



# Viral Hepatitis B in North Carolina, 2020

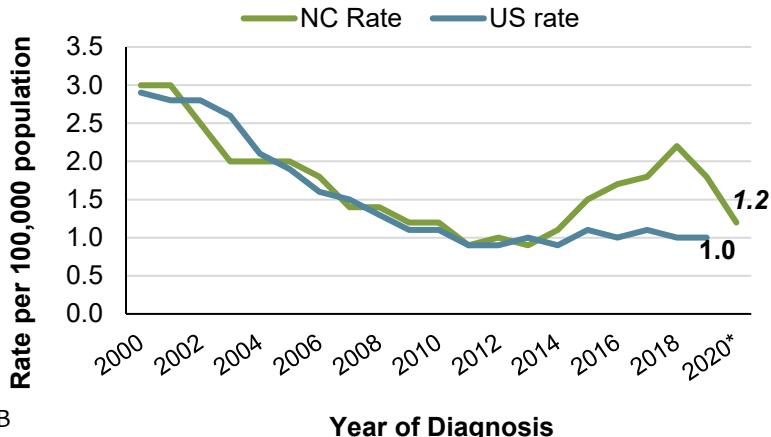
## Acute hepatitis B rates in NC are higher than the US rate

### Acute Hepatitis B

- 131 acute hepatitis B cases were reported in 2020\*, with a rate of 1.2 per 100,000 population.
- Acute HBV rates in North Carolina are higher than the national average.
- About 10% of acutely infected adults will develop chronic hepatitis B.

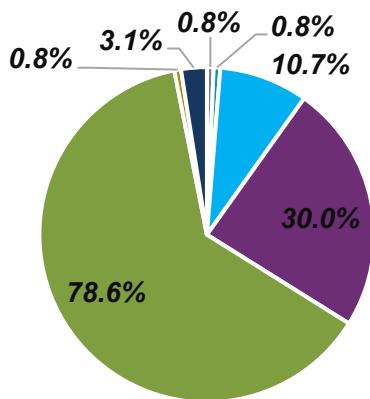
### Chronic Hepatitis B

- There were 26,299 people living in North Carolina with confirmed diagnosis of chronic hepatitis B at the end of 2020\*.
- 768 people were diagnosed with chronic hepatitis B in 2020\*.

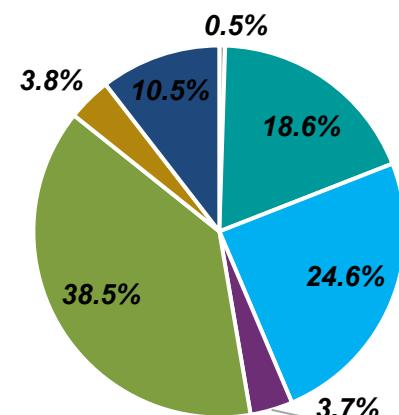


The majority of people with acute hepatitis B are White/Caucasian, while chronic hepatitis B is more evenly distributed among race/ethnicity groups

### Acute Hepatitis B



### Chronic Hepatitis B

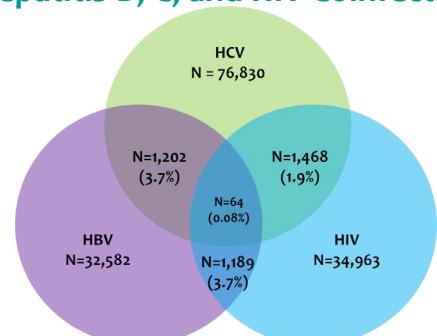


\*Non-Hispanic/LatinX

### Reported Risk Factors

- Injection drug use (IDU) has been a growing risk factor for acute hepatitis B in North Carolina.
- In 2020\*, IDU was reported by approximately 42% of people with acute hepatitis B and 10% of people diagnosed with chronic hepatitis B. Almost a third of acute hepatitis B reported non-IDU.
- Being infected with hepatitis C or HIV is also an indicator of risk for hepatitis B infection; people with these diseases should be tested and, if not infected, vaccinated for hepatitis B.

### Hepatitis B, C, and HIV Coinfection



\*Note: 2020 data should be treated with caution due to reduced availability of testing caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Data is italicized for this reason.

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Created by the HIV/STD/Hepatitis Surveillance Unit

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## Hepatitis B Causes and Symptoms

Hepatitis B is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). For some people (5-10% of infected persons), short term infection leads to lifelong (chronic) HBV infection, which can result in severe liver disease, liver damage, liver cancer and even death.

HBV symptoms include fatigue, poor appetite, abdominal pain, fever, nausea, vomiting, occasional joint pain, hives or rash. Urine may become darker in color, and jaundice (yellowing of the skin and/or the whites of the eyes) may appear.

Symptoms, although rare in occurrence, may last for several weeks to about six months after exposure.

People with hepatitis B should be vaccinated against hepatitis A.

## How is it transmitted?

Hepatitis B is spread when bodily fluids infected with the hepatitis B virus enter the body of a person who is not infected. Bodily fluids can include:

- Blood
- Semen
- Vaginal fluids



## Who is at risk?

- People who use or have used drugs
- People living with or sexually active with an infected person
- Men who have sex with men
- People who have hepatitis C and/or HIV
- Infants born to mothers who have hepatitis B

## Hepatitis B Prevention

- **VACCINATE!** Hepatitis B vaccine and hepatitis A/B combination vaccine are available at your local health department. Twinrix hepatitis A/B vaccine is available at no cost for patients who have not received a documented full HBV series of vaccine. For more information, visit Centers for Disease Control and Prevention resource websites: <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hbv/vaccchildren.htm> and <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hbv/vaccadults.htm>.
- **Get Tested!** Risk-based testing for hepatitis B is available through all local health departments at no cost.
- Safer sex practices such as using condoms and ensuring both partners are tested before having sex prevent hepatitis B.
- Never share drug use equipment; instead, utilize syringe access programs and clean surfaces with 10% bleach solution.
  - The North Carolina Viral Hepatitis Program, within the Communicable Disease Branch, has created a regional drug user health resource guide. It contains region-specific information on low cost/free clinics, housing, food pantry and community means, hepatitis treatment providers, and syringe access programs. The guide is available online: [https://epi.dph.ncdhs.gov/cd/hepatitis/DrugUserHealthResourceGuide\\_08102021.pdf](https://epi.dph.ncdhs.gov/cd/hepatitis/DrugUserHealthResourceGuide_08102021.pdf).
  - The North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition (<http://www.nchrc.org/>) provides harm reduction materials to syringe access programs and community-based organizations to prevent transmission of hepatitis B.
  - The Injury and Violence Prevention Branch, within the Division of Public Health, oversees the North Carolina Safer Syringe Initiative. For more information, please visit: <https://www.ncdhs.gov/divisions/public-health/north-carolina-safer-syringe-initiative>.



Data Sources: North Carolina Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NC EDSS) (data as of August 1, 2021), enhanced HIV/AIDS Reporting System (eHARS) (data as of June 28, 2021), Surveillance for Viral Hepatitis, United States, 2000-2019 CDC reports (<https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/statistics/index.htm>).