & outcomes
- ***Policy evaluations and natural experiments***: monitor effects of key policy and administrative changes

Initial PBRN Sites

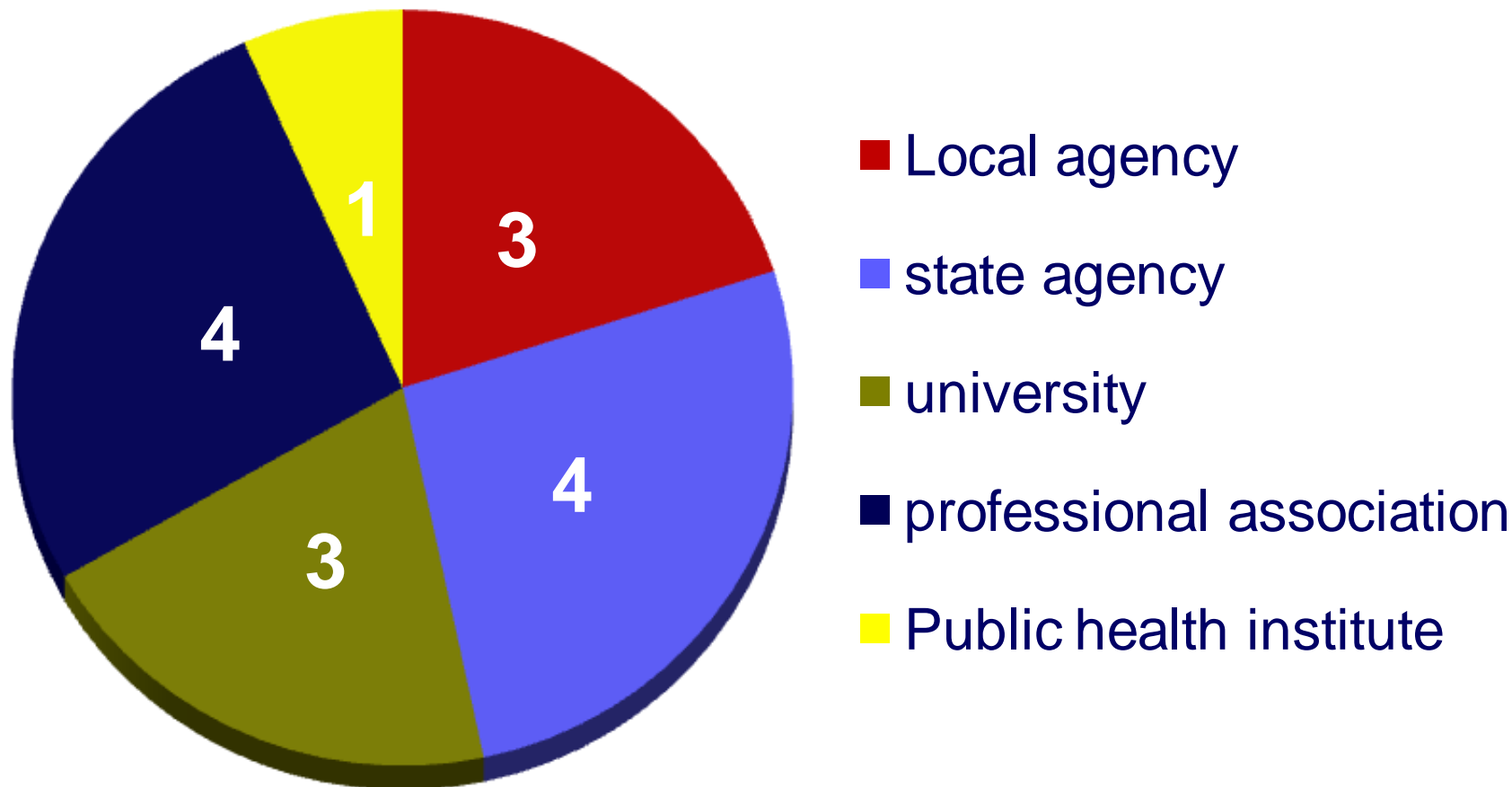


SPH = School of Public Health

PRC= Prevention Research Center

Initial PBRN Designs

Leading/Convening Organization

