

# Refugee Health in Pennsylvania

**Jun Yang, Ph.D.**

**Epidemiologist and State Refugee Health  
Coordinator**

**Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology  
Bureau of Epidemiology  
PA Department of Health**

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# Refugee Health Program (RHP)

**Charlotte Fry**

**State Refugee Coordinator**

**Jun Yang**

**State Refugee Health Coordinator**

**Shakila Shah**

**Refugee Health Promotion Coordinator**

**Susan Miller**

**Refugee Health Social Worker**

# Mission of the RHP

- **To ensure that refugees receive a comprehensive health and mental assessment after entry into the U.S.**
- **To identify and treat health conditions that could delay successful resettlement**

# Common Background of Refugees

Catastrophic events and displacement



Overcrowded living conditions

Lack of food

Lack of clean water

Poor environmental sanitation

Lack of health care

Insufficient vaccination



Unique refugee health challenges

# Health Challenges among Refugees

- **Malnutrition: 28% among refugee children**
- **Infectious/parasitic conditions**
  - ❖ **Chickenpox outbreaks**
  - ❖ **Splenomegaly among Congolese refugees**
- **Mental health issues**
  - ❖ **Higher suicide rates in Bhutanese refugees**
  - ❖ **Common mental health disorders**
    - ✓ **Anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and post-migration difficulties**

# Health Challenges among Refugees

## ➤ Culture-related conditions

### ❖ Female genital mutilation/cutting

- ✓ >200 million girls and women alive today have had FGM/C in 30 countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia (WHO data)
- ✓ Travel outside of U.S. to receive FGM/C

## ➤ Domestic violence

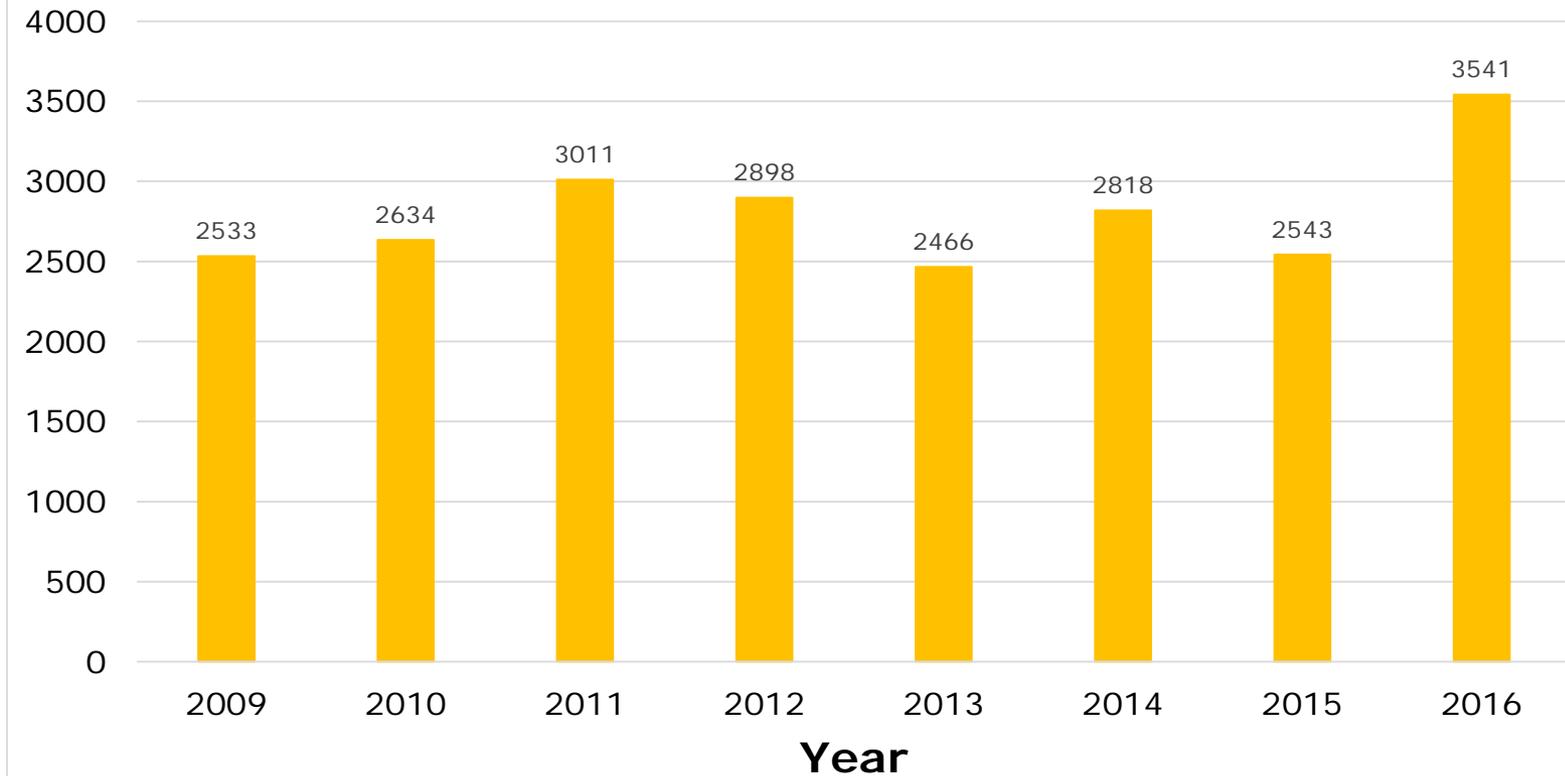
## ➤ Chronic conditions

# Refugees Health Data Systems

- **CDC Electronic Disease Notification (EDN)**
  - **Web-based system launched in 2006 and has been deployed to all states**
  - **Notifies states when immigrants have notifiable conditions or refugees arrive in their jurisdictions**
  - **Provides medical information recorded on the Department of State form**
- **PA eShare**
  - **Web-based system launched in 2013 and has been used by all contracted clinics**
  - **Records medical information collected during refugee health screening**

