

Rates of Hepatitis C Virus Testing among US Veterans in Department of Veterans Affairs Care, 2011

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Background and Objective

- In August 2012, CDC issued a recommendation for
“one-time testing without prior ascertainment of HCV risk for persons born during 1945-1965, a population with a disproportionately high prevalence of HCV infection and related disease.”
- We sought to assess the extent to which Veterans in recent VA care – particularly those Veterans born between 1945-1965 – have been tested for HCV

Methods

- Data Source
 - VA's Corporate Data Warehouse (CDW) which includes birth date, sex, race, ethnicity and VA laboratory tests for Veterans who have received VA Care
 - VA laboratory data in CDW from 1 October 1999 to the present
- Study design – Retrospective cohort analysis
 - Cohort: Veterans with at least one VA outpatient visit in 2011
 - For each Veteran in the cohort, we determined if the Veteran ever had VA HCV testing through 31 December 2011
 - Any HCV antibody (including RIBA), viral load or genotype test at any VA facility qualified as “HCV testing”

Results

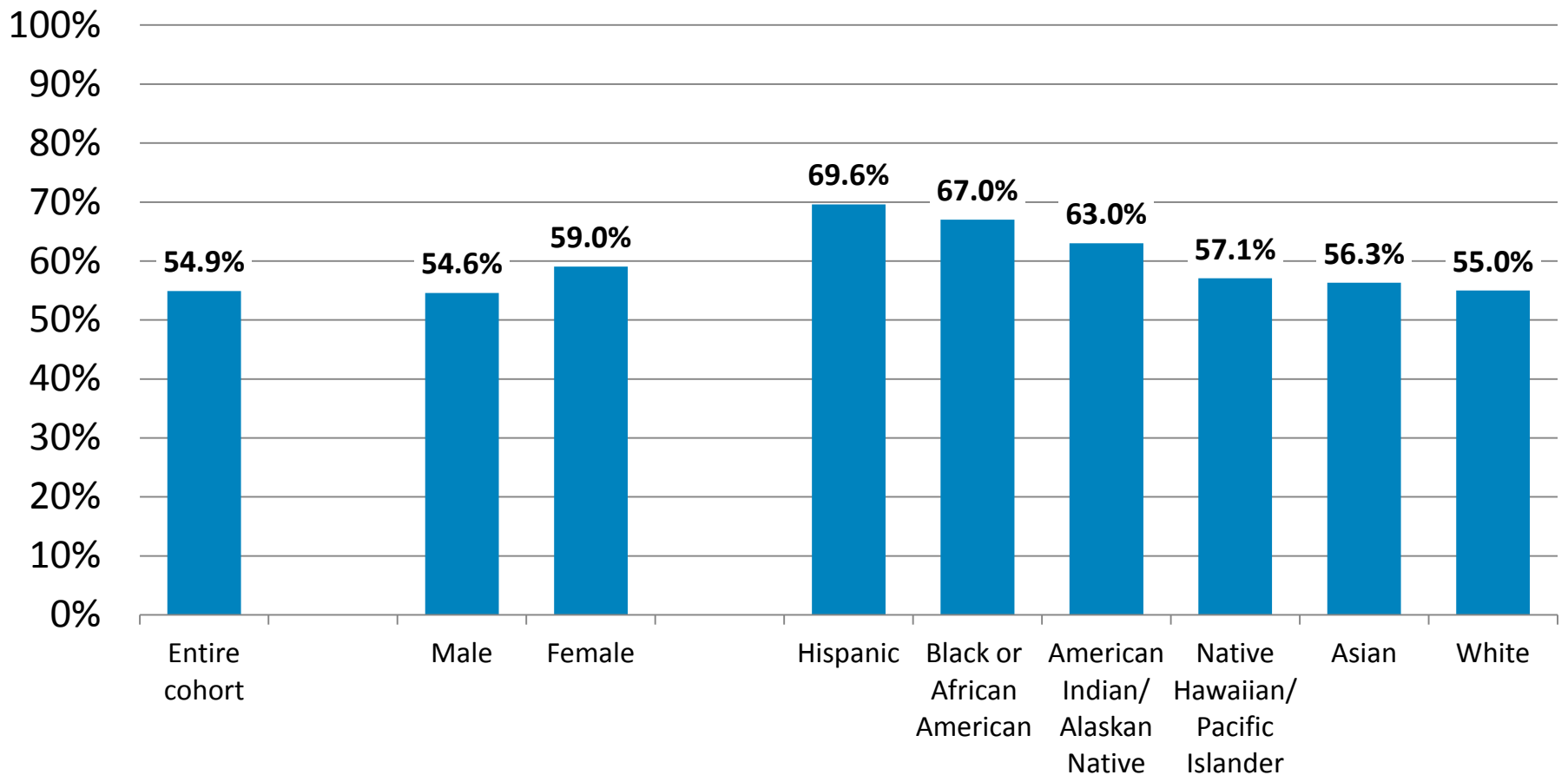
Cohort: Veterans with VA Outpatient Visit in 2011

