

# Catching Hepatitis C: Universal Hepatitis C Screening in a Primary Care Setting in California's Central Valley

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## Background

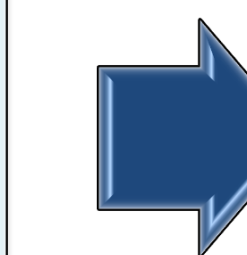
- Approximately 40% of chronic hepatitis C (HCV) patients are unaware of their diagnosis.
- The ongoing opioid crisis fueled the spread of HCV with incidence tripling between 2011-2016. The rates of intravenous and intranasal drug use in California's Central Valley are among the highest in the nation.
- Many Central Valley residents are socioeconomically disadvantaged, have poor health literacy and limited access to care.
- Identification and treatment of HCV is imperative to prevent morbidity and mortality as well as the spread of infection.



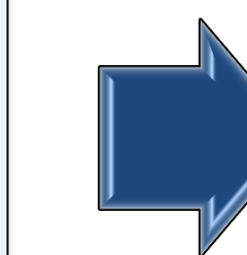
## Methods

A universal HCV screening program was implemented in the internal medicine and family medicine teaching clinics at a large federally qualified health center in the Central Valley.

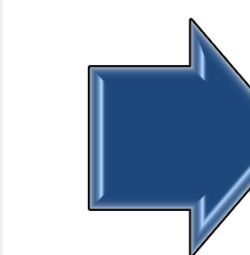
Eligible patients are identified by the EMR based on current CDC guidelines for HCV screening



An automatic prompt alerts provider and HCV labs (HCV Ab reflex to genotype and RNA level) are auto-populated and signed at the end of the visit