# Refugees Arrived in PA

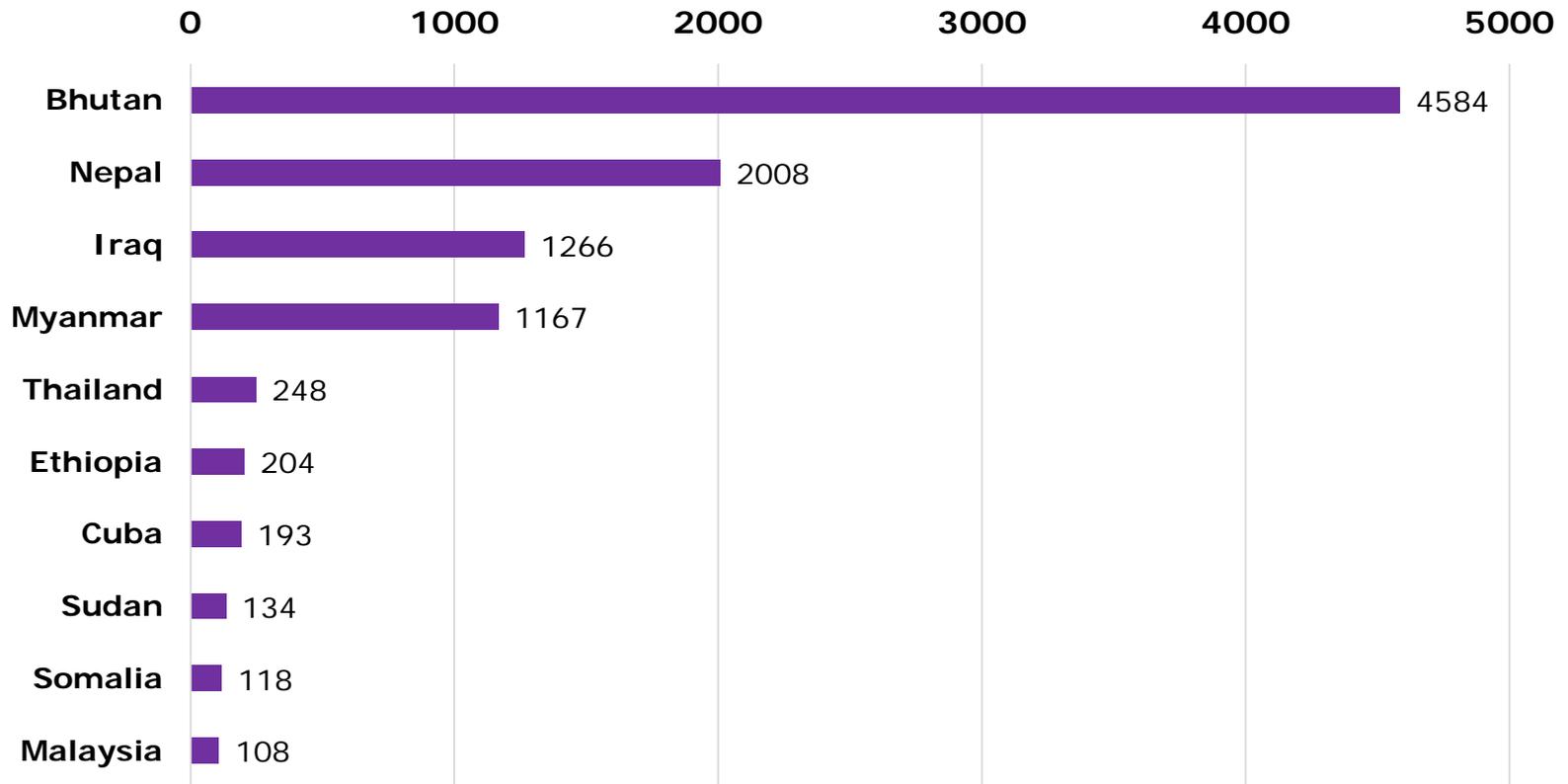
**Figure 1. Trends of Newly-Arriving Refugees in Pennsylvania, 2009 - 2016 (N=22,444)**



Data source: CDC EDN

# Refugees Arrived in PA

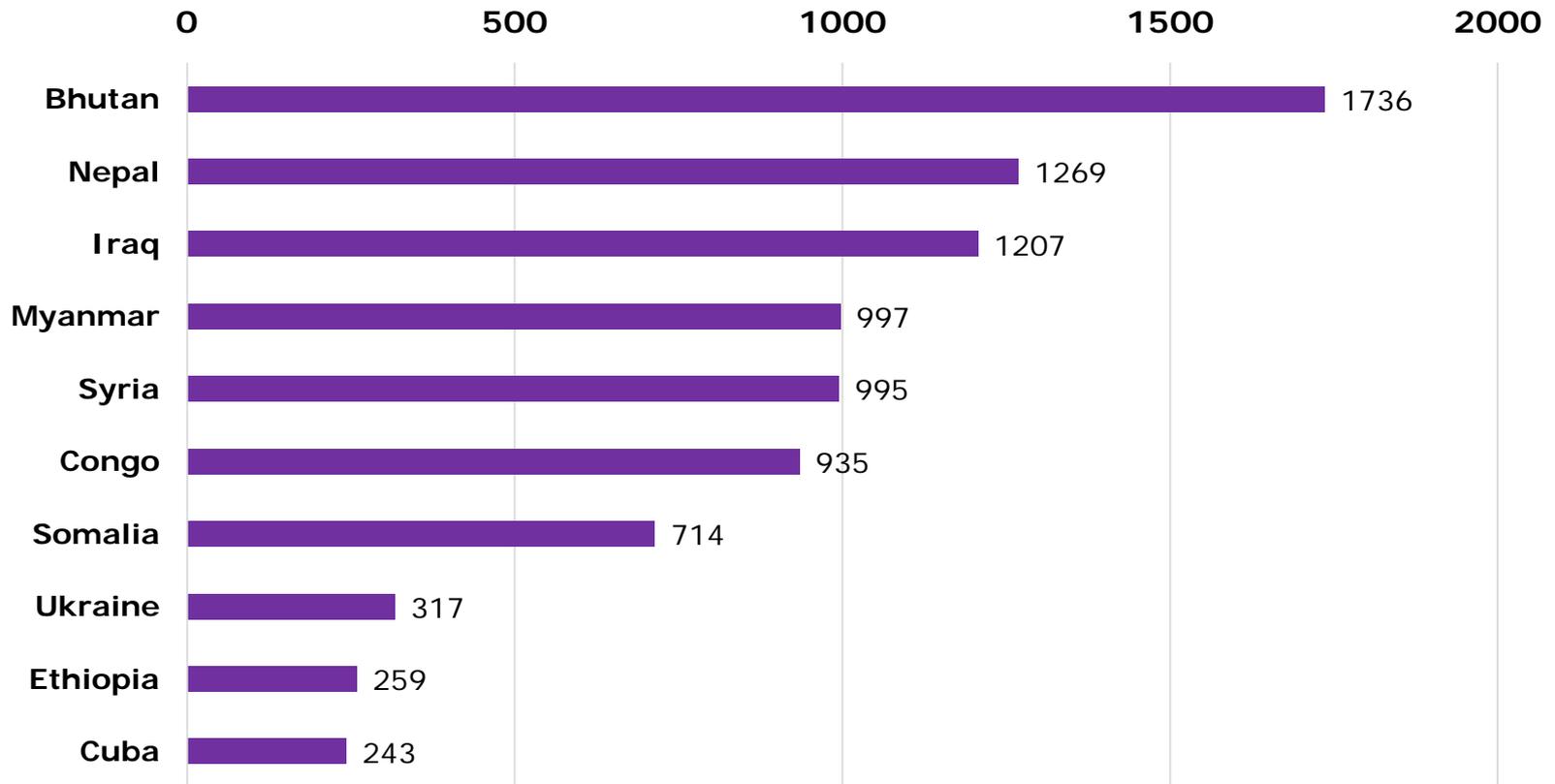
Figure 2. Ten countries of Origin with Most Newly Arriving Refugees in Pennsylvania, 2009 - 2012 (n=10,030)



