

# Transforming Care for High-Risk Veterans: Partnered Research To Define Veteran Needs and Evaluate Intensive Primary Care Interventions

CDA Enhancement Initiative Cyberseminar  
December 12, 2017

**Donna M. Zulman, MD, MS**

VA HSR&D CDA 2013 – 2018

Assistant Professor, Division of Primary Care and Population Health, Stanford University  
Investigator, Center for Innovation to Implementation, VA Palo Alto Health Care System

**Ann-Marie Rosland, MD, MS**

VA HSR&D CDA 2011 – 2016

Associate Professor of Internal Medicine, University of Pittsburgh  
Research Investigator, VA Pittsburgh Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion

# Agenda

- High-risk & high-need patients: definitions and characteristics
- Clinically actionable groups high-risk Veterans defined using existing healthcare system data
- Findings from a randomized evaluation of intensive primary care for high-risk Veterans
- Ongoing VA operations-research partnerships to improve care for high-risk Veterans

# Poll Question #1

- What is your primary role in VA? (choose all that apply)
  - Clinician
  - Operations or Administration
  - Current CDA
  - Other Researcher
  - Other

# Defining “High-Need”

THE NEW YORKER

MEDICAL REPORT

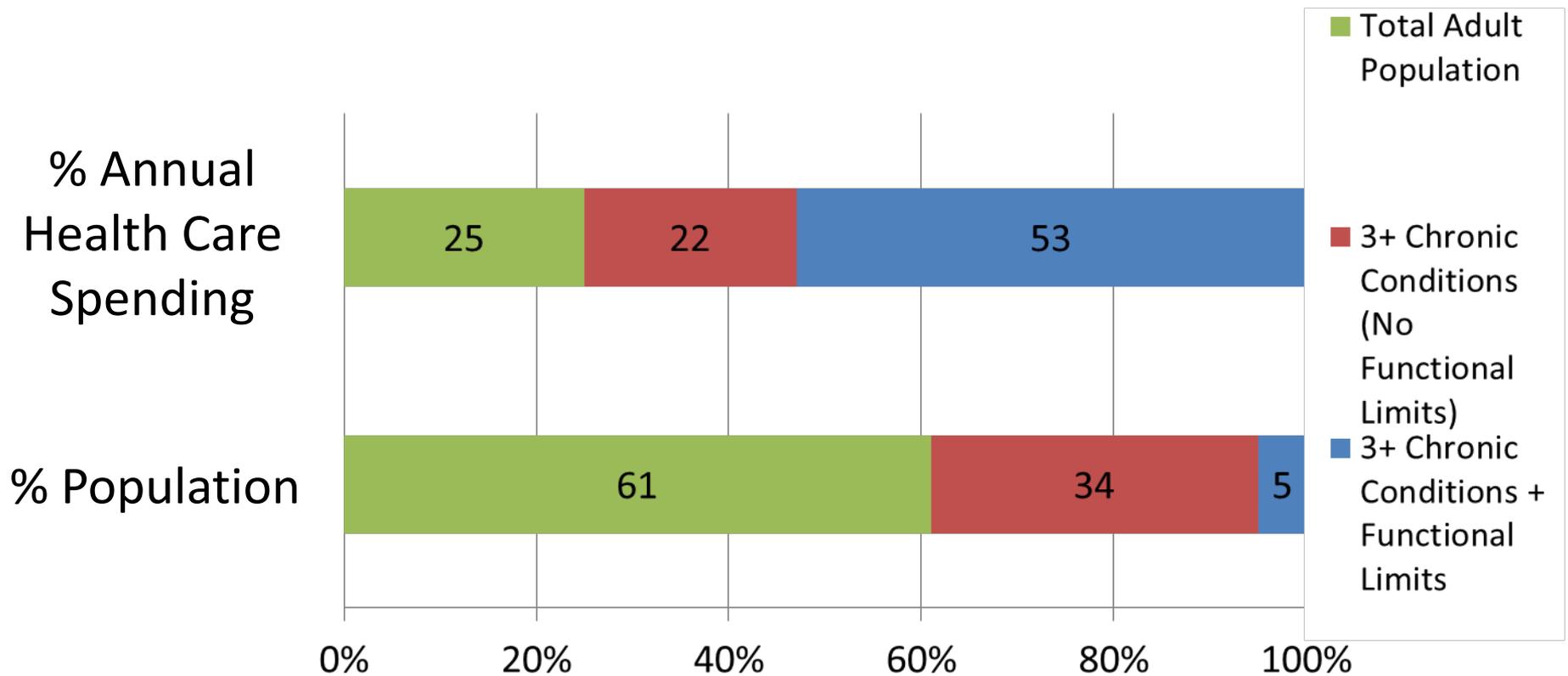
THE HOT SPOTTERS



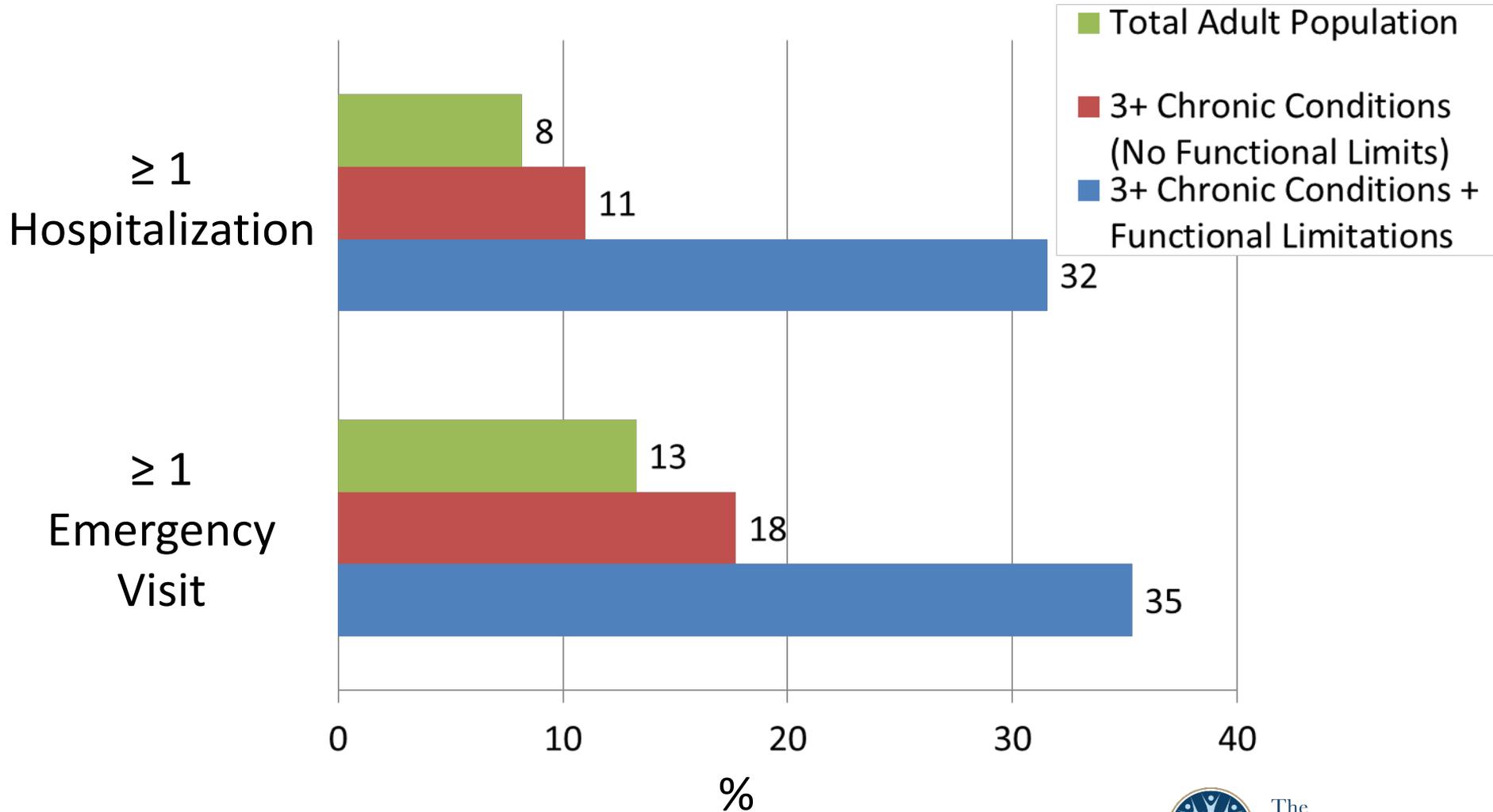
“Individuals with complex conditions and circumstances requiring multiple services that, for the most part, are not currently delivered easily or effectively by the health care system”