Project team members routinely check screening results for positive RNA levels

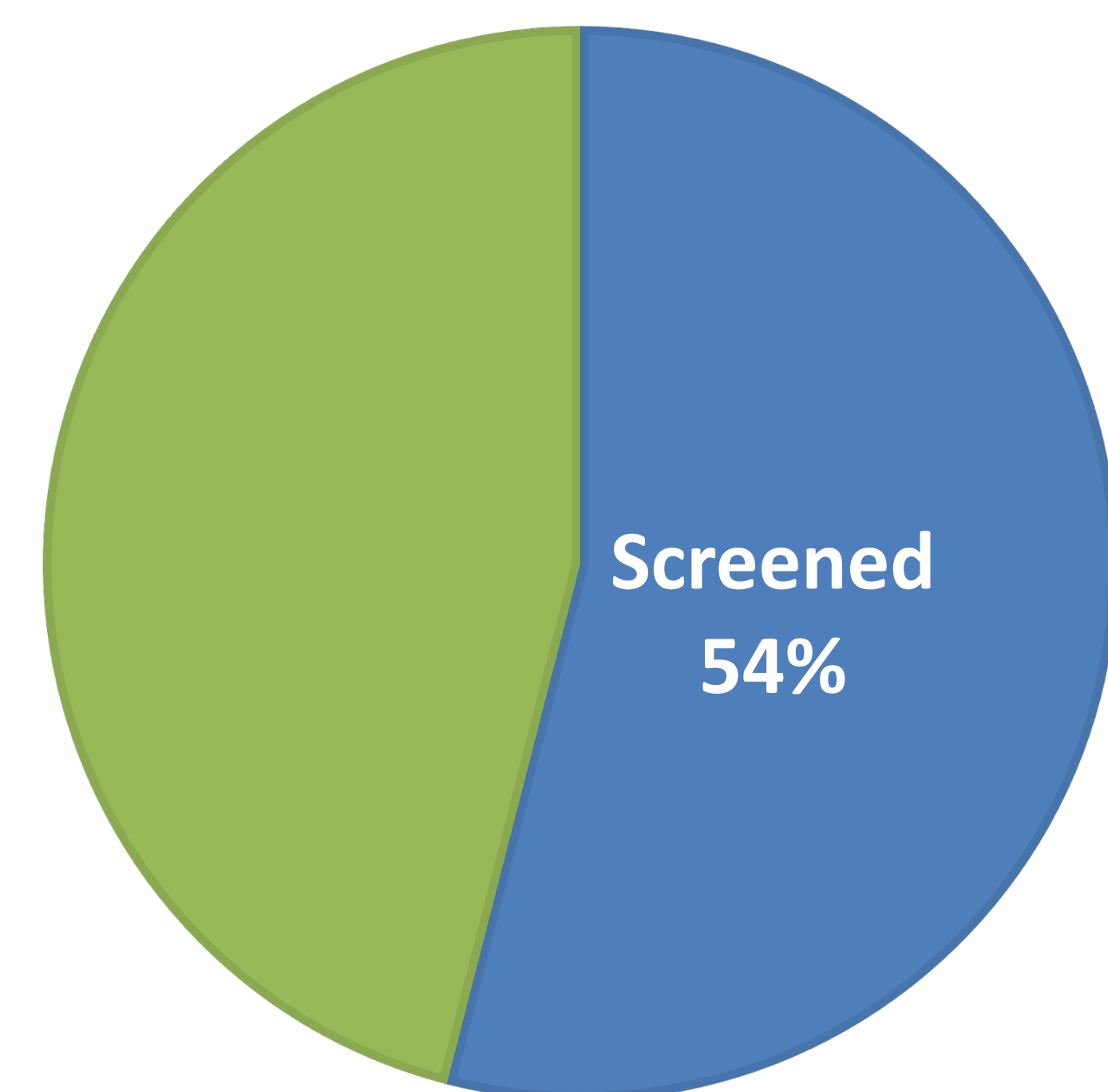


Patients with active HCV infection are contacted by the project coordinator and linked to care with provider experienced in treating HCV

## Results

Universal screening was implemented on July 1, 2021. The data presented here was collected between July 1, 2021 and November 30, 2021.

