

Changes in Home Births by Race and Hispanic Origin and State of Residence of Mother: United States, 2019–2020 and 2020–2021

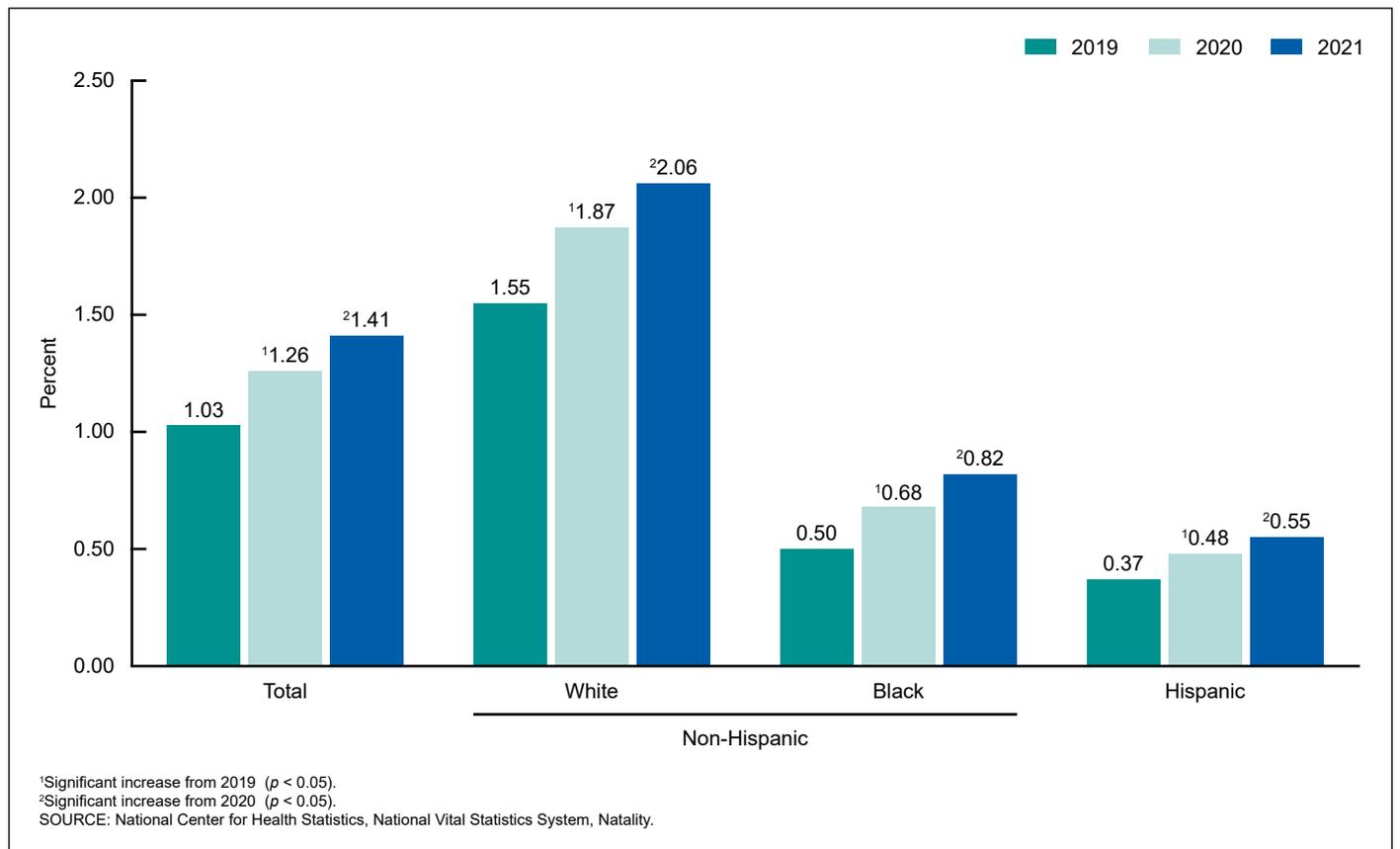
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Abstract

Objectives—This report describes changes between 2020 and 2021 in the percentage of home births by month, race and Hispanic origin, and state of residence of the mother, and makes comparisons with changes occurring between 2019 and 2020.