- 5,415,084 Veterans with VA outpatient visit in 2011

		n (%)
Sex	Male	5,076,760 (93.8%)
	Female	338,294 (6.2%)
Race/ethnicity	American Indian/Alaskan Native	36,631 (0.7%)
	Asian	42,045 (0.8%)
	Black	794,431 (14.7%)
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	36,130 (0.7%)
	Hispanic	302,782 (5.6%)
	White	3,452,352 (63.8%)
	Other/mixed/unknown	660,767 (12.2%)
Birth cohort	Born before 1945	2,168,386 (40.0%)
	Born 1945-1965	2,439,792 (45.1%)
	Born after 1965	806,231 (14.9%)

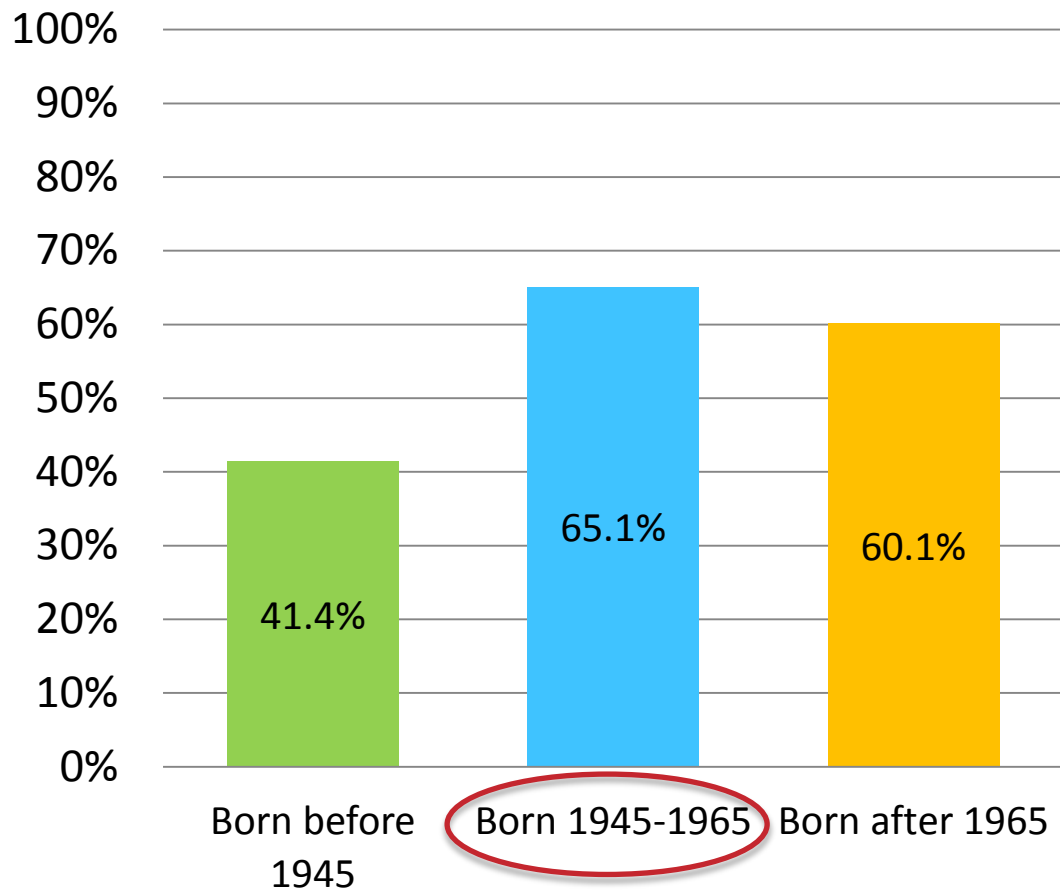
HCV Testing Rates – Entire Cohort

Sex and Race/Ethnicity



HCV Testing Rates

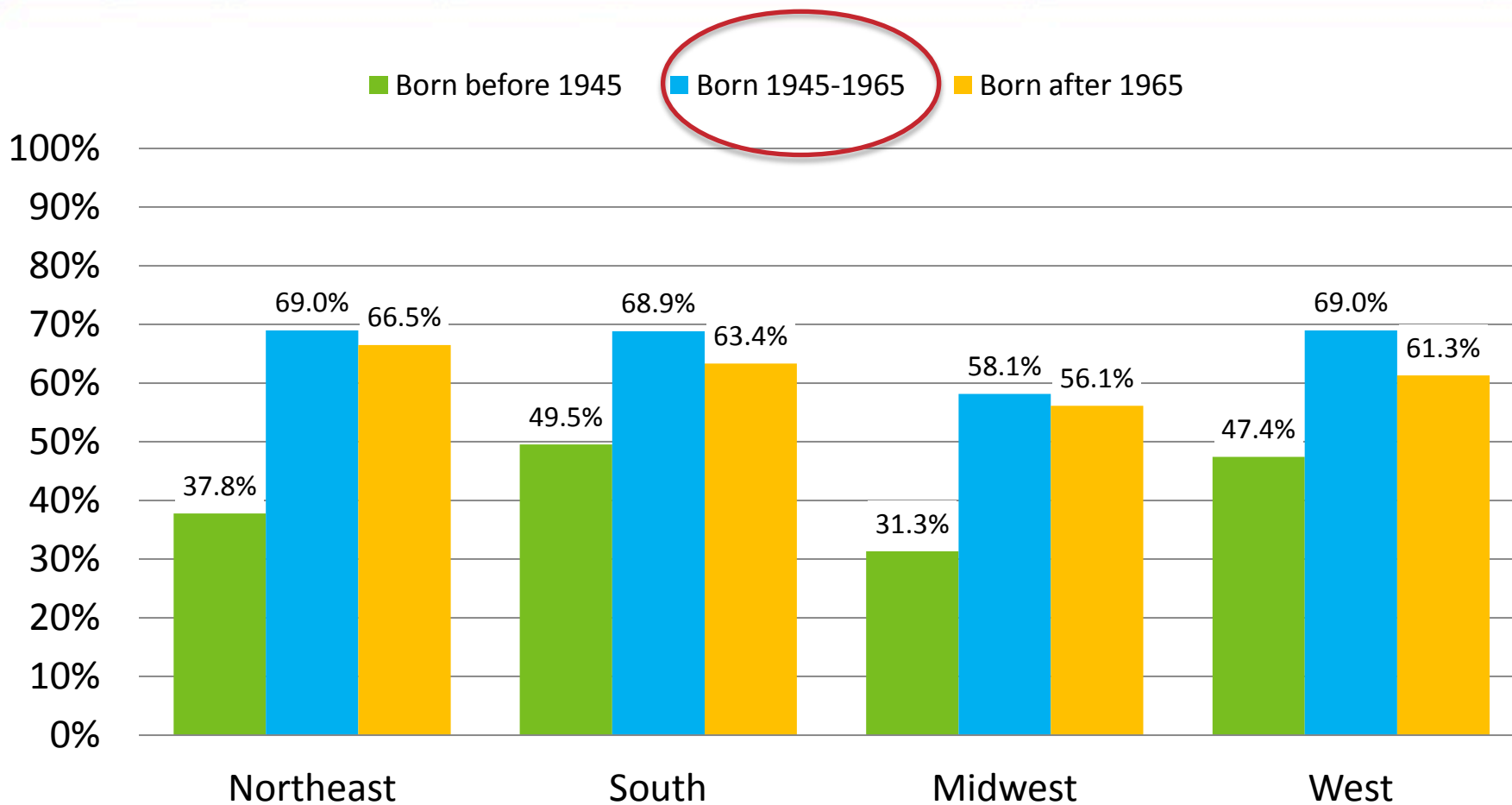
Birth cohort



- VA HCV testing rate was highest for the Veterans born between 1945 and 1965
- Nevertheless, 34.9% (n=851,212) of Veterans born 1945-1965 did not have VA HCV testing

