

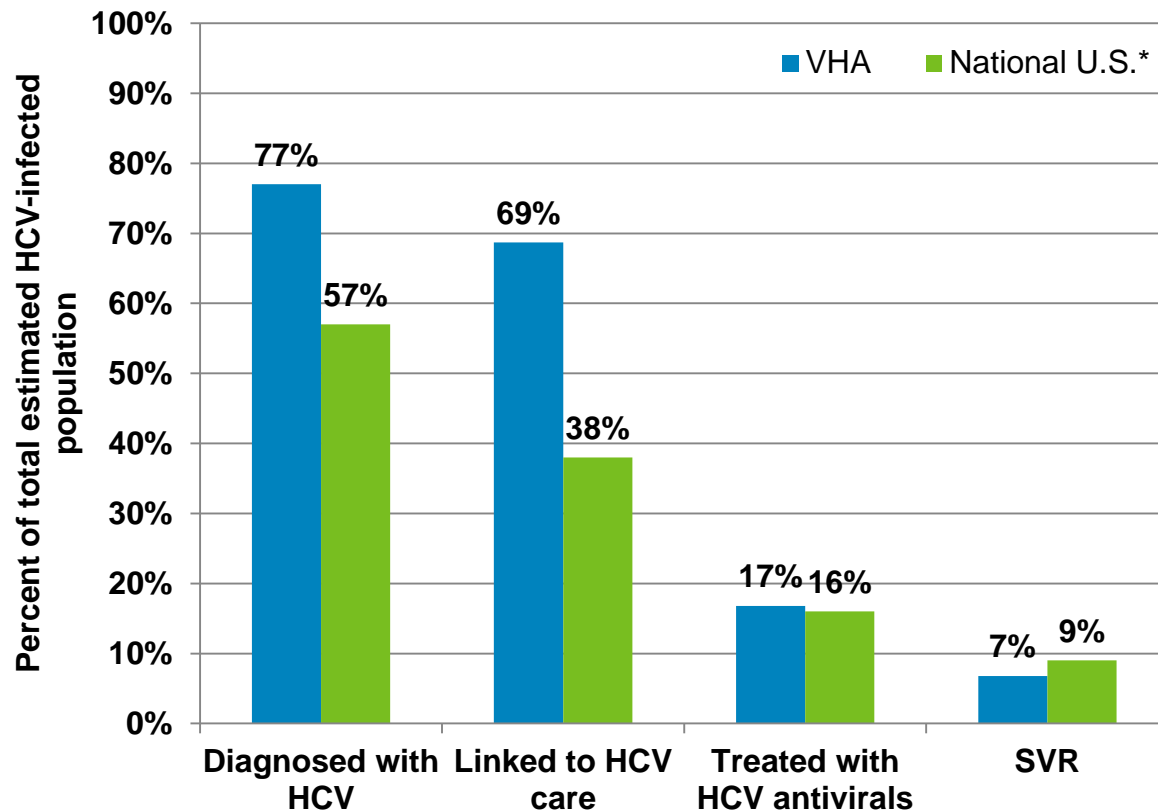
Hepatitis C in VA - 2015

David Ross, M.D., Ph.D., M.B.I.
Director, HIV, Hepatitis, and Public Pathogens Programs
Office of Public Health/Clinical Public Health
Veterans Health Administration

Summary

- VA is the largest single provider of care in the US for chronic hepatitis C virus infection (HCV)
- VA is facing an epidemic of costly, life-threatening complications in HCV patients
- VA is planning on treating the majority of HCV patients in care by 2020

