

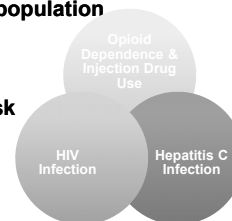
The Emerging HCV Epidemic and HIV Outbreak Vulnerability Among Injection Drug Users

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The Opioid and Blood Born Virus (BBV) Syndemic

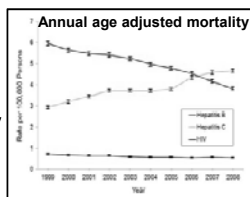
- **Syndemic** - A set of linked health problems involving two or more afflictions, interacting synergistically, and contributing to excess burden of disease in a population

Needle scarcity and unsterile needle re-use (sharing) increases the risk for acquiring BBVs, including HIV and HCV infection



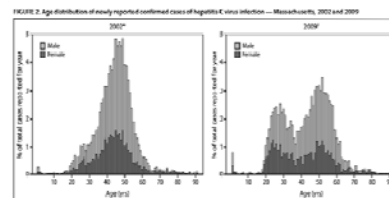
Hepatitis C Infection

- **Blood-born virus**
- **Highly prevalent**
 - >5 million in US estimated
- **High morbidity & mortality**
 - 60-70% will develop chronic liver disease
 - 20% will develop liver cirrhosis
 - Up to 5% will die of liver failure or liver cancer
 - Leading cause of liver transplant
- **Curative**
 - 12 week course of all oral medications



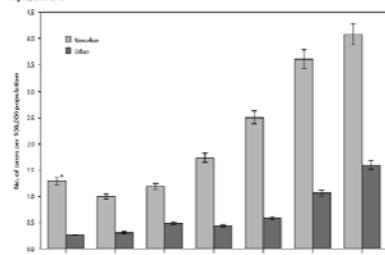
Evolving Epidemiology of HCV Infection in the US

- **Persons born between 1945-1965 account for 75% of infections**
- **Rising incidence among young (age <30) white IDUs**



Increases in Hepatitis C Virus Infection Related to Injection Drug Use Among Persons Aged ≤30 Years - Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia, 2006-2012

FIGURE 1. Incidence of acute hepatitis C among persons aged ≤30 years, by sex and year—Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia, 2006-2012



UAB Emergency Department Universal Hepatitis C Testing

Total tested: 5,972

HCV-Ab+: 458 (7.7%)

October 15, 2015 to February 15, 2016 (Unpublished data)

	No. Tested, n	HCV-Ab +, n (%)		No. Tested, n	HCV-Ab +, n (%)
Born 1945-1965			Born After 1965		
Total	2,204	231 (10.5)	Total	3,768	227 (6.0)
Sex			Sex		
Male	1,104	163 (14.8)	Male	1,619	138 (8.5)
Female	1,100	68 (6.2)	Female	2,149	89 (4.1)
Race			Race		
White	1,058	100 (9.5)	White	1,554	181 (11.7)
Black	1,092	128 (11.8)	Black	2,063	41 (2.0)
Other	39	3 (7.7)	Other	96	1 (1.0)
Missing	15	0 (0.0)	Missing	55	4 (7.2)
Insurance Type			Insurance Type		
Commercial	562	27 (4.8)	Commercial	1,065	23 (2.2)
Medicare	844	80 (9.5)	Medicare	359	23 (6.4)
Medicaid/Public	419	70 (16.9)	Medicaid/Public	935	48 (5.1)
Uninsured	275	47 (17.1)	Uninsured	1,254	119 (9.5)
Other/Missing	104	7 (6.7)	Other/Missing	155	14 (9.0)

Largest HIV outbreak in Indiana history: A toxic mix of drug addiction, poverty, hopelessness

Giles Bruce gilesbruce@gmail.com, (219) 852-2294 Apr 16, 2015

Community Outbreak of HIV Infection Linked to Injection Drug Use of Oxymorphone — Indiana, 2015

