

# **Increases of Hepatitis C in Suburban and Rural Youth: What is the appropriate public health response?**

**January 29, 2014**

**Rachel McLean, MPH, CA Department of Public Health**

**Caycee Cullen, VIP Study, UC San Francisco**

**Dan Church, MPH, MA Department of Health**

# Overview

1. Hepatitis C virus (HCV) transmission and epidemiology (Rachel McLean, CA DPH)
2. HCV Infection in adolescents and young adults: The second wave epidemic (Dan Church, MA DPH)
3. Effective HCV prevention messages for the field (Caycee Cullen, UCSF VIP Study)
4. Discussion/Q&A (All)
5. Resources (Rachel McLean, CA DPH)

# **Hepatitis C Transmission and Epidemiology– A Quick Review**

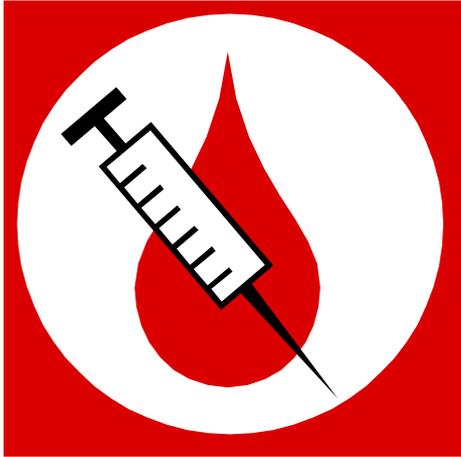
**Rachel McLean, MPH**

**Viral Hepatitis Prevention Coordinator/**

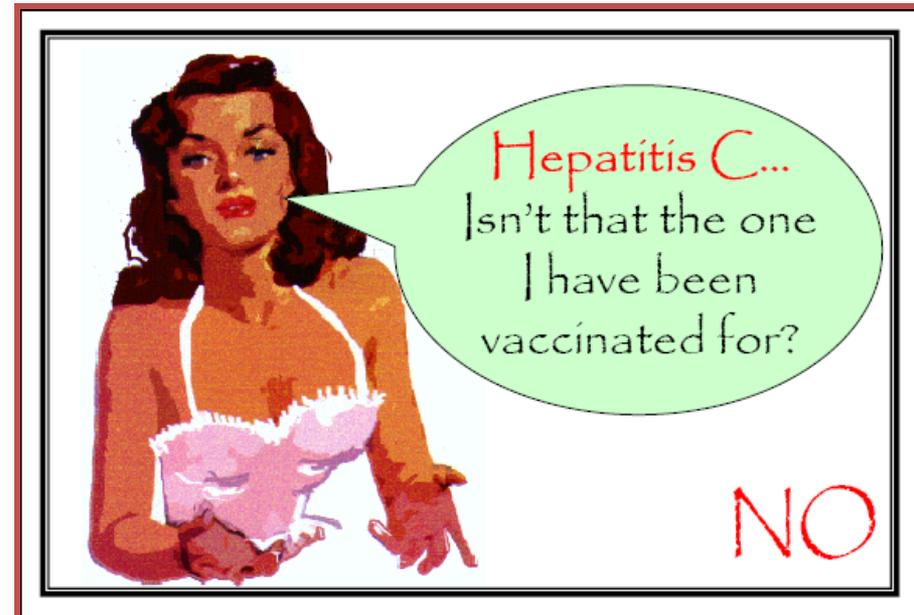
**STD Health Care Policy Analyst**

**CA Department of Public Health**

# Hepatitis C Virus: What Is It?



- Bloodborne virus that enters the body and replicates in the liver
- Can live outside the body
- No vaccine (yet)



# Transmission routes

Primarily:

- receiving a blood transfusion before 1992 or
- EVER sharing injection drug use equipment

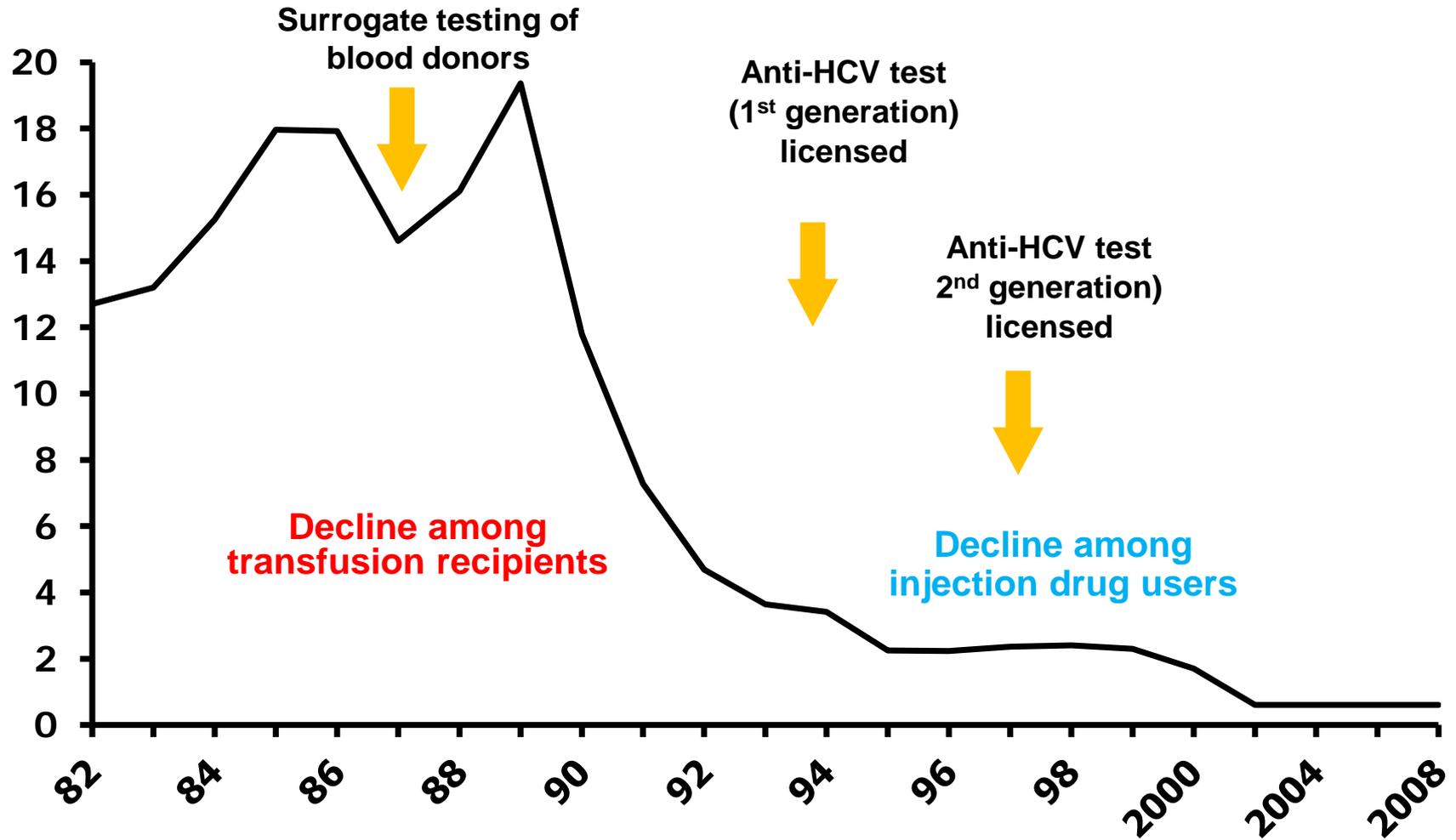
Other, less common routes:

- health care-related exposures (accidental needlesticks, dialysis, etc.)
- household contact (sharing razors, tattoo equipment in prisons)
- very limited sexual transmission; risk increased by HIV coinfection

# HCV Transmission Risk – It's All About the Blood



# Incidence of Acute HCV in the United States, 1982-2008



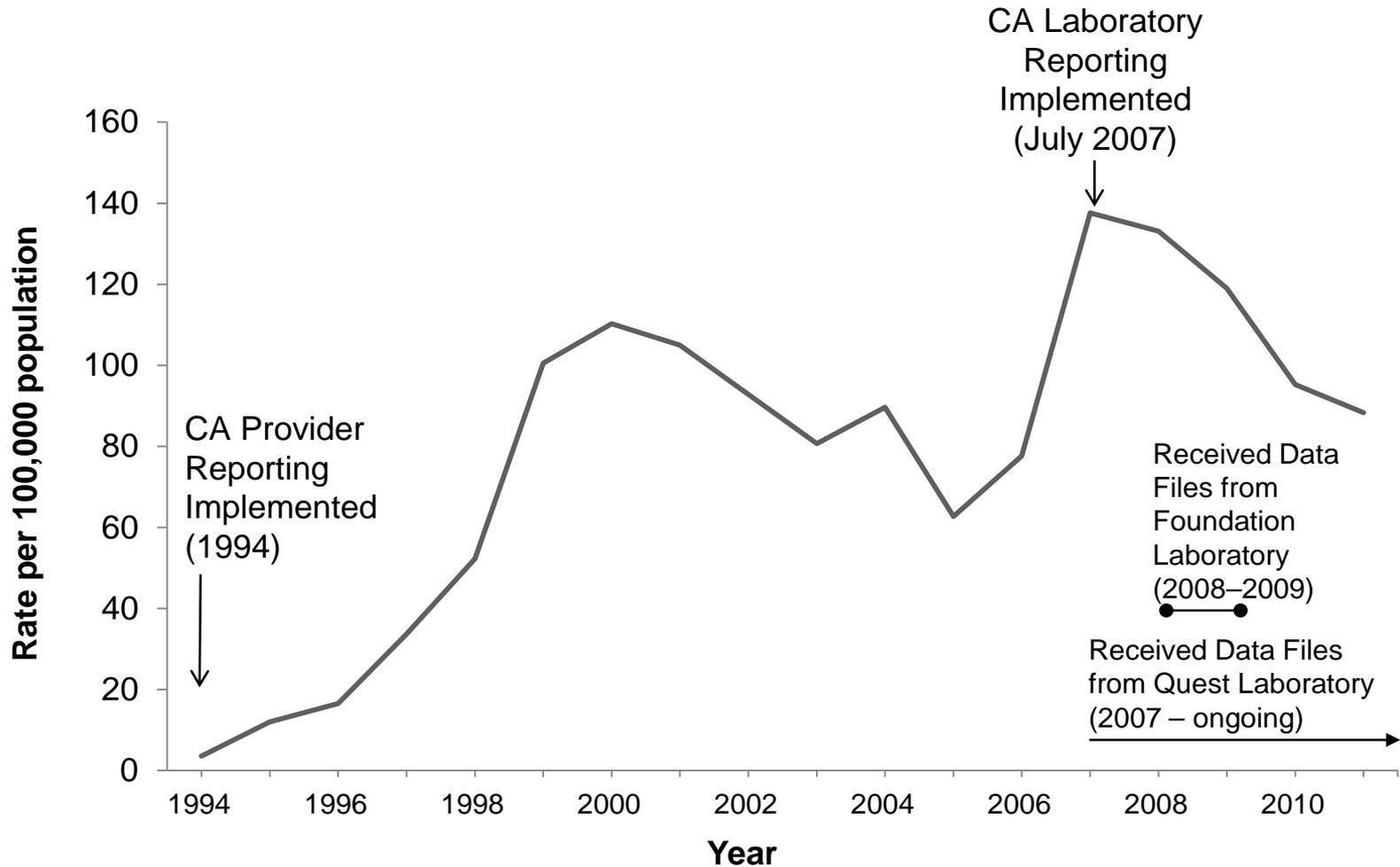
Decline among transfusion recipients

Decline among injection drug users

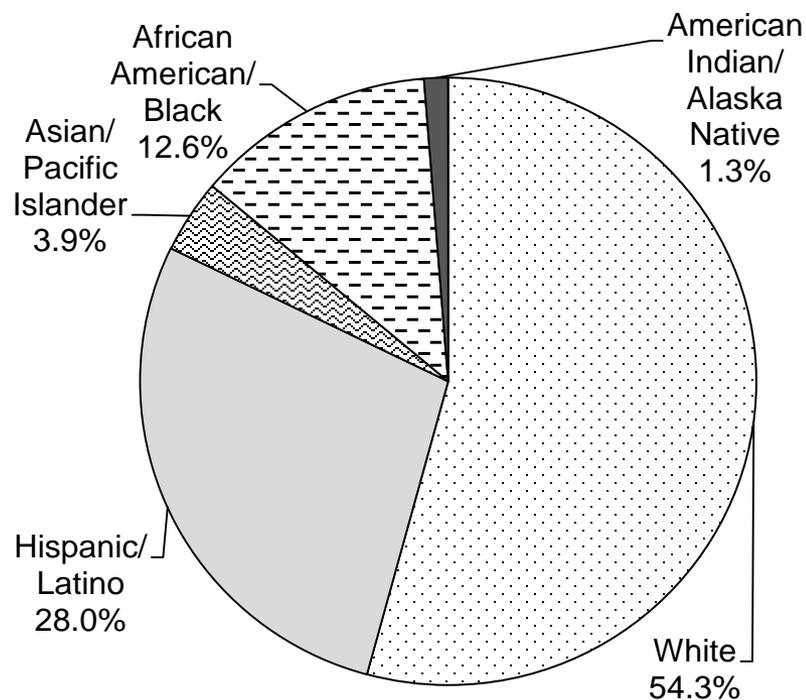
# Chronic HCV Prevalence, Costs, and Consequences