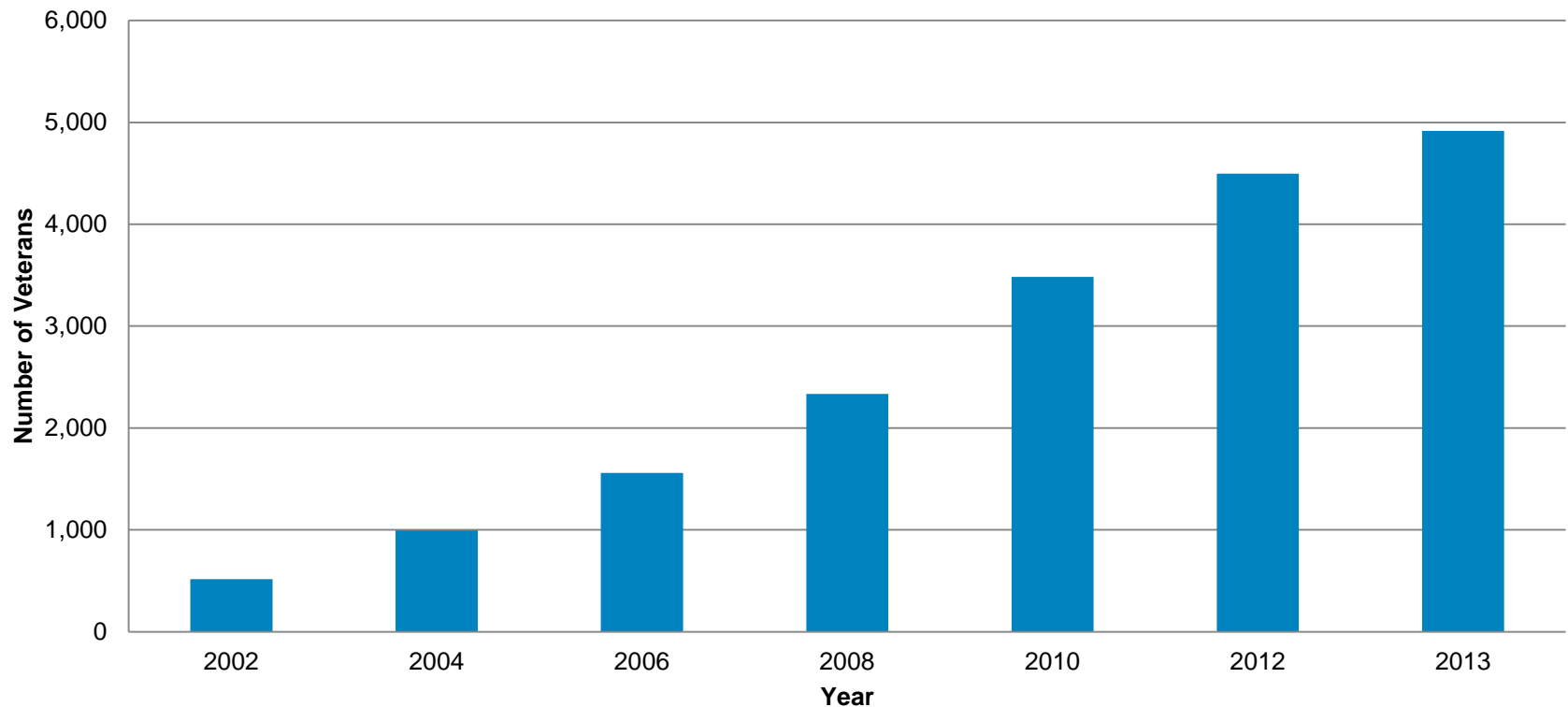
VHA and US HCV Cascades of Care



* National U.S. estimates were derived from the following sources: diagnosis-Spradling, 2012; linked to HCV care- Holmberg, 2013; receipt of antivirals and SVR- Yehia, 2014. VHA estimates from VHA National HCV

Liver cancer cases in VA HCV patients are increasing rapidly

HCV+ Veterans ever diagnosed with liver cancer*



*Median survival for all patients is <24 months

VA HCV testing initiatives

- Official policy change to birth cohort testing (Jan 2014)
- Electronic clinical reminder (under deployment)
- Provider education (ongoing)
- Social marketing campaigns (ongoing)
- Data feedback (ongoing)

Testing and Diagnosis

- Field-based projects to increase HIV and HCV testing among homeless Veterans
- Increasing focus on increasing screening in the Birth Cohort (1945-1965)
 - 65% currently tested
- Implementation of a national clinical reminder for HCV incorporating birth cohort testing
- Currently >90% positive antibody assays in VA have confirmatory testing done

HCV electronic clinical reminder

Reminder Resolution: Hepatitis C Ab Screen

VA recommends hepatitis C antibody testing (anti-HCV) for all veterans at risk for infection. Testing requires informed consent. Verbal consent is sufficient; written consent is not required.