Data source: CDC EDN

# Refugees Arrived in PA

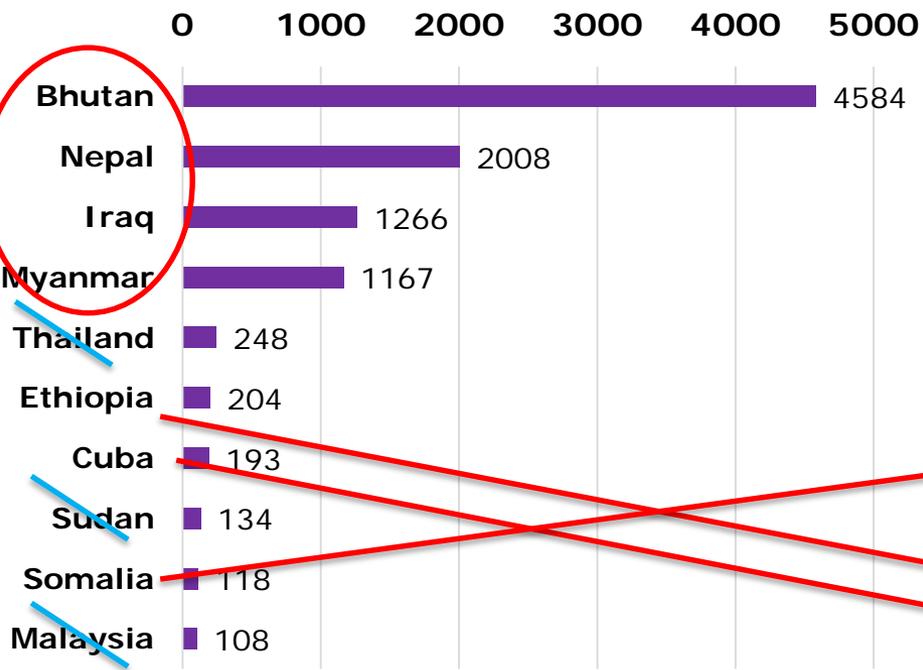
Figure 3. Ten countries of Origin with Most Newly Arriving Refugees in Pennsylvania, 2013 - 2016 (n=8,672)



