



Native Health in the Bemidji Area

Hepatitis C 2021

What is Hepatitis C

The hepatitis C virus (HCV) causes liver infection. There is no vaccine against HCV. The virus spreads through contact with the blood of an infected person. Infection with HCV can cause an acute short-term illness that is asymptomatic or has mild symptoms such as jaundice, dark urine, fever, or nausea. Treatment is available, and approximately 25% of infections will spontaneously clear on their own.¹ However, about 50% of acute infections will turn into chronic infections. Most chronic infections are asymptomatic, but many individuals with a chronic infection will develop chronic liver disease, leading to liver cancer and cirrhosis.²

Testing for HCV is recommended for pregnant women, people who have ever injected drugs, and a few other populations. Regular testing should be done on individuals who currently inject drugs and people who have ever received maintenance hemodialysis.²

Most infections are caused by sharing needles or other drug paraphernalia. In 2018, over 70% of acute HCV infections were reported in people who injected drugs.³ All blood donations and organ transplants are screened for HCV now; however, people who received a blood transfusion or organ transplant before 1992 are at risk. A final group at risk of infection is healthcare personnel.²

Hepatitis C in the Bemidji Area

In Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, American Indian/Alaska Natives had significantly higher incidence rates of acute and chronic HCV infection than whites (Table 1, Figure 1). In Minnesota, American Indian/Alaska Natives had case rates 19 times higher than whites. Additionally, in each state American Indian/Alaska Natives saw higher age-adjusted mortality rates than whites (Table 1, Figure 2).

Table 1. Hepatitis C (Combined Acute and Chronic) Cases and Incidence Rates (per 100,000)^A in 2014-2016 and Age-Adjusted Mortality Rates^B in 2000-2019, Among American Indian/Alaska Natives and Whites in Michigan,^C Minnesota,^D Wisconsin,^E and the Three-State Area

		Incidence 2014-2016			Mortality 2000-2019	
		Total Cases	Incidence Rate per 100,000 (95% Confidence Interval) ¹	Rate Ratio	Age-adjusted Rate (95% Confidence Interval)	Rate Ratio
Michigan**	AI/AN	227	420.8 (366.0-475.5)	2.3	2.4 (1.7-3.3)	2.2
	White	14,232	181.9 (178.9-184.9)		1.1 (1.1-1.2)	
Minnesota**	AI/AN	615	1,087.3 (1,001.4-1,173.3)	19.3	3.9 (2.9-5.2)	5.6
	White	2,589	56.4 (54.2-58.5)		0.7 (0.7-0.8)	
Wisconsin**	AI/AN	287	568.9 (503.1-634.7)	3.7	2.0 (1.2-3.1)	3.3
	White	7,658	154.2 (150.7-157.6)		0.6 (0.5-0.6)	
Three-State Area**	AI/AN	1,129	701.4 (660.5-742.3)	5.0	2.7 (2.2-3.3)	3.0
	White	24,479	140.8 (139.0-142.6)		0.9 (0.8-0.9)	

^APopulation denominators from the 2015 American Community Survey

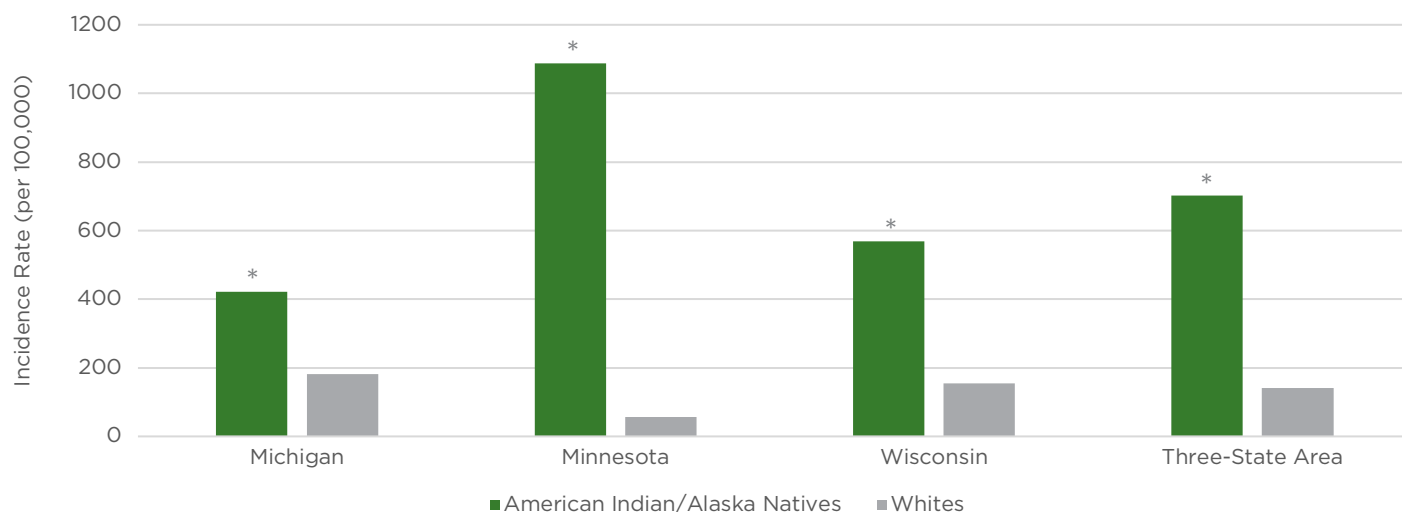
Source: Mortality data from B) CDC WONDER and hepatitis C incidence data from reports from C) Michigan, D) Minnesota, and E) Wisconsin