VHA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NCP) Guidance Statement:
[Screening for Hepatitis C](#)

Screening

Order anti-HCV lab test - if the patient gives verbal consent...

Record prior or outside hepatitis C antibody screen.

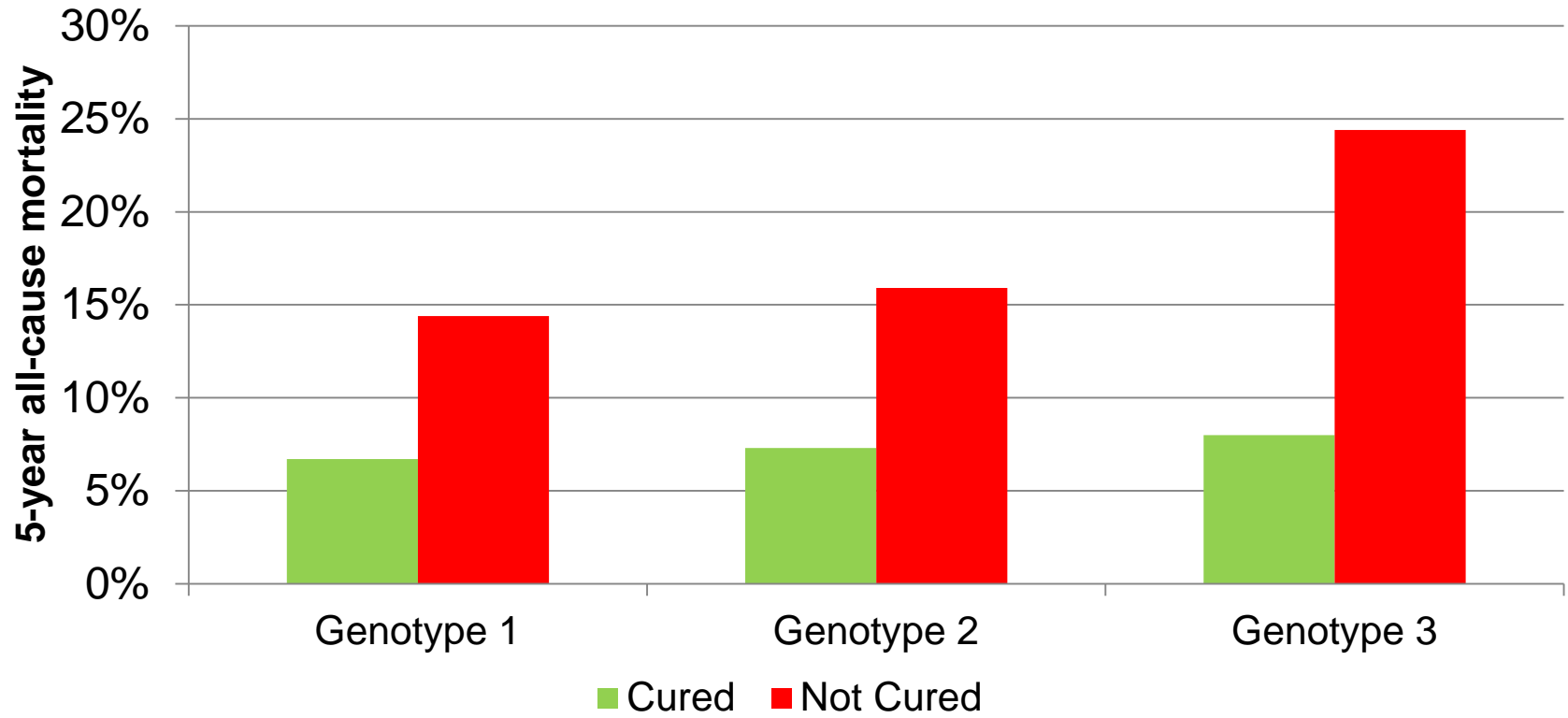
Stop Screening: Hepatitis C antibody screen not clinically indicated.