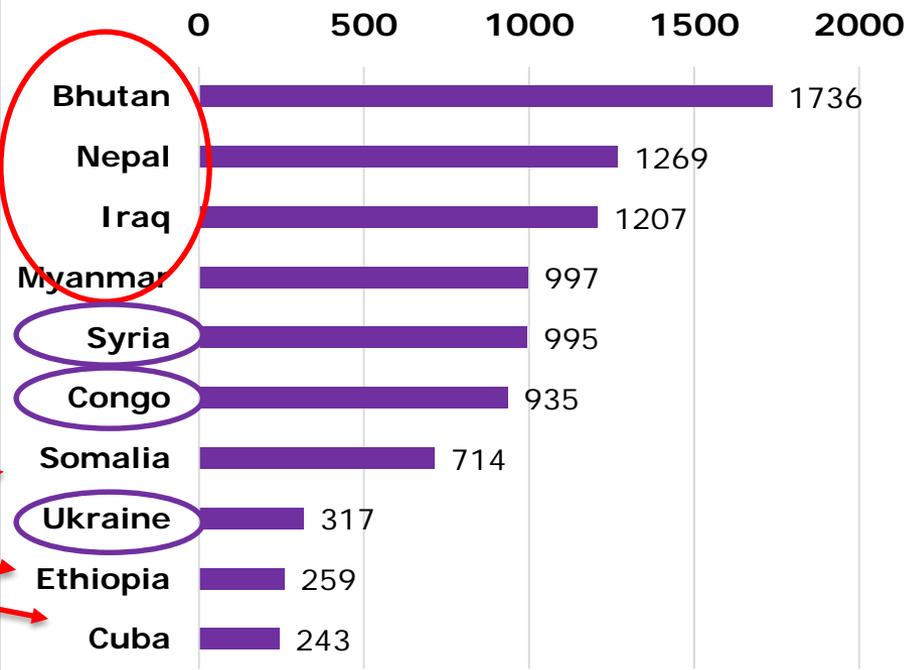
Data source: CDC EDN

# Refugees Arrived in PA

Top Ten countries, 2009 - 2012



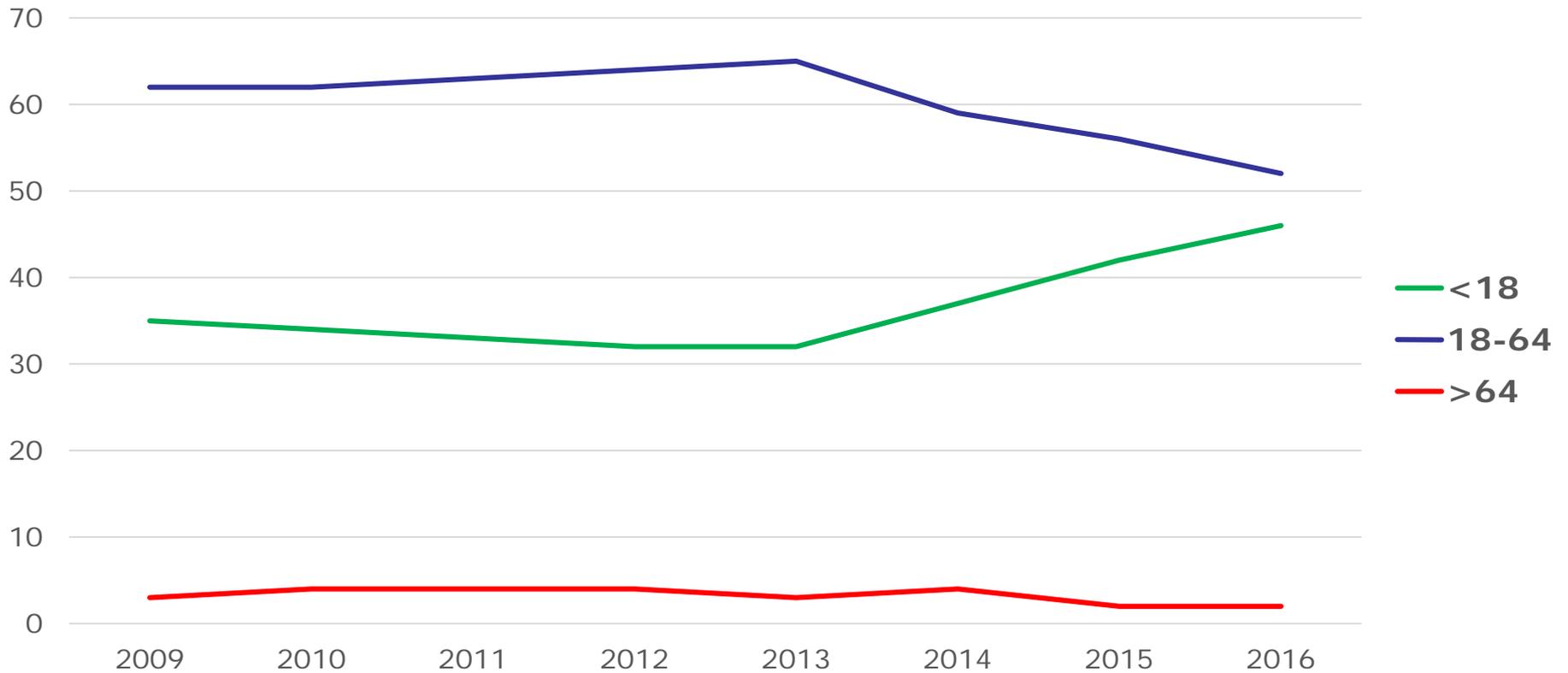
Top Ten countries, 2013 - 2016



Data source: CDC EDN

# Refugees Arrived in PA

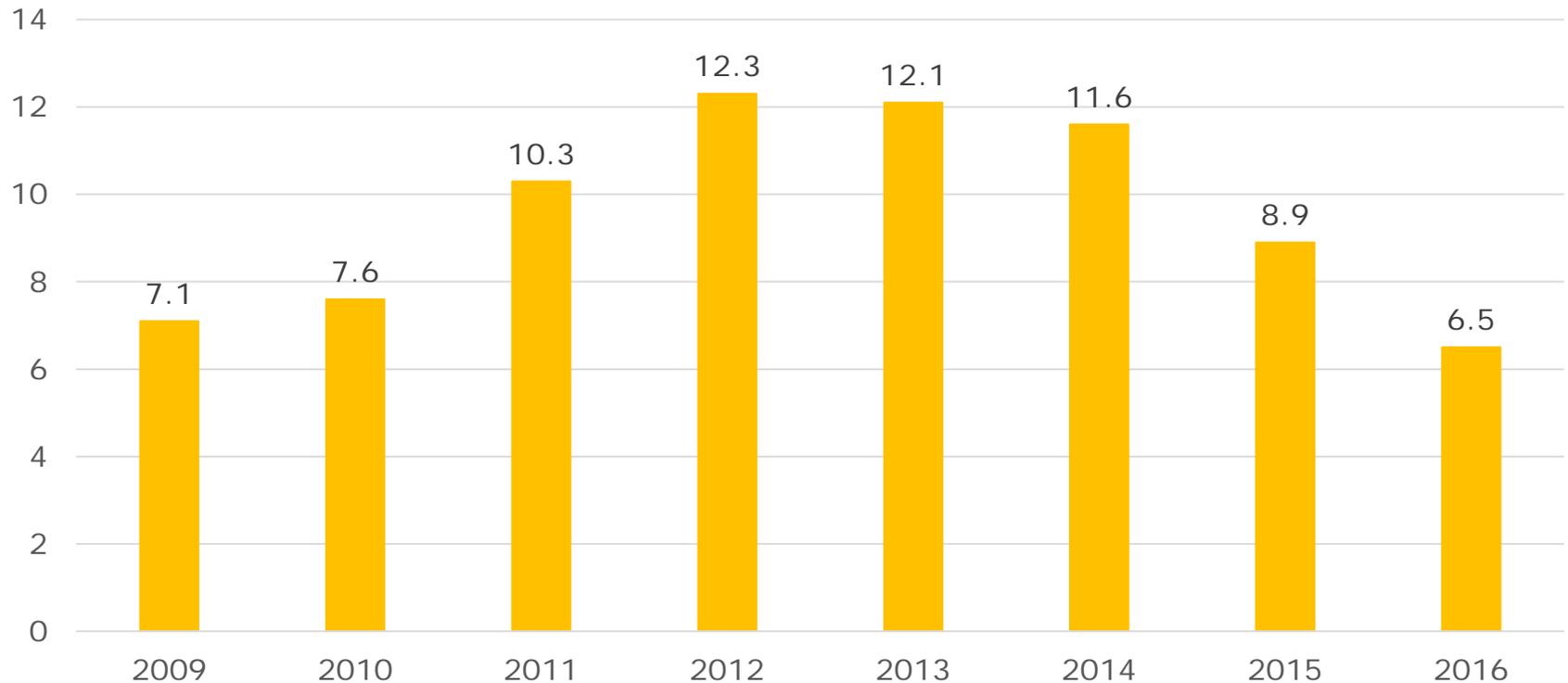
Figure 4. Percent of Refugees Arriving in PA by Age Group, 2009 - 2016



