

Building Local Capacity for Treatment & Cure

Webcast 2.5



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Webcast Overview

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Linking Testing &
Treatment

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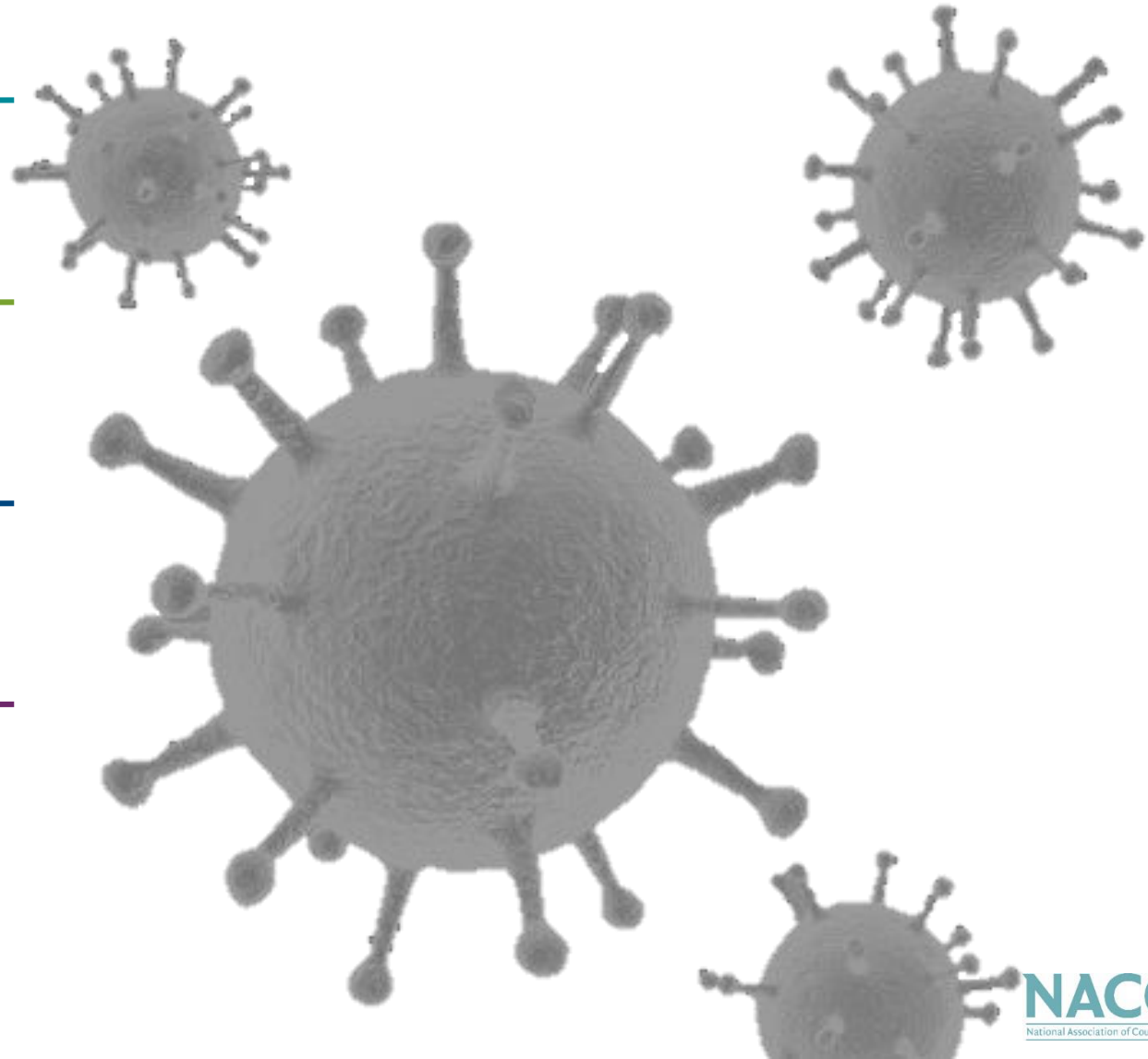
Importance of
Primary Care

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Strengthening
Referrals & Linkage

