Samaritan Ministry

Why HCV?

A Small Agency with a Big Footprint

Samaritan Ministry, a small HIV Service Organization in Knoxville, TN, has been working since mid-2013 to advocate for increased awareness around the Hepatitis C (HCV) epidemic. With trainings and workshops, community stakeholder meetings, and HCV antibody testing, Samaritan Ministry has had an impact on how the Tennessee Department of Health is acting and reacting to this epidemic. Great progress had been made during this time.

1) The Tennessee Department of Health has created a dedicated HCV staff to address this epidemic.
2) All Tennessee Public Health Departments are now testing for Hepatitis C.
3) Tennessee passed a Syringe Exchange Bill in 2017.
4) Agencies across Tennessee have received Hepatitis training and are conducting HCV antibody testing.

Why is an HIV/AIDS Service Organization getting into Hepatitis C testing and training?

First, many people living with HIV are also living with HCV (as many as 25%) and there are common vulnerabilities for both. HCV is at epidemic proportions in the U.S. and Tennessee (our home state) is having an HCV crisis. In **July 2015,** the Tennessee Department of Health issued a Public Health Alert regarding Hepatitis C.

We are also concerned, as a Christian organization, with the social justice implications of a disease that seems to be affecting the injection drug user population in significant numbers. **Who will speak up and advocate for this voiceless group?**

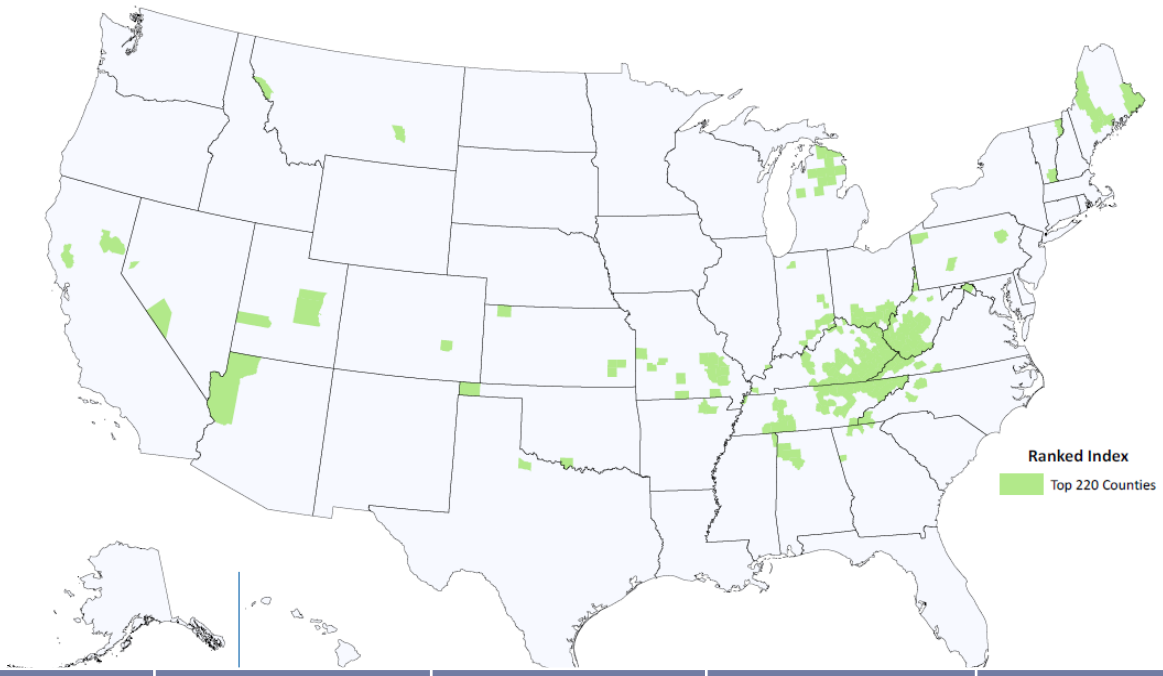
Our HCV antibody testing, using the OraQuick HCV Rapid Antibody Test, has been successful in helping to identify the problem. Keeping in mind that we have been testing people who are likely to have been exposed, such as those in recovery, the formerly incarcerated, and those experiencing homelessness, our statistics have been amazing. (See chart on opposite page.)

The map of the U.S., provided by the CDC, illustrates the top 220 counties in the United States that have the highest vulnerability for outbreak of HIV and HCV, primarily based on rural injection drug use.

Is your organization engaged in the HCV epidemic? Call us to find out how!

Vulnerability to Rapid Dissemination of HIV/HCV Infections Among Persons Who Inject Drugs: Ranked index using regression model coefficients

26 States with 1 or more vulnerable counties



YEAR	NUMBER TESTED	IDENTIFY AS IDU	POSITIVE RESULT	% POSITIVE
2013	81	23	19	23%
2014	217	89	68	31%
2015	146	53	49	34%
2016	534	268	195	37%
2017	632	328	251	40%
2018	770	357	245	32%
2019	709	315	229	32%
2020	195	86	68	35%
2021	140	28	29	21%
2022	303	70	84	28%
2023	496	132	144	31%
2024	340	109	119	35%
2025	329	81	84	26%
TOTALS	**4892**	**1939**	**1584**	**32%**