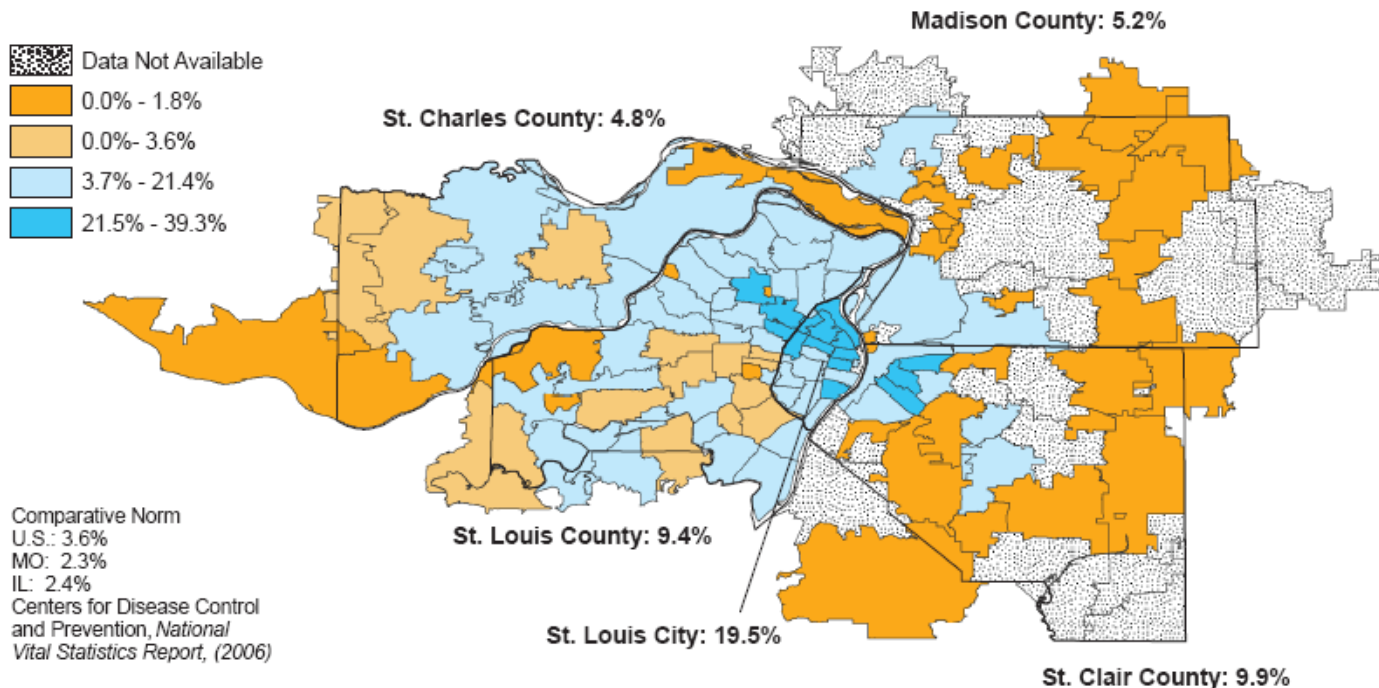


Percent of Births with No or Inadequate Prenatal Care



The goal of prenatal care is to monitor the progress of a pregnancy and identify potential problems before they become serious health concerns.¹ Women who receive regular, adequate prenatal care have healthier babies, and are less likely to deliver prematurely, or to have other serious problems related to pregnancy. When women do not have access to early prenatal care, there is an increased risk of low birth weight, premature birth, and infant death. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines "late prenatal

care" as that beginning in the 3rd trimester or later. In 2006, 3.8 percent of all births nationally received no or late prenatal care. African American populations are disproportionately affected, with national rates of 5.0 percent or more. (In Missouri & Illinois, the rate among African Americans is 8.1 and 8.8 percent, respectively). According to the CDC, prenatal care utilization had risen fairly steadily between 1990 and 2003. It stagnated during 2004-5, with the most recent data, for calendar year 2006, showing a decline.²