Data source: CDC EDN

# Refugee Health Conditions - TB

Figure 5. Percent of Any Pre-departure TB Conditions in Refugees Arriving in PA by Year, 2009 - 2016 (n=2,129, 9.5%)



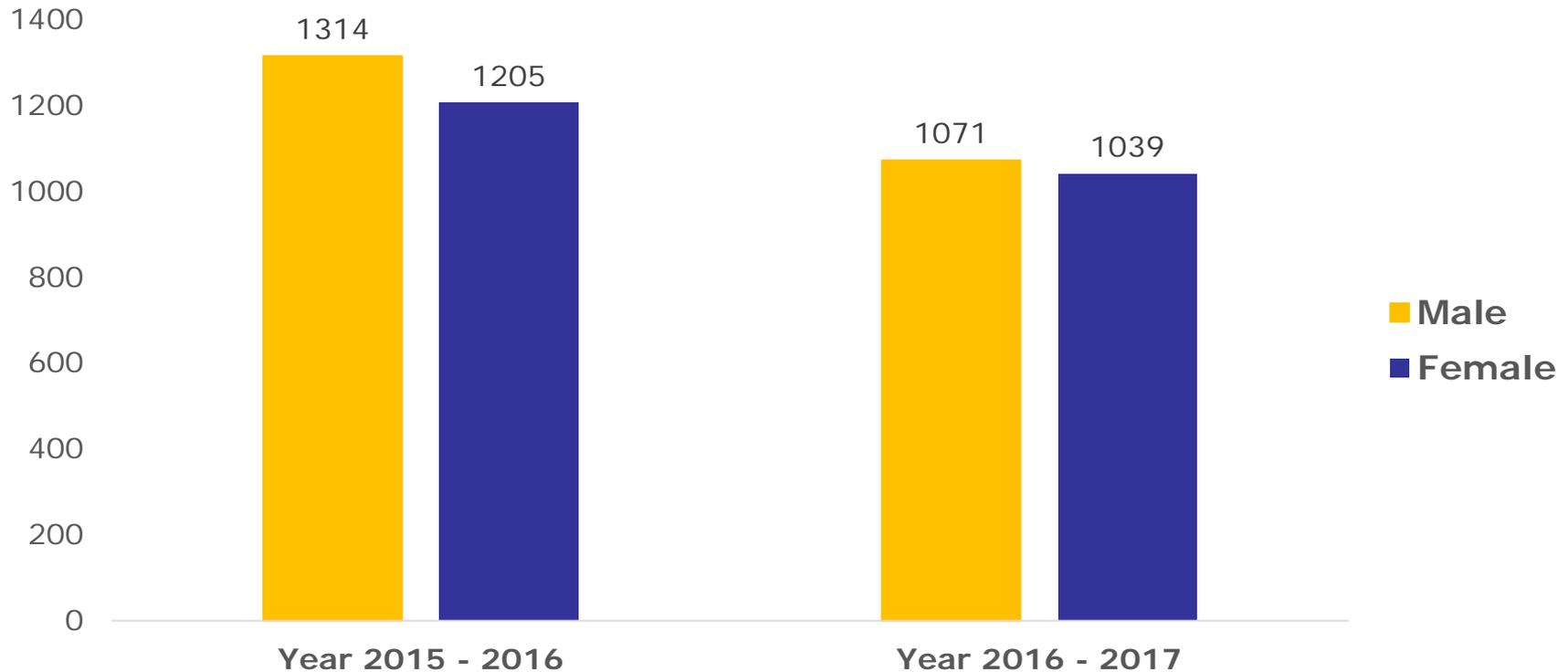
Data source: CDC EDN

# TB Incident in U.S., 2013 - 2015

- **Approximately 3 cases per 100,000 persons**
- **Among foreign-born persons in U.S.: 15 cases per 100,000**

# Fiscal Federal Year 2015 – 2017 Health Screening Statistics

Figure 6. Number of Refugees Screened by Gender, 2015 – 2017 (n=2519 for 2015 – 2016; n=2110 for 2016 - 2017)