- 3-4 million people with HCV infection in U.S.
  - 3 out of 4 were born during 1945-1965
  - Most are unaware of their infection
  - CDC recommends HCV testing for baby boomers and for persons who have ever injected drugs\*
- HCV causes liver disease, liver cancer, death
  - Leading cause of liver transplants
  - Annual HCV deaths now outnumber HIV deaths
  - \$2.3 B in HCV hospitalization charges, CA, 2010

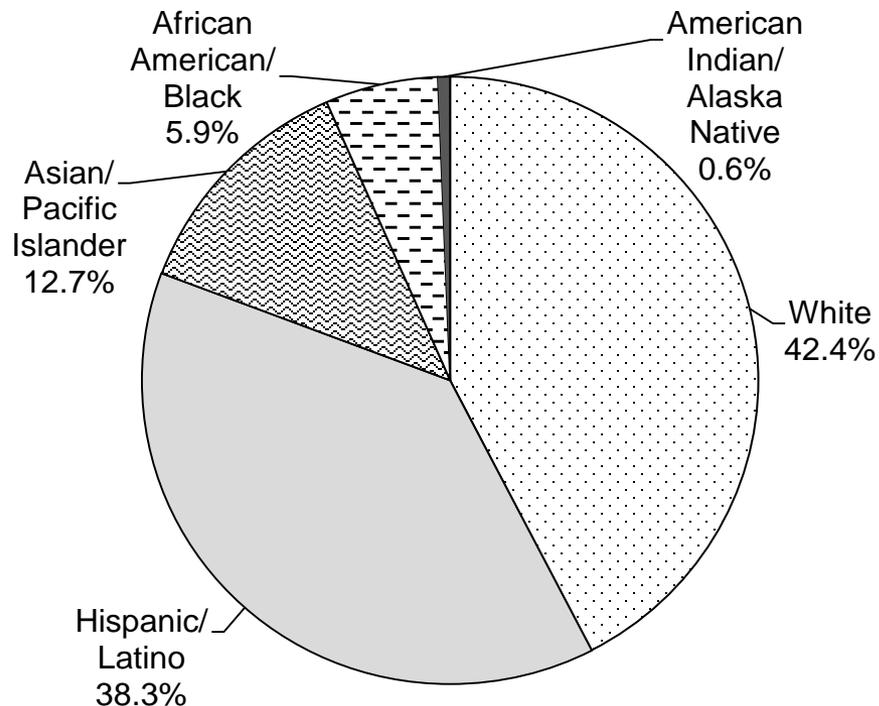
# Chronic Hepatitis C – Rates of Newly Reported Cases, California, 1994-2011



# Chronic Hepatitis C – Percent of Newly Reported Cases for Which Race/Ethnicity is Known, by Race/Ethnicity compared with the General Population, California, 2011



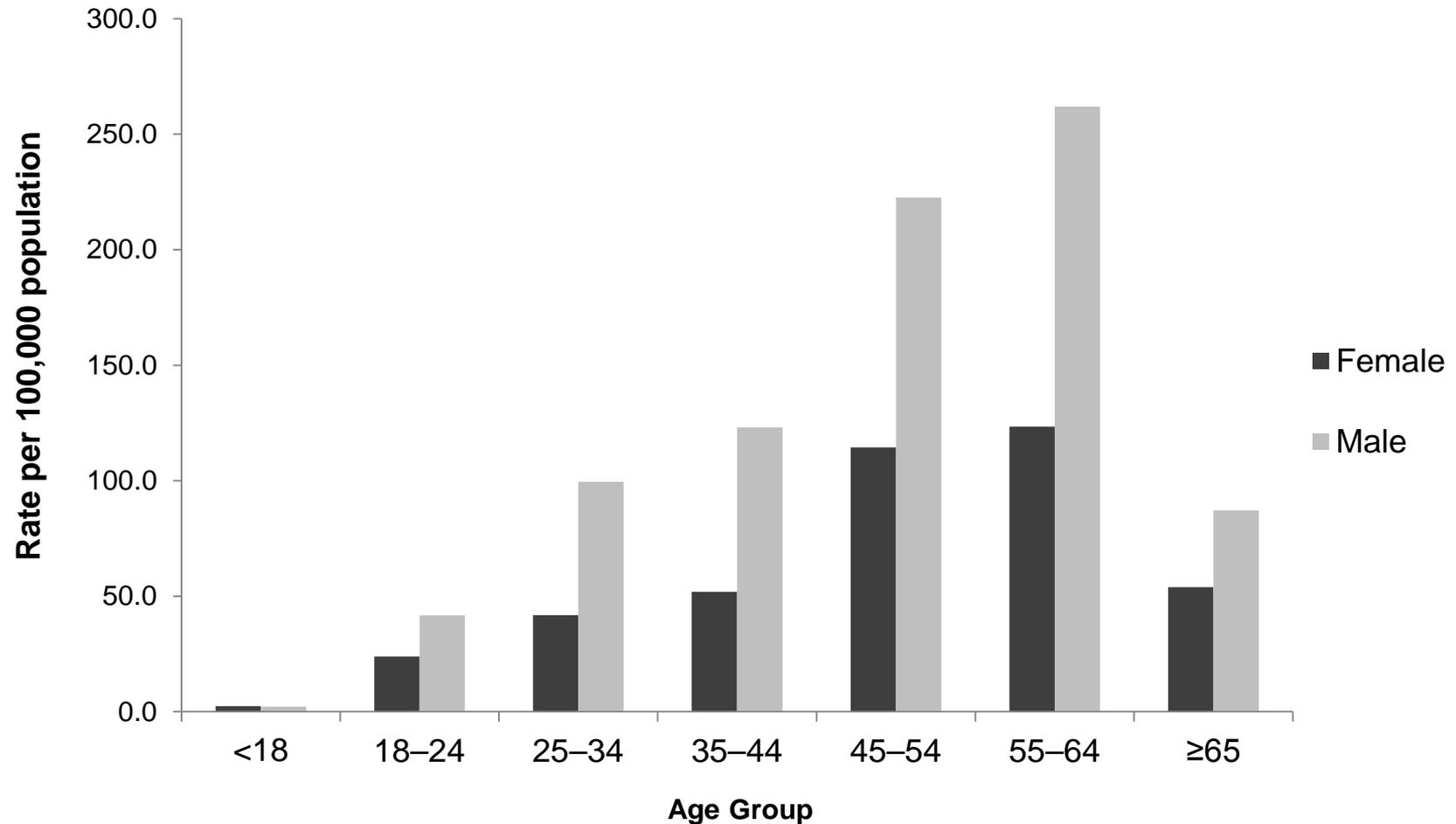
**Newly Reported Cases of Chronic Hepatitis C**



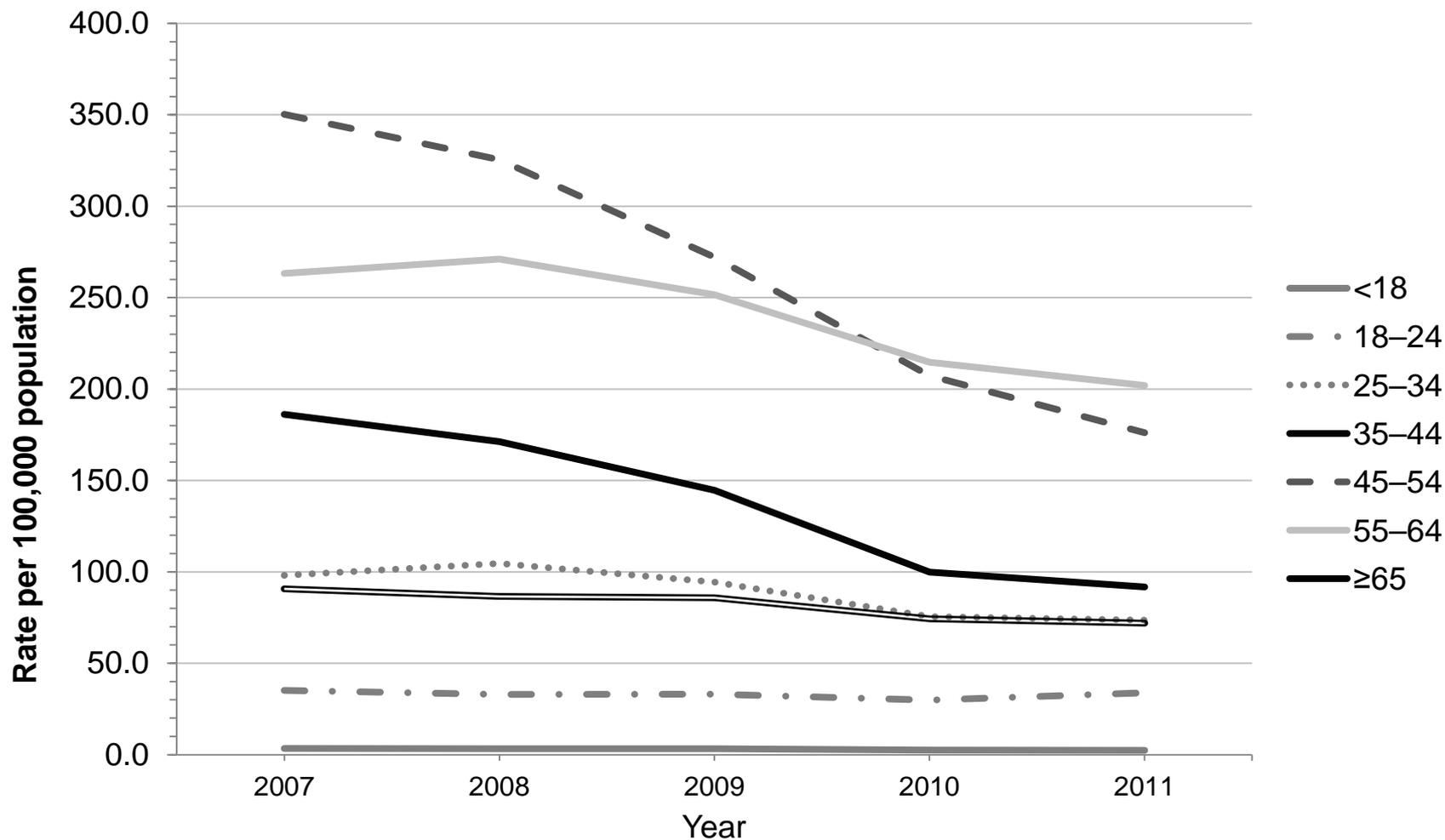
**General Population of California**

Note: The percentages shown are among the cases with known race/ethnicity. Race/ethnicity information was missing for more than two-thirds (67.9 to 81.8 percent) of cases from 2007-2011.