(National Academy of Medicine 2017, adapted from Salzberg, *et al.*, 2016)

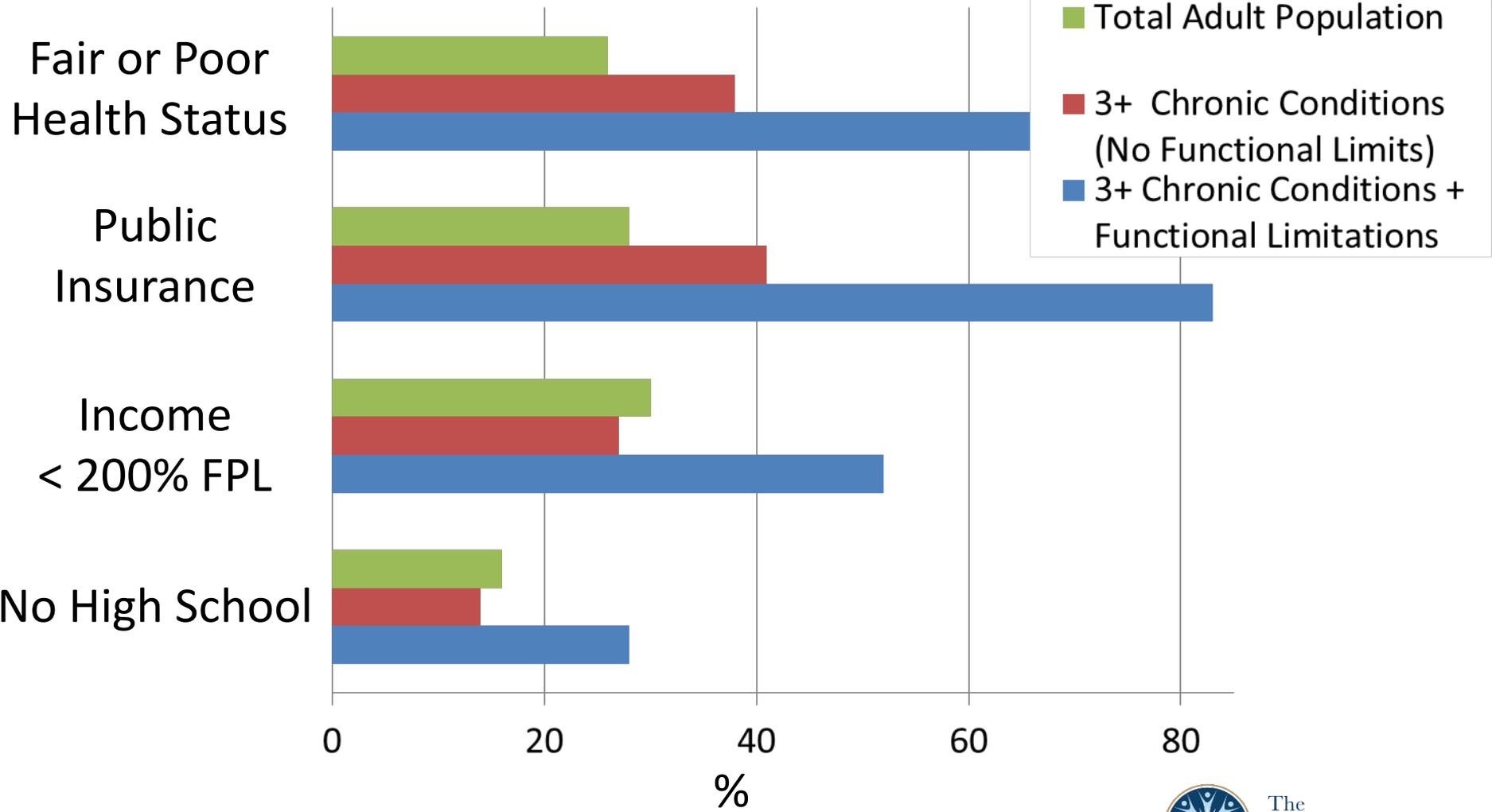
# High-Need Patients Account for Disproportionate Spending and Utilization



