

The New York City Health Department collaborates to improve hepatitis C screening and navigation services to underserved population in New York City

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Background

Approximately 86,000 people were living with hepatitis C virus (HCV) in New York City as of 2019, 40% of whom are undiagnosed.¹ HCV can lead to liver failure if left untreated.

The NYC Health Department's Viral Hepatitis Program (VHP) provides outreach to engage, connect, and support individuals to achieve HCV cure. In 2021, HCV screening was expanded to all patients at NYC Health Department Sexual Health Clinics (SHC).

VHP and SHC collaborated to improve HCV care engagement through increasing HCV screening at SHC and referring to VHP for culturally and linguistically competent multilingual telephone patient navigation services.

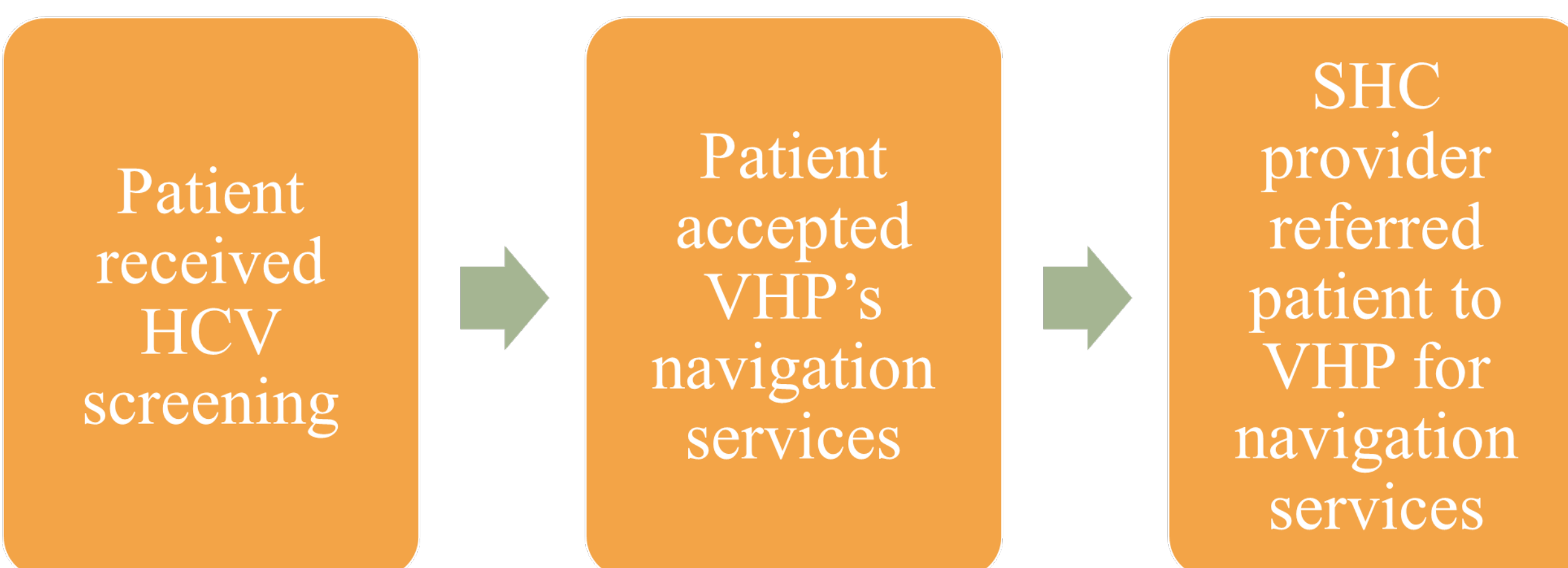
Description of model of care

People who tested positive for HCV at SHC and agreed to receive VHP navigation services were referred to VHP for linkage to HCV care and supportive services, including harm reduction, medication-assisted treatment, and overdose prevention education.