Community of 4,200 individuals

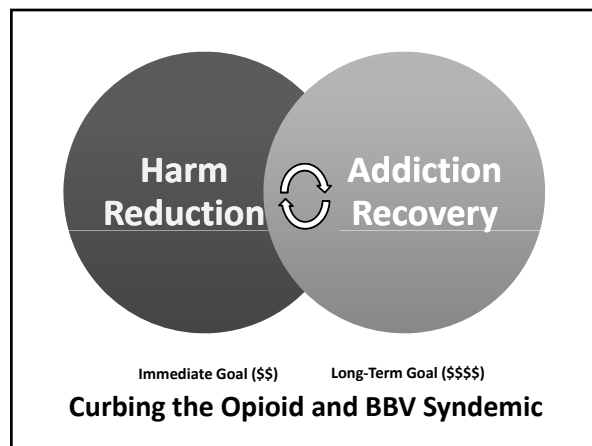
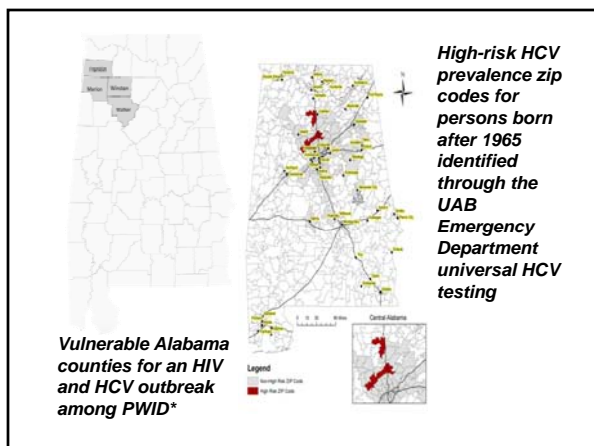
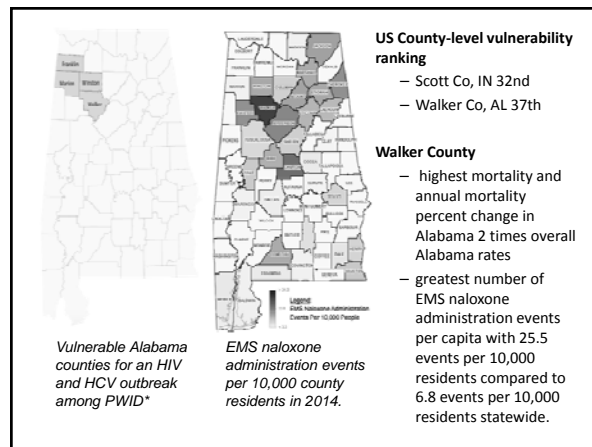
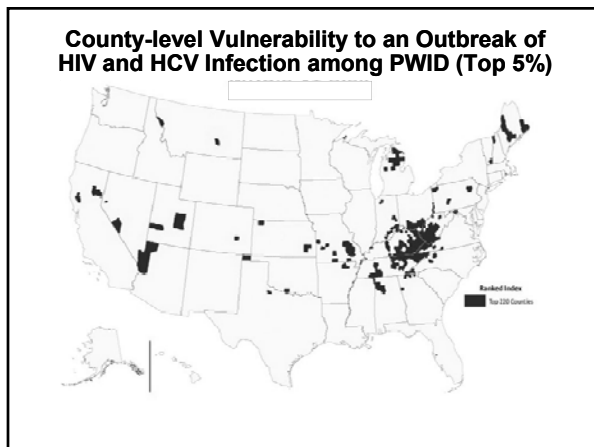
142 persons infected with HIV

- 96% of those interviewed reported IDU
- 85% confirmed with HCV infection

142 cases of HIV linked to illegal drugs
 Many cases in Scott County are linked to people injecting Oxycodone, a prescription painkiller, to break and ease withdrawal from heroin.

Oxycodone is a powerful painkiller that is often abused and injected for a high "rush" or "high." This misuse can lead to serious health problems and even death.

To reduce the risk of HIV, Indiana has established an emergency needle exchange program in the area.



