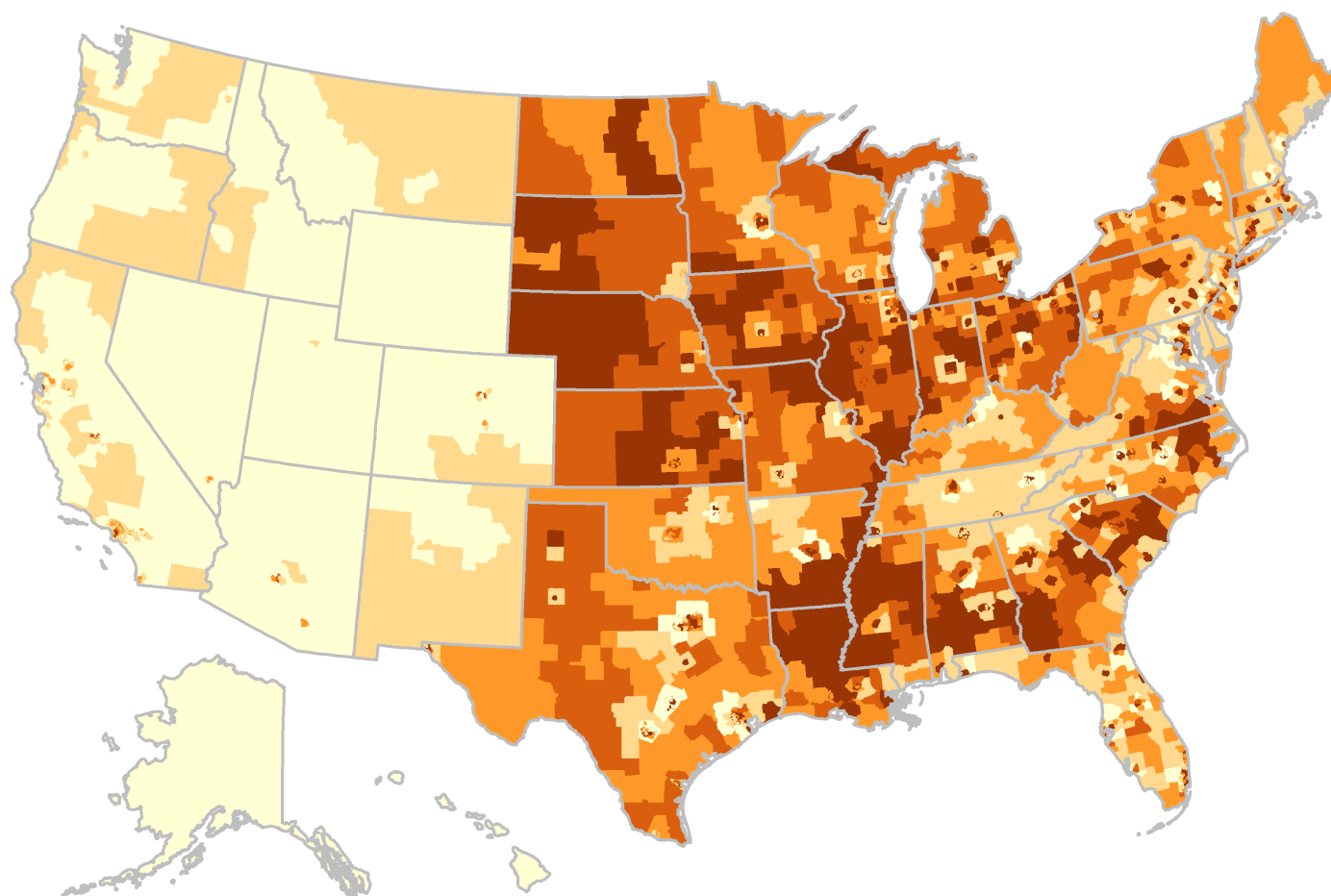


A Hidden Problem

Lead-Poisoned Children in the United States

Prevalence of children with blood lead 2.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ and higher in the U.S. in 2010, by PUMA



cases per 1,000 of blood lead 2.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ and higher

□ < 40 □ 40 - 49 □ 50 - 59 □ 60 - 69 □ ≥ 70

This map shows the number of children (aged 1-5 years) with elevated blood lead levels in 2010 by Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA). PUMAs are areas designated by the U.S. Census Bureau containing a minimum of 100,000 people. We developed a statistical model (Statistics in Medicine 2016;35(29):5417-5429) and utilized data from the census to generate these estimates.

Commonly cited estimates of lead poisoning in children are based on data from blood tests conducted by medical providers. But lead testing is not required for all children in the United States, state testing guidelines vary, and not all states report lead testing data to the CDC. Therefore, estimates based on lead testing data are incomplete.

The reference level, currently 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$, is the blood lead level at which the CDC recommends action be taken to remove sources of lead from a child's environment. The reference level is not a safety level. No amount of lead in the body is safe, and harm can occur at exposures beneath the reference level.