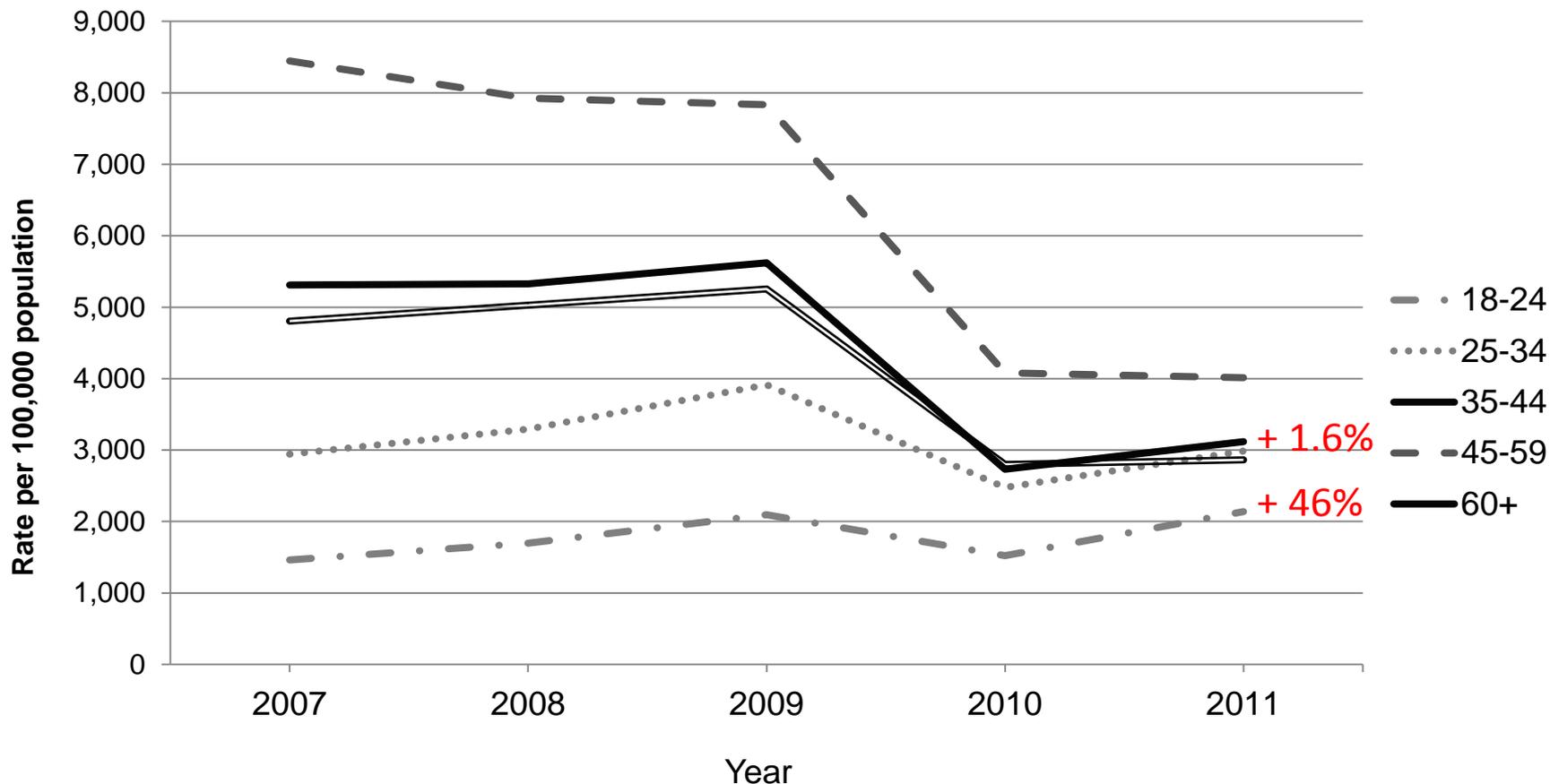
# Chronic Hepatitis C – Cases and Rates of Newly Reported Cases (per 100,000) by Age and Gender, California, 2011



# Chronic Hepatitis C – Rates of Newly Reported Cases by Age, California, 2007-2011

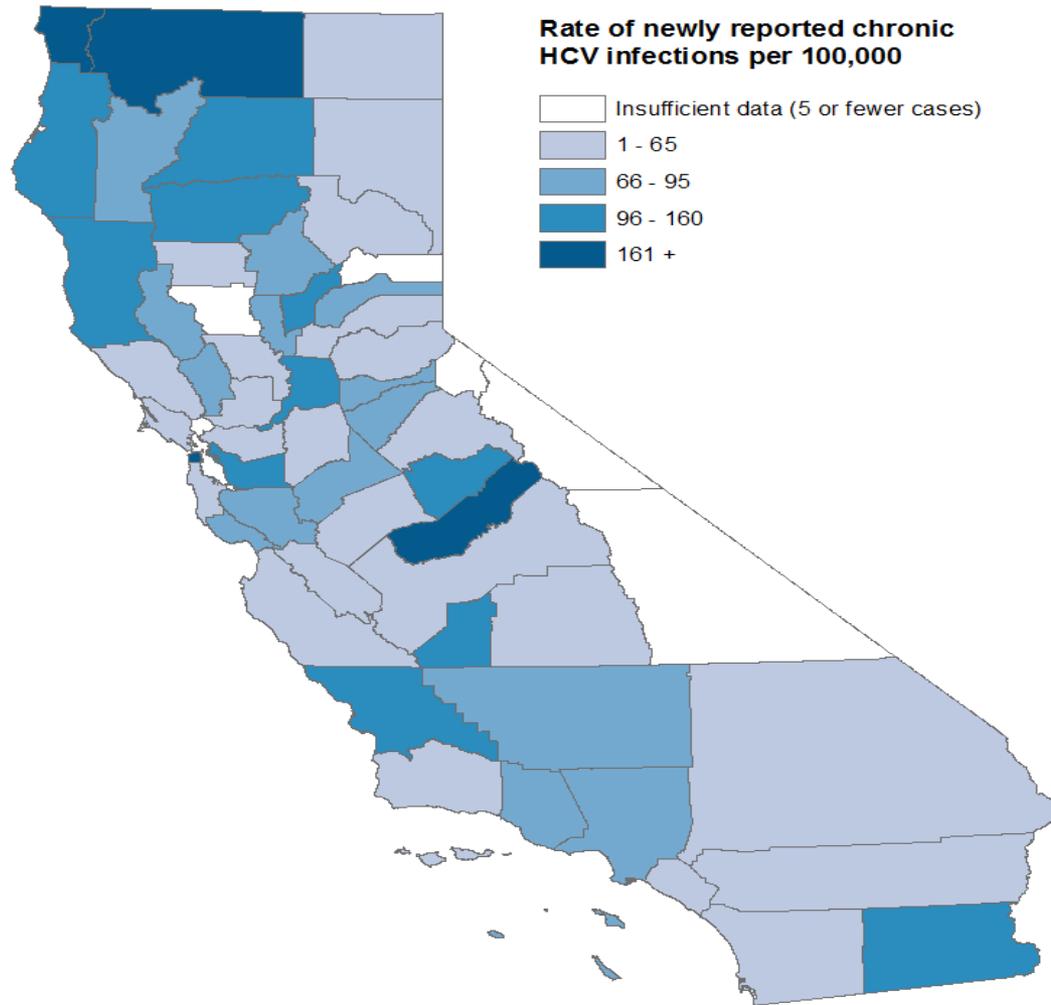


# Chronic Hepatitis C – Rates of Newly Reported Cases in State Prisons by Age\*, California, 2007-2011



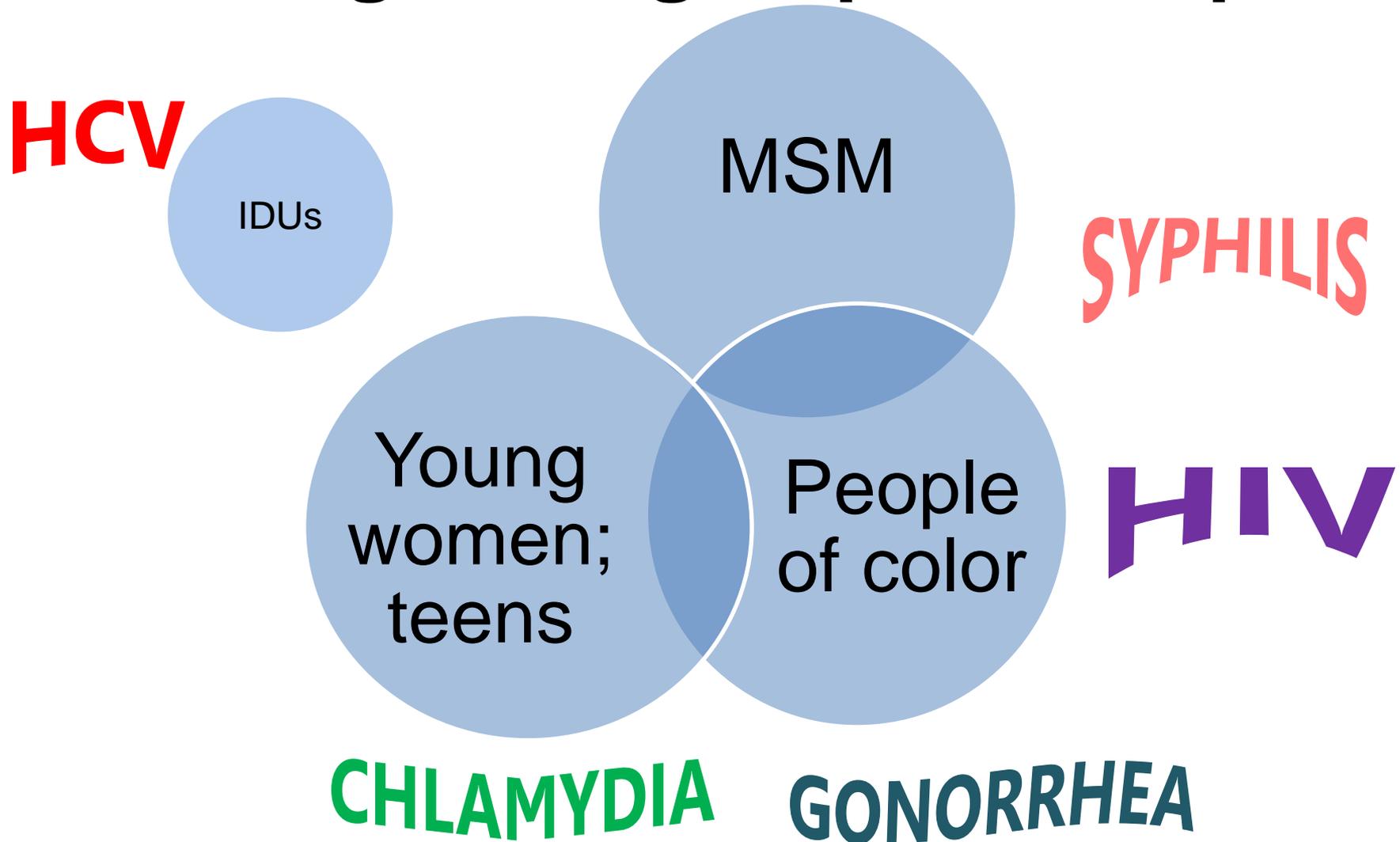
\* State prison census data use different age group categories than the California Department of Finance categories used in this slide set.

