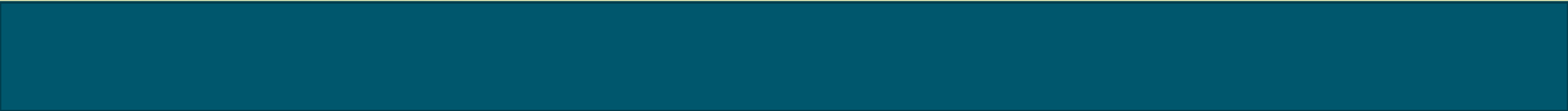


# Wisconsin's Child Care Crisis

JODI WIDUCH & AUDRA WIESER



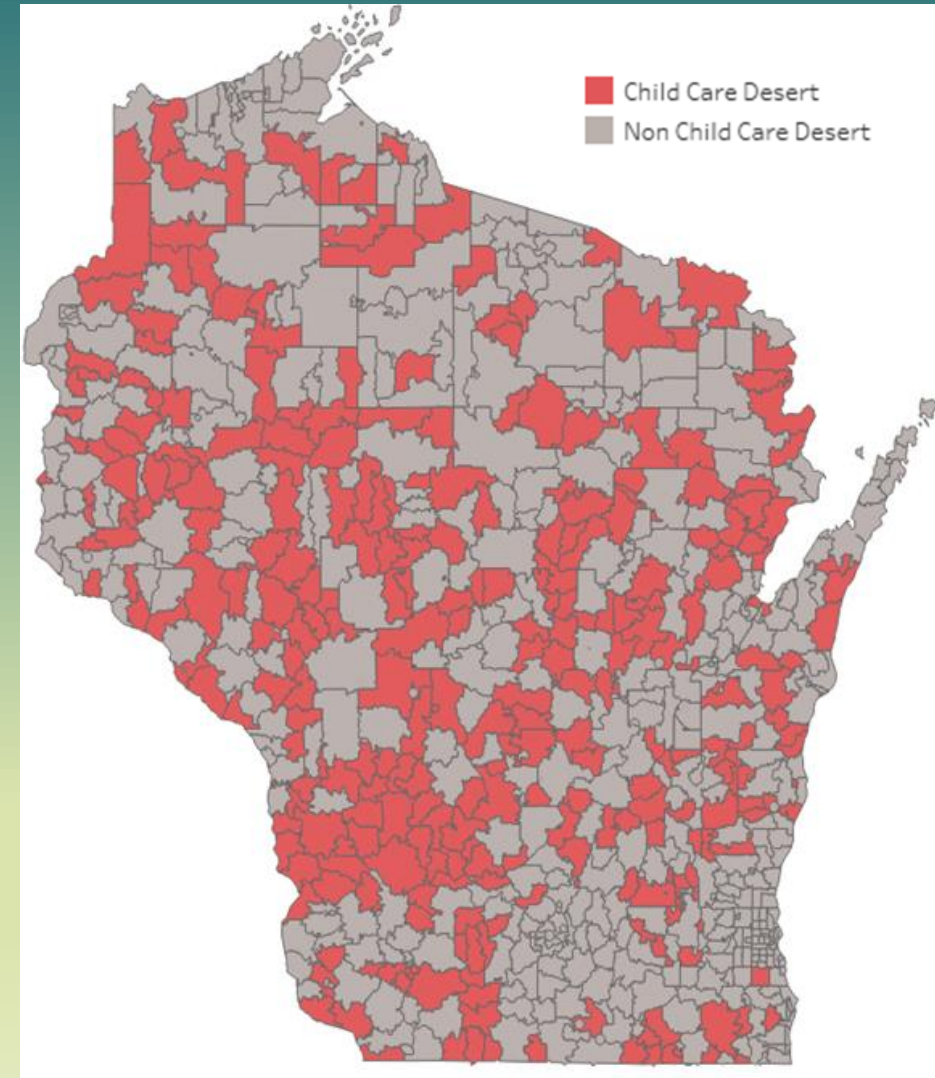
# How many of you...