Defer antibody screening for 4 months

Veteran declines hepatitis C antibody screen.

HCV anti-viral therapy prevents death

HCV Cure and Risk of Death



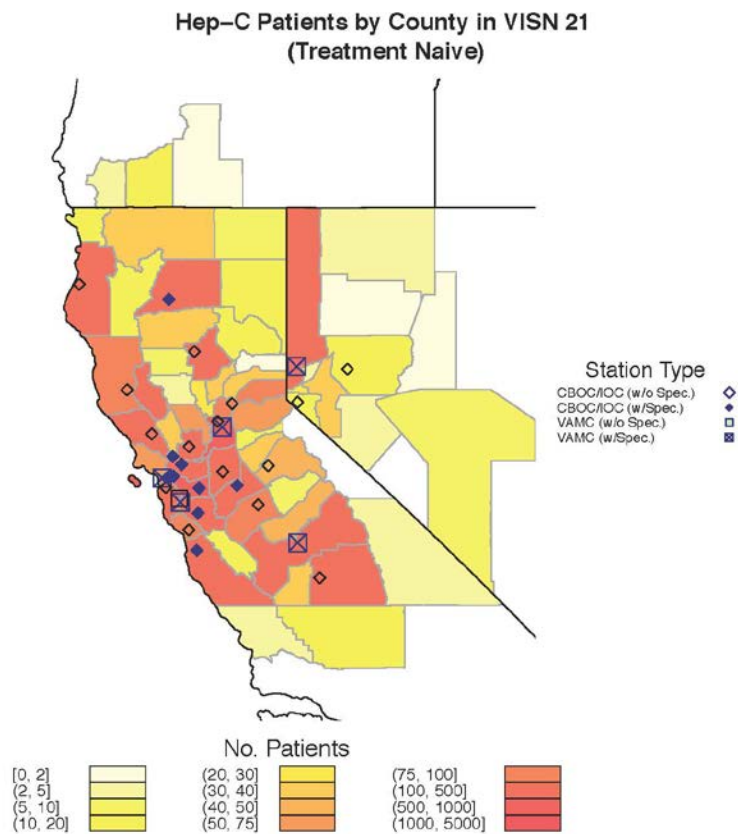
Barriers to anti-viral treatment

- Patient-level
 - Alcohol and substance use disorders
 - Serious mental illness (depression, schizophrenia)
- System-level
 - Linkage to care
 - Availability of integrated mental health services
 - Geographic location relative to patients
 - Provider knowledge/experience
 - Infrastructure (lab, clinical pharmacists, case managers)
 - Funding