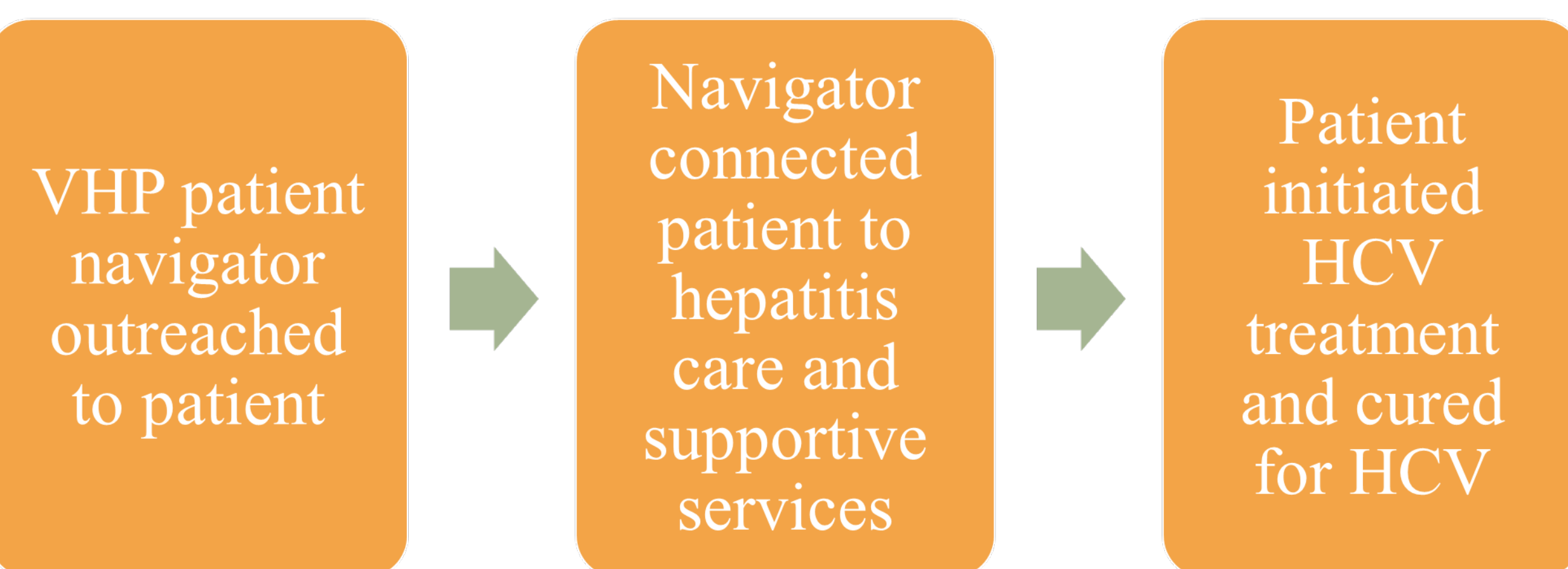
Referrals to VHP were provided by phone and at least three outreach attempts were made. Test history and linkage to care outcomes were entered into the NYC Health Department surveillance system.

Referral Process

NYC Sexual Health Clinics (SHC)



Viral Hepatitis Program (VHP)