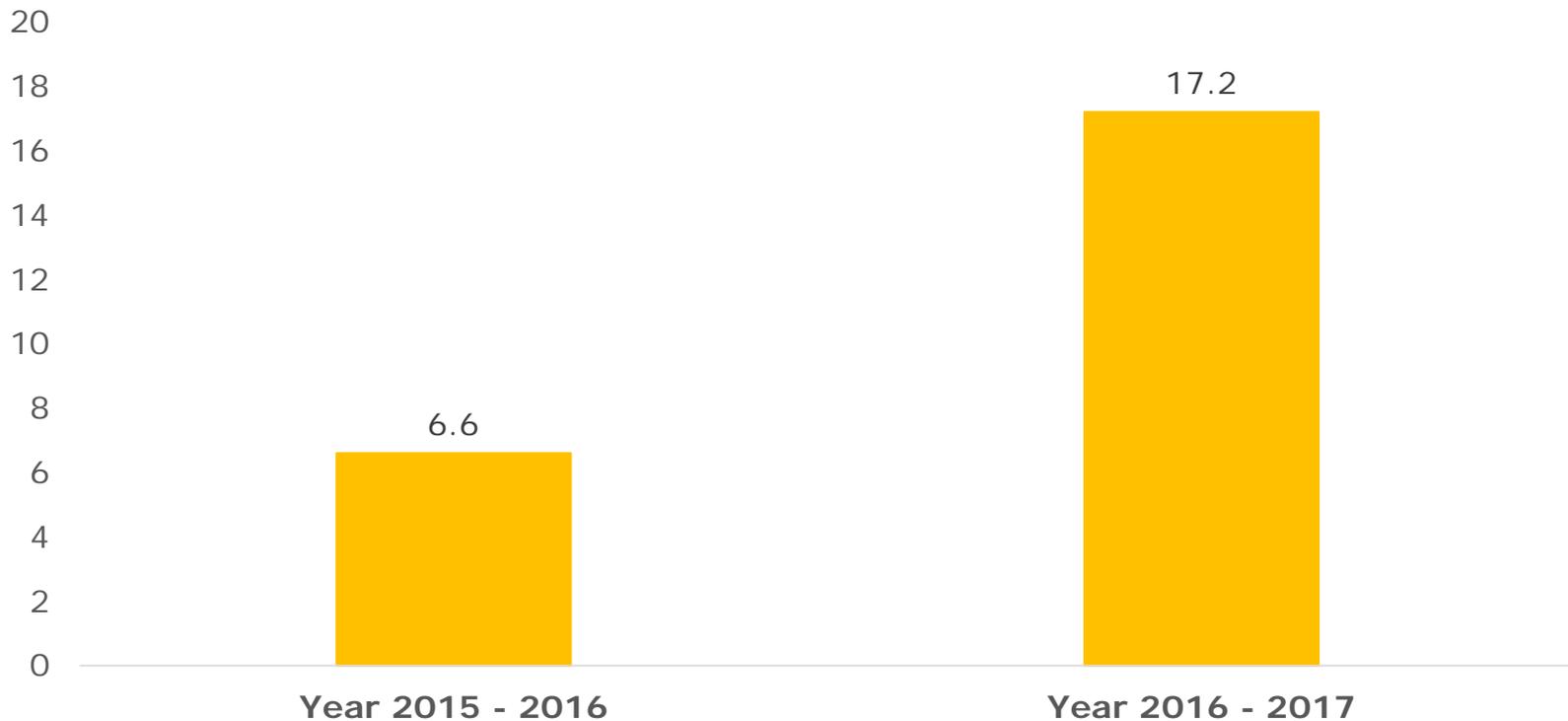


Note: For fiscal year 2016 – 2017, data were pulled for the period of October 1, 2016 – July 28, 2017

Data source: PA eShare

# Fiscal Federal Year 2015 – 2017 Health Screening Statistics

Figure 7. Percent of Refugees with Parasitic Diseases by Screening, 2015 – 2017

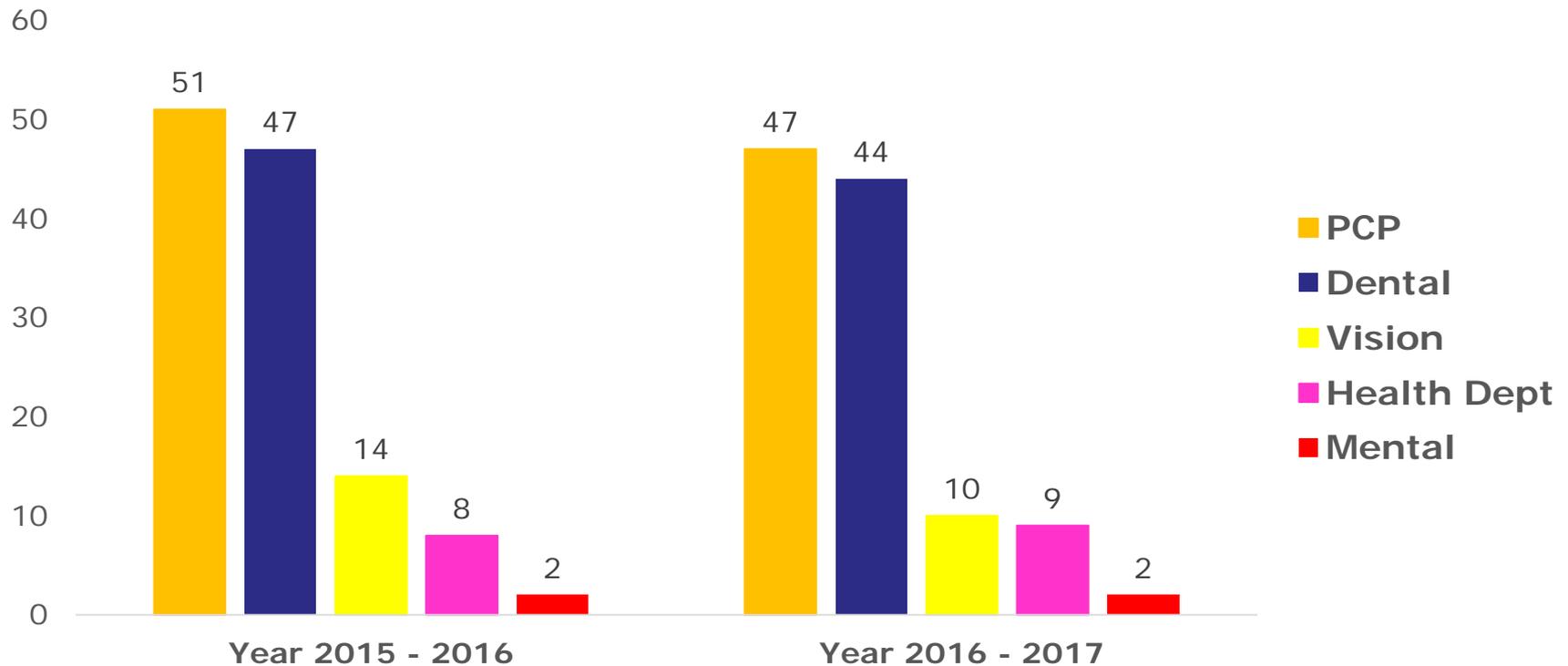


Note: For fiscal year 2016 – 2017, data were pulled for the period of October 1, 2016 – July 28, 2017