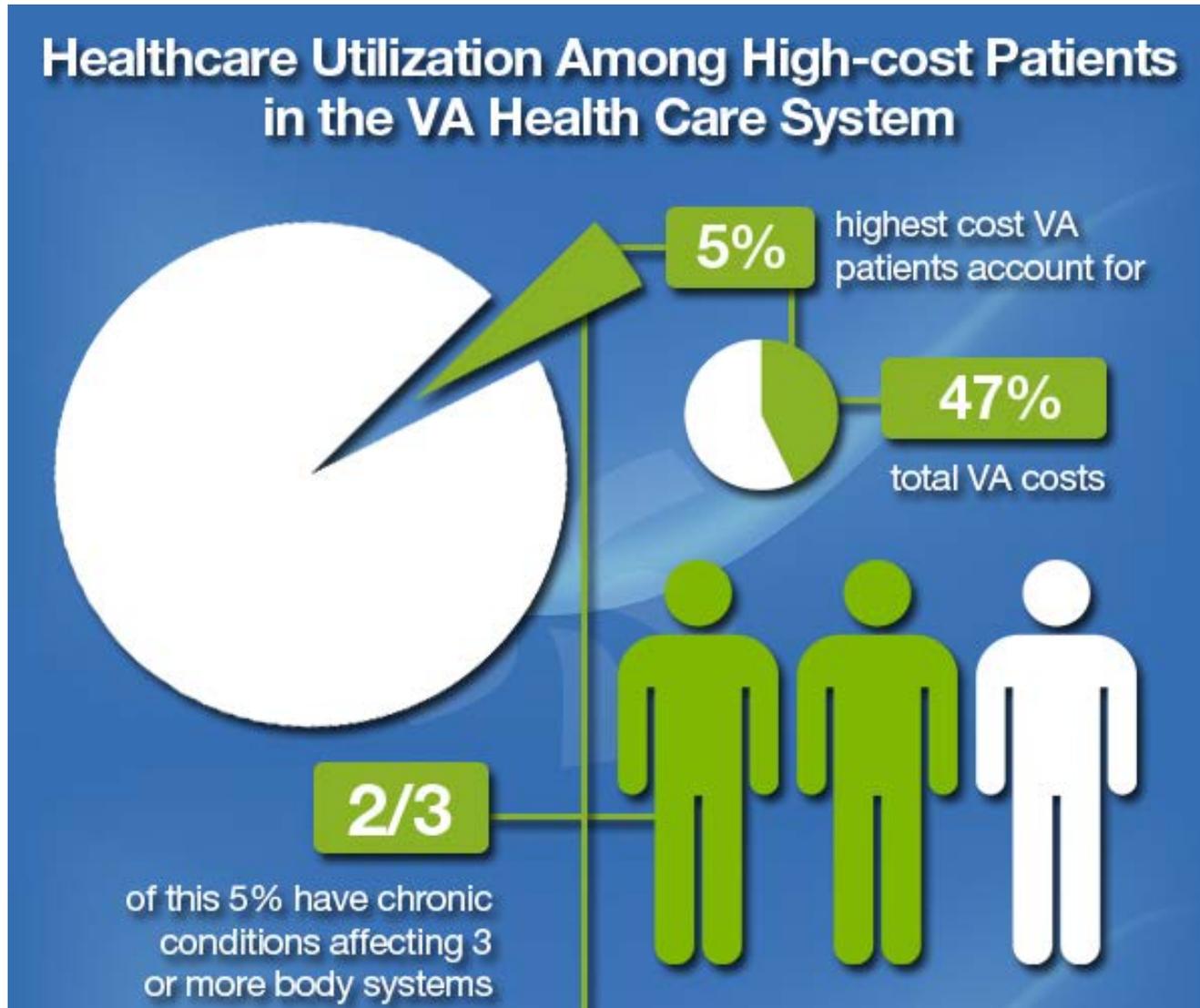
# High-Need Patients Account for Disproportionate Spending and Utilization



