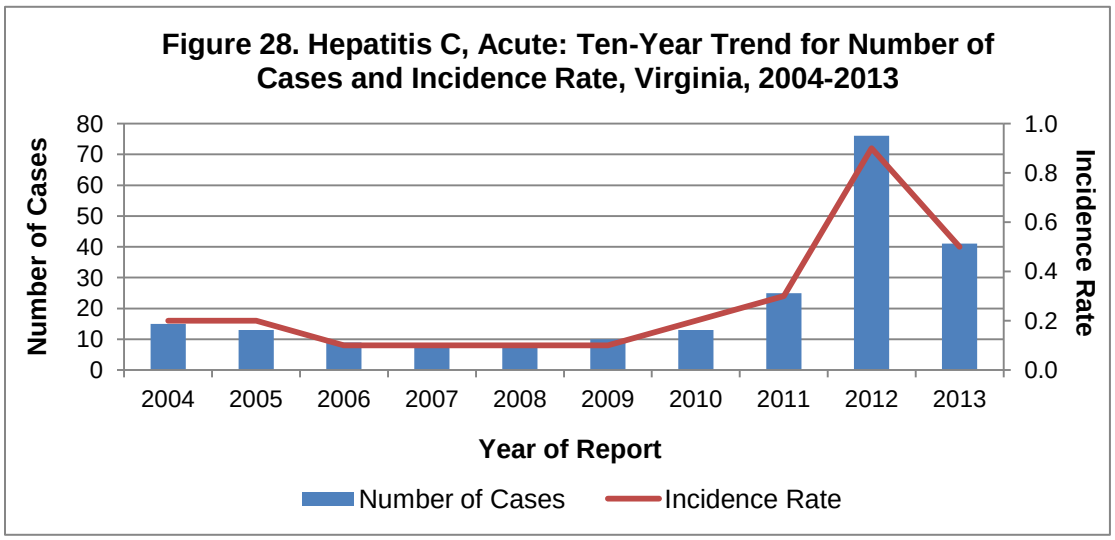
Hepatitis C, Acute

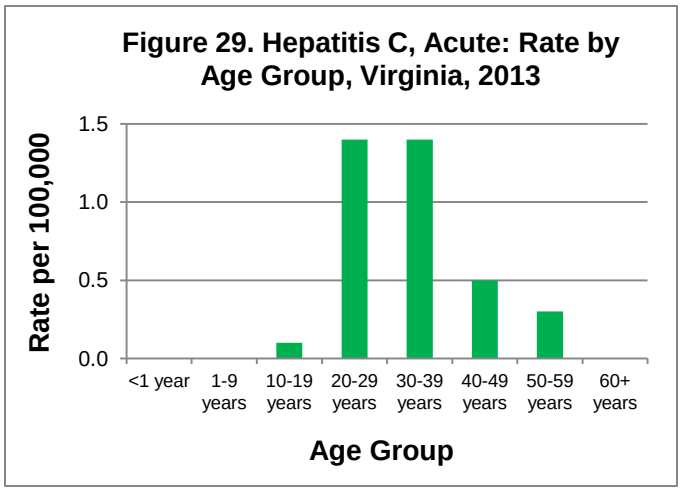
Agent: Hepatitis C virus (HCV), a member of the Flavivirus family
Mode of Transmission: Infection is spread when blood of someone with HCV enters the body of another person. Infection can occur during injection drug use if needles, syringes, or other equipment are shared or during healthcare procedures if needle-stick injuries occur. Infrequently, HCV can be spread through sex with a person infected with hepatitis C, through the sharing of personal items contaminated with infectious blood, such as razors or toothbrushes, through healthcare involving invasive procedures, or during delivery if the expectant mother has hepatitis C. Before 1992 when blood screening for HCV became available, receipt of donated blood, blood products, and organs was a common means of transmission, but now is a less common risk factor.
Signs/Symptoms: Fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, abdominal discomfort, or jaundice.
Prevention: Preventive measures include avoidance of the following: contact with blood; sharing of needles or other equipment used for injecting drugs; sharing of personal items such as razors, toothbrushes, nail clippers, or glucose monitoring equipment; or obtaining a tattoo or body piercing from an unlicensed facility or in an informal setting. Additional preventive measures include practicing safe sexual practices and proper infection control during medical and dental procedures and avoidance of donating blood if infection with HCV is known.
Other Important Information: Approximately 20-30% of new infections cause symptoms. HCV infections become chronic in 75-85% of cases. As people with chronic HCV infection age, they are at higher risk for developing chronic liver disease, cirrhosis, and liver cancer. No vaccine is available to prevent HCV.

Hepatitis C, Acute: 2013 Data Summary	
Number of Cases:	41
5-Year Average Number of Cases:	26.4
% Change from 5-Year Average:	+55%
Incidence Rate per 100,000:	0.5

Forty-one cases of acute hepatitis C infection were reported in 2013, which is less than the 76 cases reported in 2012, but 1.5 times the 5-year average of 26.4 cases per year (Figure 28). This increase may be partially attributed to changes in the acute hepatitis C surveillance case definition in January 2012. These changes allow a case of acute hepatitis C to be counted in a person who tests positive, even in the absence of symptoms, if that person had tested negative for hepatitis C within the preceding six months. Additionally, the new case definition no longer requires negative tests for hepatitis A and hepatitis B, but instead states that if those tests were conducted then the results must be negative.



The highest incidence rate (1.4 per 100,000) occurred in both the 20-29 and 30-39 year age groups. No cases of hepatitis C infection were reported in children less than 10 years of age or in adults 60 years and older (Figure 29). Among the 32 cases for which race information was available, the incidence rate was higher in the white population than in the black population (0.5 per 100,000 and 0.1 per 100,000, respectively). No cases were reported within the "other" race category. The rate of acute hepatitis C infection was the same for males and females (0.5 per 100,000).



Acute hepatitis C incidence was highest in the southwest region (1.6 per 100,000), followed by the northwest region (1.3 per 100,000) and the central region (0.1 per 100,000). No cases of acute hepatitis C were reported in the northern or eastern regions. Rates by locality can be seen in the map below. Disease onset occurred throughout the year with no apparent seasonal variation. No acute hepatitis C outbreaks were reported in Virginia in 2013.

Risk factor data were available for 34% of the cases, with some individuals reporting more than one risk factor. Among persons providing risk information, 86% reported intravenous drug abuse and 14% had sexual contact with a known hepatitis C infected partner. No reported deaths in 2013 were attributable to acute hepatitis C infection.

Hepatitis C, Acute, Incidence Rate by Locality
Virginia, 2013