

# Mountaineer Coalition FOCUS Project:

## Screening for Hepatitis B, C, and HIV in North Central West Virginia Health Departments

Jessica Russell, BA, Data Analyst; Jennifer Goldcamp, MSW, BSN, RN, Nursing Director;  
 Lee Smith, MD, JD, Medical Director/Health Officer, Monongalia County Health Department;  
 Lloyd White, MPA, Marion County Health Department; and Chad Bundy, MBA,  
 Harrison-Clarksburg Health Department

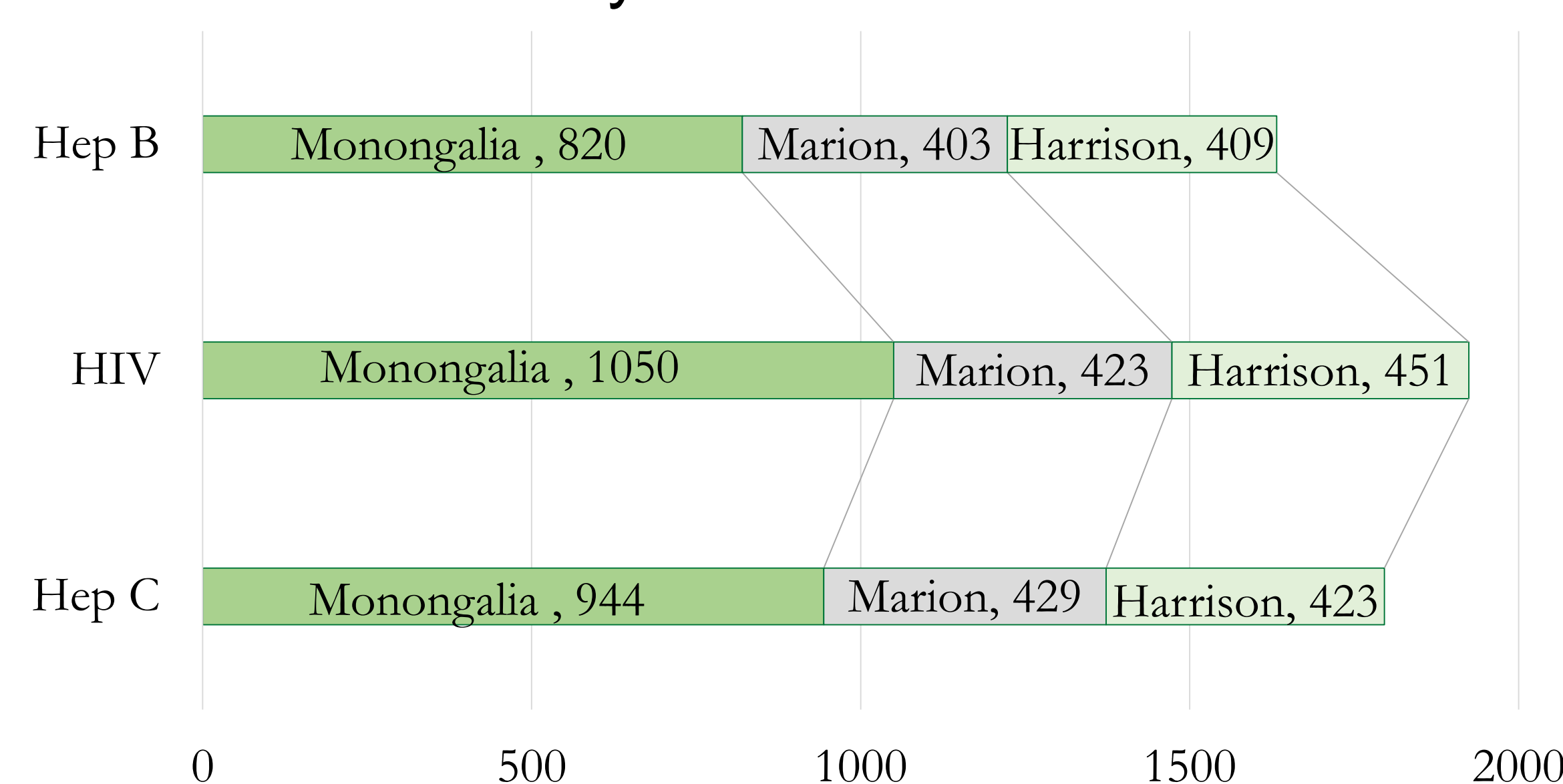


### Background

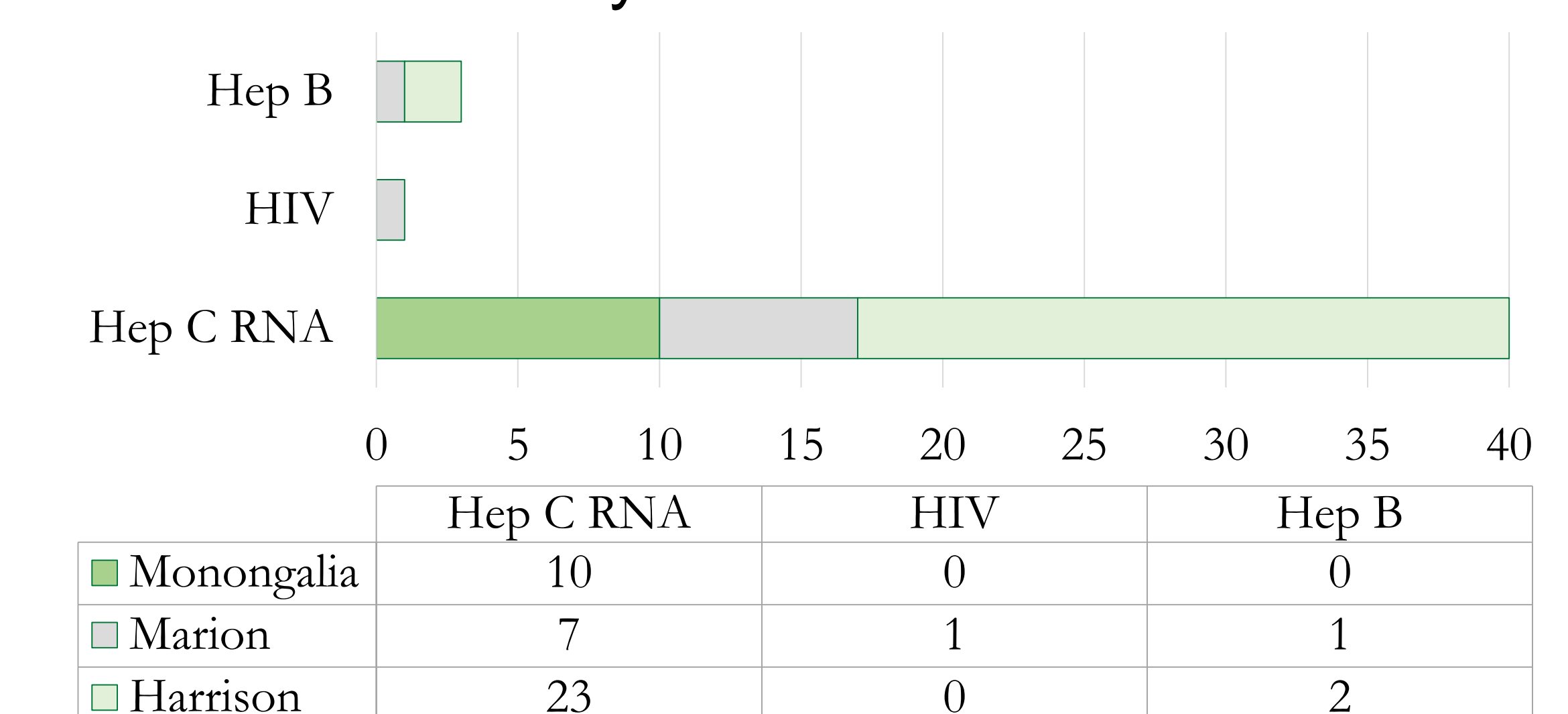
Mountaineer Coalition consists of three North Central WV County Health Departments: Monongalia, Marion, and Harrison. Through Gilead Scientific's FOCUS grant, this coalition was formed to create a regional approach to increase Hepatitis B, C, and HIV testing, as well as improve linkage to medical care for patients testing positive. By adopting CDC best practices and incorporating Opt-Out screening standards, automatic confirmatory testing, increased education, community outreach, and linkage to care, this coalition identified gaps in screening and testing of vulnerable populations, as well as shortages of health care providers willing and capable of treating patients with Hepatitis B, C & HIV. FOCUS funding supports screening and linkage to care for persons seeking public health services, who may have limited access to health care; increasing access for high risk, and underserved populations.