¹Incidence rate is significantly higher in American Indian/Alaska Natives than non-Hispanic whites

⁺Mortality rate is significantly higher in American Indian/Alaska Natives than non-Hispanic whites

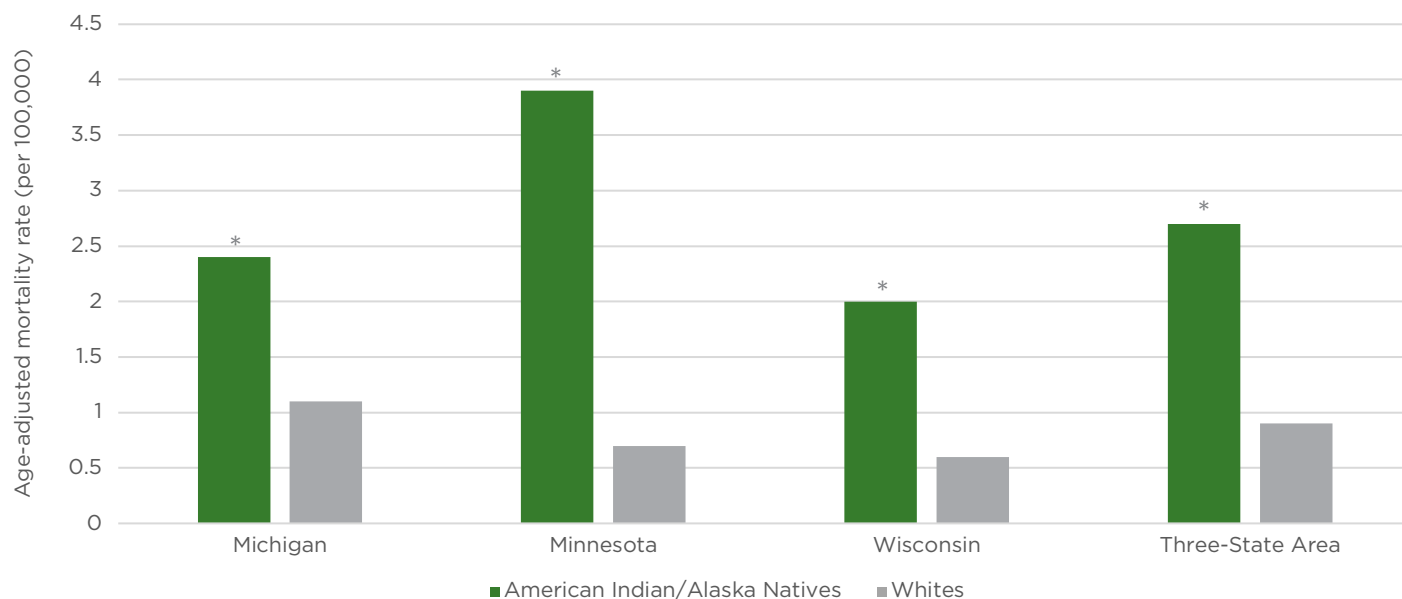
The Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Epidemiology Center (GLITEC)'s *Native Health in the Bemidji Area* factsheet series presents data on various health-related topics for communities in the Bemidji Indian Health Service Area (Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Chicago). GLITEC welcomes discussion with Bemidji Area communities' health staff in the use of this factsheet to support assessment, planning, and evaluation functions. Please contact us to discuss how we may support your community.

Figure 1. Acute and Chronic Hepatitis C Incidence Rates (per 100,000)^A Among American Indian/Alaska Natives and Whites in Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the Three-State Area, 2014-2016



^APopulation denominators from the 2015 American Community Survey
 Source: Data from hepatitis C reports from Michigan,^B Minnesota,^C and Wisconsin^D
 *Incidence rate is significantly higher in American Indian/Alaska Natives than non-Hispanic whites

Figure 2. Acute or Chronic Hepatitis C Age-Adjusted Mortality Rates (per 100,000) Among American Indian/Alaska Natives and Whites in Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the Three-State Area, 2000-2019^E



Source: CDC WONDER^E
 *Age-adjusted mortality rate is significantly higher in American Indian/Alaska Natives than non-Hispanic whites

Data Sources: A) U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B01003. <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/> B) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Underlying Cause of Death 1999-2019 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released in 2020. Accessed February 1, 2021. <http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html> C) MDHHS - Hepatitis C Statistics. Accessed February 1, 2021. https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71550_2955_2976_66415_66416_66425---,00.html D) Grilli G. Minnesota Hepatitis C 2014-2016. Published online February 9, 2021. E) Wisconsin Hepatitis C Virus Surveillance Annual Review, 2016. Published online 2016:24.

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2. Hepatitis C Questions and Answers for Health Professionals. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Published December 7, 2020. Accessed February 25, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hcv/hcvfaq.htm>
3. 2019 Viral Hepatitis Surveillance Report. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Published July 2021. Accessed May 20, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/statistics/SurveillanceRpts.htm>