# Characteristics of High-Need Patients



# 5% of VA Patients Account for 47% of Costs



# Characteristics of VA's Most Costly 5%

- High rates of hospitalization and ED visits
- Many patients with complex/costly conditions
  - Cancer, heart failure, renal failure
  - 65% with conditions spanning 3+ systems
- Approximately half with MH conditions
- High rates of homelessness (14%)
- Many with inadequate social support (41% married)
- Interactions among these factors, e.g., ED & hospitalization rates increase significantly with greater multimorbidity.

# What Patients Say...

## **Too many problems, too little time**

*Every time I would go to a doctor's appointment, everybody would be watching the clock and say you've got 15 minutes. Pick one thing, that's all we can talk about. And when you have a laundry list, it makes it very difficult to [squeeze] everything into 15 minutes.*



## **Mountains of medications**

*It's a huge struggle. Every week I have to put my meds in pill boxes because if I don't do that, with as many different medicines as I'm taking...To be perfectly honest I couldn't even tell you how many pill bottles it really is.*

## **Psychological isolation**

*For me having the mix of diseases, I have been walking around in a bubble thinking I'm the only one in the world that has got this.*

## **Coordinate providers, avoid conflicts**

*I get results from one guy, pass it over to the other one. Same thing for the medication, so they both know what I'm taking and I don't have conflicts. They can't talk to one another. I have to be the go-between.*

# Poll Question

What experience have you had with high-risk patients?

- Direct clinical care for high-risk patients
- Leadership role in program for high risk patients
- Research with high risk patients
- Other experience with high risk patients
- No experience yet

# Outline

- High-risk & high-need patients: definitions and characteristics
- Subgroups of high-risk Veterans with distinct clinical risk factors and utilization patterns
- Findings from a randomized evaluation of intensive primary care for high-risk Veterans
- Ongoing VA research/operations partnerships to improve care for high-risk Veterans

# Defining High Risk for PACT Teams: Care Assessment Needs Score (CAN) 2.0

- Identifies PACT patients at high risk for hospitalization or death
- Generated from logistic regression model using
  - Demographics
  - Clinical information
  - Rank/service branch
- CAN score represents percentile of estimated probability
- Generated on a weekly basis

Manage Patients

Consults

Administration

Tasks

News

Filter List by Patient:

Filter By Name:   [Manual High Risk Flag](#)

Search By Last 4 SSN:

Filter By CPRS Status: ACTIVE ▼

Filter By Request Date: Start Date:   End Date:

	Last 4 SSN	Patient Name	High Risk Flag	Request Date Time	Request Service Name	CPRS Status	Team
<a href="#">Select</a>	1234	Patient Name		04 Dec 2013	O/NON VA CARE PAIN REFERRAL	ACTIVE	OMA PACT 003 (636)
<a href="#">Select</a>	1234	Patient Name		20 Nov 2013	O/NON VA CARE PAIN REFERRAL	ACTIVE	OMA PACT 003 (636)
<a href="#">Select</a>	1234	Patient Name		17 Jan 2014	O/ENT VERTIGO/DIZZINESS	ACTIVE	OMA PACT 003 (636)
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## **Goal:** Identify Subgroups of Patients at High-Risk of Hospitalization Via Clusters of Clinical Conditions

### Criteria for Approach:

- More accurately reflect comorbidity complexity
- Use available EMR diagnosis data
- Empirical to start
- Clinically Useful

### Approach:

- Mixture - Item Response Theory Modeling of Diagnosis Clusters and Patient Complexity

# Applying Mixture Item Response Theory to Comorbid Conditions

- Analyzes **clusters** of many diagnoses simultaneously
- Yields 4 different types of information:
  - Latent clusters (subgroups) of patients
  - Rare/significant comorbidities for each subgroup
  - Diagnosis-specific numerical estimate of how much “complexity” a diagnosis carries *for each subgroup*
  - “Complexity Score” (theta) for each person (akin to comorbidity score)