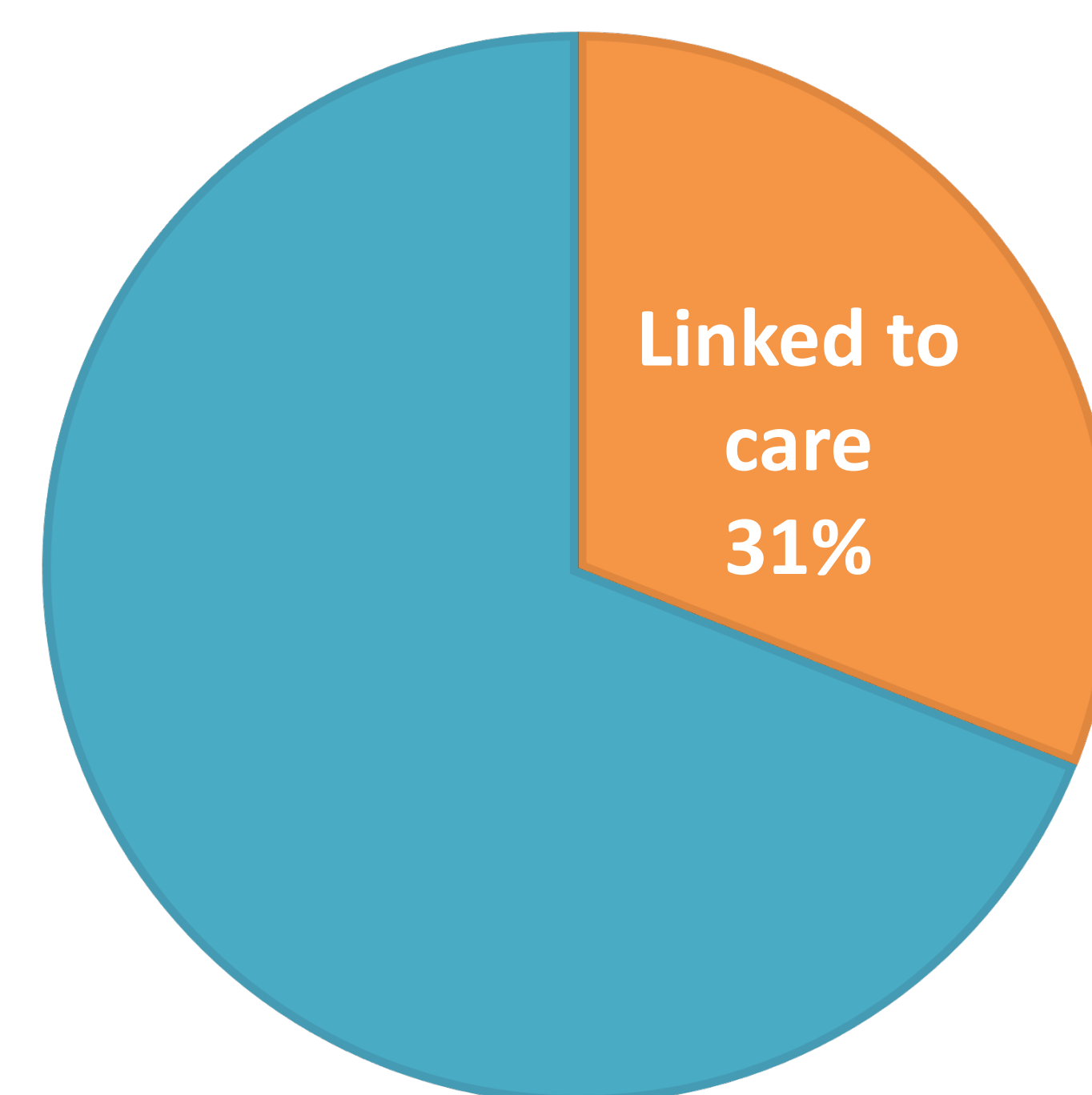
### Before Universal Screening



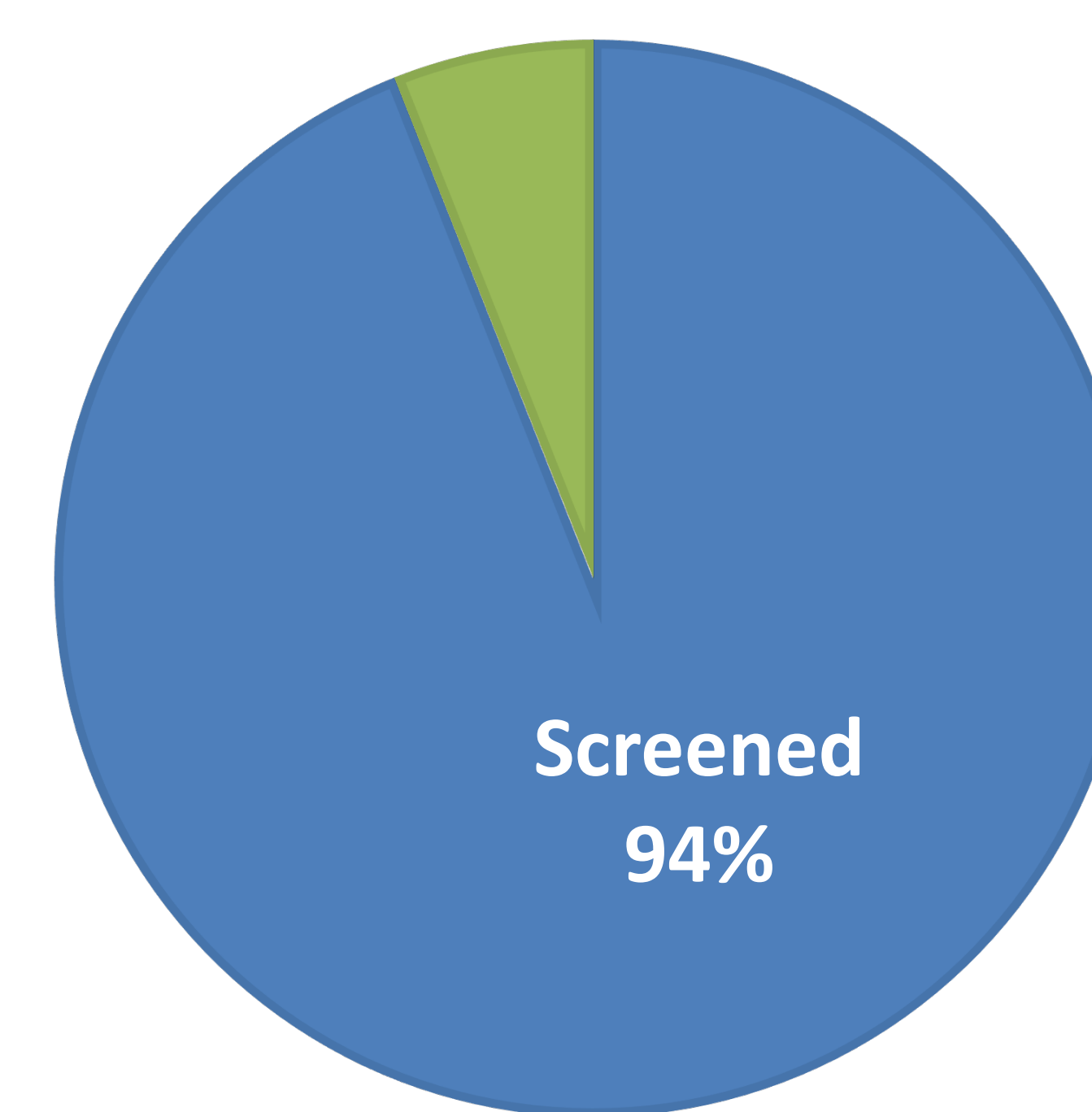
**Figure 1A:** 54% of eligible patients (644 of 1180) were screened in a 12 month period.

- Twenty-three patients tested positive for HCV Ab and 11 patients (9 male and 2 female) tested positive for HCV RNA.
- The majority of HCV RNA positive patients were Hispanic (36%) and African American (27%).
- The most common genotype was 1a (45%).