# Chronic Hepatitis C, Rates of Newly Reported Cases (per 100,000) by County, Excluding Cases in State Prisons, California, 2011

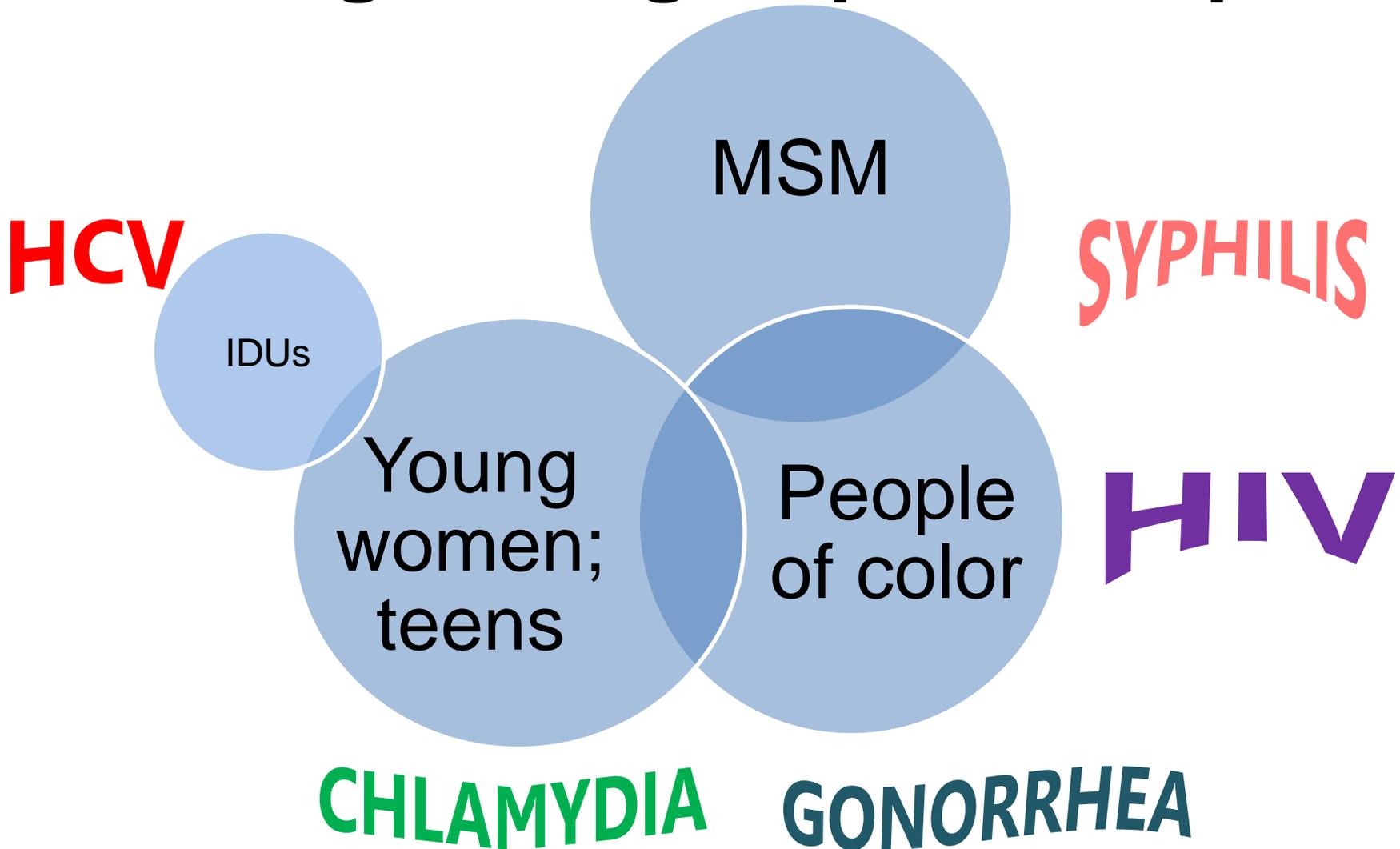


- Notes:
- Rates were not calculated for the following local health jurisdictions, which reported 5 or fewer cases in 2011: Alpine (0), Colusa (2), Inyo (2), Mono (1), and Sierra (1) counties.
  - State prison cases were removed from local health jurisdiction totals and attributed to the state prison system as a whole.

# HIV, STDs, and HCV – Do the high risk groups overlap?



# HIV, STDs, and HCV – Do the high risk groups overlap?



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**Police: When prescription pill abuse becomes too expensive, users switch to cheaper heroin**



**Video:** After months of undercover investigations, Prince William county police officers execute 'Operation Blue Dragon' targeting suspected prescription pill and heroin dealers. The Fold's Gabe Silverman takes you behind the scenes as officers arrest dozens of suspects.

By Tom Jackman, Published: November 13 E-mail the writer

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**Heroin replacing pain pills as drug of choice in some parts of Kentucky**

BY BETH MUSGRAVE  
bmusgrave@herald-leader.com January 25, 2013



Heroin has rapidly replaced prescription pain pills as the drug of choice in much of Northern Kentucky and Louisville, raising fears that a heroin scourge will soon ravage the state.

In Northern Kentucky, police are finding people passed out in cars at gas stations with needles poking from their arms. In Louisville, initial statistics suggest more than 50 people died of heroin overdoses in 2012.

"We've even found parents in the front seat with kids in the back seat in car seats, wondering what was going on," said Covington police Chief Spike Jones.

Police in Louisville and the Northern Kentucky suburbs of Cincinnati said they began seeing more heroin as early as four years ago, but it was in the last 12 months that heroin surpassed pain pills as the preferred drug of addicts.



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**Aggressive pill enforcement pushes young suburbanites to heroin**

By Phil Trexler  
Beacon Journal staff writer

Published: January 6, 2014 - 10:55 PM



Akron Firefighter Captain Joseph Nlatko with the drug Narcan, used to revive heroin overdose victims. In Akron, paramedics have used Narcan 45 times for 250 overdose cases. The drug reverses the effects of heroin and "brings people back from the dead." (Phil Masturzo/Akron Beacon Journal)

- RELATED STORIES**
- Where to find help
  - Akron-area heroin deaths soar, suburbs and rural areas fall victim
  - Ex-users help heroin addicts out of death spiral

In the '60s, the focus was on LSD, marijuana, turning on and tuning out.

In the '70s, it was cocaine at the discothèque. The '80s meant crack cocaine abuse, that urban nemesis that led Nancy Reagan to plead: "Say no to drugs."

The '90s saw a rise in methamphetamine and homemade potions. Americans learned the drug could be made with similar household products.

As the century turned, opiate use, such as prescription painkillers and heroin, came into vogue. Abuse rose, and the government and media are reacting.

To many, the opiate/heroin plague is simply a shift in America's attention on drug abuse.

Efforts to stamp out pill abuse simply led to the increased popularity of heroin, a dark drug that has been lurking in the background during all these decades.

Heroin access allures poor

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**Heroin and pill abuse stir a battle cry in Vermont**

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Updated: 7:53 a.m. Monday, May 9, 2011 | Posted: 8:53 p.m. Sunday, May 8, 2011

**Pain pill addicts use heroin when money gets tight, drug study says**

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By Katie Wedell  
Staff Writer

The over prescription of opioid medications — like OxyContin, Vicodin, Percocet and methadone — is not only leading to increased overdose rates on those drugs, but may be leading to an increase in heroin use, according to a annual statewide study of drug trends.

The Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring Network's annual report, which compiles information from eight regions in the state, shows that heroin use has increased in the past six months in Dayton and statewide. The report attributes the spike in part to the wide availability of opioid prescriptions, which often lead to addiction and then heroin use when pills become too expensive.

The report, distributed by the Ohio Department of Drug and Alcohol Addiction Services, covers June 2010 through January 2011. The findings are based on interviews with treatment providers, active and recovering drug users, and law enforcement officials as well as crime lab data and coroners' reports.

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Posted: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 4:25 pm | Associated Press |

MONTPELIER, VT (AP) — Behind the facade of pristine ski slopes, craft beer, quaint village greens and one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, Vermont is grappling with painkiller and heroin abuse, a challenge leaders say is fueling crime and wrecking lives and families disproportionately in this tiny state.

Nearly every day, police across Vermont respond to burglaries or armed robberies investigators believe are prompted by the unslakable hunger for money to feed heroin or pill habits. In many cases, law enforcement officials say, what began as the abuse of prescription drugs has turned into heroin use because it's less expensive and, more recently, easier to get.

# **Hepatitis C Virus Infection in Adolescents and Young Adults: The Second Wave Epidemic**

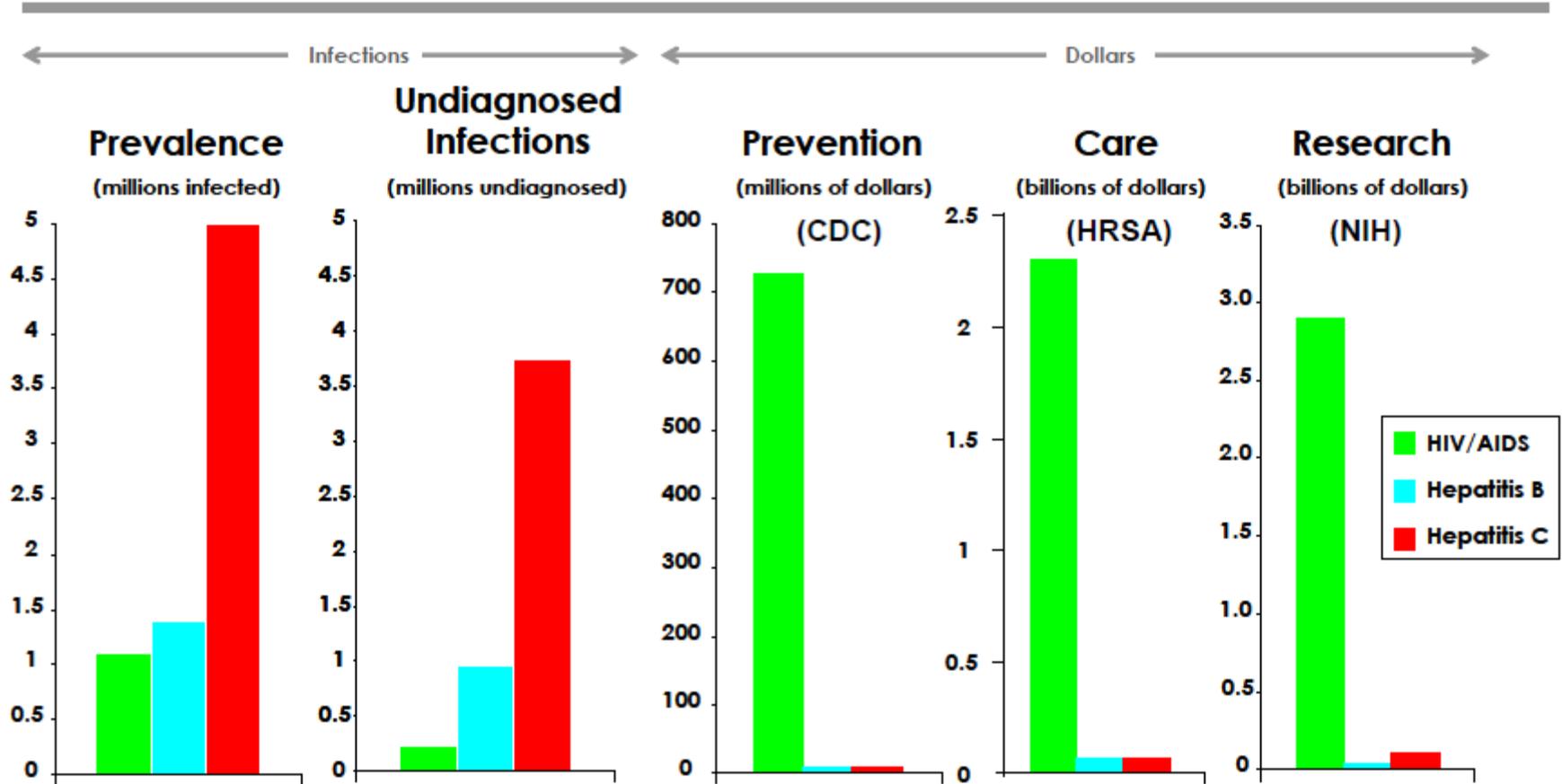
Dan Church, MPH

Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
Bureau of Infectious Disease

# Goals of presentation

- Discuss what we know about HCV infection among young IDU
  - What is the scope of the problem?
  - What are the challenges?
- Discuss what needs to be done to address the issue

# U.S. Response to HIV and Viral Hepatitis Epidemics



Edlin, 2011

# HCV and injection drug users

- Up to 10 million HCV+ IDU globally<sup>1</sup>
- IDU accounts for 68% of all new HCV infections in the US<sup>2</sup>
- $\leq 32\%$  IDUs infected with HCV within 1 year of first injecting; 53% within 5 years
  - Has this changed?