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Strategies to
Address Local
Provider Capacity

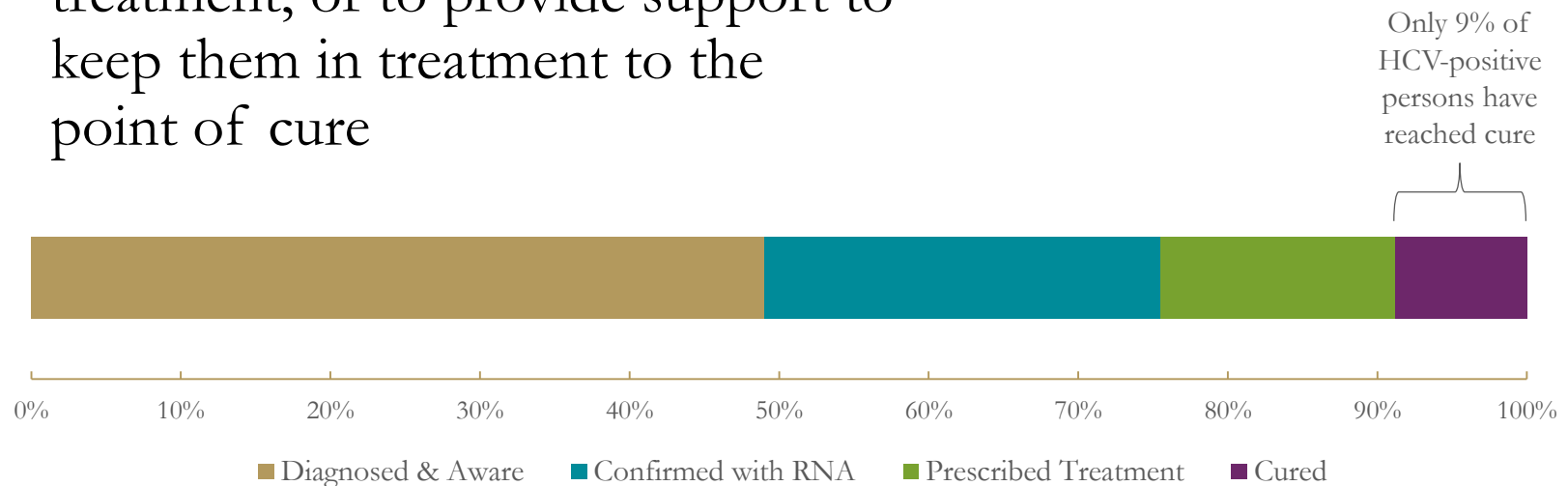


Linking Testing & Treatment



Low Likelihood of Reaching Treatment & Cure

- After receiving a reactive antibody test, it is decreasingly likely patients will receive a confirmatory RNA test, be prescribed treatment, and be cured
- Providers often do not have the resources to effectively navigate recently diagnosed patients into treatment, or to provide support to keep them in treatment to the point of cure



Components of Successful Linkage to Care

RNA Test

- Next step in testing after antibody test
- First step in linkage to treatment

Referral

- Often to a specialist for further testing and treatment initiation

Treatment

- Without supportive services, patients are often lost to follow up before reaching treatment
- Without support during treatment, patients may not complete therapy

Support
Navigation
Peer Support
Health
Education
Substance
Use Therapy
& Harm
Reduction

Importance of Primary Care

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Roles of Primary Care Providers

- Identify new infections through antibody and confirmatory RNA testing
- Initiate the referral process
- Provide initial supportive services, including health education, information on the referral and treatment process, and first impressions on the treatment experience
- Provide a critical connection to the health care system for people who inject drugs, the homeless, or who have mental health concerns
- For those not ready or able to initiate treatment, primary care providers can monitor their liver health, provide preventive care and immunizations, and offer harm reduction education and support
- Refer patients to specialist provider for evaluation, further testing, and treatment initiation

Strengthening Referrals & Linkage

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Characteristics of Strong Referral Networks