# Methods

## Sample

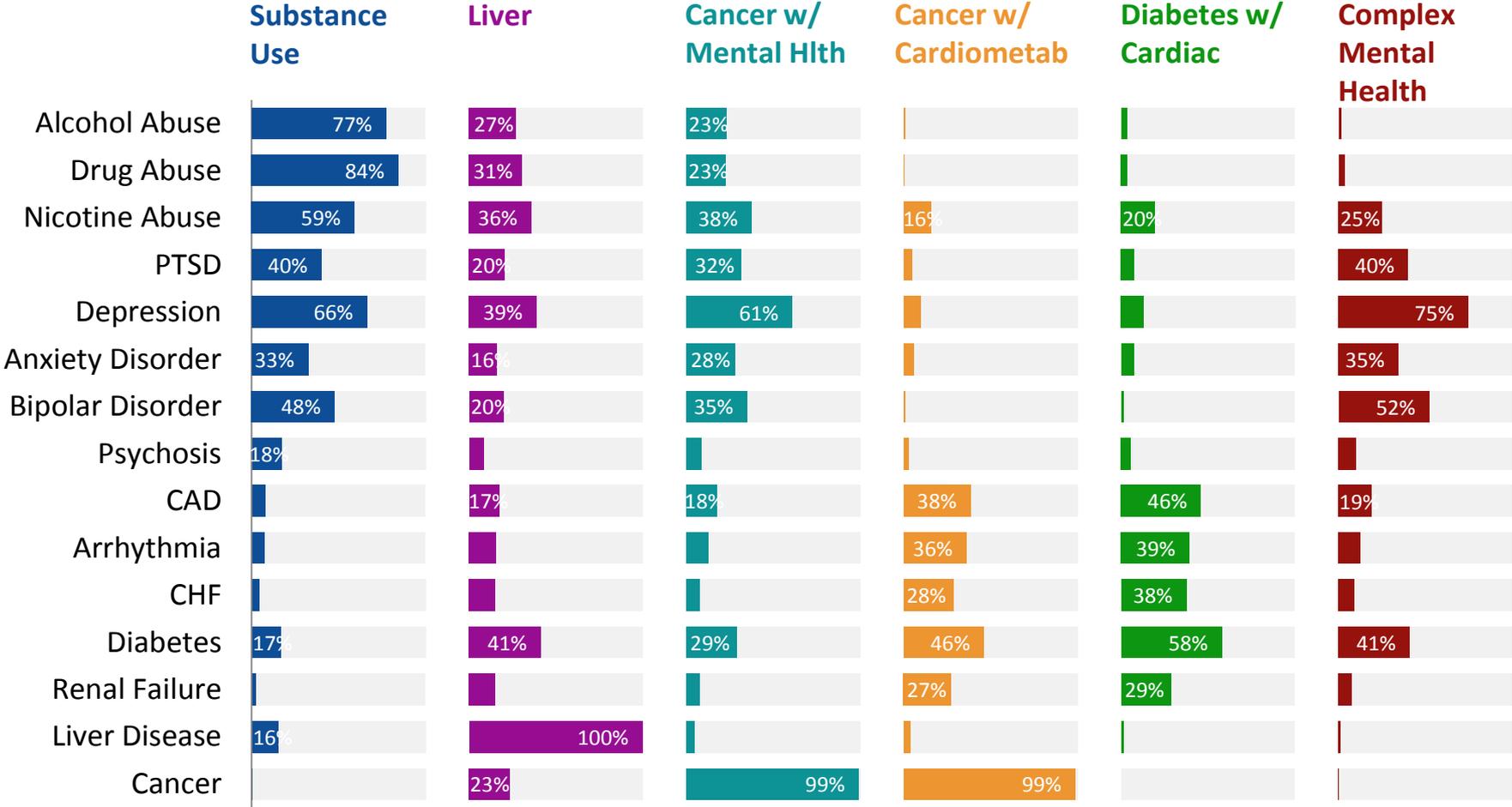
- 100 Random samples of ~65,000 Veterans Health Administration (VHA) patients at high risk of hospitalization in 1-year
- Probability of hospitalization  $\geq .25$  (~90<sup>th</sup> percentile) at any time during 2014 based on the VA Care Assessment Needs (CAN) prediction score