# How reliable are current estimates of HCV incidence?

- CDC estimates only 17,000 new HCV infections annually

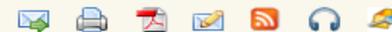
Number of New HCV Infections	Population	Number of Cases reported to public health	Source
56	IDUs	0	Hagan et al. 2002
188	Hospital	1	Kim et al. 2013

# HCV surveillance at the state and local levels

- Limited capacity to monitor cases of HCV infection at local and state level
  - High volume
  - Wide range of available infrastructure
  - Most jurisdictions have no funding to support efforts
- Even so....

## Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)

[MMWR](#)



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# Notes from the Field: Risk Factors for Hepatitis C Virus Infections Among Young Adults --- Massachusetts, 2010

*Weekly*

October 28, 2011 / 60(42);1457-1458

During 2002--2009, rates of newly diagnosed hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection increased from 65 to 113 cases per 100,000 population among persons aged 15--24 years in Massachusetts ([1](#)). Accordingly, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) and CDC interviewed persons aged 18--24 years with HCV infection reported to MDPH during July 1--December 31, 2010, to elicit detailed information regarding demographic, clinical, and risk characteristics.

Of the 394 patients indentified, 193 (49%) had a valid telephone number; of those 193 patients, 101 (52%) did not answer after three call attempts, 19 (10%) were either in a drug treatment facility or incarcerated, 19 (10%) refused to participate, 31 (16%) agreed to participate but did not come on the scheduled interview day, and 23 (12%) completed the interview. An additional five persons aged 18--24 years with diagnosed HCV infection during July 1--December 31, 2010, but not reported to MDPH, were interviewed in a correctional facility, where they were incarcerated.

Mean age of the 28 respondents was 21.9 years (range: 19--24 years); 15 (54%) patients were female, 23 (82%) were white, nine (32%) did not finish high school, nine (32%) were unemployed, and 25 (89%) had health insurance. Twenty-six (93%) had used drugs; of these, 100% reported marijuana use, with a median age of initiation of 13 years (range: 9--17 years); 92% reported opioid analgesic abuse (oxycodone and/or Oxycontin), with a median age of initiation of 17 years (range: 12--23 years); and 89% reported heroin use, with a median age of initiation of 18 years (range: 14--21 years). Nearly all respondents (95%) used opioid analgesics before switching to heroin. During the preceding 6 months, the most frequently injected drugs among respondents were heroin (50%) and opioid analgesics (30%).

Medical record reviews showed that five respondents had visited emergency departments on multiple occasions complaining of pain and were prescribed opioid analgesics. Most respondents (70%) reported sharing syringes and drug paraphernalia within networks of injection drug users that included persons with known HCV infection (43%). One in four respondents reported never being informed of their HCV infection by their health-care provider, and 11 (39%) were tested for HCV in a drug treatment program or during incarceration.

The findings in this report are subject to at least three limitations. First, only a small number of persons agreed to be interviewed, which limits the ability to generalize these findings. The low response rate might be attributed, in part, to the characteristics of the targeted population (young injection drug users) coupled with lack of provision of incentives. Second, comparison of the demographic and clinical characteristics of persons who were interviewed with those who could not be interviewed was not possible because information was lacking for nearly 60% of the 394 hepatitis C cases reported during July 1--December 31, 2010. However, of those cases with available information, 229 (58%) occurred among females and approximately 80% occurred among whites, which is consistent with the demographic characteristics of interviewed respondents. Finally, persons with HCV infection who were in drug rehabilitation centers could not be interviewed because of federal confidentiality regulations specific to these centers.

Consistent with other studies, most respondents reported opioid analgesics abuse before switching to heroin (which is less expensive) ([2,3](#)). Health-care providers should routinely ask about prescription and illicit drug use and screen all persons with risk factors for HCV infection, regardless of age ([4](#)). They also need to be aware of warning signs of prescription opioid and drug abuse, such as frequent complaints of pain and request for opioids. Drug treatment

# **Increasing reports of injection-related HCV infections among persons under 30**

## **Massachusetts**

**MMWR, Hepatitis C Virus Infection Among Adolescents and Young Adults – Massachusetts, 2002—2009, May 6, 2011 / 60(17);537-541**

## **Upstate New York**

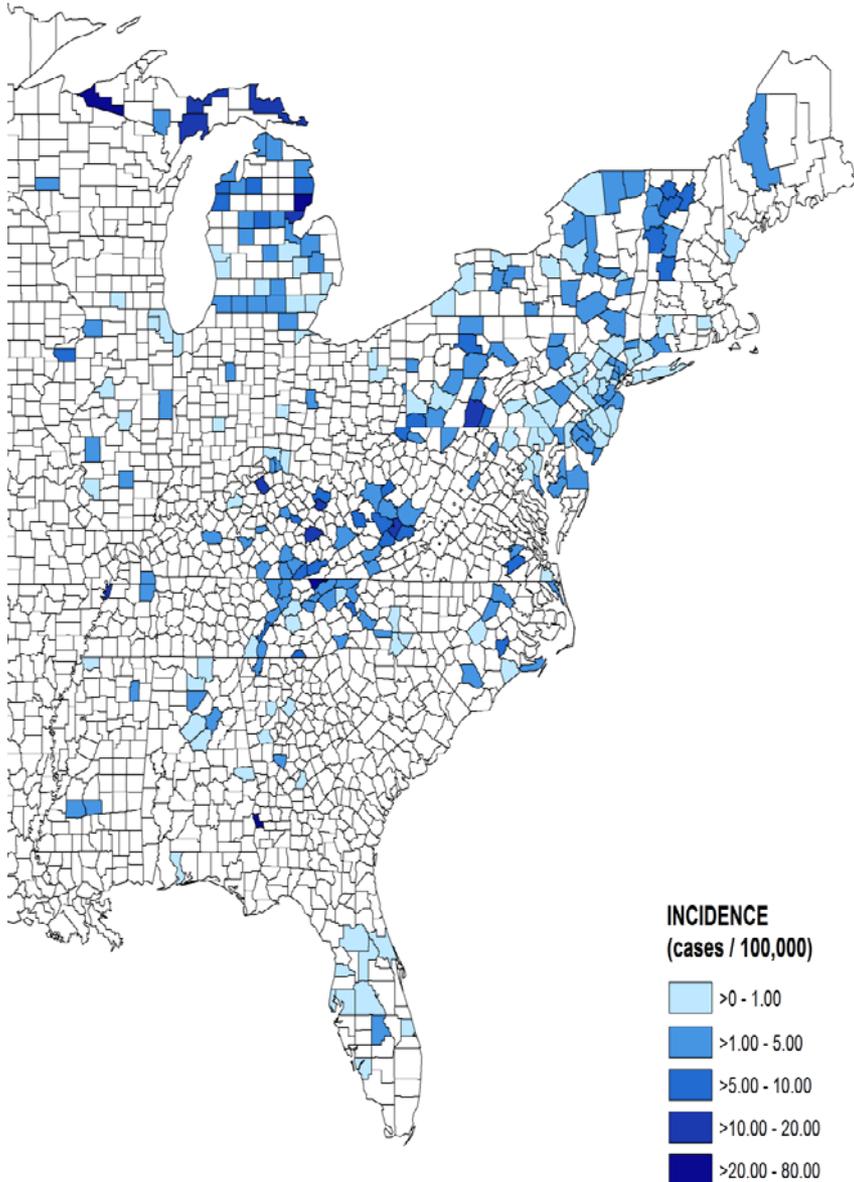
**MMWR. Use of enhanced surveillance for hepatitis C virus infection to detect a cluster among young injection drug users---New York, November 2004—April 2007. 2008; 57:517—21.**

## **Wisconsin**

**MMWR, Notes from the Field: Hepatitis C Virus Infections among young adults – rural Wisconsin, 2010, May 18, 2012 / 61(19);358-358**

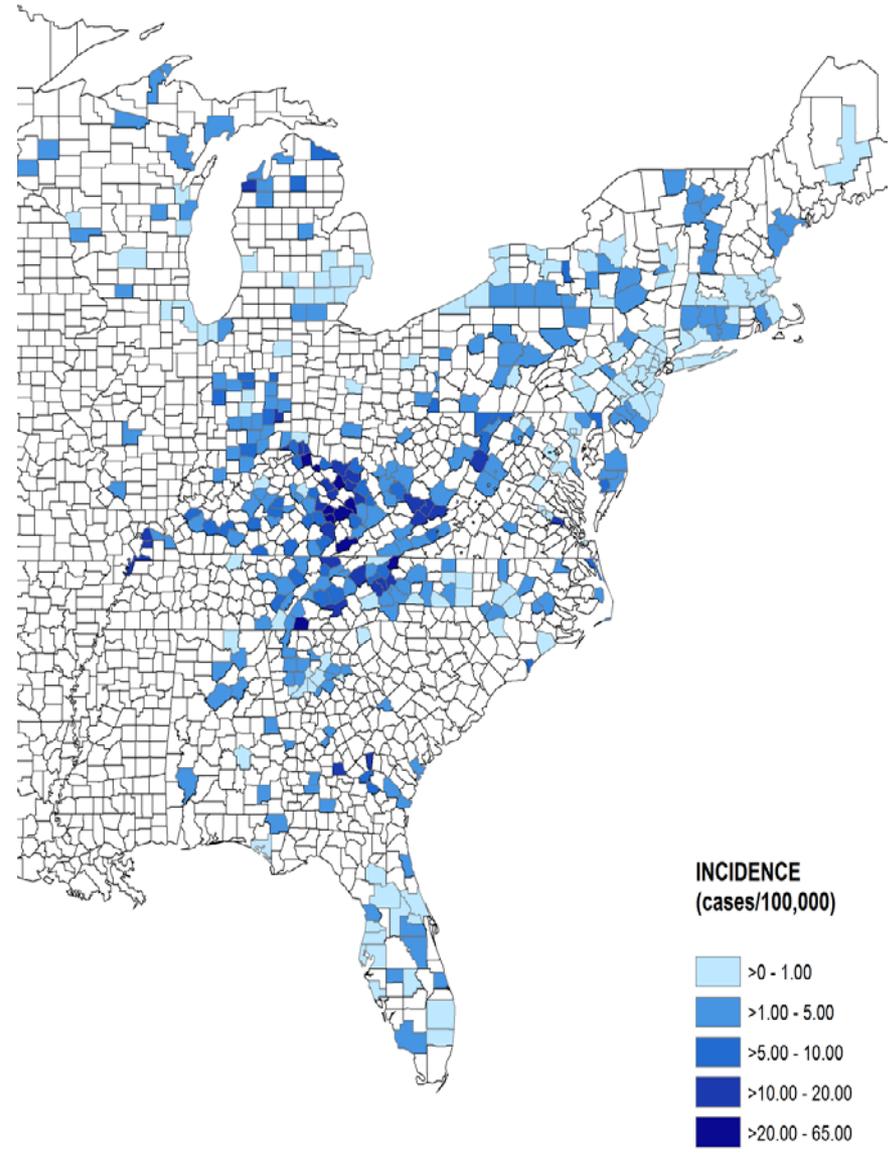
**Additional states reporting increases in HCV cases: Alabama, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Montana, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Tennessee, Washington and West Virginia**