Methods—Data are based on birth certificates filed in the 50 states and the District of Columbia (D.C.) and collected through the National Vital Statistics System. Changes in the percentage of home births in the United States from 2019 to 2020 and from 2020 to 2021 are compared by race and Hispanic origin, month, and state of residence of the mother.

Figure 1. Percentage of home births, by race and Hispanic origin of the mother: United States, 2019–2021



Results—The percentage of U.S. home births rose from 1.26% (45,646) in 2020 to 1.41% (51,642) in 2021, an increase of 12% and the highest level since at least 1990. Increases ranging from 10% to 21% were seen for the three largest race and Hispanic-origin groups. The percentage of home births for all women increased between 2020 and 2021 for most months, peaking in January 2021 at 1.51%. Patterns by month differed somewhat by race and Hispanic origin, with more consistent monthly increases seen for non-Hispanic White women. Home births increased in 30 states (with nonsignificant increases for 11 additional states) and declined in 2 states (with nonsignificant declines for 7 additional states and D.C.). The 12% increase in home births from 2020 to 2021 follows a 22% increase from 2019 to 2020, with increases by maternal race and Hispanic origin ranging from 21% to 36%. Home births increased for 40 states, with nonsignificant increases seen for 9 additional states and D.C. from 2019 to 2020.

Keywords: home births • race and Hispanic origin • state of residence • National Vital Statistics System

Introduction

Home births in the United States made up approximately 1% of all births from 1990 (0.67%) to 2019 (1.03%) (comparable data are not available for home births before the 1989 revision of the U.S. Standard Certificate of Live Birth) (1). With the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 and concerns about giving birth in a hospital, interest in home births increased among pregnant women in the United States (2–4). A previous report found that home births increased by 22% from 2019 to 2020, from 1.03% to 1.26%, reaching the highest level since at least 1990 (1). During this time, the percentage of home births rose for each month in March–December, corresponding with the initial surge of COVID-19 cases in the United States in late March and early April 2020 (1). Similar patterns were seen for the three largest race and Hispanic-origin groups (1). This report continues to explore these changes in home births through 2021 as the COVID-19 pandemic continued. Changes in home births by maternal race and Hispanic origin, month, and state of residence from 2020 to 2021 are described and compared with changes occurring from 2019 to 2020.

Methods

Birth certificate data shown in this report were collected through the National Vital Statistics System and are based on 100% of births registered in the United States for 2019 to 2021.

The 2003 revision of the U.S. Standard Certificate of Live Birth includes a checkbox item for the place of birth with five options: hospital, freestanding birth center, home birth, clinic/doctor's office, and other (5,6). If the item is not completed, it is classified as “Not stated” (0.004% of all records in 2021). Levels of “Not stated” ranged from 0.002% to 0.008% by race and Hispanic origin and 0% to 0.122% by state of residence for 2021. Home birth is defined as a birth occurring at a private

residence (7). In this report, home births include both planned and unplanned home births.

Hispanic origin and race are reported separately on the birth certificate. Data shown by Hispanic origin include all people of Hispanic origin of any race. Data for non-Hispanic people are shown separately for each single-race group. Data by race are based on the revised standards issued by the Office of Management and Budget in 1997 (8). The race and Hispanic-origin groups shown are non-Hispanic, single-race White; non-Hispanic, single-race Black; and Hispanic. For brevity, text references to “non-Hispanic White” or “non-Hispanic Black” women omit the term “single-race.”

Relative change is presented in the text and tables. Changes and differences presented in this report are statistically significant at the 0.05 level based on a two-tailed z test, unless noted otherwise (9).

Results

Changes in the number and percentage of home births

- In 2021, 51,642 home births occurred, an increase of 13% from 2020 (45,646). This increase followed a 19% rise in the number of home births from 2019 (38,506) to 2020 (Table 1).
- The percentage of home births among all women increased from 1.26% in 2020 to 1.41% in 2021 (a 12% increase), the highest level since at least 1990 (Figure 1). From 2019 to 2020, the percentage of home births increased by 22%, from 1.03% to 1.26%.