- Are a parent who's struggled to find child care?
- Have been impacted as an employer?
- Have been impacted as a grandparent?

# Access to Child Care in Wisconsin

Of Wisconsin's 774 zip codes, 293 (38%) are considered child care deserts.

*The Center for American Progress 2016 study defines a child care desert as a ZIP code with at least 30 children under the age of 5 and more than three times as many children under age 5 as there are spaces in centers.*



Map courtesy of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

# How does Wisconsin compare?

State	% of Population Living in a Child Care Desert
Wisconsin	54%
Minnesota	26%
Iowa	23%
Illinois	58%

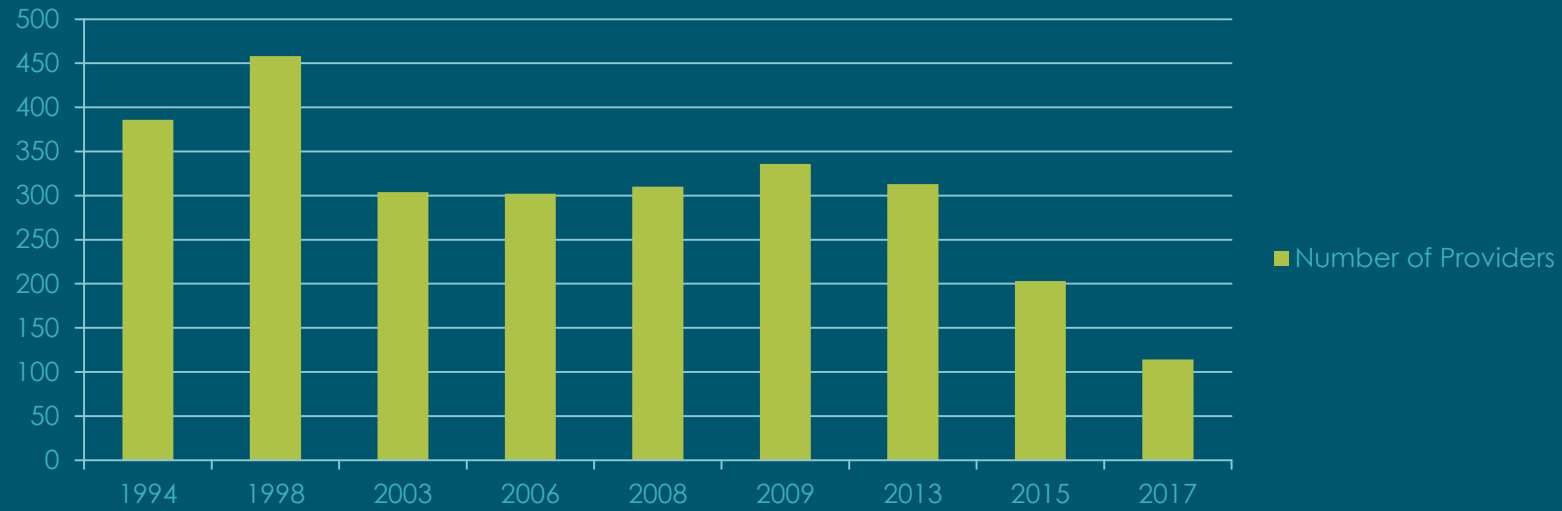
2017 study by the [Center for American Progress](#)

# La Crosse County Regulated Providers (serving children under age 5)

- ▶ 85 Total Sites
  - ▶ 35 Group Centers
  - ▶ 29 Licensed Family
  - ▶ 21 Certified Family
- ▶ Capacity for 2669 Children under age 5
- ▶ Approximately 6148 Children Under 5
- ▶ 56% of La Crosse County is a child care desert
- ▶ \*102 sites including School Age (Head Start and Preschool not included)



