

Studying local variation: Why it matters for CCDF policy, practice, and research

Lessons from a mixed-methods study in Massachusetts

A policy research partnership between:

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Introduction

- Mixed methods study of an administrative change that took place in MA in 2012
- The change focused on making eligibility reassessment more “family friendly”
 - Reassessment responsibilities transitioned from 10 regional CCR&R offices to providers
 - Change aligns with the redetermination objectives of CCDBG reauthorization
- The change only applied to a subset of income-eligible voucher children, creating a “treatment” and “comparison” group

What we're finding...

- We are finding local (within-state) variation in:
 - ✓ Administrative practices
 - ✓ Other administrative factors, like family travel distances (burden)
 - ✓ The relationship between administrative factors and outcomes (subsidy stability)

Today's purpose

- Provide examples of local variation in CCDF administrative factors from the MA study
 - Examples could help states anticipate local variation points as they implement new CCDF rules
- Summarize what our study results say about the relationship between local variation in administrative factors and subsidy stability
 - Highlight importance of local implementation research

Study Background

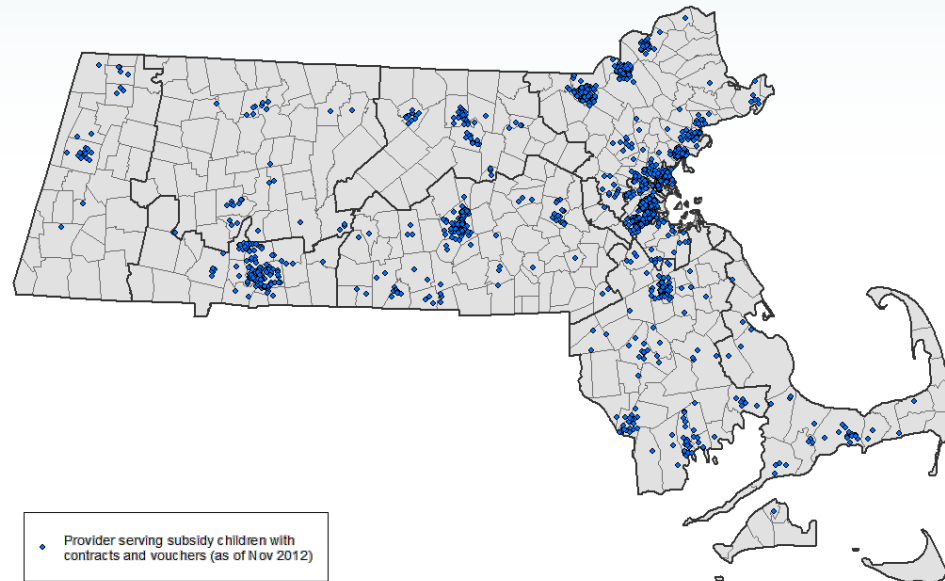
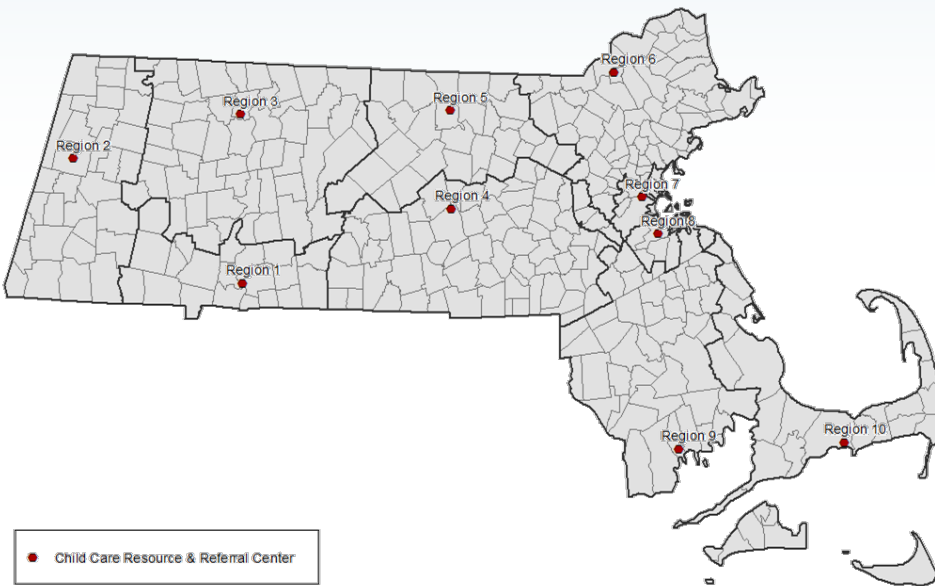
Overview of study