### Screening Data

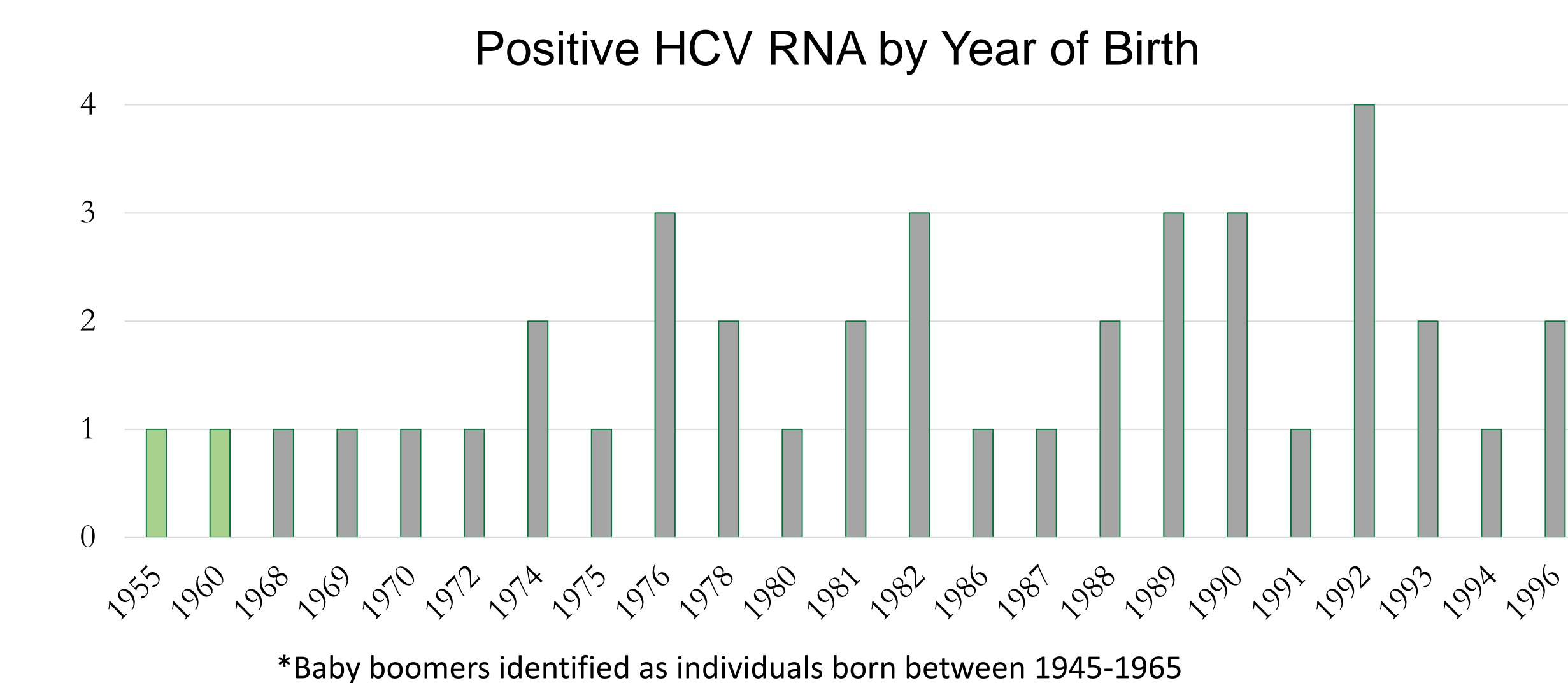
Screenings Performed  
January 2018 - June 2019