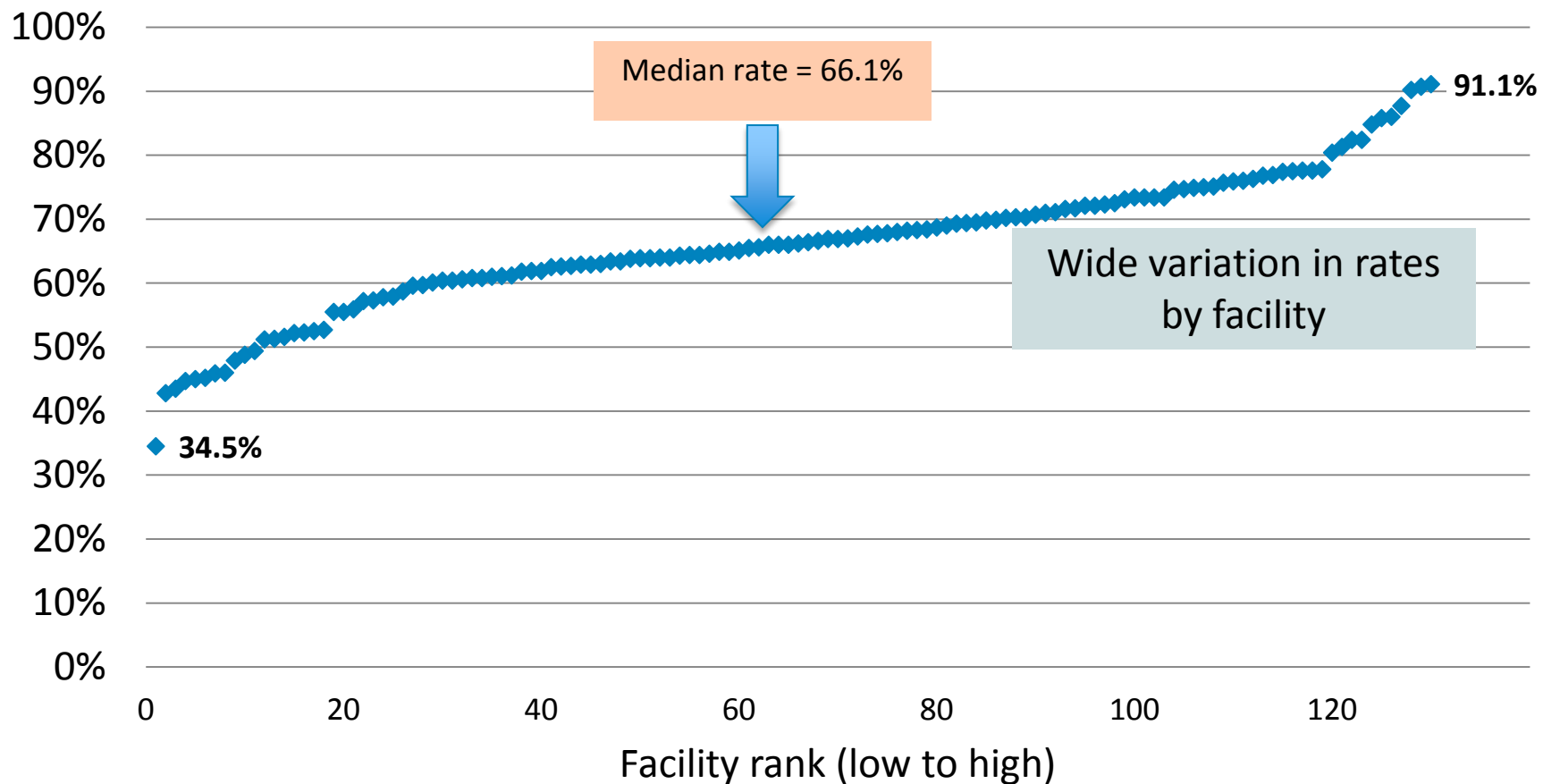
HCV Testing Rates

CDC Region



HCV Testing Rates

VA Health Care Systems (n=130)



Limitations

- VA HCV testing rates are likely underestimated in CDW data
 - HCV testing performed outside VA is not captured in CDW
 - HCV testing performed within VA but prior to 1 October 1999 is not captured in CDW

Summary and Implications

- VA HCV testing rates among Veterans with VA outpatient care in 2011 were highest among those born 1945-1965 (65.1%) even prior to the CDC birth cohort guideline
- Nevertheless, a substantial number of Veterans in this birth cohort (over 850,000) still require HCV testing to meet the new CDC recommendations
- Wide variation exists in HCV testing rates within the target birth cohort across VA health care systems
 - Extremely high performance (>90%) has been achieved at some facilities which suggests that such high performance can be achieved across the VA
 - Extremely low performance at some facilities suggests the need for facility specific assessments and possibly interventions
- Full adoption of birth cohort testing is likely to reveal substantial numbers of Veterans in VA care with previously undiagnosed HCV infections