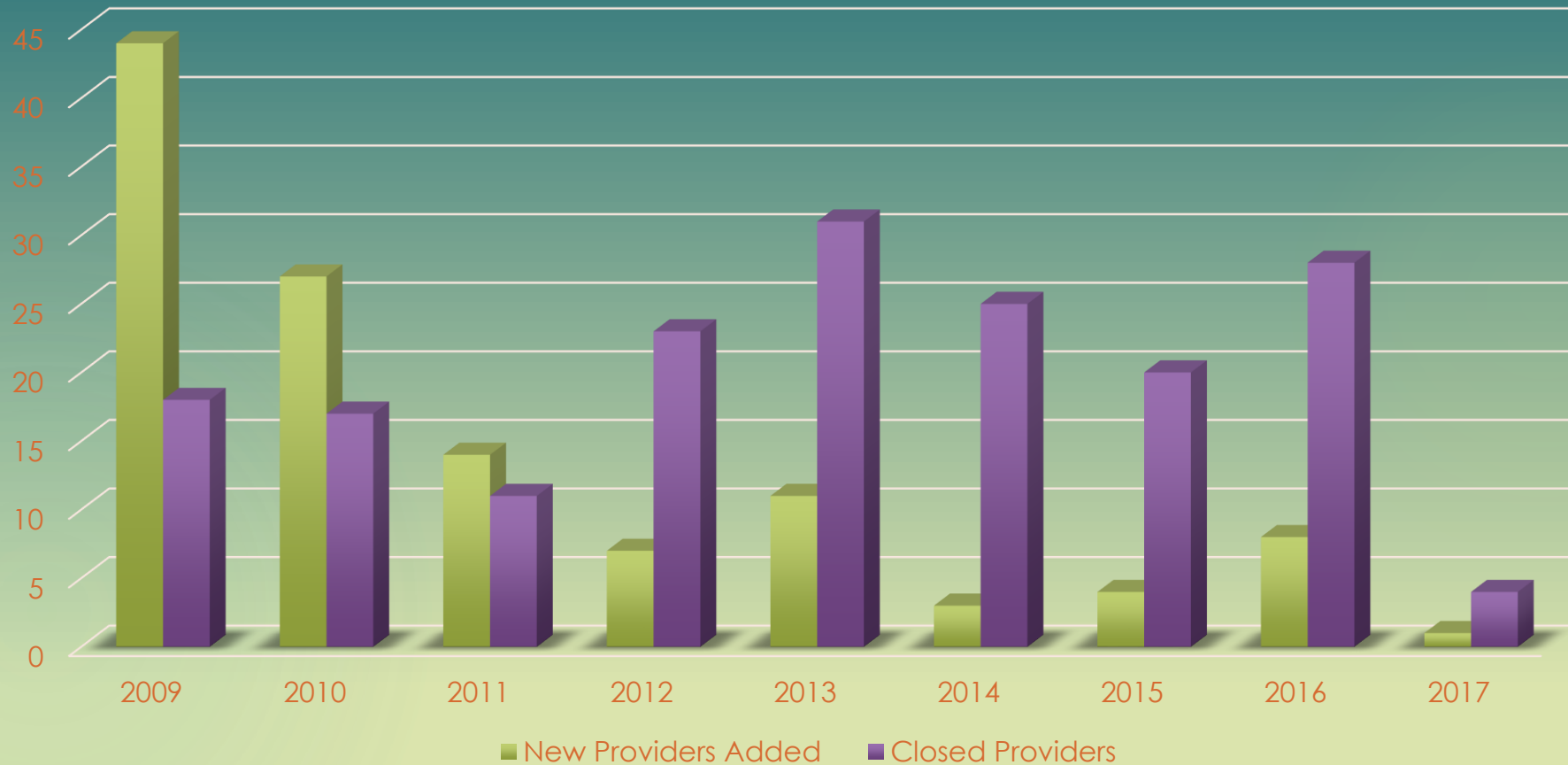
## La Crosse County Child Care Trends 1994-2017