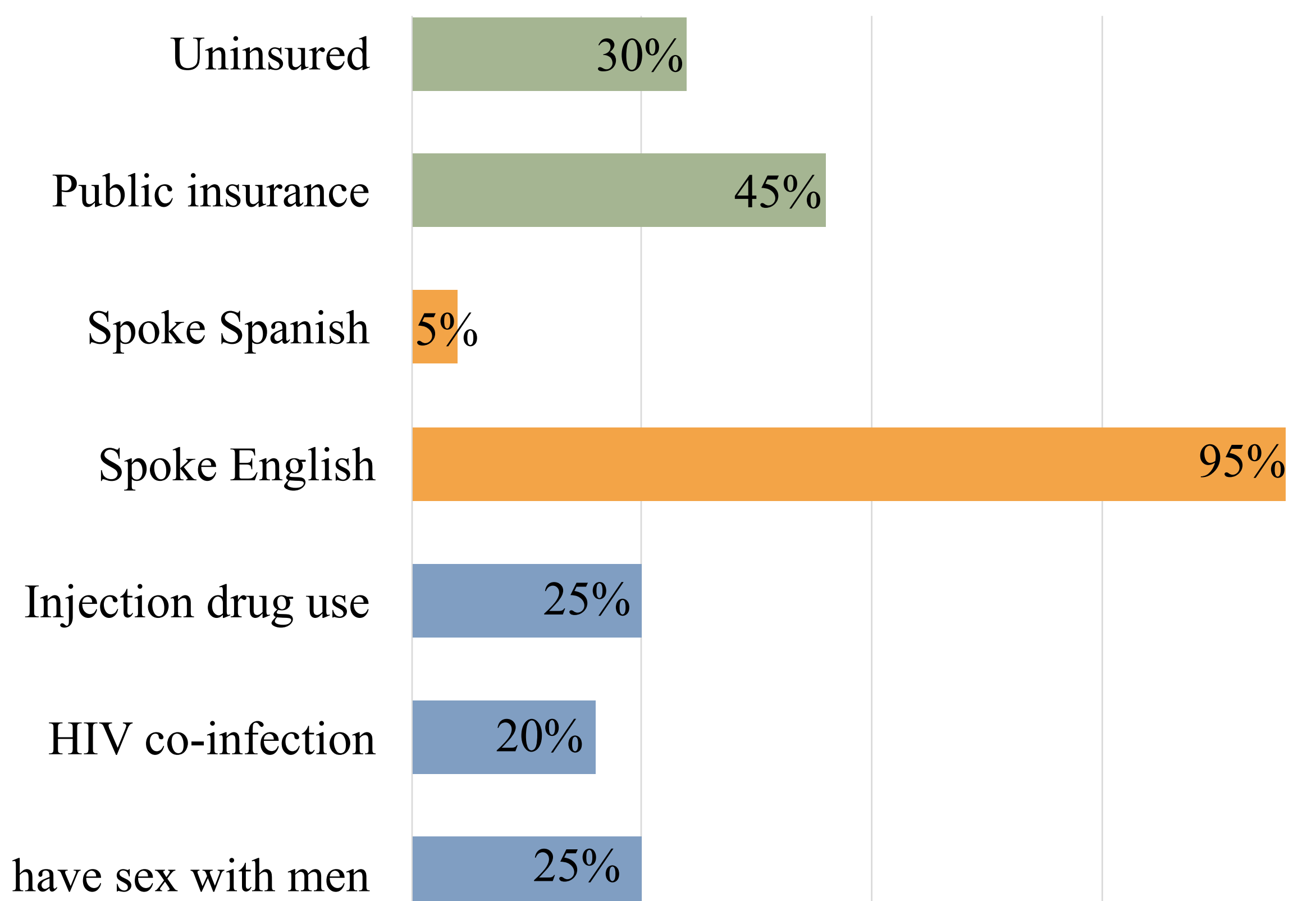


Effectiveness

During the first implementation period (March 2021–June 2021), 5,926 people were screened for HCV at SHC. The demographics of people who tested HCV-positive were similar to those who tested negative; however, a higher proportion of people who tested positive were Black, or Latino and the median age was 40 years compared with 29 years.

