



ECHO Idaho: Opioid Addiction and Treatment

Harm Reduction: Idaho's Needle Exchange Law

February 27, 2020

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The speaker has no relevant financial relationship(s) to disclose.

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Learning Objectives

- At the end of this presentation, it's my hope that participants will...
 - understand the rationale for providing syringe access services
 - understand the impact Idaho's 2019 *Syringe and Needle Exchange Act* has on providing syringe services in Idaho
 - be better prepared to navigate the political complexities that exist concerning syringe exchange in Idaho.

A close-up photograph of a young woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a blue shirt. She has a white needle in her mouth and is holding a small white vial with her right hand. Her left hand is heavily stained with blood. The background is dark and out of focus.

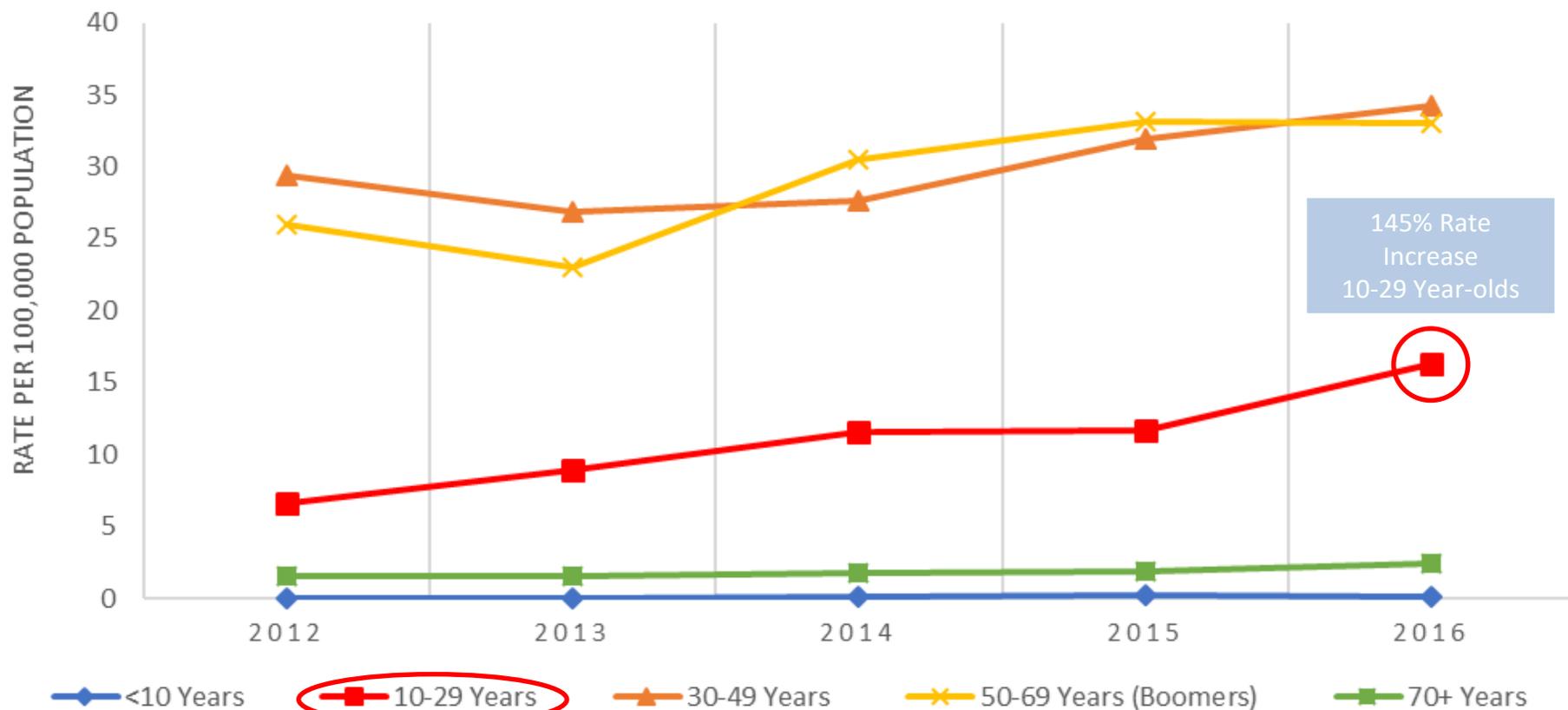
Injection drug
use is a problem
in Idaho...
and it's fueling
the spread of
blood borne
pathogens.