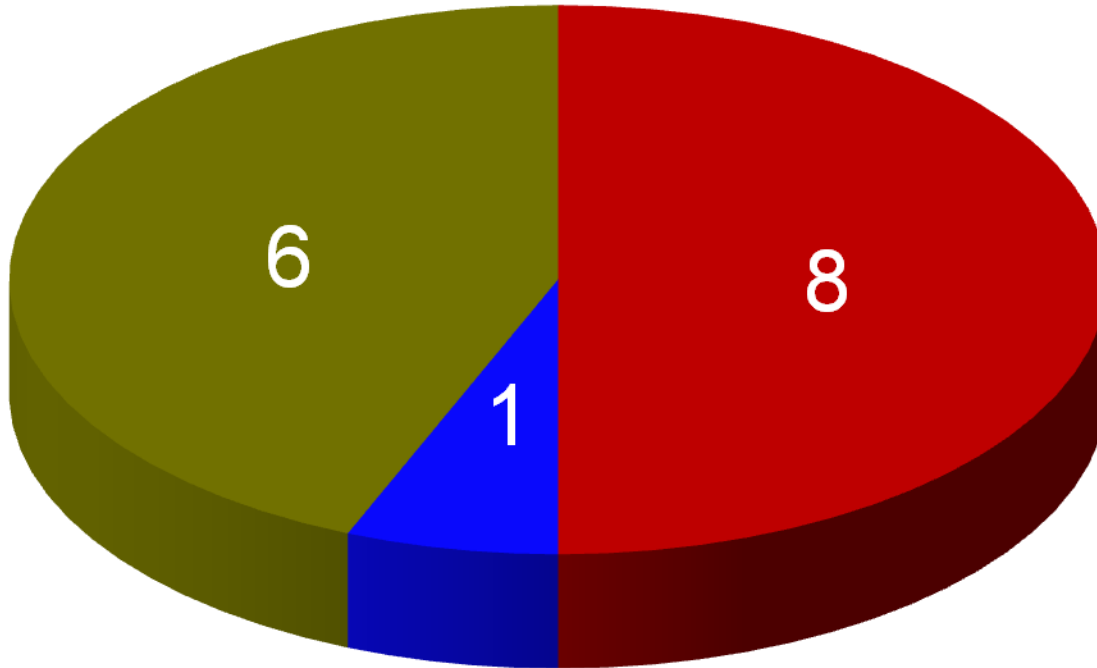


Source: applicants to Round I PBRN solicitation

Initial PBRN Designs

Geographic Reach

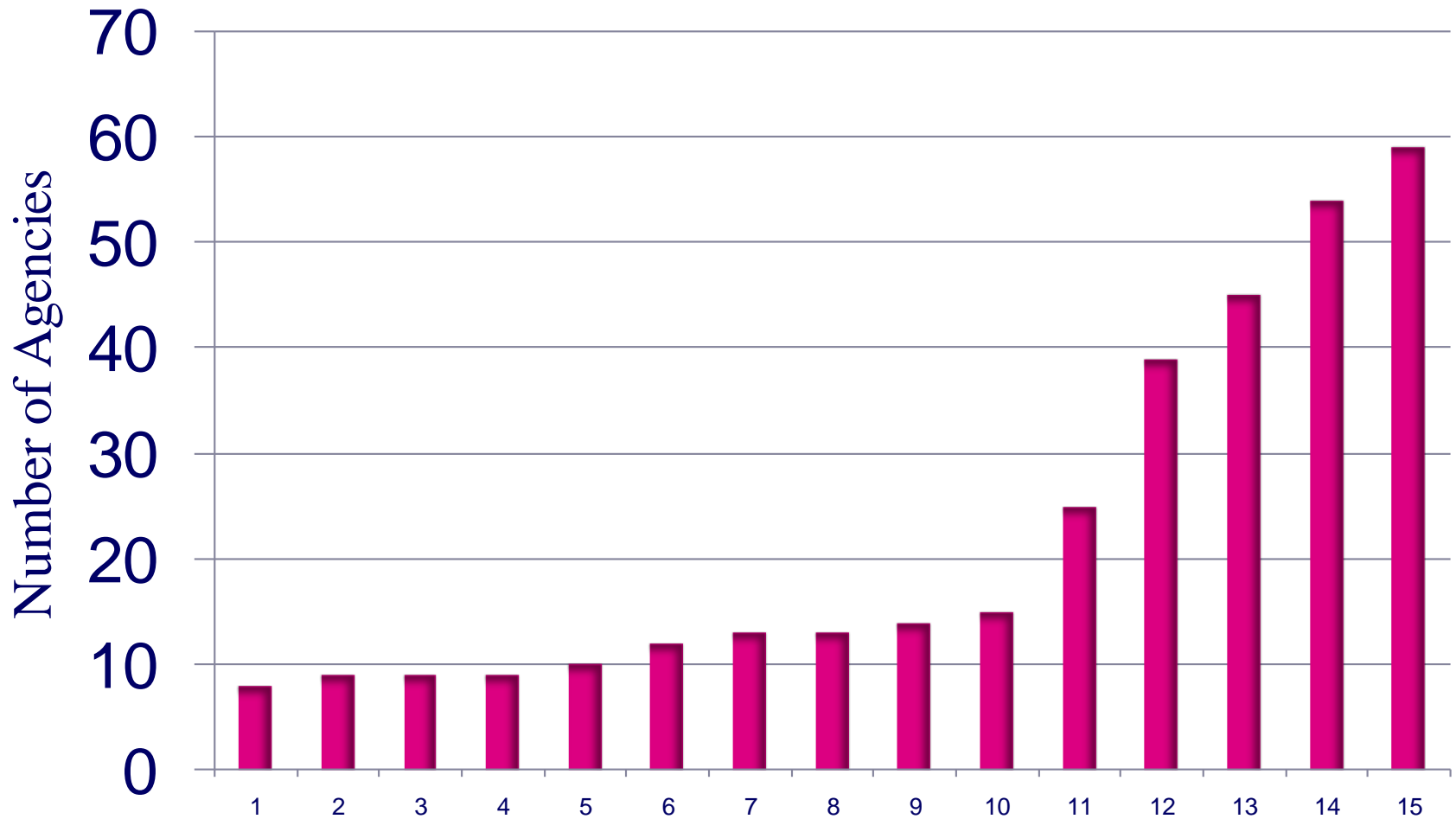
- Statewide
- Multi-state
- Sub-state



Source: applicants to Round I PBRN solicitation

Initial PBRN Designs

Size of Network