### HCV Incidence by Eastern US County, 2006



Source: National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System

### HCV Incidence by Eastern US County, 2011

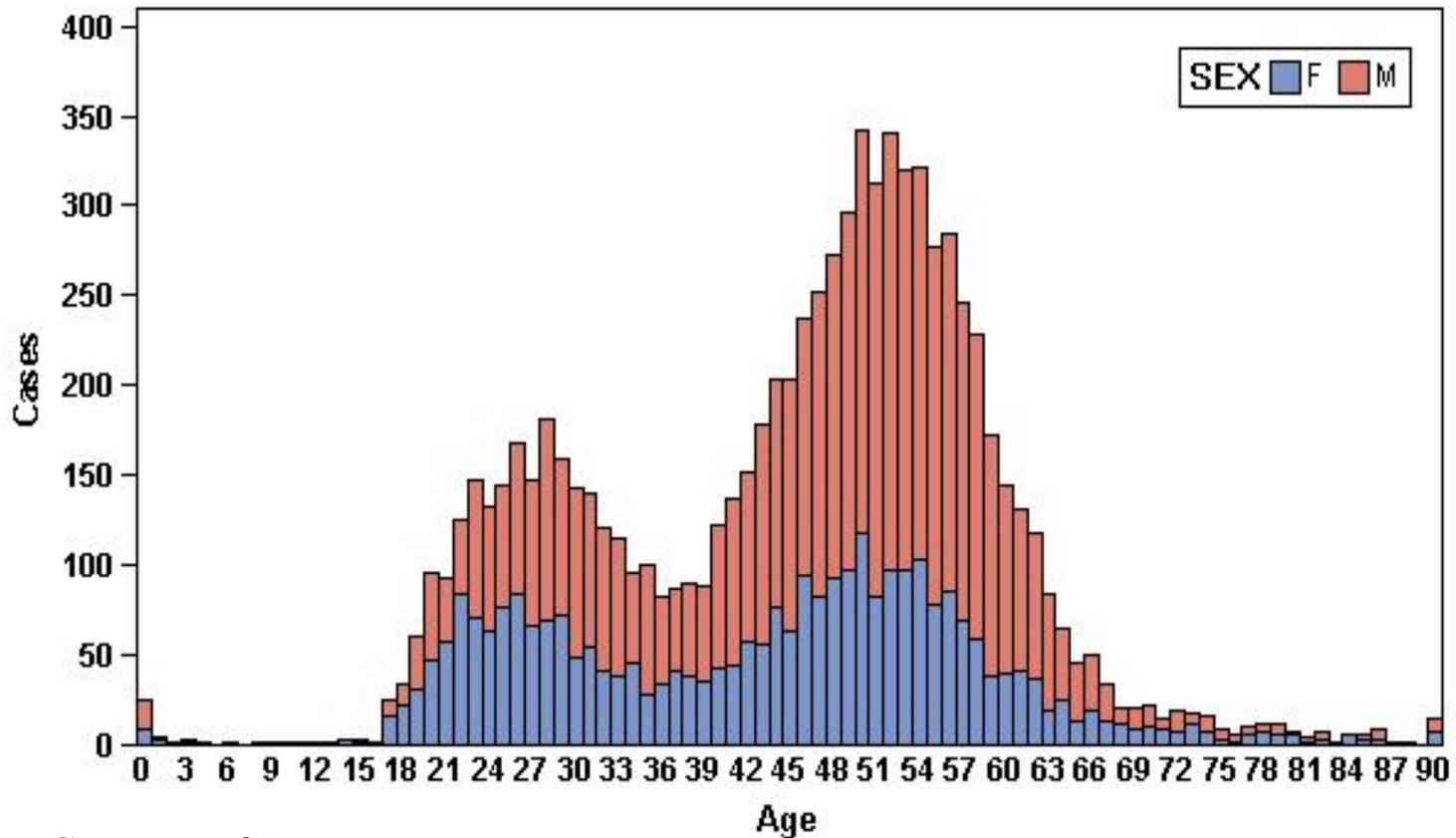


Source: National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System

# Why is this happening now?

- Oral prescription opioid sales quadrupled between 2000 and 2010<sup>1</sup>
- Increased access appears to be impacting increase in heroin injection<sup>2</sup>
  - Variability in drug use patterns between jurisdictions, urban v. suburban v. rural
- Reduced focus on prevention of bloodborne diseases among IDU nationally, due in part to decreased HIV rates

# Hepatitis Case Counts by Age Pennsylvania, 2010



Courtesy of Jon  
Zibbell, CDC, 2013

# Reports of increasing HCV infections related to IDU among persons under 30 in New York State

1. Cluster identified in Buffalo suburbs in 2007 (MMWR 2008;57:517-21)
2. Rise in reported cases in town of Corinth, located in Saratoga county in Upstate NY
3. Most recently, reports in Cortland county, rural county outside of Syracuse, sparked initial investigation (n=11) and follow-up targeted survey

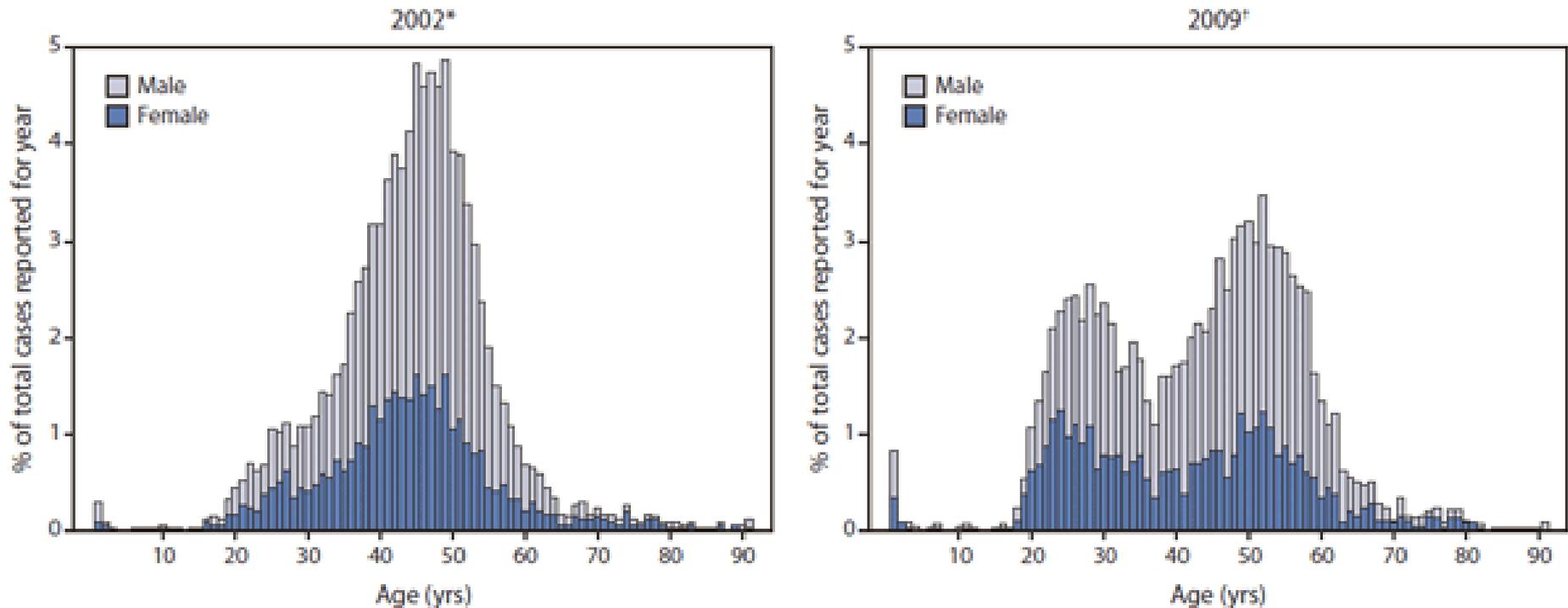


Courtesy of Jon Zibbell, CDC, 2013

# **HCV among youth in Massachusetts 2007-2012**

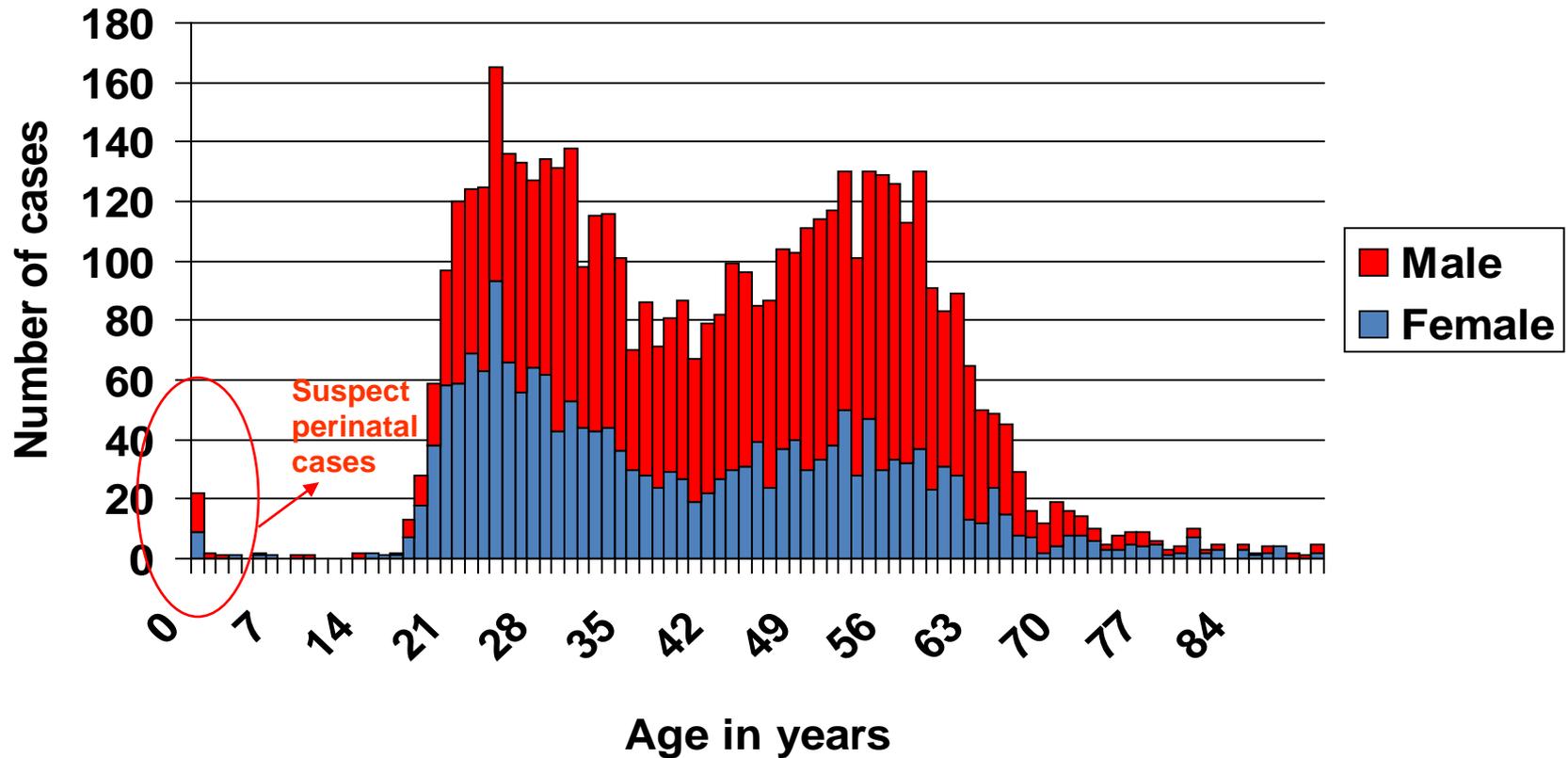
- Increase of newly diagnosed HCV infection noted among people 15-29 years of age
- Between 2002 and 2012, an increase of 68 to 156 cases per 100,000 population was reported in this age group
- Surveillance data suggest increase is due to youth injecting drugs (mostly heroin)