- Heroin use in Idaho equals the national average, but Idaho has the fifth highest rate of pain reliever misuse in the country (CBHSQ, 2017).
- Arrests for drug-related crimes in Idaho increased from 12,496 in 2008 to 26,936 in 2018 (IDHW, 2020).
- 82.4% of the 244 heroin users and 51.9% of the 1,203 meth users admitted to publicly funded substance abuse treatment programs in Idaho reported injection drug use (IDHW, 2020).
- 22.4% of people detected as HIV positive in ID between 2008 and 2017 reported injecting drugs previously (IDHW 2020).
- Injection drug use is the most common cause of HCV transmission in the US
 - About 1/3 of 18-30 year old injection drug users are estimated to be infected
 - Up to 90% of older or former injection drug users (those who injected drugs in the 1970s or 1980s) are estimated to be infected (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016)

Emerging Population?

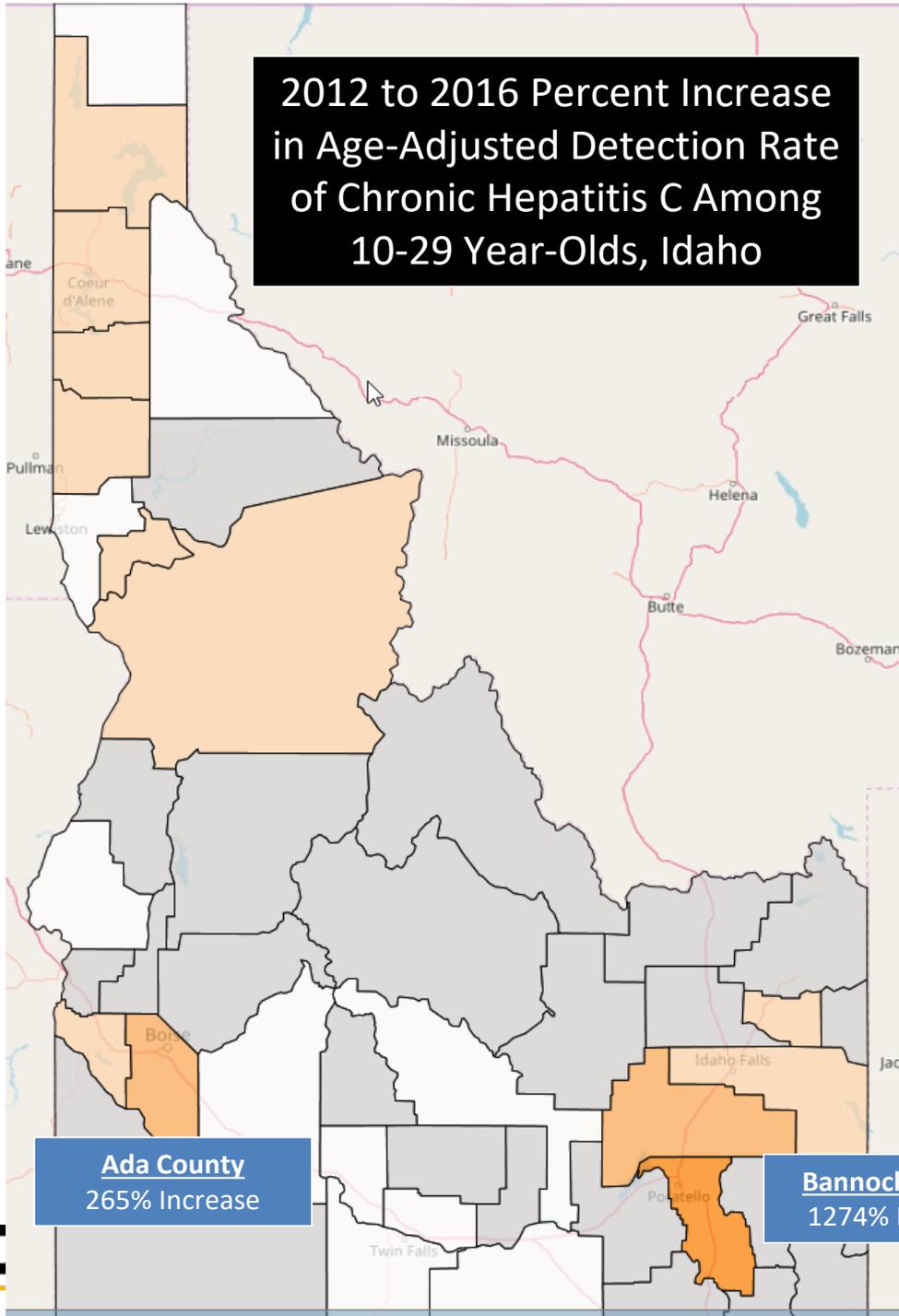


TRENDS IN AGE-SPECIFIC INCIDENCE RATE OF CHRONIC HEPATITIS C, IDAHO 2012-2016



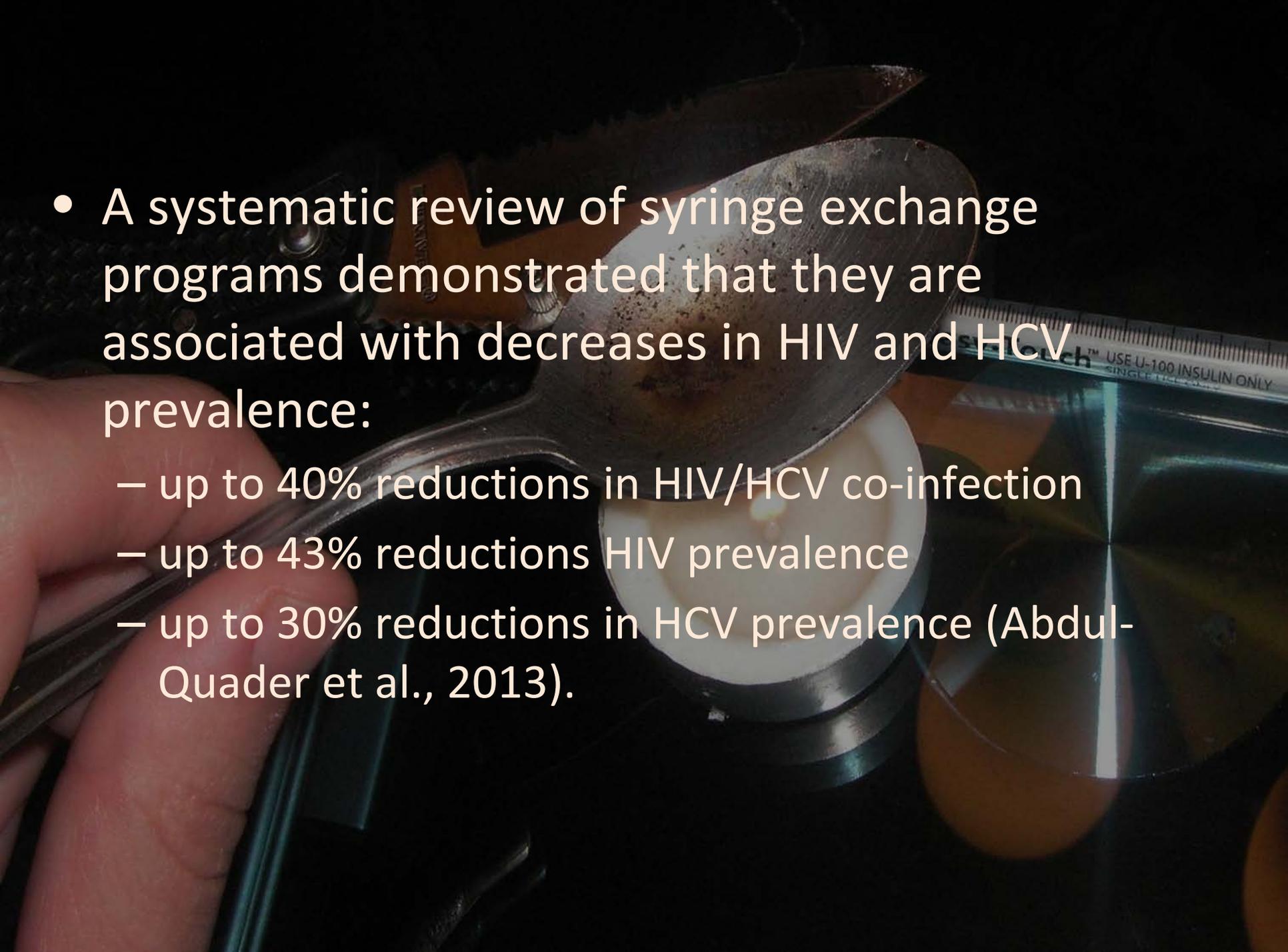
2012 to 2016 Percent Increase in Age-Adjusted Detection Rate of Chronic Hepatitis C Among 10-29 Year-Olds, Idaho

