

Background

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) was awarded the "Frontlines of Communities in the United States" (FOCUS) grant by Gilead Sciences in September 2017. In Year 2 of the FOCUS project, VDH created avenues around the lack of designated patient navigators or bridge counselors, and used Hepatitis C (HCV) Coordinators and Community Based Organization (CBO) staff to collect linkage to care data. The FOCUS project also worked to strengthen community networks of local health departments (LHDs), CBOs, and independent clinics to advance patient engagement and linkage to care.

Results

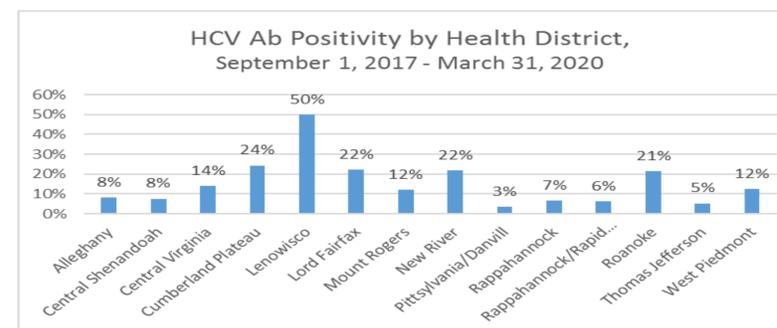
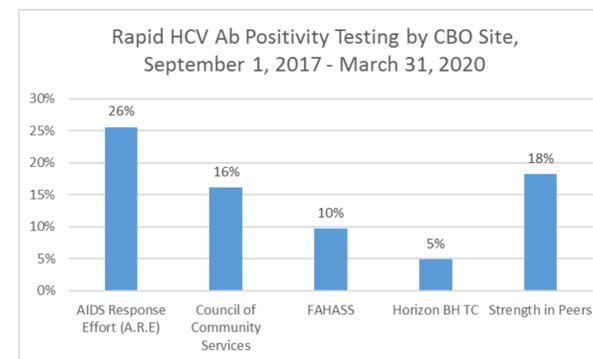
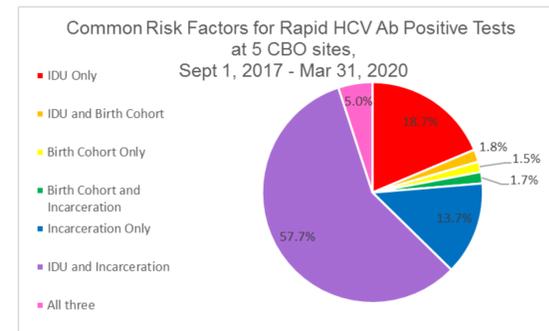
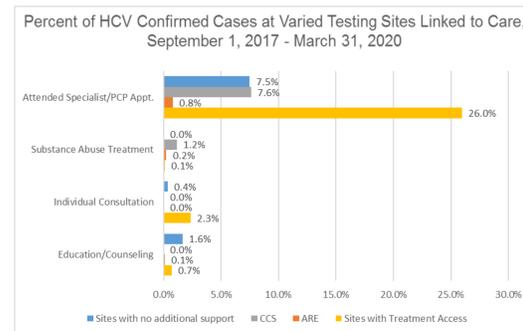
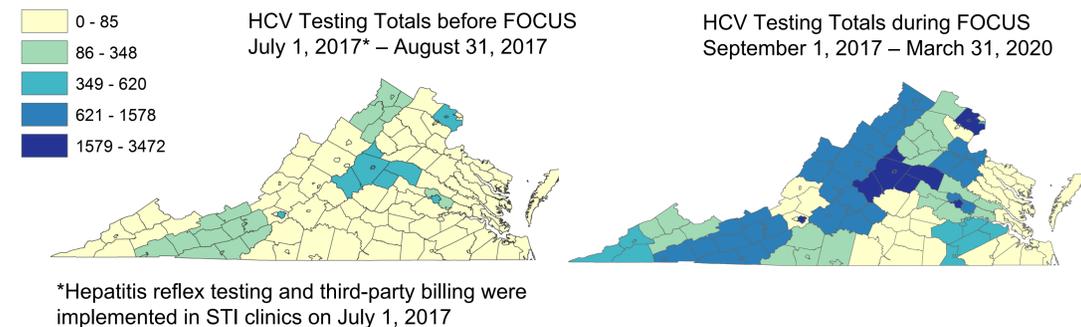
The Year 2 outcomes include 680 HCV antibody positive results, as of March 31, 2020. The total number of tests is comprised of 1,917 rapid HCV antibody tests with 225 positive results (12%), and 3,584 conventional HCV antibody tests with 455 positive results (13%). Additionally, FOCUS sites conducted 491 HCV RNA confirmatory tests with 341 HCV RNA positives (69%).

Discussion

Year 2 strategies examined data reporting systems to better uncover linkage to care (LTC) cases after HCV confirmatory testing; improvement to VDH programmatic communication and follow-up with VDH partners; the broader inclusion of previously siloed programs to advance data reporting; UVA coordination with the Virginia Department of Corrections to receive release dates for incarcerated individuals; and providing technical assistance to CBOs to improve their service delivery capacity and reduce barriers to confirmatory testing for clients.

The progress of the program is a result of careful adjustments and the continuation of Year 1 efforts of education, funding the rapid tests for CBOs, funding conventional tests for uninsured patients in the LHDs, and continuing to strengthen VDH – CBO relationships.

Data



Key Accomplishments

- Tightened the LTC network in partner communities.
- Implemented a more consistent and thorough LTC reporting system with VDH FOCUS partners, documenting a climb from 48% LTC in August 2019 to nearly 68% LTC in March 2020.
- Strengthened patient navigation for previously incarcerated individuals as a result of the partnership with UVA.
- Assisted one FOCUS partner, ARE, in developing phlebotomy capacity.

Implications/ Lessons Learned

- VDH found that on-going technical support is imperative for program success.
- Regular and attentive communication with partner sites helps uncover and resolve potential programmatic impediments.
- Collaboration with other VDH efforts, such as Comprehensive Harm Reduction programs, makes prevention and LTC efforts more effective and ensures a better use of resources.

Acknowledgments

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External Collaborators

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