

# A peer response to hepatitis C in persons who inject drugs

The logo for the Virginia Harm Reduction Coalition (VHRC) features the letters 'VHRC' in a white, thin, sans-serif font. The letters are centered within a solid black rectangular background. This black rectangle is set against a white background that has a distressed, ink-splattered appearance with various black spots and smudges. The entire logo is framed by a thin, light brown L-shaped line that starts at the top left and ends at the bottom right.

Virginia Harm Reduction Coalition

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I have no relevant financial relationship within the past 24 months

# Virginia Harm Reduction Coalition (VHRC)

501(c)(3) nonprofit, peer-run organization.



**Mission:** Improve the health of our community.

**How:** advocating for, developing, and implementing evidence-based solutions to address the adverse effects of drug use by providing outreach to marginalized, stigmatized, and criminalized populations, advocating for health policies that address their specific needs.



## Services:

- Benefit enrollment services
- Case management / patient navigation
- HCV and HIV rapid testing
- COVID 19 nasopharyngeal testing
- Overdose education and Naloxone distribution
- Sterile use supplies to prevent infection
- Peer support
- Advocacy
- HIV testing begins October 2020



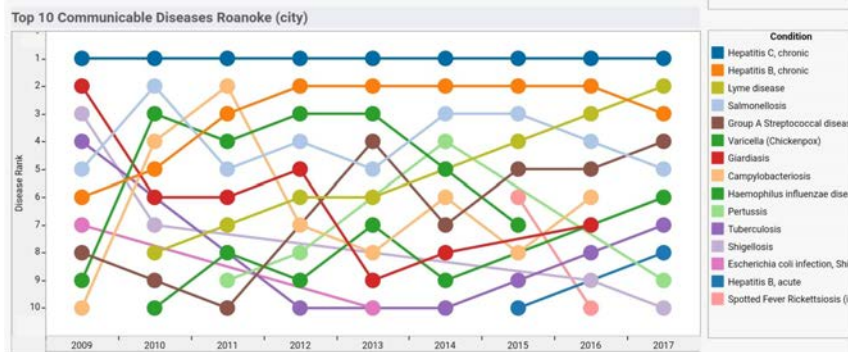
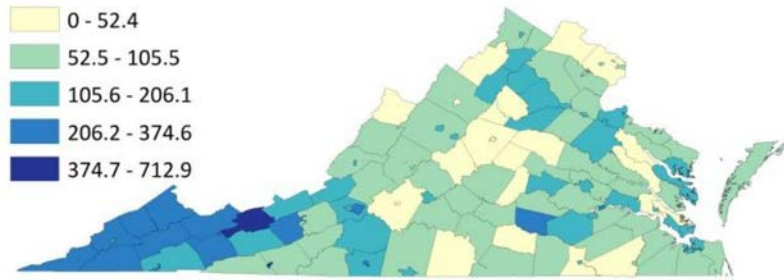
## 2020 Results:

- 1,200 people enrolled in VHRC services
- 42,761 doses of naloxone
- 2,907 reversal reports
- 254,834 syringes distributed
- 322 HCV tests with ~150 reactivities
- 12 people made first HCV appointment, 5 completed treatment

# Cancer prevention

## Through reduction in HCV

Figure 2.2. Reported hepatitis C per 100,000\*



- Hepatocellular Carcinoma (HCC) 9th leading cause of cancer-related death in the US.
  - 2 year mortality rate = 50%
  - 5 year mortality rate = >90% (1)
  - Even without HCC, HCV kills more people in the US than the next 60 leading infectious diseases combined (3)

- Individuals with HCV are 17 times more likely to develop HCC than HCV-naive individuals (2).
- One of the populations with the highest rate of HCV are persons who inject drugs (PWID) with a prevalence of around 70% (4).
- A combination of opiate substitution therapy, high coverage syringe programs, and HCV antiviral treatment can cut HCV prevalence by greater than 50% (5).

1. Golabi, Fazel, Otgonsuren, Sayiner, Locklear, & Younossi, 2017
2. Andrade, Junior, Melo, De Souza, Silva, & Paraná, 2009
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016
4. Latimer, Hedden, Floyd, Lawson, Melnikov, Severtson &...Cole, 2009
5. Martin, Hickman, Hutchinson, Goldberg, & Vickerman, 2014



We Love You. Be Safe. Carry Naloxone.



# Results

- 322 HCV tests with ~150 reactivates
  - Lower positive percentage accounted for by open public testing in addition to PWID
- 12 people made first HCV appointment, 5 completed treatment
  - Partner HCV clinics were severely limited due to COVID19
- 600+ individuals educated about HCV prevention
- 254,834 syringes distributed
  - Along with other sterile safer use materials
- Founding member of Virginia Hepatitis Coalition
  - Develop treatment and testing capacity, policy advocacy
  - Members: Carilion, Virginia Tech School of Medicine students, University of Virginia Telemedicine, Virginia Department of Health, National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable and more

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