Source: Idaho Department of Health and Welfare: Pedersen, 2018



Percent Increase

- Missing / Excluded
- Less than 0 : <0 (decrease)
- 0 to 250 : 0-250
- 250 to 500 : 250-500
- 500 and above : >500

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- A hand is holding a metal spoon containing a small amount of white powder. In the background, there is a syringe with the text "USE U-100 INSULIN ONLY" and "SINGLE USE ONLY" visible. Other medical supplies are also visible, including a vial and a container.
- A systematic review of syringe exchange programs demonstrated that they are associated with decreases in HIV and HCV prevalence:
 - up to 40% reductions in HIV/HCV co-infection
 - up to 43% reductions HIV prevalence
 - up to 30% reductions in HCV prevalence (Abdul-Quader et al., 2013).



What can syringe access look like?

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- 43% of syringe exchanges experience at least monthly conflict with law enforcement regardless of their legal status
 - low-visibility syringe dispensaries seem to be the least likely to have clients stopped by law enforcement (Beletsky, Grau, White, Bowman, & Heimer, 2011).

- “I think probably the only major thing I would change at the statute level is protections for people who are both conducting syringe exchanges as well as participants, as far as legal protections, because currently our drug paraphernalia law and our syringe exchange law are in conflict. Technically, even a provider conducting syringe exchange could be arrested for paraphernalia if they have used, collected syringes on them and they are stopped by the police... and we fear that it could potentially cause problems later on.” (H. Bush, personal communication, February 28, 2019).

What passed in Idaho?

- Rep. Blanksma gets a call from Republic Services
- Intent:
 - <https://legislature.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/sessioninfo/2019/legislation/H0180SOP.pdf>
- Bill itself:
 - <https://legislature.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/sessioninfo/2019/legislation/H0180.pdf>
- Legislation history:
 - <https://legislature.idaho.gov/sessioninfo/2019/legislation/h0180/>

What happened next?

- 2019 Legislature went home without authorizing administrative rules, setting all current rules to expire on July 1, 2019.
- IDHW drafted rules for the Syringe Exchange Act.
- IDHW received guidance from Governor Little's office that these rules were not mission critical and that non-binding 'guidance' should be created in place of regulation.

Key Points

- The spread of HIV and HCV by injection drug use is a problem in Idaho.
- Syringe exchange services are an evidence-based intervention for reducing the spread of HIV and HCV.
- Syringe exchange is politically controversial.
- Idaho has a new Syringe Exchange Act that has an interesting political history.

References

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