- **Research question:** Does changing reassessment from CCR&Rs to providers impact stability?
- **Sample:** 2,834 income-eligible voucher children with new subsidy receipt spell in 2012
 - Treatment: voucher children with contracted providers
 - Comparison: voucher children with voucher-only providers
- Treatment children reassess with provider; comparison children reassess with CCR&R

The MA “geography of reassessment”

Comparison children

Treatment children



Median distance to reassessment=6.2 miles

Median distance to reassessment=2.1 miles

Data sources

- Massachusetts CCDF administrative data, 2012-2013 (2014 in progress)
- Qualitative data obtained from:
 - Document reviews
 - Key stakeholder interviews
 - In-depth qualitative interviews and site visits to all seven main CCR&R regional offices
 - Provider interviews
 - Parent interviews (in progress)

Methods: How local variation fits into the analysis plan

- 1) Use spell analysis to study stability patterns
 - Spell analysis by CCR&R region
- 2) Use discrete-time event history analysis to assess impacts of the change on subsidy stability
 - Estimate impacts by CCR&R region
- 3) Incorporate measures of administrative factors that may vary locally
 - Motivated by findings of local variation in implementation and spatial research
- 4) Integrate impact/implementation findings to explain observed local variation

Examples of local variation in administrative practices/factors

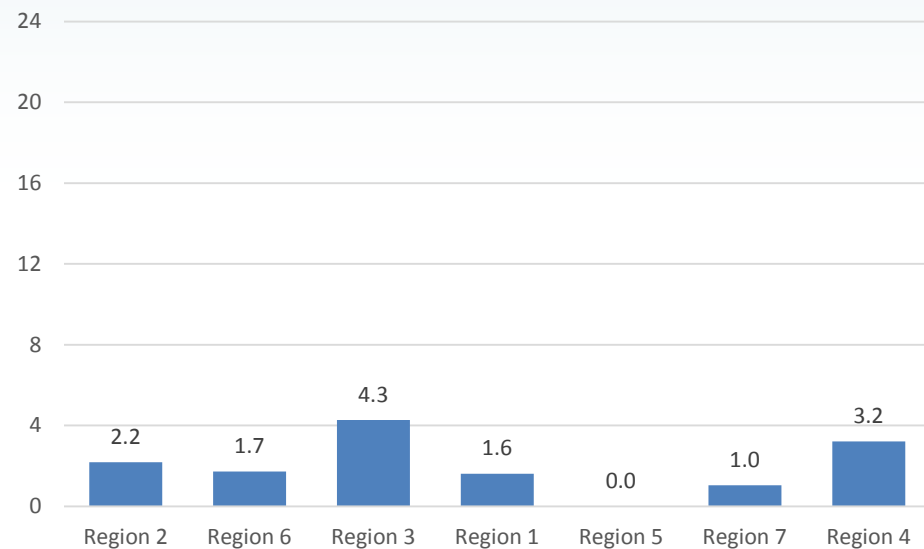
- Reassessment practices
- Family travel distances

“Family friendliness” of reassessment practices, by CCRR region

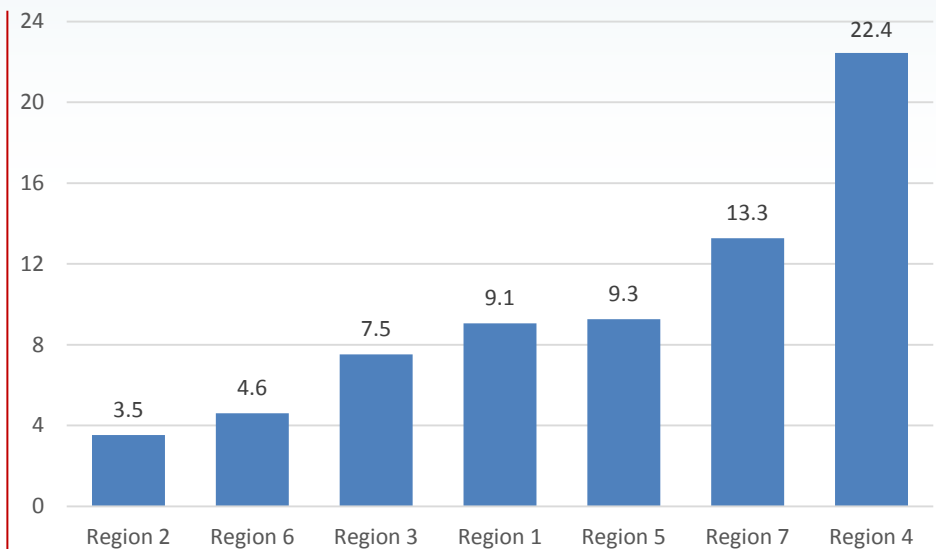
	Reminders	Allow walk-ins	Remote Reassessment	Make appointments online	Wet signatures	Density of Outposts	Saturday appointments	Off-business hours	SCORE
Region 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	6
Region 7	✓	✓		✓				✓	4
Region 5	✓	✓		✓			✓		4
Region 2			✓		✓	✓			3
Region 6	✓		✓					✓	3
Region 4	✓						✓	✓	3
Region 3			✓					✓	2

