



Provision of Hepatitis C Care in a Federally Qualified Health Center during the COVID-19 Pandemic

A. RIPKIN¹, J. ANDERSON¹, J. EVANS¹, J. KOSTMAN¹, L. MAGALDI, ¹T. PRESTON¹, R. RIVERA¹, N. ROSARIO¹, S. TROOSKIN^{1,2}
¹Philadelphia FIGHT Community Health Centers, Philadelphia, PA ²Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

BACKGROUND

Philadelphia FIGHT Community Health Centers, a Federally Qualified Health Center, transitioned to a patient centered model of hepatitis C (HCV) care and social service provision that responded to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

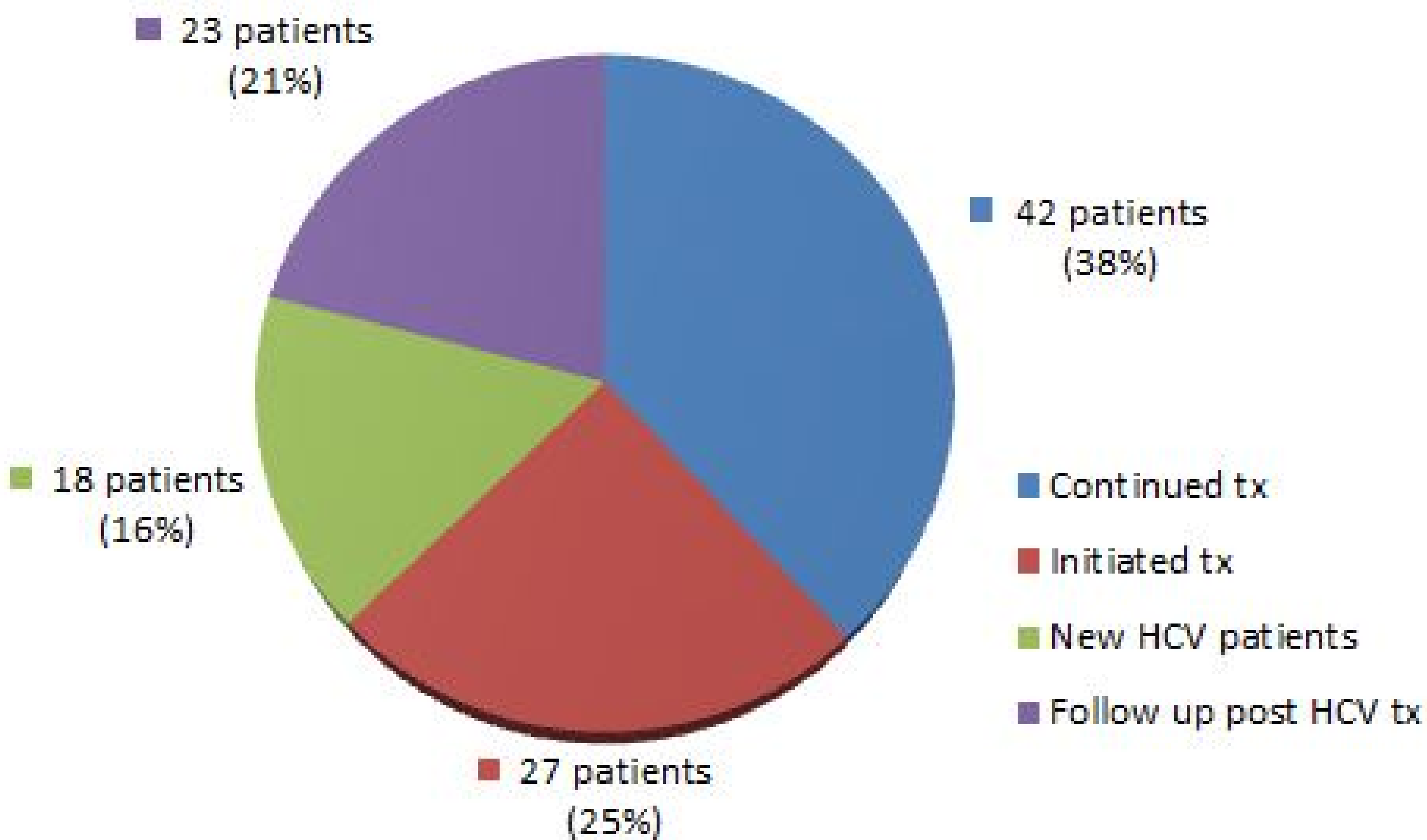
METHODS

Beginning on March 15, 2020, the FIGHT HCV program initiated a comprehensive approach to providing HCV care for patients who had (1) begun HCV treatment, (2) been previously engaged in HCV care but had not yet started treatment, (3) were new patients to the clinic, and (4) had completed treatment but were not yet evaluated for SVR or had other medical needs. Interventions included outreach for medication delivery, audio and video telehealth appointments to support medication adherence, and collaboration with inpatient and outpatient substance use treatment facilities. A weekly multidisciplinary team “huddle” was maintained to determine the status of all HCV infected patients.

TABLE 1. Demographics of patients who attended appointments between 3/15/2020 and 6/15/2020

	Percentage of Total (N=290)
Female (n=93)	32%
Male (n=195)	67%
Transgender (n=2)	1%
Hispanic (n=44)	15%
Non-Hispanic (n=246)	85%
Other race/Don't know (n=30)	10%
Black/African American (n=80)	28%
White (n=180)	62%
Baby boomers (n=85)	29%
Non-baby boomers (n=205)	71%

FIGURE 1. Distribution of patients living with chronic Hepatitis C who attended in-person and telehealth appointments at John Bell Health Center between 3/15/2020 and 6/15/2020 (N=110)



CONCLUSIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced changes in the management of chronic HCV infection. In our FQHC, a team approach has enabled us to continue HCV treatment in patients who started therapy prior to the pandemic, begin HCV treatment for new patients and those previously engaged in care, and follow up with previously treated patients to ensure achievement of SVR and encourage harm reduction tools to avoid HCV reinfection. The strategies implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic will allow for continued expansion of HCV treatment efforts post pandemic.

RESULTS

BETWEEN MARCH 15, 2020 AND JUNE 15, 2020:

290 Total patients with in person or telehealth appointments at John Bell Health Center

110 Patients with diagnosis of chronic hepatitis C (38%)

42 Patients previously initiated HCV treatment and maintained on treatment

27 Patients previously engaged in medical clinic initiated HCV treatment

18 New patients diagnosed with chronic HCV → **3** new patients initiated

23 Patients previously treated for HCV had follow up medical appointment and SVR labs

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was supported in part by grant funding through the Frontlines of Communities in the United States (FOCUS), Gilead Sciences. FOCUS funding supports HIV, HCV, and HBV screening and linkage to the first medical appointment after diagnosis; FOCUS funding does not support any activities beyond the first medical appointment and is agnostic to how FOCUS partners handle subsequent patient care and treatment.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Alexandra Ripkin, MPH MSW
aripkin@fight.org