Changes in the percentage of home births by race and Hispanic origin

- For non-Hispanic White women, the percentage of home births increased 10%, from 1.87% in 2020 to 2.06% in 2021. This followed a 21% increase from 2019 (1.55%) to 2020 (Table 1 and Figure 1).
- For non-Hispanic Black women, home births increased 21%, from 0.68% in 2020 to 0.82% in 2021. The percentage of home births increased 36% from 2019 (0.50%) to 2020.
- For Hispanic women, home births increased from 0.48% in 2020 to 0.55% in 2021, an increase of 15%. The percentage of home births increased 30% from 2019 (0.37%) to 2020.

Changes in the percentage of home births by month and by race and Hispanic origin

All women

- From 2020 to 2021, the percentage of home births for all women increased by 28% to 47% for January through March, and by 7% in April; the percentage of home births

was highest in January 2021, at 1.51% (up from 1.03% in January 2020). Home births then declined 5% in May 2021 (from 1.49% to 1.42%). Levels increased, but not significantly, for June and July, and then rose by 7% to 9% for August through December (Table 1 and Figure 2).

- In comparison, from 2019 to 2020, home birth levels were stable in January and February. Levels then rose each month for the remainder of the year, with increases ranging from 5% to 45%.

Non-Hispanic White women

- From 2020 to 2021, the percentage of home births for non-Hispanic White women increased by 24% to 41% for January through March, and by 6% in April. The percentage was highest in January, at 2.21% (up from 1.57%). Home births then declined 6% in May (from 2.18% to 2.05%). The percentage of home births increased for June and July, but not significantly, and then rose by 5% to 12% for August through December (Table 1).
- In comparison, from 2019 to 2020, no significant changes were seen in the percentage of home births to non-Hispanic White women for January through March. Home births then rose for all months in April through December, with increases ranging from 21% to 42%.

Non-Hispanic Black women

- From 2020 to 2021, the percentage of home births for non-Hispanic Black women increased by 51% to 62% for January through March, and by 21% in April. The percentage was highest in February, at 0.90% (up from 0.57%). The percentage increased, but not significantly, for May and June, then rose by 16% to 20% for July through September. Increases for October and November, and the decline in December, were not significant (Table 1).
- In comparison, for non-Hispanic Black women, the percentage of home births increased from 2019 to 2020, although not significantly, for January through March. The percentage then rose every month for April through December, with increases ranging from 20% to 63%.

Hispanic women

- From 2020 to 2021, the percentage of home births for Hispanic women increased for January through March, with increases from 24% to 69%. The percentage was highest in January, at 0.61% (up from 0.36%). Home births increased in April and declined in May, although these changes were not significant, and then rose in June (17%) and July (19%). Increases for August through October and declines for November and December were not significant (Table 1).
- In comparison, for 2019–2020, the percentage of home births to Hispanic women was not significantly different for January and February. Home births then increased in all months from March through December, with increases ranging from 25% to 67%.

Changes in the percentage of home births by state of residence

- From 2020 to 2021, the percentage of home births increased in 30 states. Increases ranged from 8% in Florida to 49% in West Virginia (Table 2 and Figure 3). Increases in 11 other states were not significant. The percentage of home births declined in 2 states, by 17% in Connecticut and 5% in New York; nonsignificant declines were seen in 7 additional states and the District of Columbia (D.C.).
- In comparison, the percentage of home births increased in 40 states for 2019–2020, with increases ranging from 11% to 68%. Nonsignificant increases were seen in 9 additional states and D.C.

Summary

Following average annual increases of 2% from 1990 (0.67%) to 2019 (1.03%), the percentage of home births rose 22% from 2019 to 2020 (1.26%), and another 12% from 2020 to 2021 (1.41%). The 2021 level was the highest since at least 1990, demonstrating a higher rate of increase in home births during the first 2 years of the COVID-19 pandemic. From 2020 to 2021, levels increased by 10% to 21% for each of the race and Hispanic-origin groups. For all women and non-Hispanic White women, increases occurred generally for most months of the year, although not all increases were significant. Although less pronounced and consistent, increases also were seen in home births for most months for non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic women. Between 2020 and 2021, home births increased in 41 states (changes in 11 states were not significant) and declined in 9 states and D.C. (changes in 7 states and D.C. were not significant).