# MMWR: Age distribution of newly reported confirmed cases of hepatitis C virus infection --- Massachusetts, 2002 and 2009



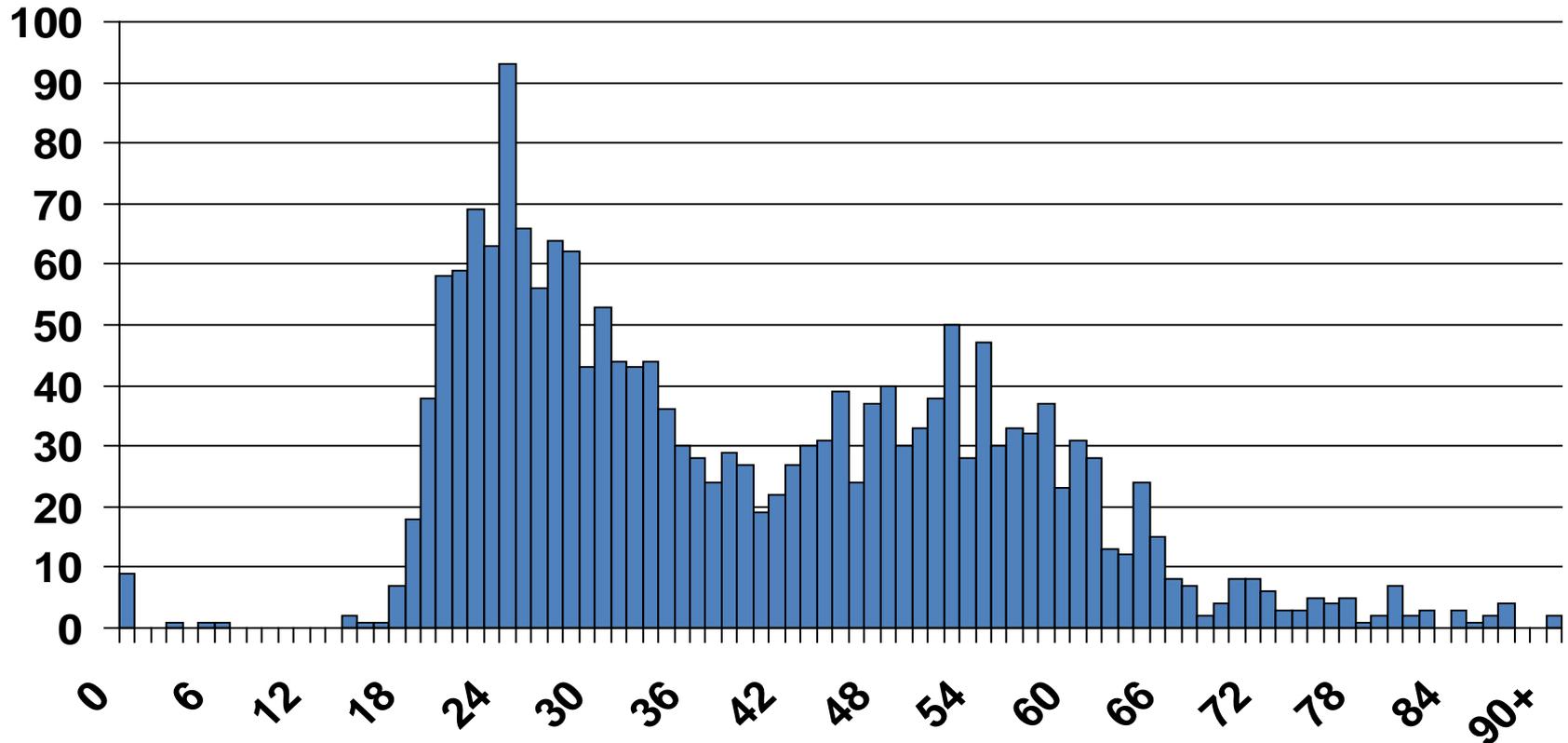
\* N = 6,281; excludes 35 cases with missing age or sex information.  
† N = 3,904; excludes 346 cases with missing age or sex information.

# Confirmed and probable reported HCV cases in Massachusetts, 2012



Data as of 13AUG2013 and subject to change

# Confirmed and probable reported female HCV cases in Massachusetts, 2012



Data as of 13AUG2013 and subject to change



# **Injection equipment sharing practices, MDPH enhanced surveillance, 2012**

Of 41 interviewed cases who reported ever IDU:

	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Ever used syringe previously used by another injector</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Ever divided up drugs using a needle (back loading)</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Ever used cooker, bottle cap, or spoon after someone else used it</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Ever used cotton after someone else used it</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Ever used rinse water after someone else used it</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Knew where they could access clean needles</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>76</b>

# What has MDPH done in response?

- Fully integrated HCV education, screening, testing services with all 34 HIV prevention/ screening programs
  - Testing programs now required to completed HCV case report form (including for rapid test)
- 5 needle exchange programs, pilot Narcan distribution, pharmacy access to sterile syringes
- Integration of HCV medical management into 5 HIV case management programs
- Education by MDPH staff and community partners
- Ongoing data collection and dissemination of findings

# Service delivery outcomes at prevention and screening programs: CY2012

- In FY2013, 69,114 HIV tests conducted (0.4%+)
  - 9,152 HCV tests conducted (7% antibody positive)
- Of HIV testing clients, 9,692 (14%) reported IDU
  - 1,356 (14% of all IDU seen) were tested for HCV
- Of clients tested for HCV:
  - 28% were between 13 – 24 years of age
  - 24% were Black, 30% Hispanic, and 42% White

# Other service delivery outcomes

- In FY2013, 1,744 (26%) of enrolled needle exchange program clients were ages 18-29
  - A total of 12,719 syringes were distributed
- More than 2,000 overdoses reversed with the Narcan pilot program
- Between 2010-2013, 3,055 clients received some HCV case management services, 7% reported as having started HCV treatment

# Challenges to HCV prevention among IDU

- Low awareness by public and providers (IOM, 2010)
- Stigma regarding drug use and addiction
- Variability in the epidemiology of addiction
  - Injection of prescription opioids v. heroin
- Limited distribution of sterile drug injection equipment
  - Currently, no federal funds can be spent on distribution of sterile syringes
  - Engagement of young people by syringe exchange programs?
- Public health response is greatly underfunded
  - Testing availability limited
  - Inconsistent national surveillance

# What is needed: multi-component prevention programs

- Distribution of sterile drug injection equipment\*
- Education (including peer-based)\*
  - Focus on harm-reduction principles
- Opioid replacement therapy\*
- Provider education: reduce stigma, increase access to IDU services in primary care
- Overdose prevention
- Testing, treatment
  - Impact of new HCV medications on prevention?

\* Source: Hagan H, Pouget ER, Des Jarlais DC. A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Interventions to Prevent Hepatitis C Virus Infection in People Who Inject Drugs. *JID*. 2011;204 (1 July):74-83

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**Effective HCV Prevention  
Messages for the Field  
– Lessons from the UFO Model**

**Caycee Cullen**

**Recruitment and Retention Coordinator  
Vaccination is Prevention (VIP) Study  
University of California San Francisco**

# About the UFO Model



**ESTABLISHED 1996**

A series of community-based research studies of HIV, HBV and HCV, health consequences of drug use, vaccine feasibility and adherence in young adult injectors in San Francisco

Source: University of California San Francisco, Center for AIDS Prevention Studies  
<http://caps.ucsf.edu/ufo-study/>

# The UFO Model

A hep C intervention for young adult IDU

 >  
Contact Us  

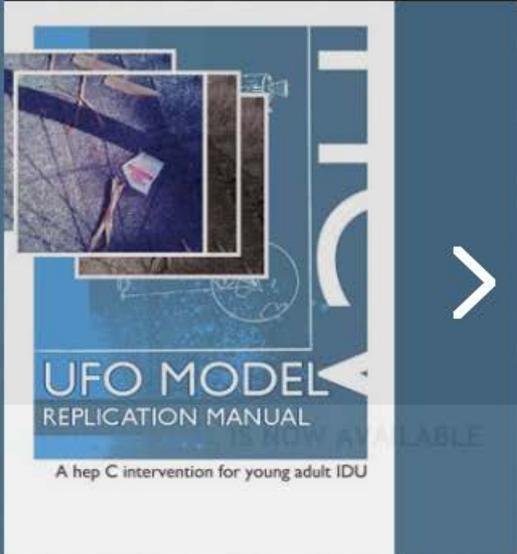
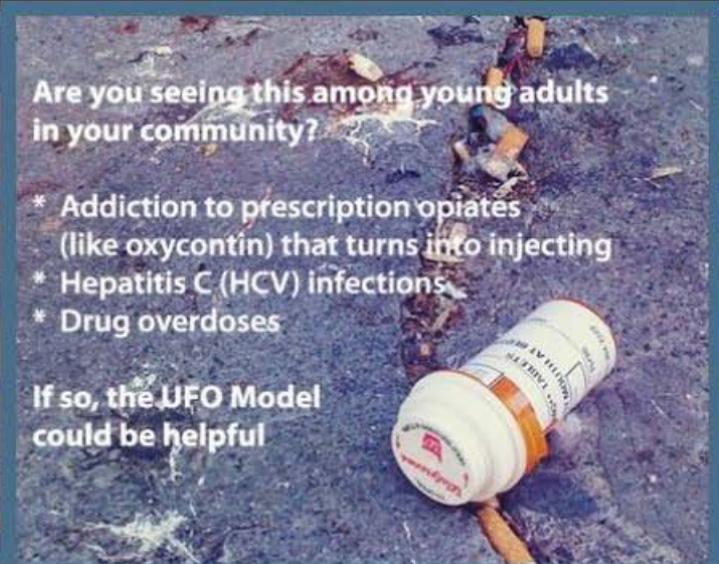
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Are you seeing this among young adults in your community?

- \* Addiction to prescription opiates (like oxycontin) that turns into injecting
- \* Hepatitis C (HCV) infections
- \* Drug overdoses

If so, the UFO Model could be helpful



UFO MODEL  
REPLICATION MANUAL

A hep C intervention for young adult IDU

- GET STARTED
- ASK QUESTIONS
- CONNECT
- PROVE IT

# UFO Model Approach



Cultural competency/non-judgment

Youth-centered focus

Outreach and consistency

Collaboration and referrals

# Core Components



Outreach and education  
Youth-centered referrals  
Drop in center  
Syringe access  
HCV testing and HAV/HBV vaccination  
Education and support groups

# HCV Transmission Risk – It's All About the Blood



# The Drug Injection Process



Add drug to cooker/spoon



Add water



Heat



Add cotton filter



Draw up liquid into syringe



Tie on a tourniquet to make vein more prominent



Clean injection site with alcohol wipe



Inject drug



Put pressure on injection site to stop bleeding



Dispose of equipment in sharps container

# Sample Safer Injection Kit



1. Empty bottle
2. Bleach (*optional*)\*
3. Band-Aid
4. Sterile water and saline solution
5. Tourniquet
6. Bottle cap or “cooker”
7. Cotton pellets
8. Syringe
9. Safer injection instructions
10. Alcohol wipes

\* Many SEPs no longer distribute bleach as it is not necessarily effective in killing HCV

# Core HCV Prevention Message



Do not share needles *or injecting equipment* (e.g. cookers, cottons, water, tourniquets)!

