Re-engaging Patients in HCV care
Real-World Experience from the US Department of Veterans Affairs

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Patients engaged in care in traditional HCV-treatment settings

To Reach Everyone

Engage those affected by HCV wherever they are!
Veterans Affairs & HIT Collaborative

- Organized into 18 regions called Veteran Integrated Service Networks (VISNs)
- >150 Veterans Affairs Medical Centers (VAMCs)
- ~1000 community-based outpatient clinics
- HCV disproportionately affects Veterans
  - 2011: Prevalence in Veterans in VA care 6.2% compared to national estimate 1.0%
  - Highest in the 1945-1965 birth cohort with 10.3% prevalence

Hepatitis C Innovation Team Collaborative

- HIT Learning Collaborative: Community of Multidisciplinary, network-level teams
- Application of process improvement to healthcare delivery across all steps of HCV Care Cascade
- Sharing of strong practices & innovations
RE: Treatment of Hepatitis C Infection

Dear [Patient Name],

The Veterans Healthcare Administration is committed to providing care to all Veterans with hepatitis C. Our records indicate that you have hepatitis C infection.

New medicines, using only pills, have made treatment shorter, easier to take, and very successful in curing hepatitis C. The VA Long Beach has cured more than 400 patients with these new medicines.

We would like to see you to discuss your hepatitis C.
Outreach Efforts

- Mass media (newspapers, radio, TV, billboards)
- Outreach events & Health Fairs
- Partnering w/ Community Organizations
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter)
- Direct Patient Outreach (Letters & Phone Calls)
- Celebration/Recognition Events
Who are we missing?
Population Health Dashboards Helped to Identify Patients Needing Additional Targeted Outreach

From this analysis (and others), conservative estimate of >10% of viremic Veterans in care were impacted by a barrier that was delaying initiating HCV therapy
Many clinics across VA were confronted with patients with HCV and substance use disorder (SUD).

One HCV provider saw an opportunity to partner hepatitis C virus (HCV) therapy with the inpatient Substance Abuse Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (SARRTP).

Within the first year, 28 patients were referred for HCV treatment, in the previous year, only 1 patient had been referred.

- At the end of the first year, 18 patients had been tested for SVR
  - 14 of 18 had achieved SVR
  - 3 virologic relapse
  - 1 lost to follow up

We asked: How can barriers to care, including SUD, comorbid mental health conditions, homelessness, and others, be addressed across VA?
Taking HCV Care to the Veterans

Miguel Luna, advanced medical support assistant, approaches an area frequented by homeless Veterans in Fresno, Calif. When the team locates homeless Veterans, they ask if they would like to be Hep C tested and if there is anything else they need.

Anne Bailey, PharmD and team bringing care to the Veterans in Columbia, SC.

VA MOBILE VAN TEST STATION
New York Harbor (Brooklyn)
Polina Plotkin, PharmD
Margarita Pashukyants, NP
Where Can YOU Begin?

• Acknowledge the scope of your expertise
• Connect to stakeholders with established expertise:
  – Programs for people in unstable housing
  – Substance Use treatment
  – Trusted groups who address mental health concerns
  – Community Health Workers
  – Peers & Champions
  – Community Leaders & Organizations

“Engage us where we are, not where you wish we were.”
~Marie Ennis-O’Connor
Acknowledgements

• VA’s HIV, Hepatitis & Related Conditions (HHRC) Leadership
• HIT Collaborative Leadership & Evaluation Team
• HITs
• Veterans