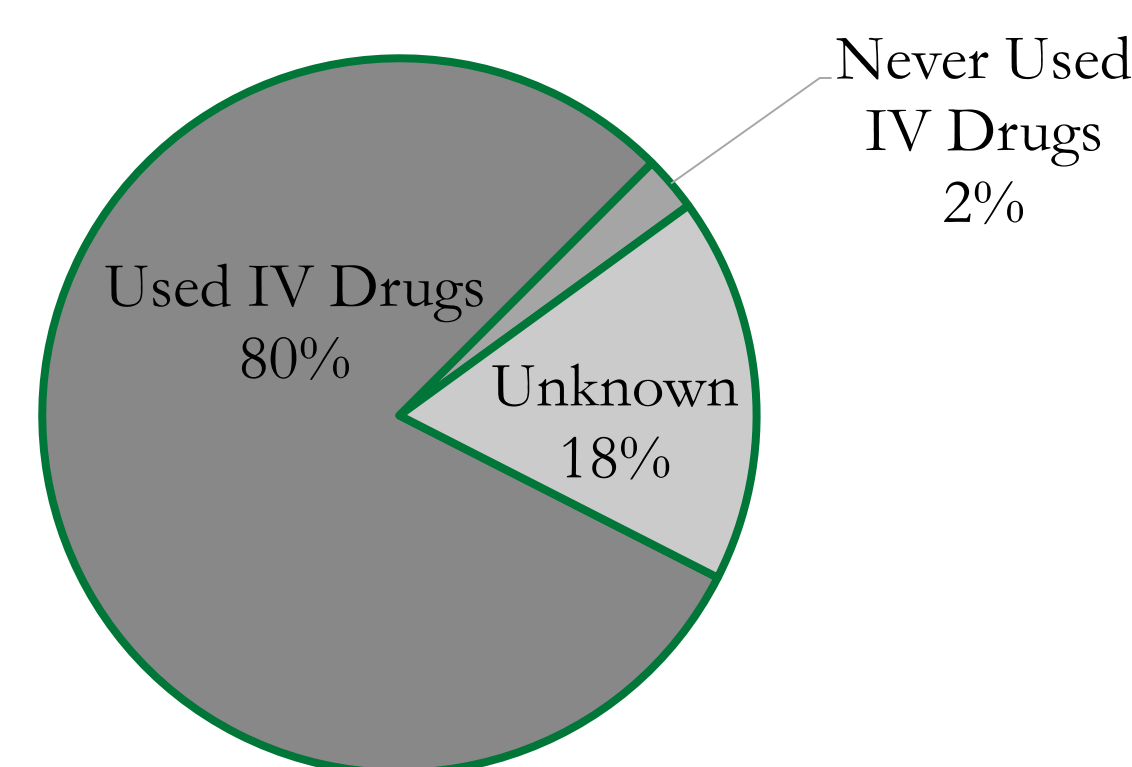
Positives Identified  
January 2018 - June 2019