Distance to reassessment (in miles), by CCR&R region

Children who reassess with provider*
(Treatment)



Children who reassess with CCR&R
(Comparison)

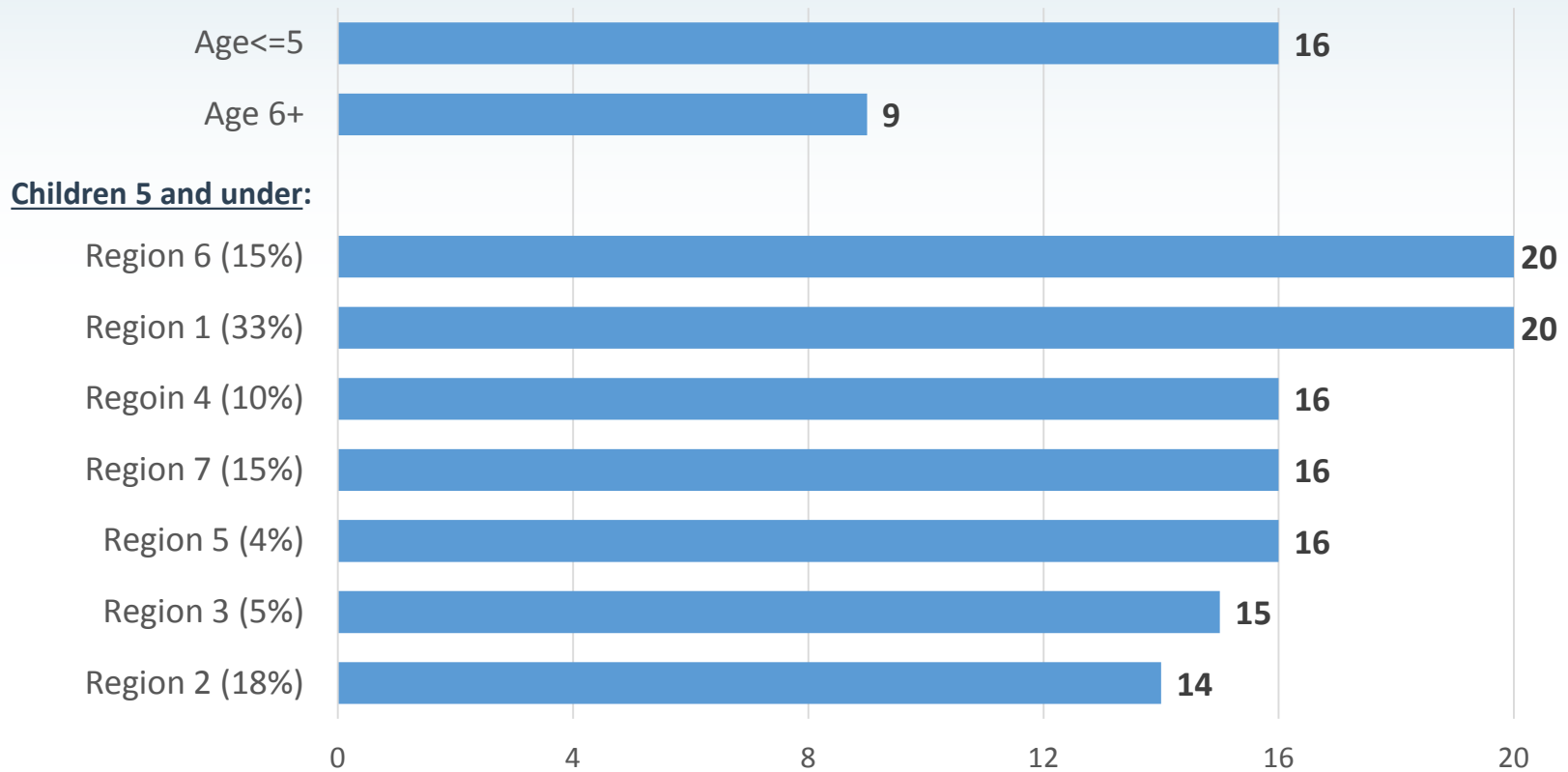


*Children who reassess with provider either visit the provider site (incurring no incremental travel distance to reassessment) or visit the umbrella agency office (if provider is part of an umbrella/system organization).

Results

Subsidy spell analysis by CCR&R region