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Figure 2. Percentage of home births, by month of birth: United States, 2019–2021

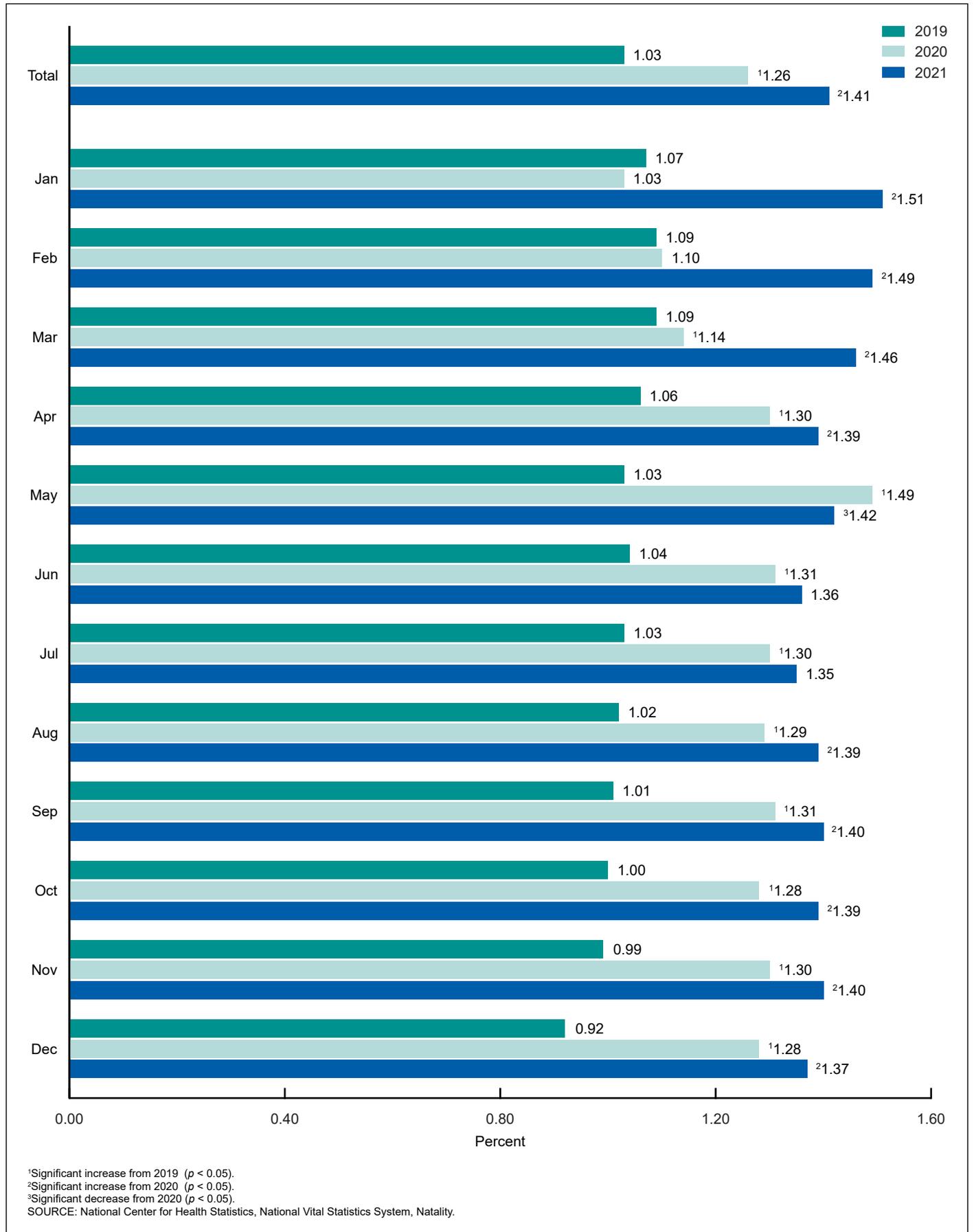
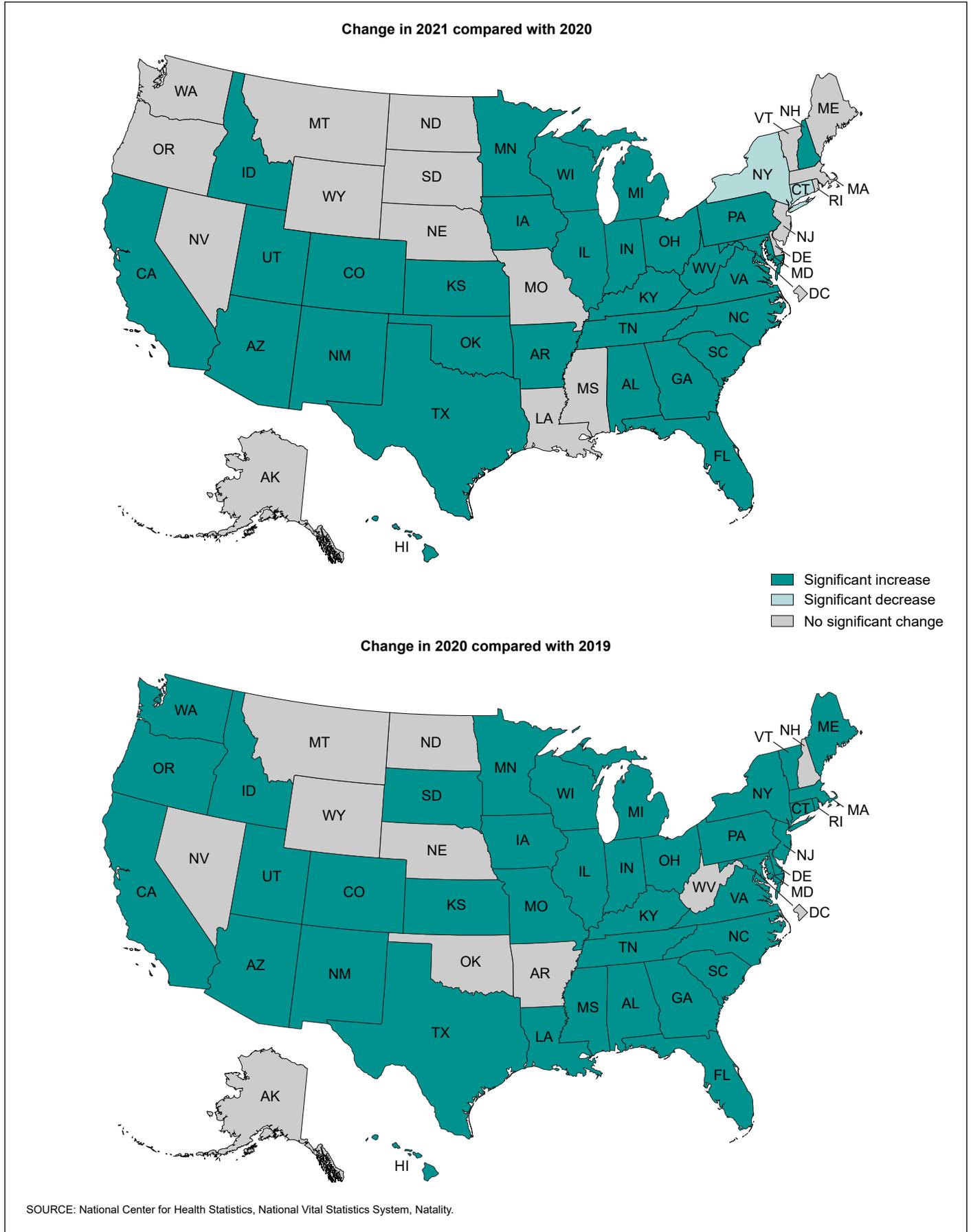


Figure 3. Changes in the percentage of home births, by state of residence: United States, 2019–2020 and 2020–2021



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Table 1. Home births, by month and race and Hispanic origin of mother: United States, 2019–2021

