



Early phase implementation of routine opt out hepatitis C testing in the Philadelphia jail system

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BACKGROUND

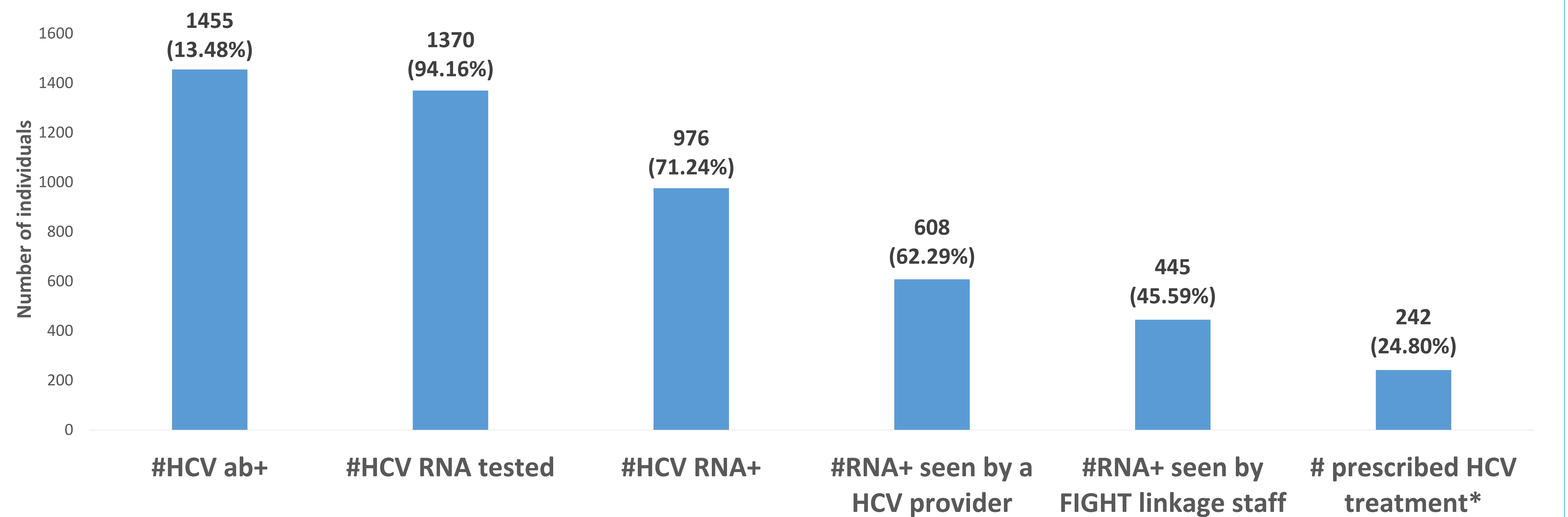
Hepatitis C (HCV) infection disproportionately affects those in United States’ correctional institutions with seroprevalence rates from 17.4-23.1%. Jails have represented a particularly challenging setting for HCV testing and treatment given the short duration of stay and uncertainty of the timing of prisoners’ release. Despite recommendations that all incarcerated persons undergo HCV testing, screening is not universally performed. In the Philadelphia jails, 1463 (7.5%) of the 19395 prisoners in 2018 were screened at sentencing.

METHODS

On September 3, 2019 the Philadelphia jail partnered with Philadelphia FIGHT Community Health Centers to implement routine opt out HCV testing upon intake. Protocols for testing, result delivery and provider follow up were developed in a collaborative manner between the jail and FIGHT. Herein, we report the care continuum resulting from the first eight months of routine opt out screening at intake.

RESULTS

Between September 3, 2019 and May 31, 2020, 11867 individuals entered the jail. 10983 (92.55%) individuals were tested for HCV antibody (ab) upon entry. The figure illustrates the care continuum of those screening positive for HCV antibodies.



*100 individuals left jail before completing treatment.

CONCLUSIONS

Establishment of routine opt out HCV screening in a jail setting resulted in more than 90% of individuals entering the jail being screened for HCV. Short duration of incarceration, the need for rapid result delivery, increased linkage coordinator visits, and coordination of treatment between the jail and the community are challenges that must be addressed for successful program implementation in a jail setting. Collaboration between health care providers in the correctional system and community is necessary to coordinate HCV services in a high volume, high turnover urban jail.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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