Median length of first subsidy receipt spell in study period (in months)

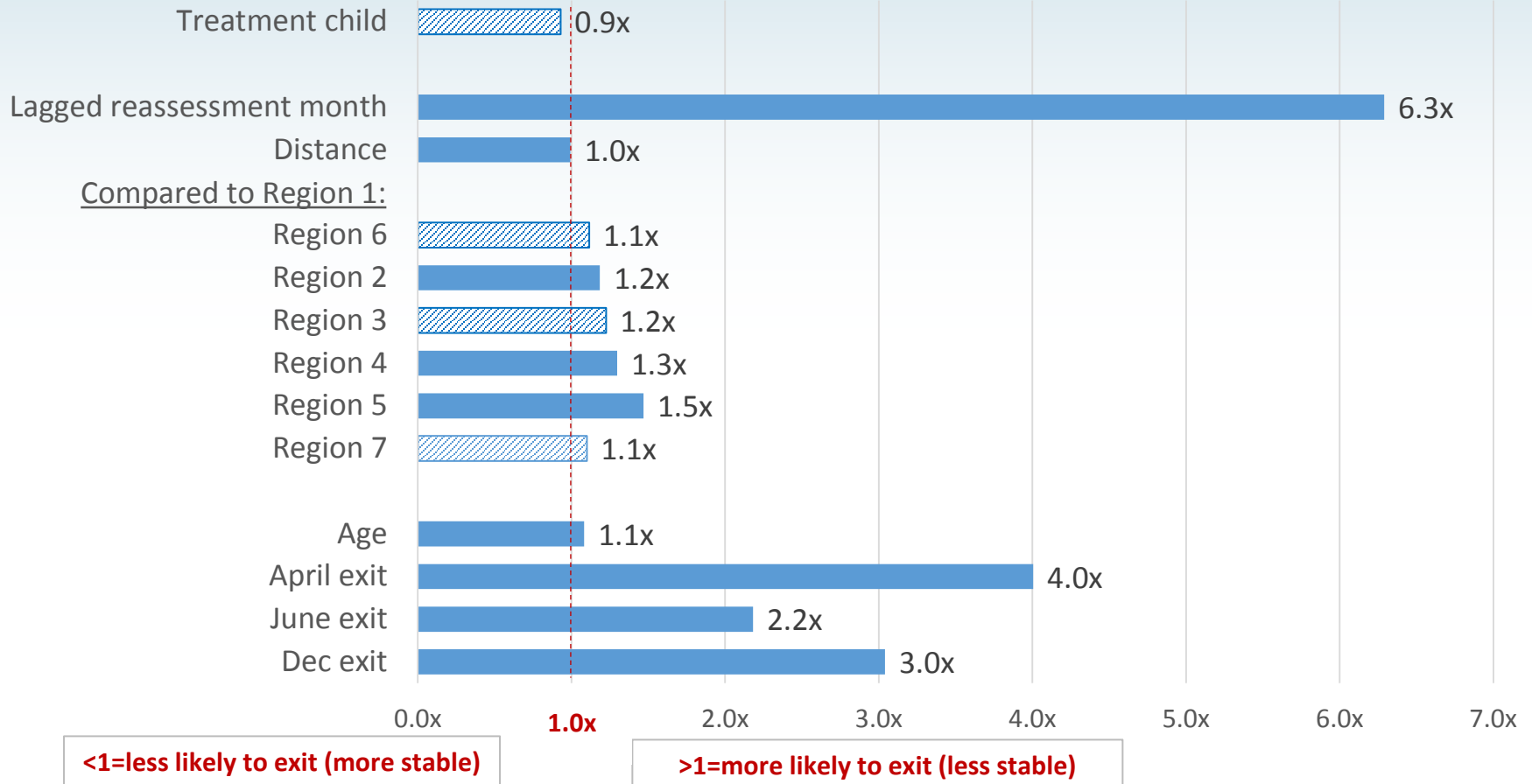


Observation period=24 months

Notes: Data for children in study sample (n=2,834; n=674 for children 5 and under), which includes income-eligible voucher children with new subsidy receipt spell starting in 2012 (excludes DTA, i.e. TANF, cases). Percentages after region names represent % of the study sample in each region.