Race and Hispanic origin and month	Number of home births			Number of births ¹			Percent			Percent change	
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019–2020	2020–2021
All races and origins²											
Total	38,506	45,646	51,642	3,747,422	3,613,482	3,664,160	1.03	1.26	1.41	†22	†12
January	3,331	3,152	4,189	310,863	304,703	277,160	1.07	1.03	1.51	-4	†47
February	3,047	3,121	3,969	279,949	282,646	266,343	1.09	1.10	1.49	1	†35
March	3,307	3,453	4,427	304,229	301,616	302,682	1.09	1.14	1.46	†5	†28
April	3,157	3,775	4,076	298,935	290,461	293,199	1.06	1.30	1.39	†23	†7
May	3,249	4,480	4,282	316,381	301,471	300,903	1.03	1.49	1.42	†45	†-5
June	3,169	3,969	4,277	304,080	302,146	313,587	1.04	1.31	1.36	†26	4
July	3,420	4,197	4,417	333,636	321,619	326,102	1.03	1.30	1.35	†26	4
August	3,495	4,113	4,599	341,677	319,603	330,253	1.02	1.29	1.39	†26	†8
September	3,285	4,089	4,549	325,772	311,695	325,725	1.01	1.31	1.40	†30	†7
October	3,239	3,906	4,391	325,035	305,072	315,405	1.00	1.28	1.39	†28	†9
November	2,954	3,670	4,216	298,075	282,584	301,721	0.99	1.30	1.40	†31	†8
December	2,853	3,721	4,250	308,790	289,866	311,080	0.92	1.28	1.37	†39	†7
Non-Hispanic, single race³											
White:											
Total	29,768	34,536	38,845	1,915,856	1,843,356	1,887,615	1.55	1.87	2.06	†21	†10
January	2,558	2,398	3,139	156,814	152,511	142,213	1.63	1.57	2.21	-4	†41
February	2,327	2,385	2,986	142,986	143,706	138,999	1.63	1.66	2.15	2	†30
March	2,619	2,652	3,345	157,498	155,977	159,420	1.66	1.70	2.10	2	†24
April	2,435	2,848	3,100	156,511	150,949	154,402	1.56	1.89	2.01	†21	†6
May	2,550	3,419	3,242	165,583	156,885	157,923	1.54	2.18	2.05	†42	†-6
June	2,465	3,030	3,229	158,318	156,925	164,889	1.56	1.93	1.96	†24	2
July	2,650	3,206	3,296	172,125	165,193	168,304	1.54	1.94	1.96	†26	1
August	2,715	3,129	3,457	174,279	162,587	169,798	1.56	1.92	2.04	†23	†6
September	2,522	3,068	3,371	165,361	158,147	165,573	1.53	1.94	2.04	†27	†5
October	2,486	2,967	3,316	165,033	154,392	160,076	1.51	1.92	2.07	†27	†8
November	2,270	2,722	3,161	148,644	140,433	151,903	1.53	1.94	2.08	†27	†7
December	2,171	2,712	3,203	152,704	145,651	154,115	1.42	1.86	2.08	†31	†12
Black:											
Total	2,724	3,590	4,247	548,047	529,777	517,846	0.50	0.68	0.82	†36	†21
January	233	257	342	47,484	46,353	41,344	0.49	0.55	0.83	12	†51
February	200	238	348	41,494	42,036	38,680	0.48	0.57	0.90	19	†58
March	204	232	361	43,583	43,589	42,059	0.47	0.53	0.86	13	†62
April	227	288	338	42,149	41,390	39,947	0.54	0.70	0.85	†30	†21
May	216	318	320	44,584	42,997	41,109	0.48	0.74	0.78	†54	5
June	235	287	331	42,810	43,377	43,372	0.55	0.66	0.76	†20	15
July	231	318	364	48,125	46,432	46,046	0.48	0.68	0.79	†42	†16
August	229	321	388	50,074	46,789	46,506	0.46	0.69	0.83	†50	†20
September	245	330	390	47,646	45,248	46,106	0.51	0.73	0.85	†43	†16
October	236	330	360	47,112	44,213	44,295	0.50	0.75	0.81	†50	8
November	232	313	350	45,303	42,600	42,858	0.51	0.73	0.82	†43	12
December	236	358	355	47,683	44,753	45,524	0.49	0.80	0.78	†63	-3

Table 1. Home births, by month and race and Hispanic origin of mother: United States, 2019–2021—Con.