Data source: PA eShare

# Fiscal Federal Year 2015 – 2017 Health Screening Statistics

Figure 8. Percent of Major Referrals after Screening, 2015 – 2017

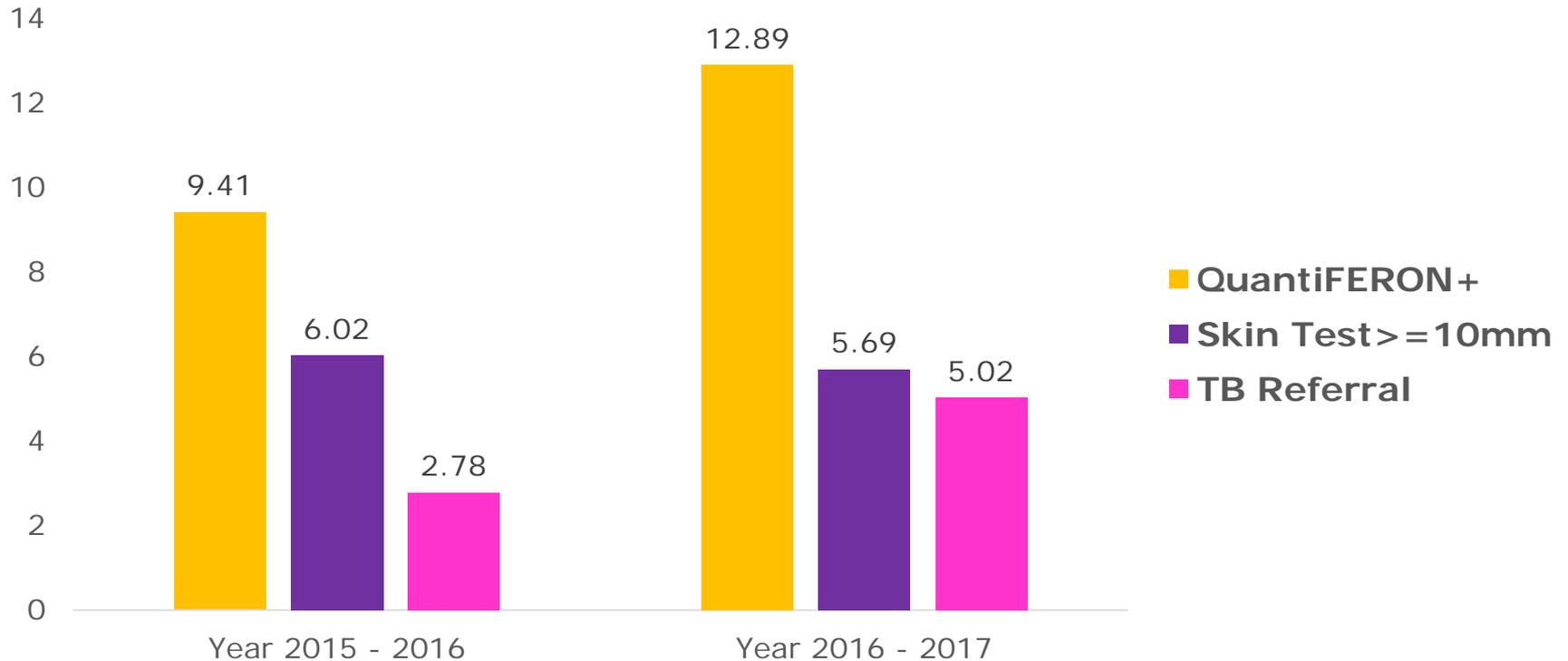


Note: For fiscal year 2016 – 2017, data were pulled for the period of October 1, 2016 – July 28, 2017

Data source: PA eShare

# Fiscal Federal Year 2015 – 2017 Health Screening Statistics

Figure 9. Results of Tuberculosis Testing and Subsequent Referral, 2015 – 2017



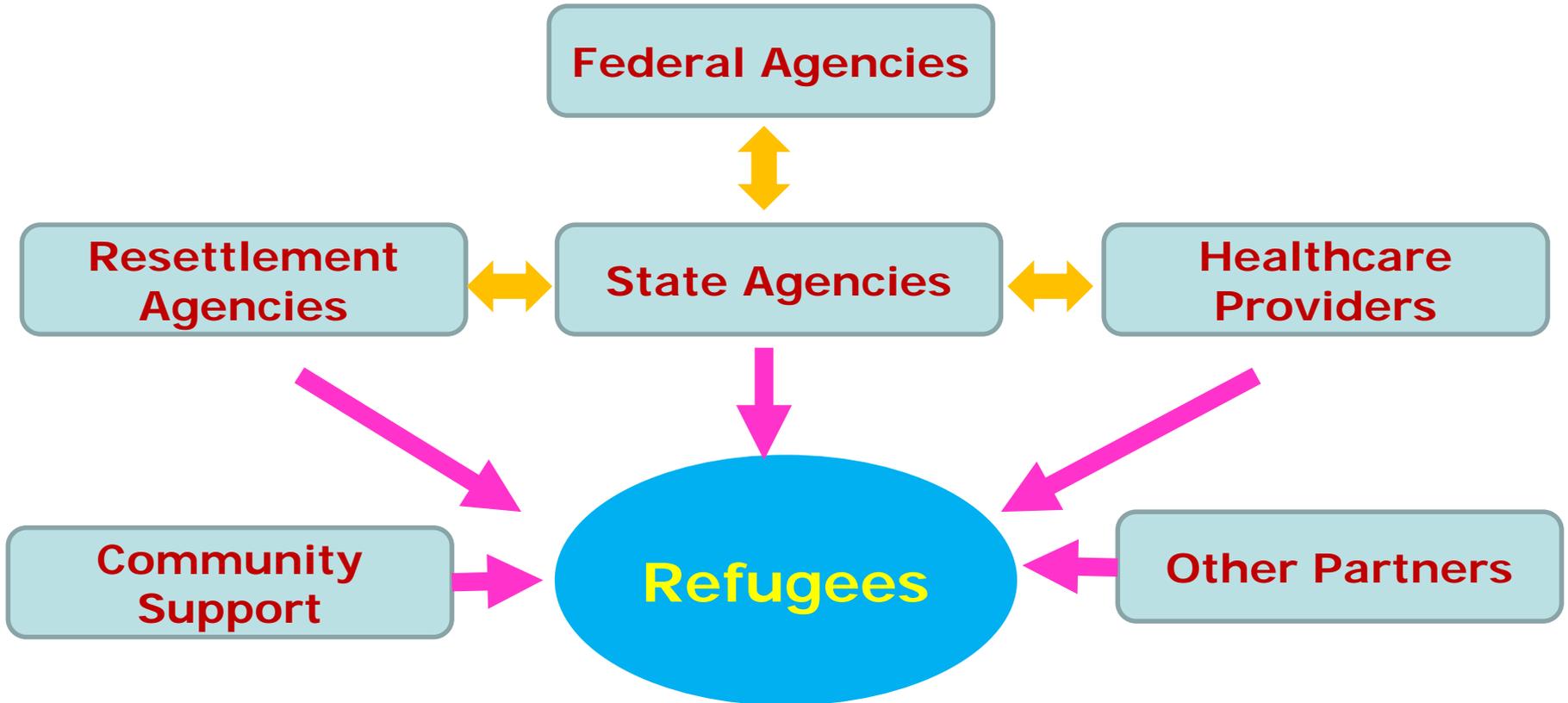
Note: For fiscal year 2016 – 2017, data were pulled for the period of October 1, 2016 – July 28, 2017