(Selected) Impact model results

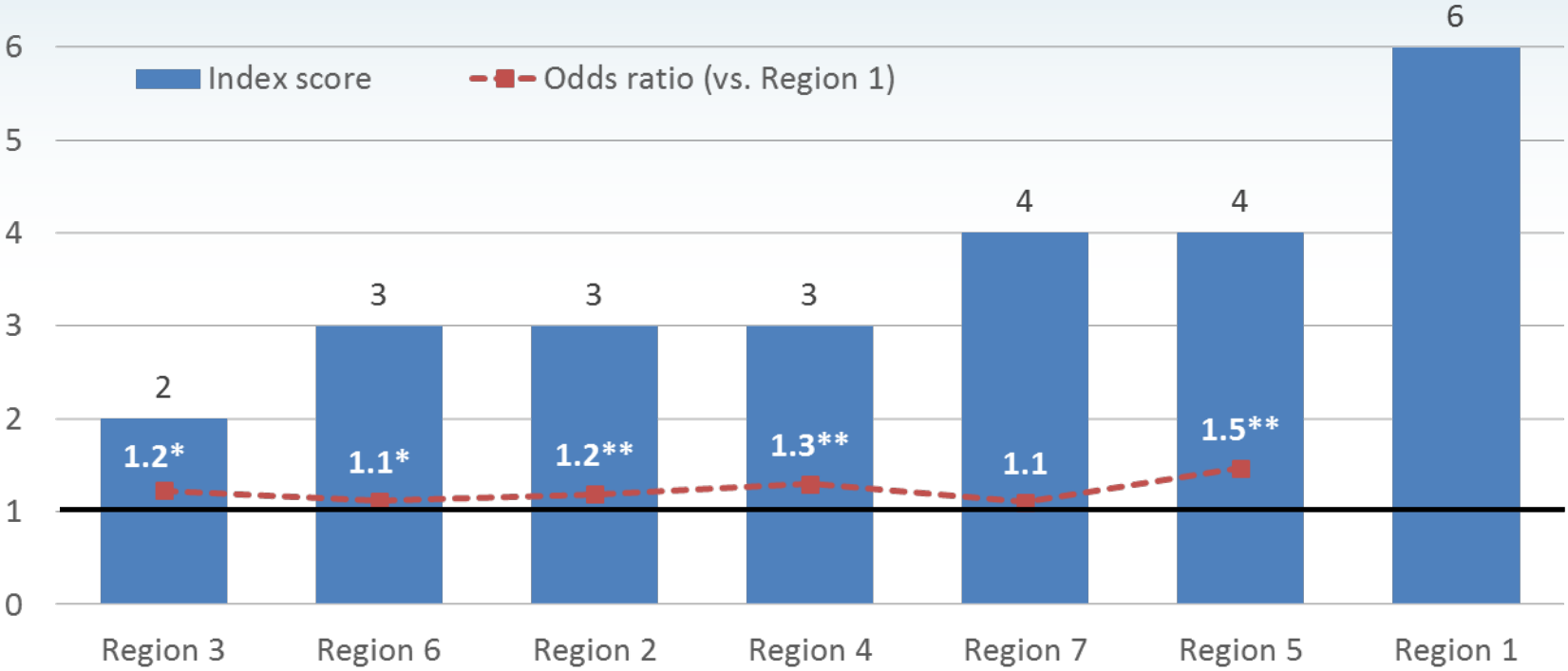
Likelihood of subsidy exit (odds ratios)



N=2,834. Solid blue bars represent statistically significant results, $p < 0.05$. Additional significant covariates ($p < 0.05$) not shown: subsidy amount, work hours, service code (special needs). Additional non-significant covariates ($p > 0.05$): Race, number of children in care, provider type, provider structure, service code (post transitional, other), family income, father in house, July/August/Sept exit. FULL MODEL RESULTS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