Race and Hispanic origin and month	Number of home births			Number of births ¹			Percent			Percent change	
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019–2020	2020–2021
Hispanic ⁴											
Total	3,280	4,192	4,845	886,454	866,679	885,886	0.37	0.48	0.55	†30	†15
January	302	264	403	73,742	73,596	65,719	0.41	0.36	0.61	-12	†69
February	273	282	338	65,666	67,466	61,995	0.42	0.42	0.55	–	†31
March	252	324	400	70,441	70,358	70,137	0.36	0.46	0.57	†28	†24
April	276	337	351	68,517	67,996	68,335	0.40	0.50	0.51	†25	2
May	257	386	383	72,746	70,082	70,988	0.35	0.55	0.54	†57	-2
June	263	339	412	70,875	71,045	73,634	0.37	0.48	0.56	†30	†17
July	292	366	451	78,805	77,001	78,616	0.37	0.48	0.57	†30	†19
August	309	372	429	81,983	77,446	80,533	0.38	0.48	0.53	†26	10
September	281	414	471	79,239	76,819	81,555	0.35	0.54	0.58	†54	7
October	288	353	410	78,073	74,716	78,775	0.37	0.47	0.52	†27	11
November	237	381	409	71,527	69,850	75,916	0.33	0.55	0.54	†67	-2
December	250	374	388	74,840	70,304	79,683	0.33	0.53	0.49	†61	-8

† Significant change ($p < 0.05$).

– Quantity zero.

¹Excludes births where place of birth is not stated.²Includes births to race and origin groups not shown separately, such as Hispanic, single-race White; Hispanic, single-race Black; and non-Hispanic, multiple-race women, and births with origin not stated.³Race and Hispanic origin are reported separately on birth certificates; people of Hispanic origin may be of any race. In this table, non-Hispanic women are classified by race. Race categories are consistent with the 1997 Office of Management and Budget standards; see reference 8 in this report. Single race is defined as only one race reported on the birth certificate.⁴Includes all people of Hispanic origin of any race.

SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System.

Table 2. Home births, by state of residence: United States and each state, 2019–2021