Audience Question

- Some people feel that one way to engage persons who inject drugs and reduce the spread of communicable diseases is to offer needle exchange programs. Needle exchange programs involve agencies providing clean needles to drug users and others who inject themselves in exchange for used ones, in hopes of minimizing the spread of contagious diseases like HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C.

Audience Question

- In general, would you say you...
 - 1 - disapprove strongly
 - 2 - disapprove
 - 3 - approve
 - 4 - approve strongly
 - 5 - or have no opinion at all about needle exchange programs

Harm Reduction

- Set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing the negative consequences of drug use
- Harm reduction interventions:
 - Home naloxone distribution
 - Opioid replacement therapy
 - Syringe service programs
 - Blood born virus testing



Harm Reduction

- Immediate goals achievable through harm reduction:
 - Reduction in overdose deaths
 - Reduction in the spread of blood born virus infections through testing, referral, and vaccines
 - Education of users on safer practices
 - Reduction in illicit use through opioid replacement therapy

Improved Addiction Recovery Access (Long-Term Goal)

- Inpatient / Residential / Outpatient Addiction Recovery Care must be:
 - Affordable
 - Accessible (Local)
 - Accountable for outcomes



Improved Addiction Recovery Access (Long-Term Goal)

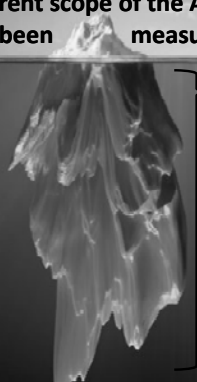
- **Criminal Justice Reform**
 - 50% of all prisoners meet criteria for drug abuse or dependence
 - Alternatives to incarceration
 - Treatment merged with judicial oversight in drug courts
 - Prison- and jail-based treatments, including opioid replacement tx

Improved Addiction Recovery Access (Long-Term Goal)

- Re-entry programs intended to help offenders transition from incarceration back into the community
- Improve medical outcomes & reduce recidivism = reduced costs

*“Punishment alone is a futile and ineffective response to drug abuse, failing as a public safety intervention for offenders whose criminal behavior is directly related to drug use.”**

Current scope of the Alabama opioid epidemic has been measured in deaths and arrests



Important knowledge gap

- True size of the epidemic
- Locations affected
- Prevalence of HIV and HCV infection

This knowledge is essential to:

- Estimate the needs / costs and locations of any short or long-term intervention
- Serve as a baseline to measure the effectiveness of any intervention

Barriers to Alabama’s Harm Reduction & Recovery Efforts

Financial


Who pays for this?

- Costs should be shared among all facets of the US healthcare system and criminal justice system because we all stand to gain from such an investment

Political


Can we align our laws with the evidence to reduce harm in Alabama?

- The evidence for harm reduction is not controversial, but societal beliefs and politics is controversial



Funding Source	Source Potential Benefits
AL General Fund	Vote winner
Public Health	Improved surveillance & addiction outcomes
Criminal justice system	Reductions in crime and costs related to crime
Health Systems	Reduction in healthcare costs
Insurance providers	Reduction in healthcare costs
Industry	Sales (HCV tx, opioid replacement, naloxone)
NIH / AHRQ / PCORI	Scientific advancement / knowledge

Funding Alabama’s Harm Reduction & Recovery




More States and Cities Consider Needle-Exchange Programs to Reduce Spread of Infection

Indiana's HIV Outbreak Leads To Reversal On Needle Exchanges

Needle exchanges spread in Kentucky as outbreak threat grows


Early results of W.Va. town's needle exchange program show progress




The Growing Necessity of Syringe Service Interventions in the US

Alabama Laws Regarding Syringes (AL Statute 13-A-12-260)

- No explicit authorization for syringe exchange by law
- No exceptions to the law that would allow for the distribution of syringes to prevent blood-borne diseases



Annual Mortality Rate of Change for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders (2000-2014), Both Sexes, Age-Standardized



"Your longevity and health are more determined by your zip code than they are by your genetic code"

Tom Frieden, MD, MPH
CDC Director