CCR&R “family-friendliness” and regional stability patterns

CCR&R family-friendliness index score vs. odds ratio

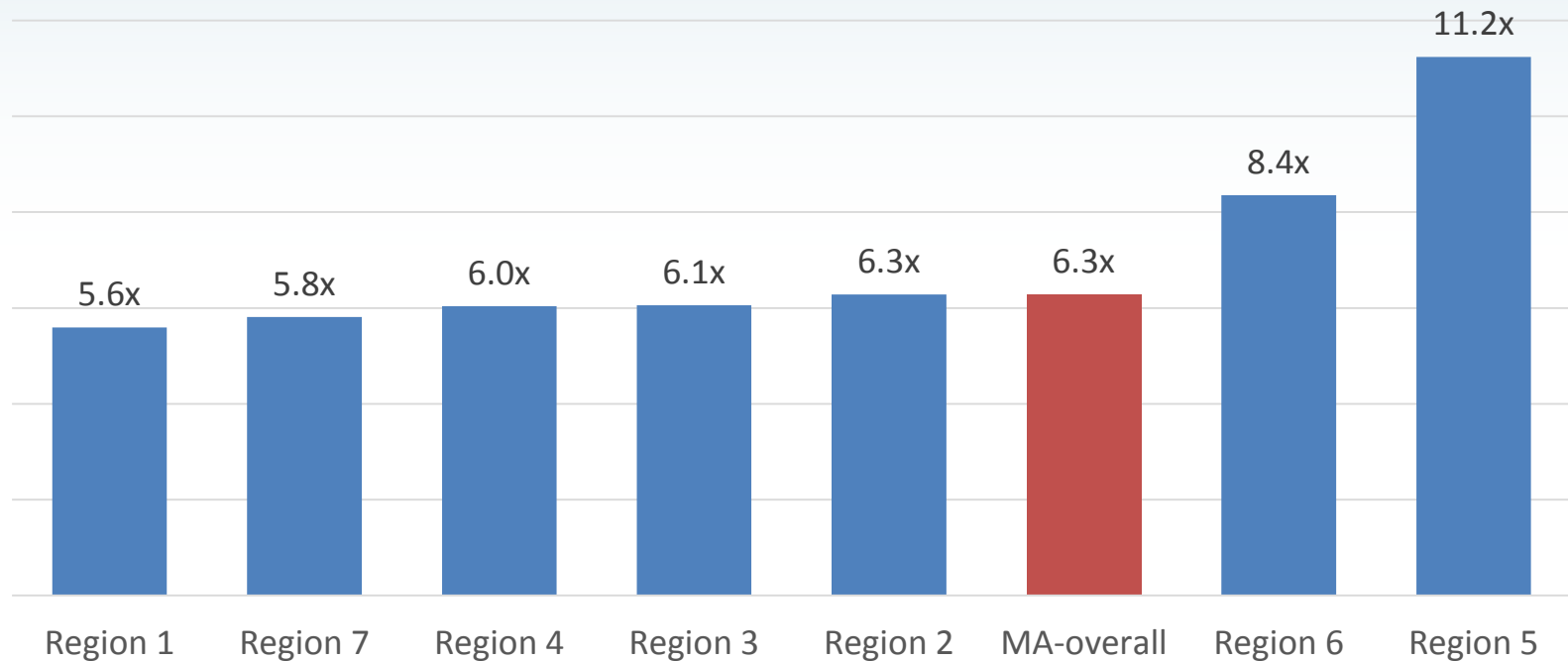


Children in the region with the highest “family friendliness” rating demonstrate greatest stability of subsidy receipt

N=2,834. **p<0.05; *p<=0.10

Odds of exit in lagged reassessment month, by CCR&R region

Odds ratios on lagged one-month reassessment month variable



The odds of leaving subsidies in lagged reassessment month (i.e. month immediately after end of 12 month reassessment period, or month 13) varies by region

All results shown are statistically significant, $p < 0.05$.

Summary of results

- Administrative factors are the strongest predictors of subsidy exits and are high across regions
 - But results do suggest that some regions may be better than others
- Results suggest that even in a state with many of the key CCDF provisions in place, local administrative factors may play a role in “moving the needle” on stability
- Next steps:
 - Assess impacts using an expanded sample
 - Incorporate data from parent interviews

Implications for evaluating CCDF policy changes

- When studying statewide impacts of policy changes, important to include several regions/counties
- Local variation in practices and lack of consistent local performance metrics are challenges in local implementation research
- Local implementation studies are key to understanding local variation in impacts (and statewide effects too)

THANK YOU

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