Area	Number of home births			Number of births ¹			Percent			Percent change	
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019–2020	2020–2021
United States	38,506	45,646	51,642	3,747,422	3,613,482	3,664,160	1.03	1.26	1.41	†22	†12
Alabama	243	321	422	58,614	57,646	58,054	0.41	0.56	0.73	†37	†30
Alaska	195	213	235	9,822	9,466	9,367	1.99	2.25	2.51	13	12
Arizona	706	931	1,065	79,371	76,947	77,914	0.89	1.21	1.37	†36	†13
Arkansas	326	353	441	36,564	35,250	35,964	0.89	1.00	1.23	12	†23
California	3,081	3,591	4,079	446,477	420,258	420,607	0.69	0.85	0.97	†23	†14
Colorado	899	1,065	1,227	62,862	61,488	62,946	1.43	1.73	1.95	†21	†13
Connecticut	217	271	238	34,258	33,460	35,670	0.63	0.81	0.67	†29	†-17
Delaware	66	98	105	10,560	10,392	10,482	0.63	0.94	1.00	†49	6
District of Columbia	72	91	85	9,079	8,873	8,659	0.79	1.03	0.98	30	-5
Florida	2,052	2,431	2,714	219,999	209,662	216,258	0.93	1.16	1.25	†25	†8
Georgia	744	930	1,245	126,328	122,434	124,030	0.59	0.76	1.00	†29	†32
Hawaii	319	383	512	16,797	15,784	15,618	1.90	2.43	3.28	†28	†35
Idaho	619	685	798	22,063	21,531	22,426	2.81	3.18	3.56	†13	†12
Illinois	819	998	1,155	140,127	133,296	132,188	0.58	0.75	0.87	†29	†16
Indiana	1,160	1,322	1,559	80,853	78,606	79,944	1.43	1.68	1.95	†17	†16
Iowa	507	578	683	37,649	36,113	36,835	1.35	1.60	1.85	†19	†16
Kansas	494	545	642	35,395	34,376	34,705	1.40	1.59	1.85	†14	†16
Kentucky	680	802	1,013	53,066	51,668	52,211	1.28	1.55	1.94	†21	†25
Louisiana	153	191	175	58,941	57,328	57,437	0.26	0.33	0.30	†27	-9
Maine	222	268	313	11,779	11,539	12,006	1.88	2.32	2.61	†23	13
Maryland	533	720	856	70,176	68,553	68,280	0.76	1.05	1.25	†38	†19
Massachusetts	395	561	548	69,117	66,425	69,136	0.57	0.84	0.79	†47	-6
Michigan	1,534	1,972	2,225	107,886	104,074	104,980	1.42	1.89	2.12	†33	†12
Minnesota	800	926	1,033	66,027	63,442	64,425	1.21	1.46	1.60	†21	†10
Mississippi	169	204	196	36,636	35,473	35,156	0.46	0.58	0.56	†26	-3
Missouri	1,071	1,309	1,403	72,125	69,284	69,450	1.48	1.89	2.02	†28	7
Montana	263	280	320	11,079	10,790	11,231	2.37	2.59	2.85	9	10
Nebraska	93	108	99	24,755	24,288	24,607	0.38	0.44	0.40	16	-9
Nevada	573	593	623	35,068	33,610	33,645	1.63	1.76	1.85	8	5
New Hampshire	163	161	243	11,839	11,791	12,625	1.38	1.37	1.92	-1	†40
New Jersey	415	562	591	99,585	97,954	101,497	0.42	0.57	0.58	†36	2
New Mexico	274	350	406	22,960	21,902	21,391	1.19	1.60	1.90	†34	†19
New York	2,458	3,030	2,913	221,537	209,336	210,742	1.11	1.45	1.38	†31	†-5
North Carolina	716	852	1,017	118,724	116,728	120,463	0.60	0.73	0.84	†22	†15
North Dakota	120	133	144	10,448	10,053	10,111	1.15	1.32	1.42	15	8
Ohio	1,599	1,854	2,099	134,461	129,191	129,791	1.19	1.44	1.62	†21	†13
Oklahoma	505	540	614	49,143	47,623	48,410	1.03	1.13	1.27	10	†12
Oregon	865	957	1,061	41,858	39,820	40,914	2.07	2.40	2.59	†16	8
Pennsylvania	2,606	2,873	3,250	134,227	130,692	132,622	1.94	2.20	2.45	†13	†11
Rhode Island	48	71	84	10,174	10,095	10,463	0.47	0.70	0.80	†49	14
South Carolina	361	577	743	57,038	55,703	57,180	0.63	1.04	1.30	†65	†25
South Dakota	89	144	148	11,449	10,960	11,369	0.78	1.31	1.30	†68	-1
Tennessee	956	1,126	1,334	80,446	78,689	81,717	1.19	1.43	1.63	†20	†14
Texas	2,618	3,064	3,765	377,591	368,182	373,590	0.69	0.83	1.01	†20	†22
Utah	1,027	1,204	1,399	46,826	45,702	46,712	2.19	2.63	2.99	†20	†14
Vermont	125	155	160	5,355	5,130	5,384	2.33	3.02	2.97	†30	-2
Virginia	941	1,133	1,255	97,426	94,749	95,824	0.97	1.20	1.31	†24	†9
Washington	1,745	2,140	2,116	84,893	83,082	83,909	2.06	2.58	2.52	†25	-2
West Virginia	136	136	203	18,135	17,322	17,198	0.75	0.79	1.18	5	†49
Wisconsin	1,604	1,706	1,943	63,269	60,594	61,781	2.54	2.82	3.14	†11	†11
Wyoming	130	138	145	6,565	6,128	6,236	1.98	2.25	2.33	14	4

† Significant change ($p < 0.05$).¹Excludes births where place of birth is not stated.

SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System.

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