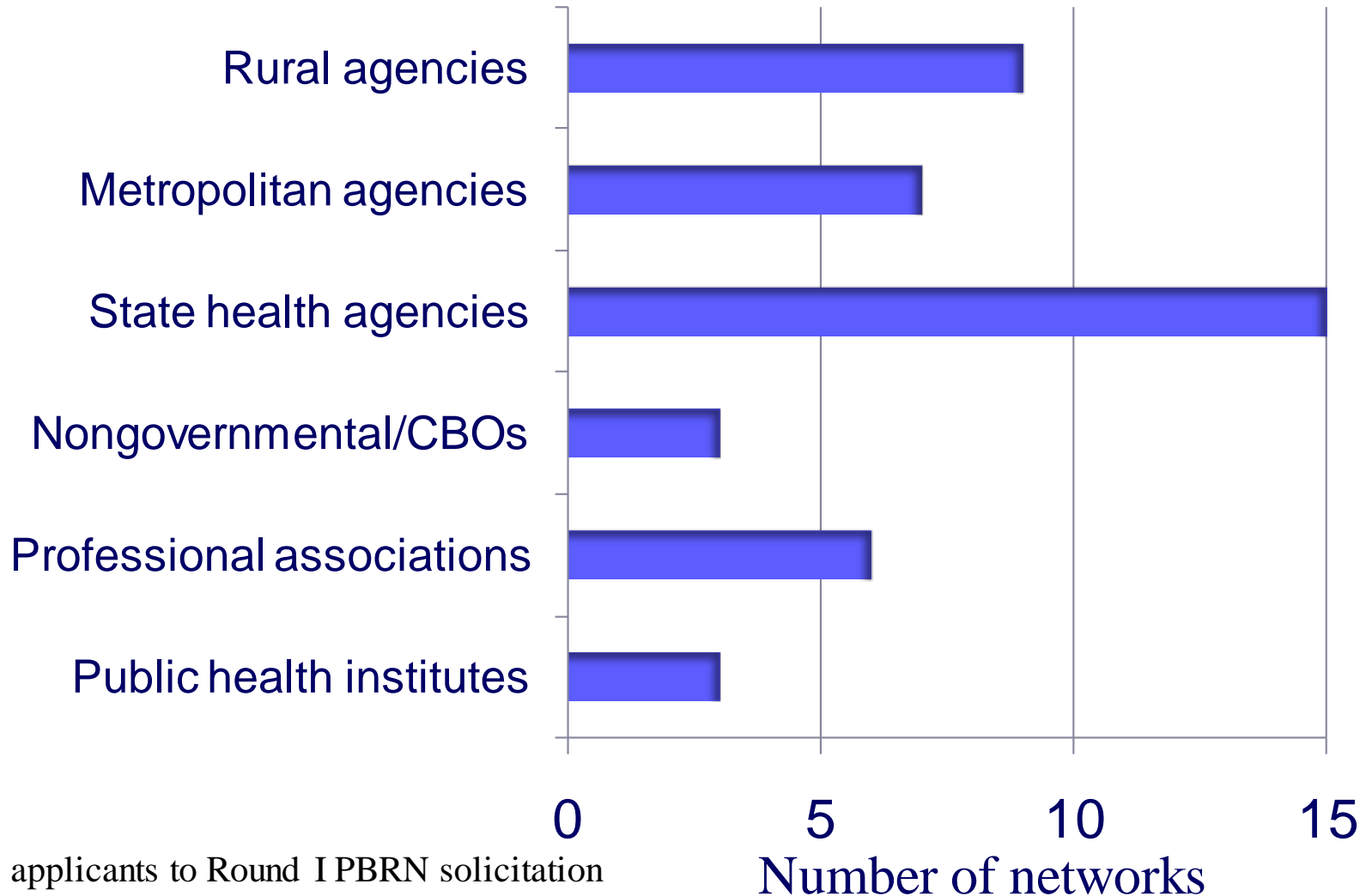


Source: applicants to Round I PBRN solicitation

Networks

Initial PBRN Designs

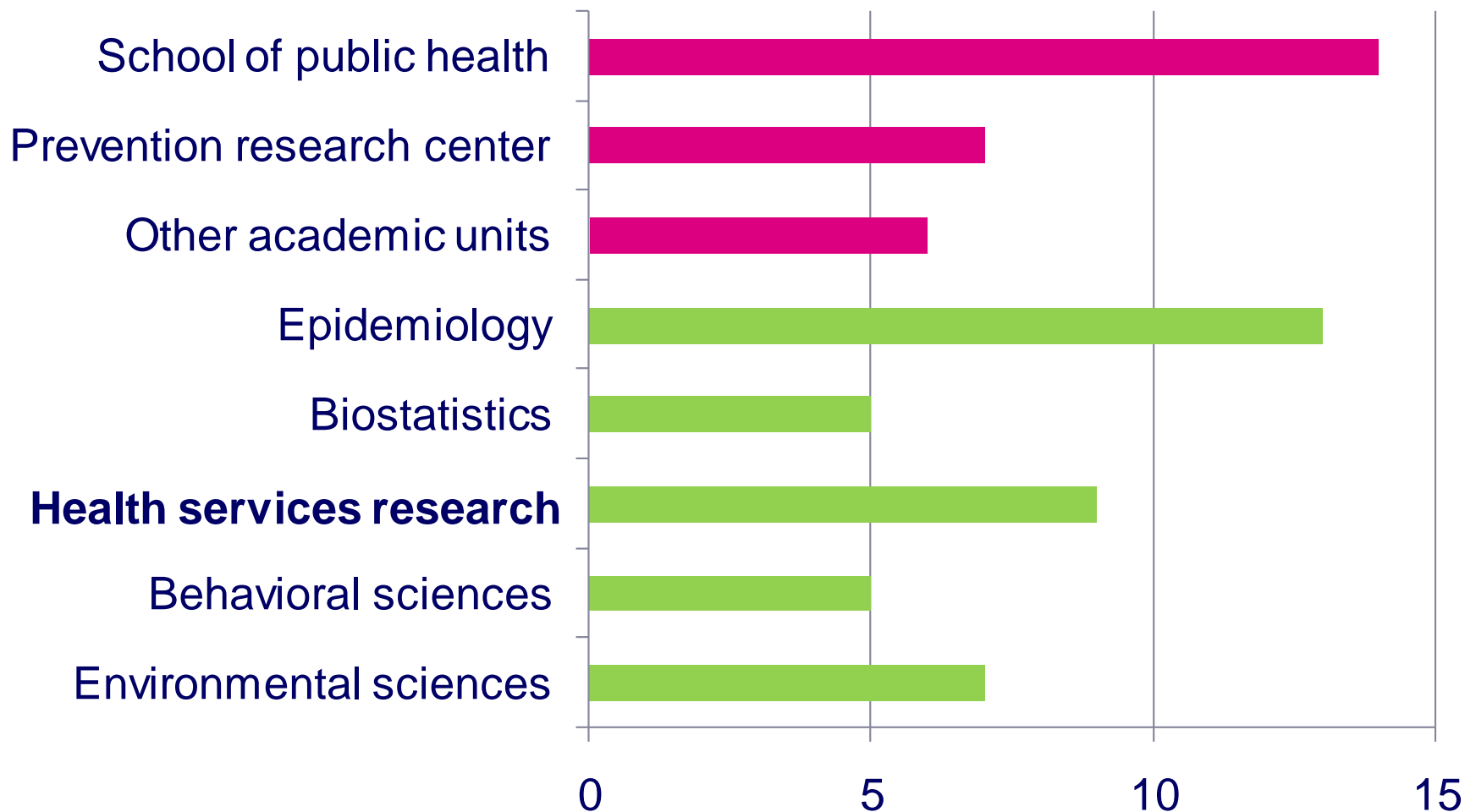
Types of Organizations Included



Source: applicants to Round I PBRN solicitation

Initial PBRN Designs

Research Partners



Source: applicants to Round I PBRN solicitation

Number of networks

Initial PBRN Research Interests

Proposed Topics

Adoption of evidence-based practices	11
Workforce/workforce development	10
Impact of quality improvement	8
Public health financing/economics	6
Impact of public health policy & law	5
Organizational structure/regionalization	4

Conclusions – stay tuned...

- Learning what works to improve practice
- Comparing approaches across diverse practice settings
- Building reusable and sustainable capacity for practice-relevant research
- Testing approaches for rapid research dissemination and translation