- Integrated across primary care providers and specialist providers
- Minimize patient's burden of seeking out treatment
- Provide end-to-end patient support to reduce opportunities for patients to be lost to follow-up
- A key role of public health in strengthening referral networks is facilitating relationships between primary care providers and specialist providers
- Assess providers for:
 - Ability to take new patients
 - Process and key staff to coordinate referrals
 - System for health information exchange
 - Willingness to coordinate referrals and work with patient navigators
 - Capacity for using new technologies, such as text message reminders for results and appointments

Patient Navigation & Peer Support

- Patient navigation can:
 - Connect patients to community resources
 - Provide support to overcome practical barriers such as transportation to medical appointments
 - Assist in financial and insurance navigation
- Peer support approaches can:
 - Help to overcome mistrust of health care system
 - Increase patient engagement in care
 - Mitigate effects of stigma and improve knowledge of HCV and treatment process
 - Provide practical and emotional support from patients going through similar experiences
- Health departments can:
 - Establish patient navigator positions in directly-administered clinics and funded partner organizations
 - Educate community partners and providers on patient navigation techniques
 - Collect and distribute information on peer support groups and networks to providers

Health Education, Substance Use Treatment, and Harm Reduction

- Health education can be used to overcome patient misinformation about HCV
- Patients who inject drugs can be directed to harm reduction resources, including syringe access programs if available
- Patients who use substances who are ready to access substance use treatment should be directed to treatment programs
- Health departments can:
 - Distribute patient-oriented educational materials to providers
 - Conduct provider capacity building on educating patients to overcome misinformation; on harm reduction communication, approaches, and resources available locally; and on local substance use treatment programs
 - Directly administer syringe access programs, facilitate a community partner's administration of syringe access program, or ensure providers know of resources available to patients who inject drugs

Strategies to Address Local Provider Capacity

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Assessing Provider Capacity

- Brief surveys of local providers to:
 - Determine ability to take on new patients
 - Assess experience or interest in treating hepatitis C
 - Gauge willingness to train and mentor other providers
 - Measure awareness of and comfort with harm reduction techniques
- Pharmacy surveys to determine:
 - Locations where newer hepatitis C pharmaceuticals are routinely stocked
 - Prescribing frequencies to know number of providers prescribing hepatitis C treatment

Public Health Detailing

- Structured educational visits to providers to:
 - Distribute materials and information
 - Educate providers on best practices for prevention and chronic disease management, referral network information, community resources, and effective strategies for patient support
- Most effective when it is:
 - Conducted in-person by health department staff with established relationships with providers
 - Concise
 - Highly focused
 - Supplemented by high-quality educational materials
- NACCHO has developed a detailing kit for health departments to use with their providers – now available on NACCHO website alongside educational series

Providing Treatment in Primary Care Settings

- Fully integrated HCV testing and treatment for uncomplicated cases with primary care providers
- Possible because new medications offer significantly simpler prescribing protocols and have fewer side effects
- Several benefits to this treatment model:
 - Patients can stay in their medical home
 - Treatment can be provided in the context of comprehensive and holistic care
 - Long-standing patient-provider relationships leveraged to improve treatment outcomes
 - Wider availability of primary care providers and greater cost-effectiveness of primary care provider-based care improves accessibility and sustainability of care

Public Health Support for Treatment in Primary Care Settings

- Develop and disseminate guidance and best practice information
- Facilitate training opportunities
- Advocate to lift insurance and Medicaid provider restrictions
- Promote consultative or mentoring relationships
 - Project ECHO or similar models
- Disseminate referral information on primary care providers who treat hepatitis C to difficult-to-reach and high-risk populations
 - Through syringe service programs
 - During homeless outreach
 - At substance use treatment facilities



NACCHO's Educational Series on HCV & Local Health Departments: *Module 2*

2.1: Planning for Action at the Local Level

2.2: Creating a Local HCV Epidemiologic Profile

2.3: HCV Testing Challenges and Systems-based Solutions

2.4: Targeted Outreach and Other Strategies for Increasing HCV
Testing: Working in Settings that Serve High-risk
Populations

2.5: Building and Supporting Local Capacity for HCV Care,
Treatment, and Cure

2.6: *Advocating for Sensible Policies in the Age of HCV Cure*