



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  

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Community Health Centers



America's Voice for Community Health Care



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## *America's Voice for Community Health Care*

### **The NACHC Mission**

The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) represents Community, Migrant, and Homeless Health Centers, as well as Public Housing Primary Care Programs and other community-based health centers.

Founded in 1970, NACHC is a nonprofit organization providing advocacy, education, training and technical assistance to health centers in support of their mission to provide quality health care to underserved populations.



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# *Hepatitis Services in Community Health Centers*

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March 3, 2009



## Hepatitis Services in Community Health Centers

# *Understanding Community Health Centers*

## 5 Basic Characteristics of Health Centers

There are more than 1,200 community health centers organizations with 7,000 delivery sites providing vital primary care to more than 18 million Americans with limited financial resources

- They are located in high need areas.
- They provide comprehensive care, including physical, mental and dental care.
- Open to all residents, regardless of ability to pay, with sliding scale payments
- Directed by boards with majority consumer membership, health centers focus on meeting the basic health care needs of their individual communities.
- Held to strict performance, accountability standards for administrative, clinical and financial operations





## Community Health Center Benefits

- Community health centers provide substantial benefits to their communities:
  - They serve 20% of low-income, uninsured people.
  - 70% of their patients live in poverty .
  - They save the national health care system between \$9.9 billion and \$17.6 billion a year by helping patients avoid emergency rooms and making better use of preventive services.
  - They serve the homeless, residents of public housing, migrant farm workers and others with emergent and chronic health care needs.



## How Health Centers Make a Difference

- In providing health care to a population that couldn't otherwise afford it, community health centers provide a huge benefit to the greater American society:
  - Highly efficient and cost-effective care, which reduces or eliminates the need for more costly care such as emergency room visits and avoidable hospital stays.
  - Better preventive care, including screening, diagnosis and management of chronic illnesses such as diabetes, asthma, heart and lung disease, depression, cancer and HIV/AIDS.
  - Reduced infant mortality by as much as 40 percent in communities served by a health center, and also reduce rates of low birth weight.
  - Save the Medicaid program as much as 30 percent while still delivering high quality care to their low-income patients enrolled in Medicaid.



## Challenges Faced by Community Health Centers

- Fewer physicians are providing primary care services
  - 56 million Americans lack access to a doctor specifically because of local shortages of primary care physicians. Many of them actually have insurance.
- Growing number of uninsured
  - 47 million patients are currently uninsured
  - Projections put the number of uninsured Americans at 60 million by 2010



# Hepatitis Services in Community Health Centers

*NACHC HCV Initiative*

*Keeping HCV Treatment at  
Home*



## Perceived Scope of Hep C Epidemic in Health Center Patient Populations

Uniform Data System gathers information from community health centers, such as for certain diseases, but to date does not collect information on hepatitis C.

- Estimate 25% of HIV patients co-infected with HCV
- 60 to 80% of HCV infections stem from IV drug use
- Over 360,000 HIV/AIDS encounters at health centers nationwide in 2005
- Nearly 600,000 drug abuse visits at health centers nationwide in 2005



## NACHC HCV Initiative Goals

- Work with community health centers to successfully begin screening, evaluating and treating Hepatitis C patients
- Raise overall awareness of Hepatitis C within community health centers and their patient populations
- Build an HCV Community within community health centers



## NACHC HCV Initiative Overview

- Each participating community health center agreed to commit a clinical team of three to treating HCV.
  - Participating clinicians attended a 2 day HCV educational symposium, with a one year follow-up conference to reinforce learning and provide mentorship to new participants
  - Clinicians participated in a 1-2 preceptorship with a local HCV expert
  - NACHC HCV team provided continued support through operational assistance, additional education, HCV listserv and an educational newsletter
- § NACHC collected data on numbers screened and treated



## NACHC HCV Mentoring Component

- Ongoing dialogue with HCV Team about their confidence and progress to evaluate and treat patients
- Looked at administrative support and challenges as a way to overcome treatment barriers
- Telephone support / E-Newsletter / Web Site
- Ongoing relationship with preceptors or other community experts
- Encouragement to plan for program sustainability
- Acknowledged and shared health center success stories
- NACHC HCV team provided continued support through operational assistance, additional education, HCV listserv and an educational newsletter
- Identified physician mentors to support learning and hands-on experiences



## NACHC HCV Initiative Achievements

- 18 community health center sites are now successfully screening, evaluating and treating HCV
- Over 2,000 patients identified with HCV as part of screening initiative
- Over 220 patients have been treated
- Patients treated increased 178% in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the project
- Patients who did not previously have access to Hepatitis C Treatment are now being treated.

The logo for NACHC (National Association of Community Health Centers) is located in the top left corner of the slide. It features a stylized blue house icon with a person figure inside, and the letters 'NACHC' in a bold, sans-serif font.

## NACHC HCV Initiative Achievements

- Participating health centers are beginning to expand the programs to additional sites
- Patient support and education programs have been either started within the health center or have been identified as resources for patients in the community
- Multi-disciplinaries are working together as a team approach to the management of patients on treatment increasing patient compliance and outcomes
- EMR systems are incorporating screening and tracking tools for hepatitis C



## NACHC HCV Partnerships

- Funded by pharmaceutical grants
- Health Center supported at the operational level
- Mentor partnerships from within the community
- Ryan White Care Act
- Other



## Challenges to Treating Hepatitis C in Community Health Centers

- Given the difficult patient populations community health centers serve, many are not initially eligible for treatment
- General funding for operations of the HCV Initiative (lab costs, liver biopsy)
- Over-worked clinicians and inability to allocate time
- High rates of clinician turnover



## Overcoming the Challenges

- Utilizing the integrated mental health and drug rehabilitation services within the community health centers increases patient eligibility rates and assists with monitoring patients on treatment
- Structuring agreements with suppliers and laboratories to reduce costs of the service line
- Ongoing strategies to sustain the service line and care of patients with hepatitis C
- Providing continued educational support for the clinicians and working with a team of physicians helps ensure the continuation of the service line



## Reproducible Program and Changes

### YES – REPRODUCIBLE!

- An HCV Workbook was developed in order to allow all health centers an opportunity to take a closer look at the components to develop an HCV treatment service line
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### YES – CHANGES IN THE MODEL!

- Implement an RFP process versus internal evaluation and invitation method
- Look at other multi-media partnerships/approaches for ongoing education and training



# Questions?

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