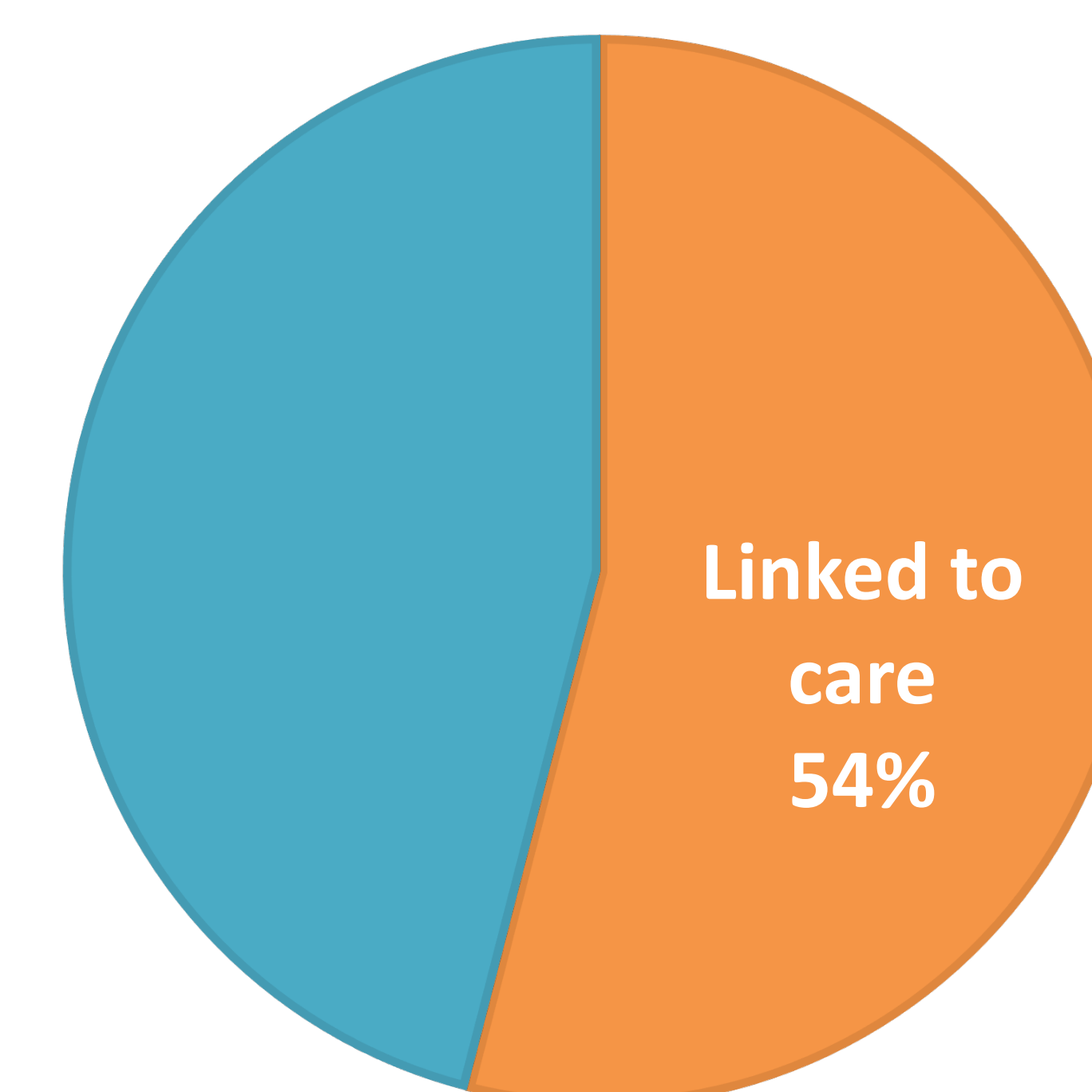
### After Universal Screening



**Figure 1B:** 31% of positive HCV patients (8 of 26) were linked to care. (defined as completion of the first medical appointment).



**Figure 2A:** 94% of eligible patients (1084 of 1152) were screened within a 5 month period.



**Figure 2B:** 54% of positive HCV patients (6 of 11) were linked to care.

## Conclusion

- Prior to the implementation of universal screening, only 54% eligible patients were screened in a 12-month period (Figure 1A).
- Based on preliminary data, we screened 94% eligible patients within a 5-month period.
- In addition, only 31% of HCV patients prior to universal screening were linked to care compared to the 54% linked to care through our initiative (Figure 1B, Figure 2B).
- Our project encouraged providers to screen patients which helped identify HCV in the community.
- Although data collection is ongoing, we suspect this initiative will surpass the total number of patients screened and linked to care compared to previous practices.

## References

- Schillie, S., Wester, C., Osborne, M., Wesolowski, L. and Ryerson, A., 2022. *CDC Recommendations for Hepatitis C Screening Among Adults — United States, 2020*

*Disclaimer: FOCUS funding supports HIV, HCV, and HBV screening and linkage to the first appointment after diagnosis. FOCUS partners do not use FOCUS awards for activities beyond linkage to the first appointment.*