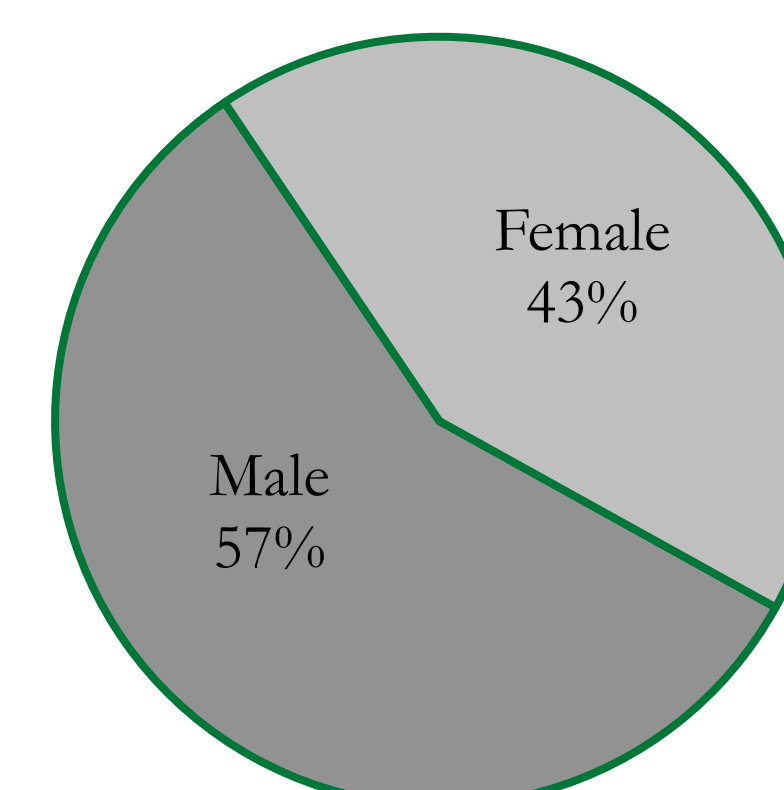
### HCV RNA (+) Patient Profile



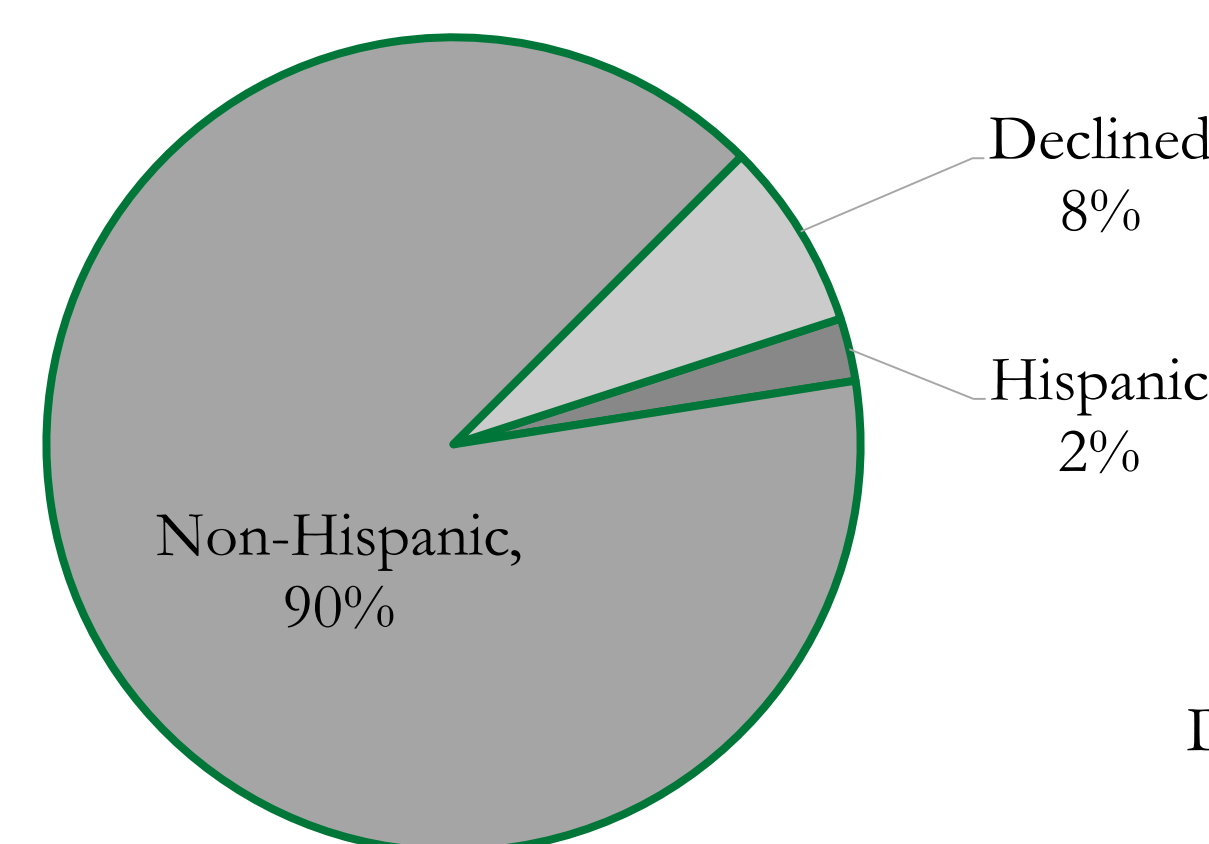
Positive HCV RNA by History of IV Drug Use



