



## Background

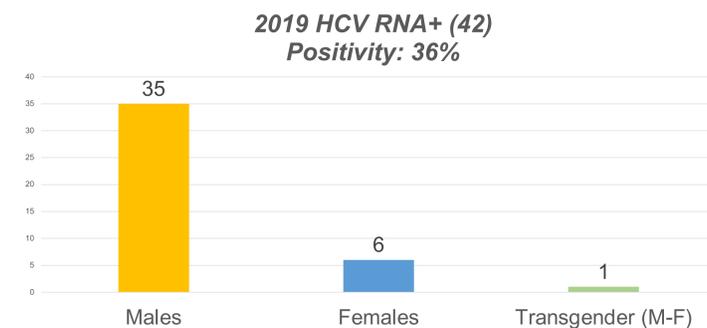
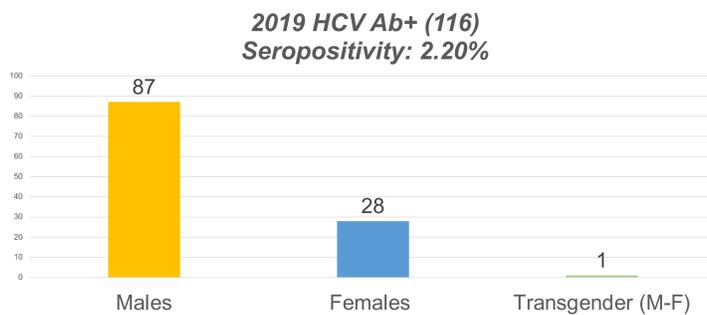
We serve one of the largest metropolitan areas in the US-Mexico border with a combined population of 2.7 million residents. According to census statistics in El Paso alone 87.1% of the population are identified as people of color and 20.5% of those people live in poverty. In regards to health insurance, 23.8% of the persons do not hold any form of medical health insurance compared to the national average of 13.3%.<sup>2</sup> Focused in the vibrant border city of El Paso, TX and Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua border region. Aside from the sister cities, services are also expanded to rural West Texas and Southern New Mexico regions. Our goal is to bring awareness for HCV testing and linkage to care highlighted in the border region.

## Rationale

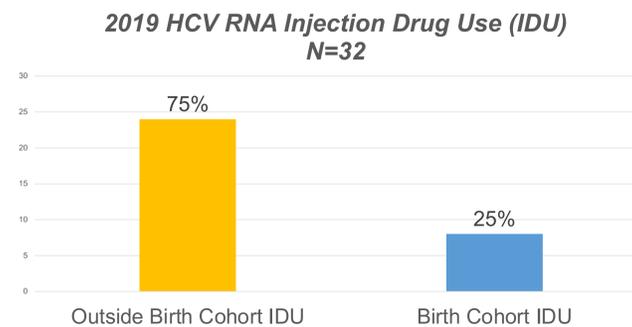
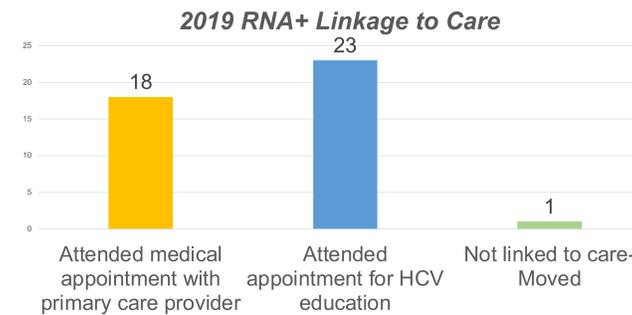
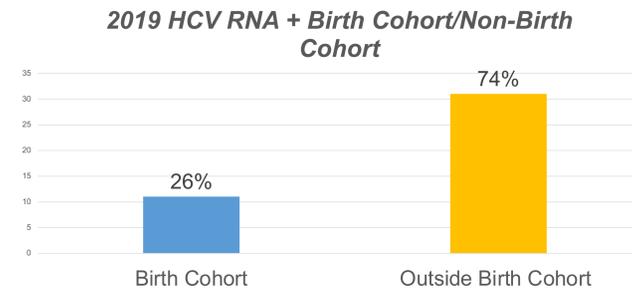
This poster will present the successes of the second year of the integration of HCV as a reportable disease, implementing free HCV testing into routine health exams and linkage to care in the US-Mexico Border. We have studied an alarming and growing number of younger people being diagnosed with HCV. This is a direct impact of opioid related occurrences and the large impact here.

## Results

From January – September 2019, a total of 5,263 HCV Ab rapid tests were performed.



## Results



## Discussion

From January- December 2018, there was a total of 6,211 HCV Ab rapid tests performed. There was a total of 97 HCV Ab+ tests and 57 HCV RNA+ tests. 34 HCV RNA+ individuals injected drugs; 56% were born outside of the birth cohort while 44% were born in the birth cohort.

- Even though universal testing was cut short in the second year, the number of positives is very similar
- There continues to be a growing amount of individuals born outside of the birth cohort testing positive for HCV

## Implications/ Lessons Learned

- Linkage to care best practices has proved to increase HCV RNA+ individuals getting medical care
- Thinking outside the box for education opportunities helps reach individuals that do not even think or know about HCV
- This year Wellness classes were implemented in the El Paso County Jail Annex. These classes included a HCV session for both men and women. Each session began with a pre-test and ended with a post-test. It was found that the pre/post tests helped the attendees focus more on the presentation
- Tackling and finding enhancements to testing and linkage to care challenges continues to be a work in progress

## Conclusions

- Normalizing HCV screenings gives a better opportunity to test the population
- Education is extremely important and has a long lasting effect
- Staff members that are knowledgeable, relatable and very hands-on improve HCV linkage to care
- Harm reduction is an important tool to use for individuals who are not ready for the medical side of HCV
- Universal HCV testing is vital to ending the HCV epidemic

## Next Steps

- Continue working with community partners for complete linkage to care for HCV+ individuals
- Continue providing education to the community
- Strengthen advocacy efforts and include community leaders
- Explore grant opportunities to continue providing universal HCV screenings

## Acknowledgements

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## Works Cited

2-United States Census Bureau. (2019). *QuickFacts El Paso County, Texas*. Census. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/elpasocountytexas>

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