Data source: PA eShare

# Strategies to Improve Refugee Health

- **Sufficient funding: federal, state, other sources**
- **Conduct epidemiologic studies and surveillance**
  - ❖ **Refugee health surveys**
  - ❖ **Targeted studies**
- **Health education**
- **Training**
- **Increase collaboration**

# Strategies to Improve Refugee Health



# Available Refugee Health Resources in PA

**Supports families with special medical needs children**

**Provides information on health care resources, respite care, advocacy, assistive technologies**

**Special Kids Network**

**Provides family support in overcoming challenges**

**Provides information about accessible and inclusive recreation and leisure**

# Available Refugee Health Resources in PA

- **Refugee Health Promotion Grant**
- **Training**
  - ❖ **Culturally Competent Health Education and Health Care**
  - ❖ **Serving LGBT Population**
  - ❖ **Mental Health First Aid Training**

# Questions and Discussion



# Contact Information

- Charlotte Fry [charfry@pa.gov](mailto:charfry@pa.gov)  
(717) 787-8608
- Jun Yang [juyang@pa.gov](mailto:juyang@pa.gov)  
717-547-3486
- Shakila Shah [shshah@pa.gov](mailto:shshah@pa.gov)  
717-346-1094
- Susan Miller [sbowersmil@pa.gov](mailto:sbowersmil@pa.gov)  
717-783-3901

<http://www.refugeesinpa.org/>





# Definition of a Refugee

- **Living outside their own country of nationality**
- **Unable or unwilling to return to that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution (based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group)**

# Health Challenges among Refugees

## ➤ Malnutrition – 2012 data

- ❖ 28% among refugee children
- ❖ 10% severe acute malnutrition (five times above the threshold)
- ❖ 44% of children < two years old are malnourished
- ❖ 18% of children < two years old have severe acute malnutrition

Data source: <https://www.msf.org.za/stories-news/stories-and-news/south-sudan-new-msf-mortality-and-malnutrition-data-point-catastrophic>

# Health Challenges among Refugees

## ➤ Infectious/Parasitic conditions

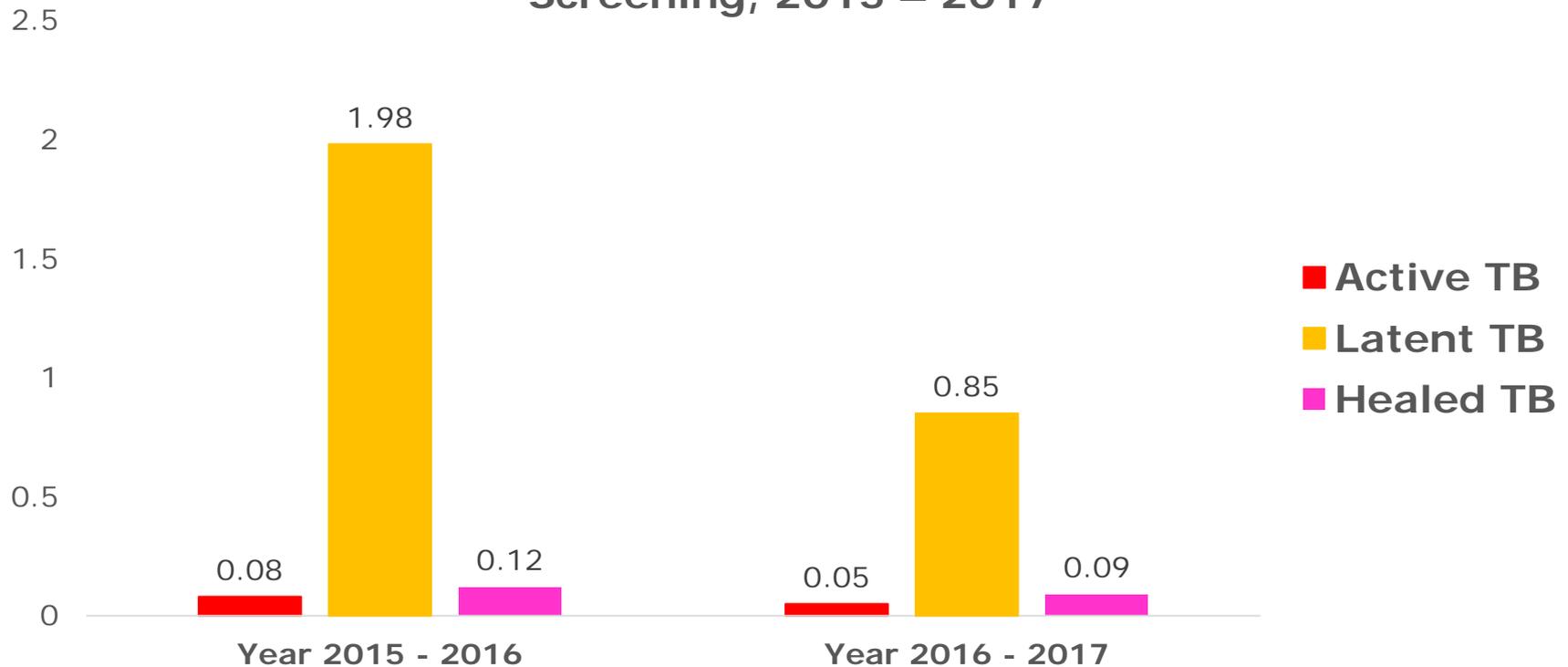
- ❖ Chickenpox outbreaks
- ❖ Malaria – Splenomegaly among Congolese refugees (under investigation)

## ➤ Mental condition

- ❖ Higher suicide rates among Bhutanese refugees (2013 data)
- ❖ Common mental health disorders
  - ✓ Anxiety
  - ✓ Depression
  - ✓ Post-traumatic stress disorder
  - ✓ Post-migration difficulties (e.g., family conflict or unemployment)

# Fiscal Federal Year 2015 – 2017 Health Screening Statistics

Figure 9. Percent of Tuberculosis Diagnosis by Screening, 2015 – 2017



Note: For fiscal year 2016 – 2017, data were pulled for the period of October 1, 2016 – July 28, 2017

Data source: PA eShare