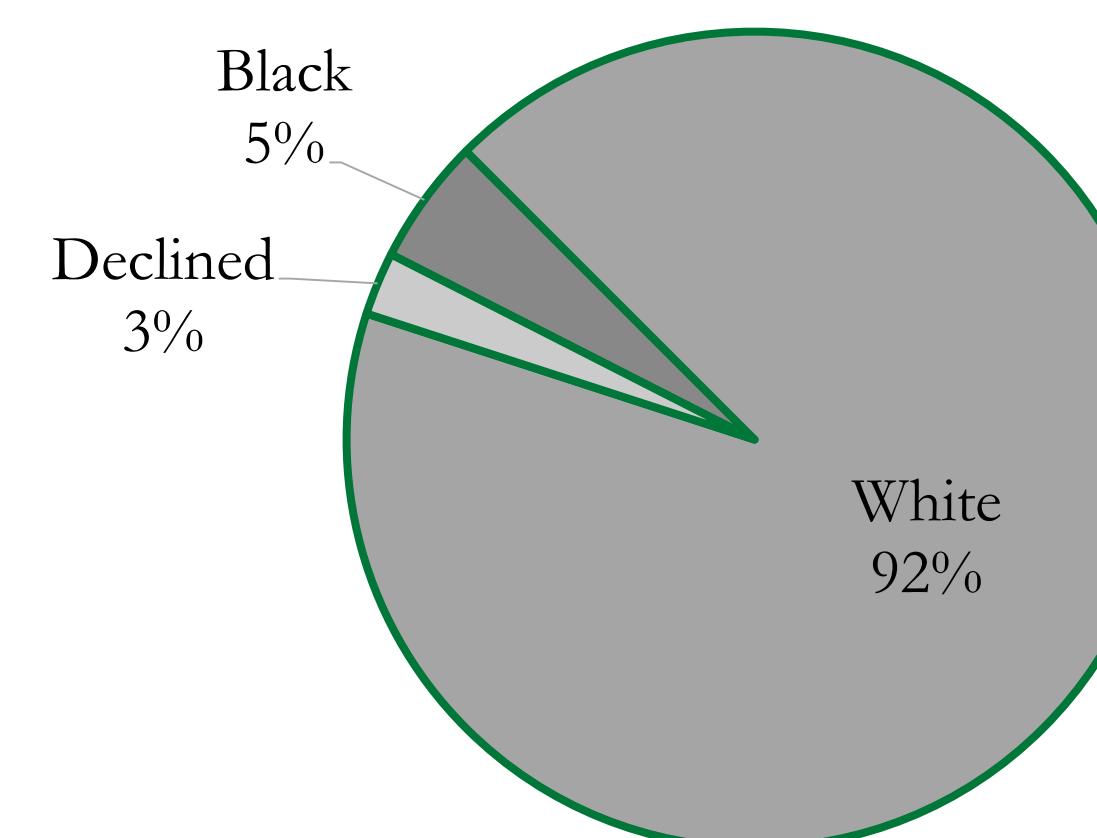
Positive HCV RNA by Gender



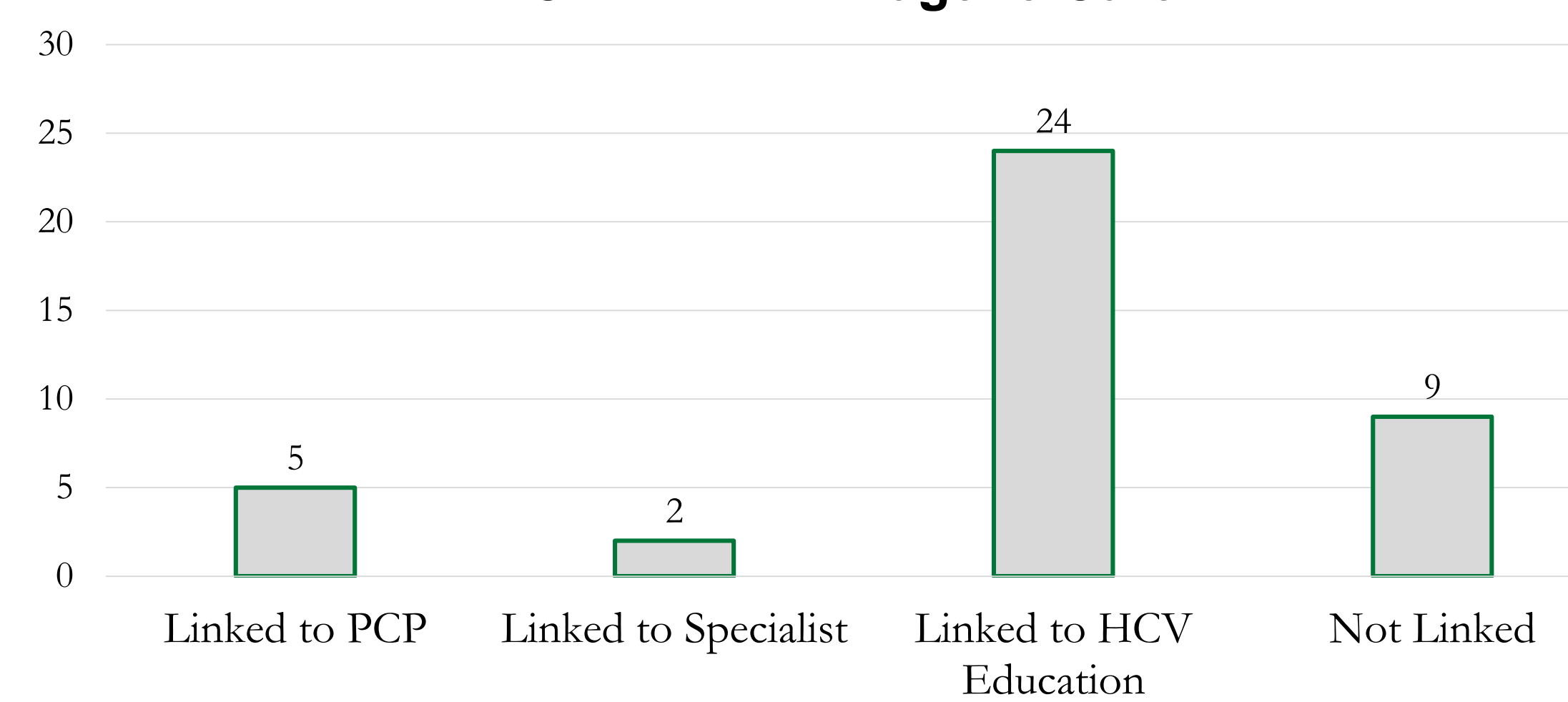
Positive HCV RNA by Ethnicity



Positive HCV RNA by Gender



HCV RNA+ Linkage to Care



\*Profile data based on 40 Positive HCV RNA screenings, between January 2018 and June 2019.

### Conclusions

Gilead's FOCUS grant funding allows for commercial laboratory testing of Hepatitis B, C, and HIV and helps patients avoid lengthy turnaround times with state lab facilities. (2 days v. 2 wks.) Patients expect health department testing to be free and confidential. Many patients are uninsured or under-insured and funding from FOCUS increases opportunities to screen at-risk populations, while meeting CDC recommendations.

Harrison and Marion County Health Departments offer FOCUS testing as part of their Harm Reduction/Syringe Access programs. One challenge for FOCUS is a continued difficulty with linking positive patients to care, particularly Hepatitis C positive patients from Harm Reduction clinics. For many of these patients who are transient, homeless and/or have profound mental health issues, treatment is not a high priority especially if they are currently using or recently entered recovery. Many patients are also difficult to contact as they come into the Harm Reduction Clinic seeking confidential services and give providers minimal information.

In order to comply with requirements of informed consent, patients receiving results positive for Hepatitis B, C, or HIV are notified personally of that particular disease and treatment options, as well as education on preventing infection of others with using clean, unshared needles when injecting drugs and using prophylactics with intercourse. Unfortunately, we are finding that patients diagnosed with Hepatitis C, frequently fail to keep appointments for referred services despite education enabling them to make an informed decision. The phenomena of diagnosed but not treated is a problem yet without a solution.

### Collaboration

Local Health Departments throughout West Virginia work together on many occasions, but usually not on extended projects. Gilead's FOCUS project has formed a collaboration among Monongalia, Marion, and Harrison counties that has proven to be mutually beneficial and we are now into our second year and solidified working together on projects regionally.

### Acknowledgements

Numerous individuals were instrumental in making the Mountaineer Coalition a success. We would like to acknowledge all the nurses and data managers representing Marion County Nursing Director Sandy Hassenpflug, and Data Manager Jonna Mundell, along with Harrison County Health Department, Nursing Director Donna Riffle.