Always use your own stuff and use it ONCE

Use “a new kit for every hit”

# WHERE to get new equipment

Alameda  
City of Sacramento  
City of San Diego  
Contra Costa  
Fresno  
Humboldt  
Lake  
Los Angeles  
Marin  
Mendocino  
Monterey  
San Francisco  
San Luis Obispo  
San Mateo  
Santa Barbara  
Santa Clara  
Santa Cruz  
Shasta  
Sonoma  
Ventura  
Yolo

## Authorized Syringe Exchange Programs (SEPs) in California

*As of October 2010*



# WHERE to get new equipment



All pharmacies in California may sell up to 30 syringes to adults without a prescription

Source: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/aids/Documents/SAPharmacyList.pdf>

# HOW to avoid sharing equipment



Label your equipment so you know it's yours

Keep it all in one place so it doesn't get mixed up

Dispose of your equipment after use, ideally in a biohazard container

# More HCV Prevention Messages



Get tested for hepatitis C

Know the status of your injecting partners

Teach your injection partners how to be safe

# More HCV Prevention Messages



If someone else injects you, make sure they inject you first and themselves second

Avoid sharing tattoo eqpt., razors, nail clippers

Get vaccinated against hepatitis A and hepatitis B

# WHERE to get tested for hep C

CalHEP

California Hepatitis Alliance

Advocacy. Awareness. Access.

Get Involved!

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Policy issues

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Home

## Viral Hepatitis Services Referral Guide

Select a COUNTY from the dropdown and click search, or click a county on the map.

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Hepatitis A vaccination  
Hepatitis B vaccination  
Hepatitis B testing  
Hepatitis C testing  
Linkages to care  
Support groups  
Syringe exchanges

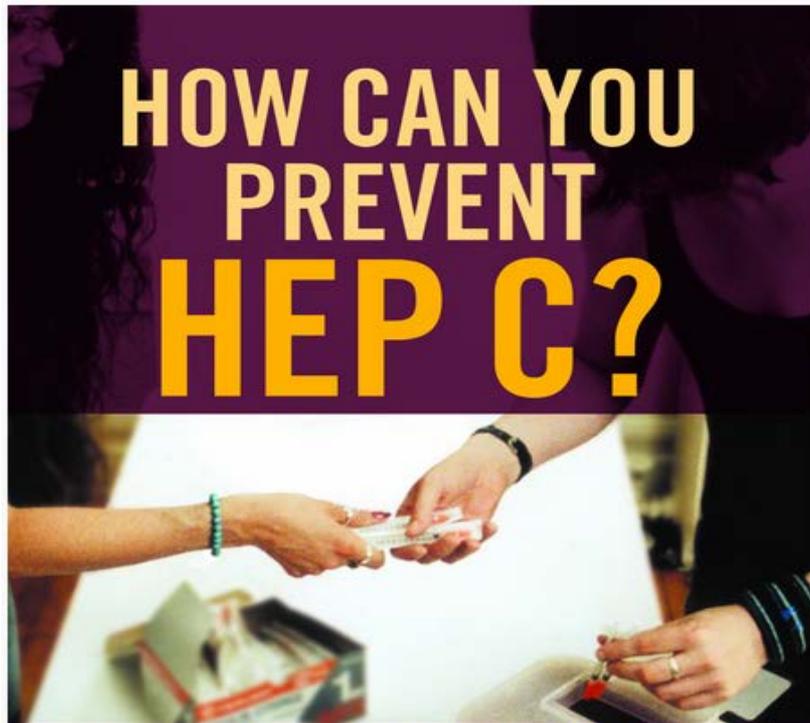
Source: <http://calhep.org/referralguide.asp>

# HCV Myths Debunked



You CANNOT get hepatitis C from yourself  
Bleach does NOT kill hepatitis C  
Hepatitis C CAN be treated and cured

# HCV prevention materials



**HOW CAN YOU PREVENT HEP C?**

**IF YOU SHARE YOUR DRUGS, DON'T SHARE YOUR BLOOD**

Works, sets, rigs, gizmos. Cooker, spoon, cotton, filter, water. Whatever you call them, use them safely when you inject drugs. Hepatitis C is a virus spread through blood that can cause liver disease. So go to a needle exchange or ESAP pharmacy and take care of yourself and your friends: use a new set each time you inject.

Hepatitis C Harm Reduction Project  
[www.hepcproject.org](http://www.hepcproject.org)

YourLife isworthit

Source: [www.harmreduction.org](http://www.harmreduction.org)

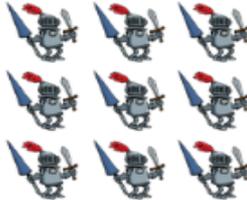
## About Hepatitis C Exposure

**Imagine your body is a castle, and Hep C is a dragon.**

Any time you share needles or equipment you put yourself at risk for Hep C, and the Hep C dragon can storm your castle.



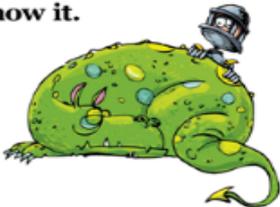
**Your body fights back by creating antibodies.**



If you receive a positive Hep C antibody test result, it means you have been exposed to the virus. The next step is to get another blood test to look for the virus. About 30% of people who are exposed to the Hep C virus will clear it and kick it out of their body.

**You may have Hep C and not even know it.**

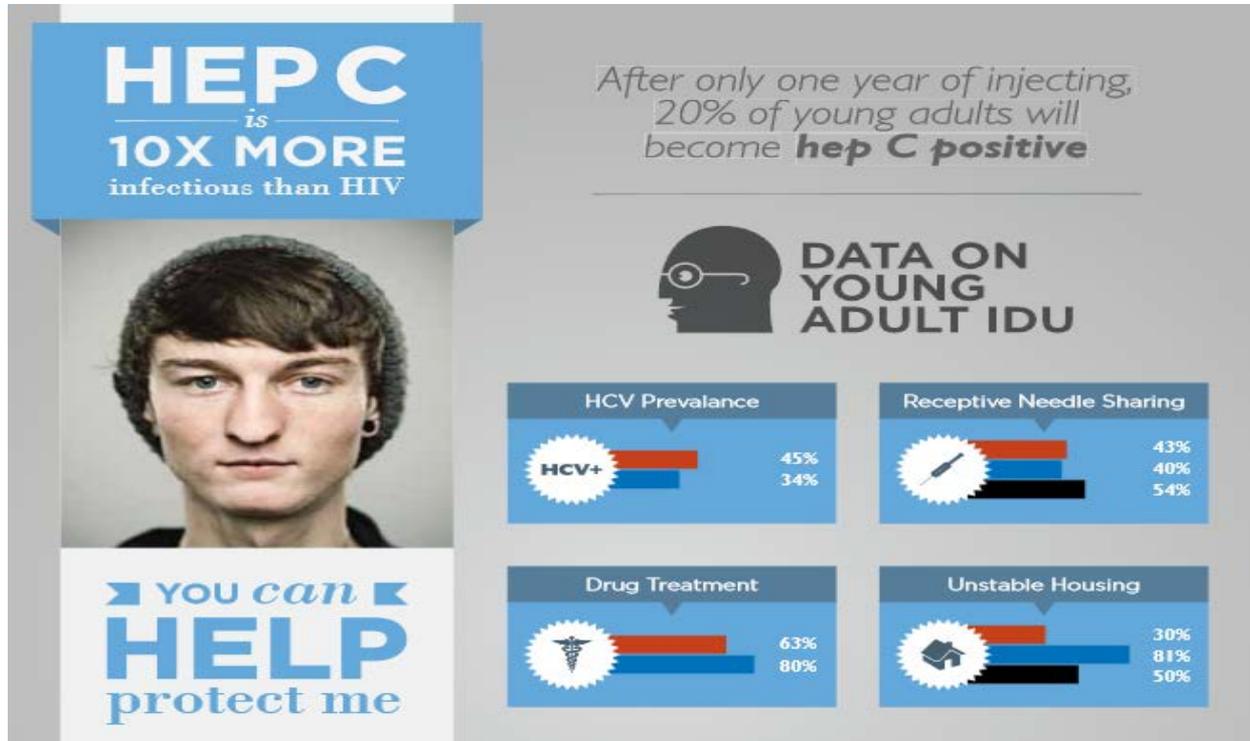
If you do have the virus, you might not feel sick. The dragon can sleep inside the castle walls for years before waking up to affect your liver.



**PROTECT YOURSELF & OTHERS FROM THE HEP C DRAGON**  
Use a **clean needle** and **new equipment** every time.

Source: [www.ufomodel.org](http://www.ufomodel.org)

# WHAT you can do to prevent HCV



Find out what drugs youth in your community are using and how  
Find out where to refer young IDUs for injection equipment and HCV testing  
Integrate HCV testing into your services

# Contact Information

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[www.ufomodel.org](http://www.ufomodel.org)

**Questions?**

# Questions for Discussion

- How do these findings compare with what you are seeing in the field (e.g., HIV/STD partners services and disease investigations)?
- What kinds of questions (if any) do you get during trainings or in the field about hep C?
- What resources can local health departments and community-based organizations leverage to increase HCV awareness among youth who may be using prescription drugs or injecting?

# Possible roles for local health departments, educators, providers

- Integrate education on misuse of prescription opiates and HCV risk into sex and drug education curricula for youth
- Provide referrals to local syringe exchange programs, pharmacies that sell syringes and to local opiate replacement therapy programs
- Integrate HCV testing into HIV testing services, HIV/STD partner services?
- What else?

Technical Consultation

# Hepatitis C Virus Infection in Young Persons Who Inject Drugs

February 26–27, 2013  
Consultation Report



Combating the Silent  
Epidemic of Viral Hepatitis  
Action Plan for the Prevention,  
Care & Treatment of Viral Hepatitis

## Topline Strategies Identified

- Create community-led education and messaging strategies on hepatitis C risks, injection transmission risks (e.g., sharing ancillary injection equipment), and HCV testing resources.
- Improve and increase infrastructure for HCV surveillance and data collection.
- Create age-appropriate (e.g., young adult) substance use and hepatitis C interventions and prevention strategies that are evidence based and effective.
- Expand both community-based and basic science research activities to better understand how to effectively address the emerging crisis of hepatitis C infection among young IDUs.

## Meeting Themes

- Understand the influence of family.
- Use adolescent- and youth-appropriate strategies.
- Include the voices of young people.
- Address social networks.
- Expand access to sterile preparation and injection equipment for drug users who cannot or will not stop injecting.
- Leverage opportunities related to advances in HCV treatment.
- Address HCV surveillance gaps.
- Use community-level interventions to address systems barriers to prevention, treatment and care services.
- Foster a coordinated federal and private sector response to this public health issue.

# Additional Resources

- CDC, Division of Viral Hepatitis

[www.cdc.gov/hepatitis](http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis)

- CalHEP viral hepatitis services referral guide

<http://calhep.org/referralguide.asp>

- CDPH, Office of AIDS, Syringe Access Information for California, including informational materials for pharmacists

[www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/aids/Pages/OASyringeAccess.aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/aids/Pages/OASyringeAccess.aspx)

- CDPH, Office of AIDS, HCV Rapid Testing Guidelines

[www.cdph.ca.gov/hcvtest](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/hcvtest)

- CDPH Office of Viral Hepatitis Prevention

[www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/pages/ovhp.aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/pages/ovhp.aspx)

- Harm Reduction Coalition

<http://harmreduction.org/issues/syringe-access/>

# Contact Information

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