### Quality and Regulatory Changes

- 2007 Grow In Quality Pilot Project Initiated
- 2009 Wisconsin Act 28 passed which includes a directive for the creation of a child care quality rating system  
Car Alarms required for vehicles seating 6 or more
- 2010 Contract issued to YoungStar Consortium
- 2011 YoungStar Implementation Begins
- 2012 Tiered Reimbursement goes into effect; School Age providers required to participate
- 2013 Tiered Reimbursement for 5 star providers increased to 25%  
Announcement of requirement of FBI Fingerprint Background Checks
- 2014 Day Camps required to enroll
- 2017 Child Care Development Fund will require changes to the initial training requirements for Certified Providers and put a 6 month limit on Provisional Certification

# Number of New Providers Compared To Number Who Left Regulated Care



# Where have they gone?

- ▶ Left field for higher paying position with benefits
- ▶ Providing unregulated care
- ▶ Retirements without new providers entering field
- ▶ Health Concerns
- ▶ Moved out of area
- ▶ Regulatory compliance challenges
- ▶ Experienced child care directors leaving field



# Why not just open more child care?

Income is Capped

Adult/child ratios are regulated

Increasing rates

Rigorous Regulations

No matching support

Environment requirements

Disadvantaged Competition for Employees

4 yr degree candidates

Average starting wage \$10.00 to \$12.20 per hour

Perceived professionalism of Child Care positions

=> “Broken Economics”



# Let's not forget quality...

- Brains are literally shaped by early childhood experiences
- Studies have shown early childhood investments save money later
- 30% of child care in La Crosse County is considered high quality
- 71% of current 17-24 year olds are ineligible to serve in the military

“Having worked at a daycare, I see lots of licensing rules being violated. I saw this in all the daycares that I toured.”

# What do local families say?

- ▶ Many parents utilize unregulated care to meet some or all of their child care needs
- ▶ Most parents prefer child care close to where they live
- ▶ The cost of care is a burden or even prohibitive for families (La Crosse -1 in 5 pay at least 25% of income)
- ▶ Parents are often less than completely satisfied with the care options available
- ▶ Parents prefer regulated care but were forced to unregulated
- ▶ 38% of employees indicate productivity was impacted by child care issues

# How does this affect employers?

## Productivity

- 38% of La Crosse area employees indicate productivity was impacted by child care issues
- 25% spend 2-5+ hours per month of paid work time dealing with child care issues

## Recruitment & Retention

- Nationally 23% of parents report decreasing hours or opting out of workforce due to child care issues

“Some days, child care is not available and we scramble to find a sitter. Both my spouse and I have missed work due to child care issues.”

“Wife can't work full time. We couldn't afford it.”

# What's being done in our area?

- Momentum!
- Increased recognition of child care as economic necessity and community asset
- Continued work with 7 Rivers Alliance (Surveys and Summit)
- Committees formed for La Crosse City/County Task Force
- Meeting with DCF Leadership May 2019
- Child Care Business Model report by end of 2019
  - Public/Private partnerships; Ratio Differences; Shared Services
- TTA Funding; Diversity Proposal; Certification incentive; Infants at Work pilot
- No Small Matter documentary and panel discussions

# How can I get involved?

- Consider ways to support employees' child care needs
  - Connect them to CCR&R and Wisconsin Shares
  - Consider flexible scheduling
  - Infants at Work Program
  - Flexible Spending Accounts for Dependent Care
  - Child Care Stipends or Subsidies as a benefit
- No Small Matter Screening – 8/28 6 PM at Misty's
- Consider joining a work group through City/County (Contact Caroline Gregerson at City of La Crosse)
- Other ideas?





# Questions?

Thank you!!