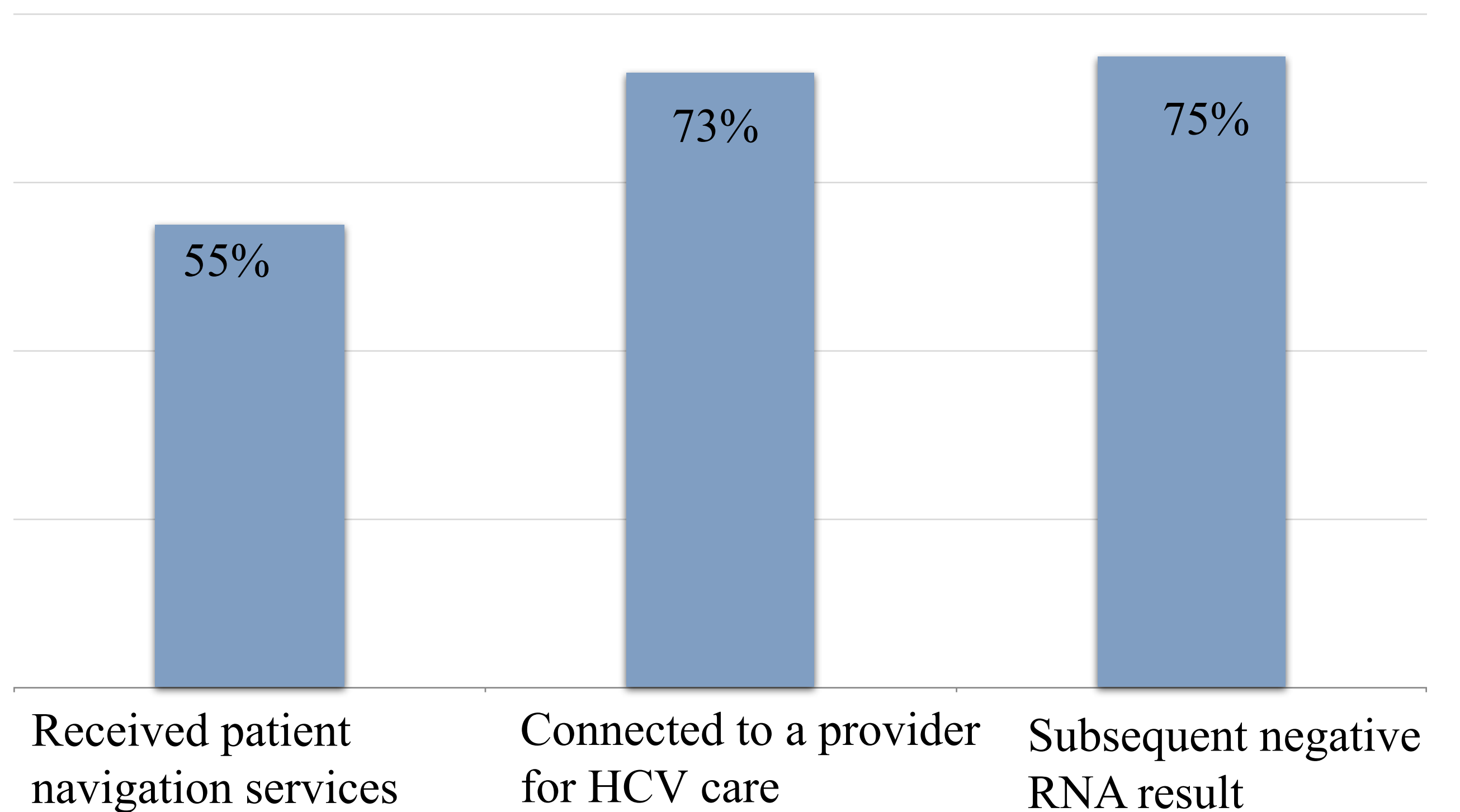
From March 2021–February 2022, 20 people with HCV were referred to VHP: 5 (25%) were men who have sex with men; 4 (20%) had HIV co-infection; 5 (25%) had history of injection drug use; 19 (95%) spoke English; 1 (5%) spoke Spanish; 9 (45%) had public insurance and 6 (30%) were uninsured.

Characteristics among people referred to VHP



Among those referred to VHP, 11 (55%) people received patient navigation services from VHP, 8 (73%) people were connected to a provider for HCV care, and 6 people (75%) had a subsequent negative HCV RNA result after receiving patient navigation services.

Number of people who were referred to VHP



This collaboration allowed for underserved populations to receive culturally and linguistically competent navigation services in a setting without on-site HCV care and treatment.

Contact

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References

1. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, *Hepatitis A, B and C in New York City: 2021 Annual Report*. Long Island City, NY. To be published fall 2022.