VA HCV treatment initiatives

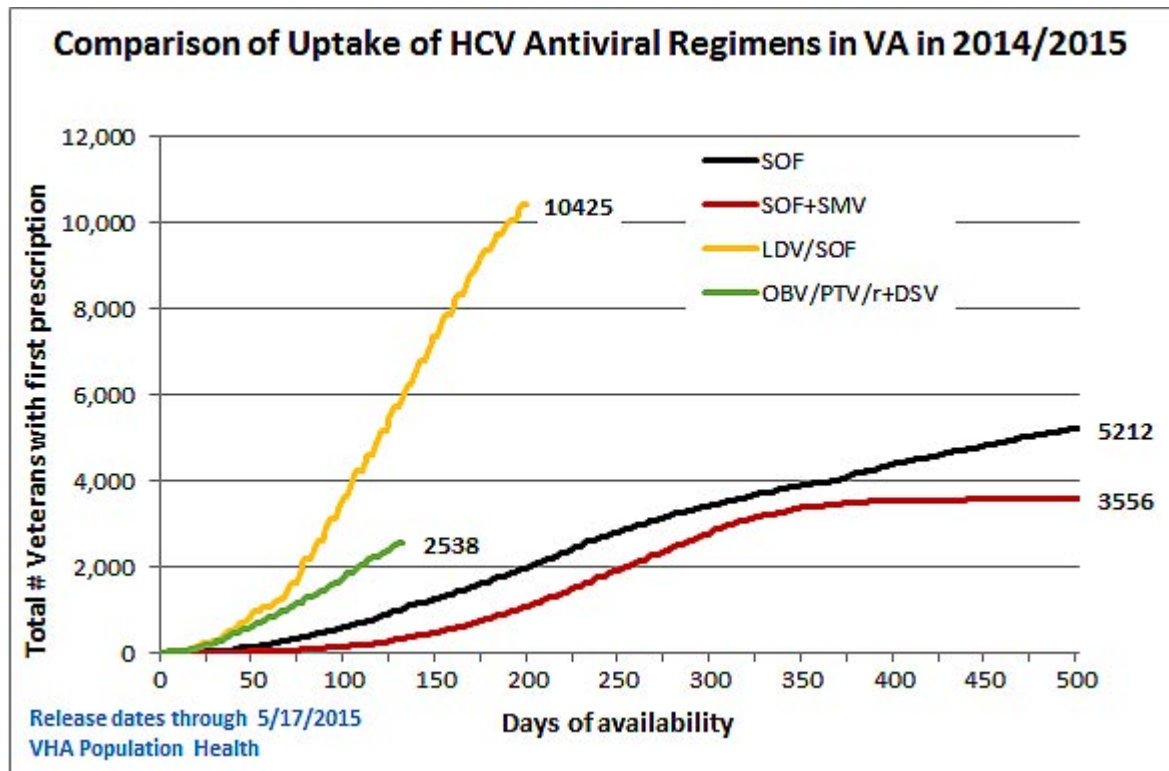
- Allocation of \$700M for anti-viral drug purchases
- New drugs put on VA National Formulary (Apr 2014;Jan 2015)
- Updated VA HCV treatment guidelines (Feb 2015)
- Training new providers to increase capacity
- System redesign to improve access
- Monitoring of drug uptake and outcomes (ongoing)
- Treatment of comorbidities
- Provider education (ongoing)
- Data feedback (ongoing)

Increasing access, quality, efficiency



- System redesign
 - VISN HCV Innovation Teams
 - Natl Hepatitis C Resource Center
 - HCV dashboards
- Increasing capacity
 - Training new providers
 - SCAN/ECHO
 - Mini-residencies
 - Educational programs
 - Psychology fellowships
- Clinical Resources
 - Data reports
 - Treatment guidelines
 - Patient education

Uptake of new HCV drugs in VA



VA Hepatitis C Resource Center Products

Provider Resources

- **Print**
 - AUDIT-C scoring cards
 - Hepatitis A/B immunization
 - Hepatitis C Support Group
 - Liver Telehealth Guide
 - Brief Alcohol Intervention Teaching Guide
- **Web**
 - Evaluating LFT abnormalities
 - LiveMeeting Webcasts on HCV
- **Conferences**
 - Hot Topics in Liver Disease
 - Protease inhibitor training
 - Liver Disease for Primary Care Physicians
 - Mini-sabbaticals/mini-residencies
- **Published guidelines**
 - Antibody screening and confirmatory testing
 - Co-infected patients
 - Anti-viral therapy
 - Cirrhosis
 - Liver cancer
 - Monitoring treatment

Patient Resources

- **Patient Guides**
 - Hepatitis C
 - Cirrhosis
 - Liver Cancer
 - New HCV Drugs
 - Liver Transplant
 - Alcohol
 - Managing Treatment Side-effects
- **Patient Videos**
 - ABCs of Hepatitis
 - Living with Hepatitis C
- **Patient tools**
 - Drinking diaries
 - Triple therapy workbooks
 - Education classes
 - Toolkits for patients with special learning needs

www.hepatitis.va.gov
publichealth@va.gov