## Initial Data

- 31 medical and mental health diagnoses

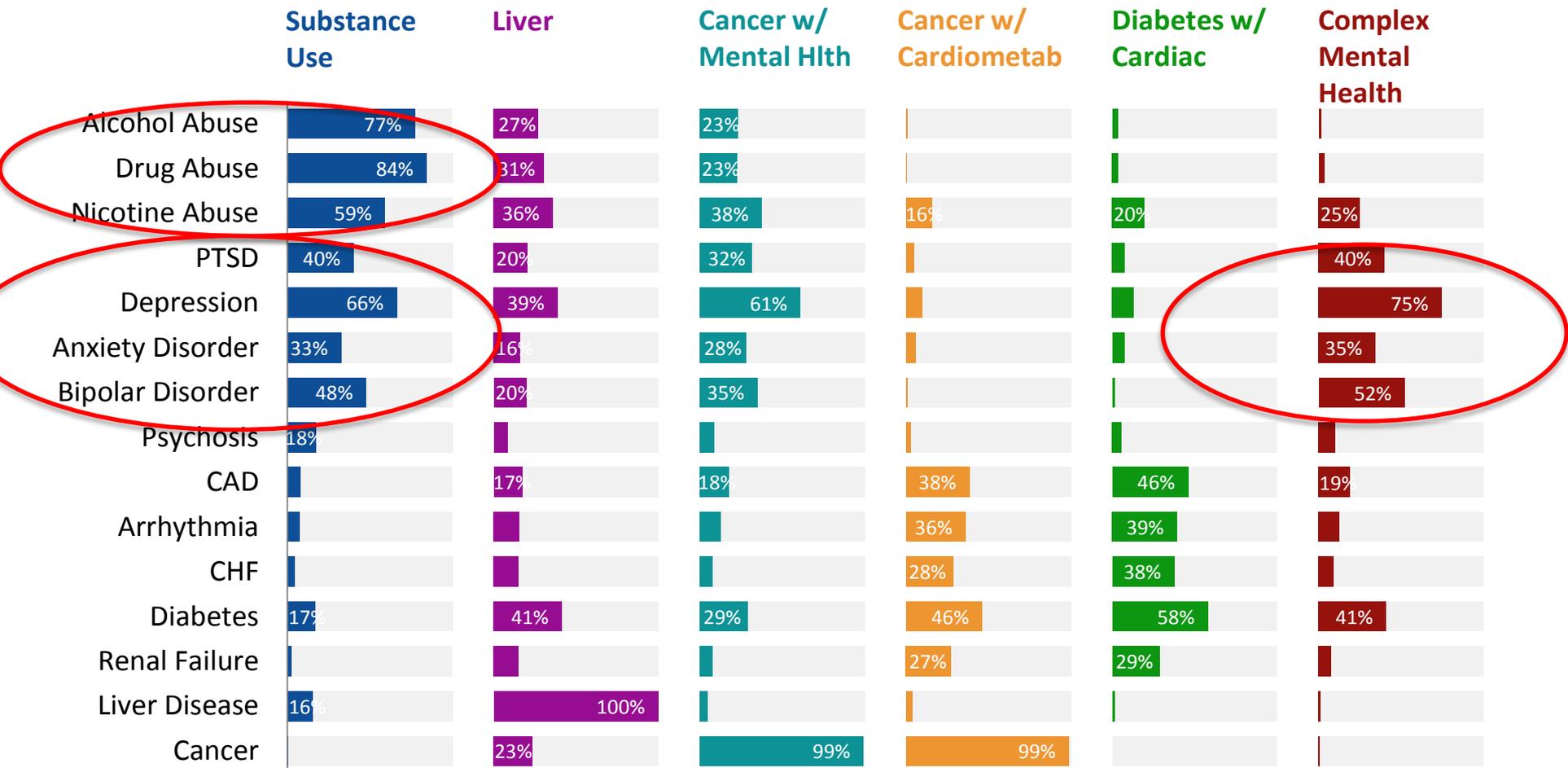
# Clinical Subgroups of High-Risk Patients

## Diagnoses by Subgroup



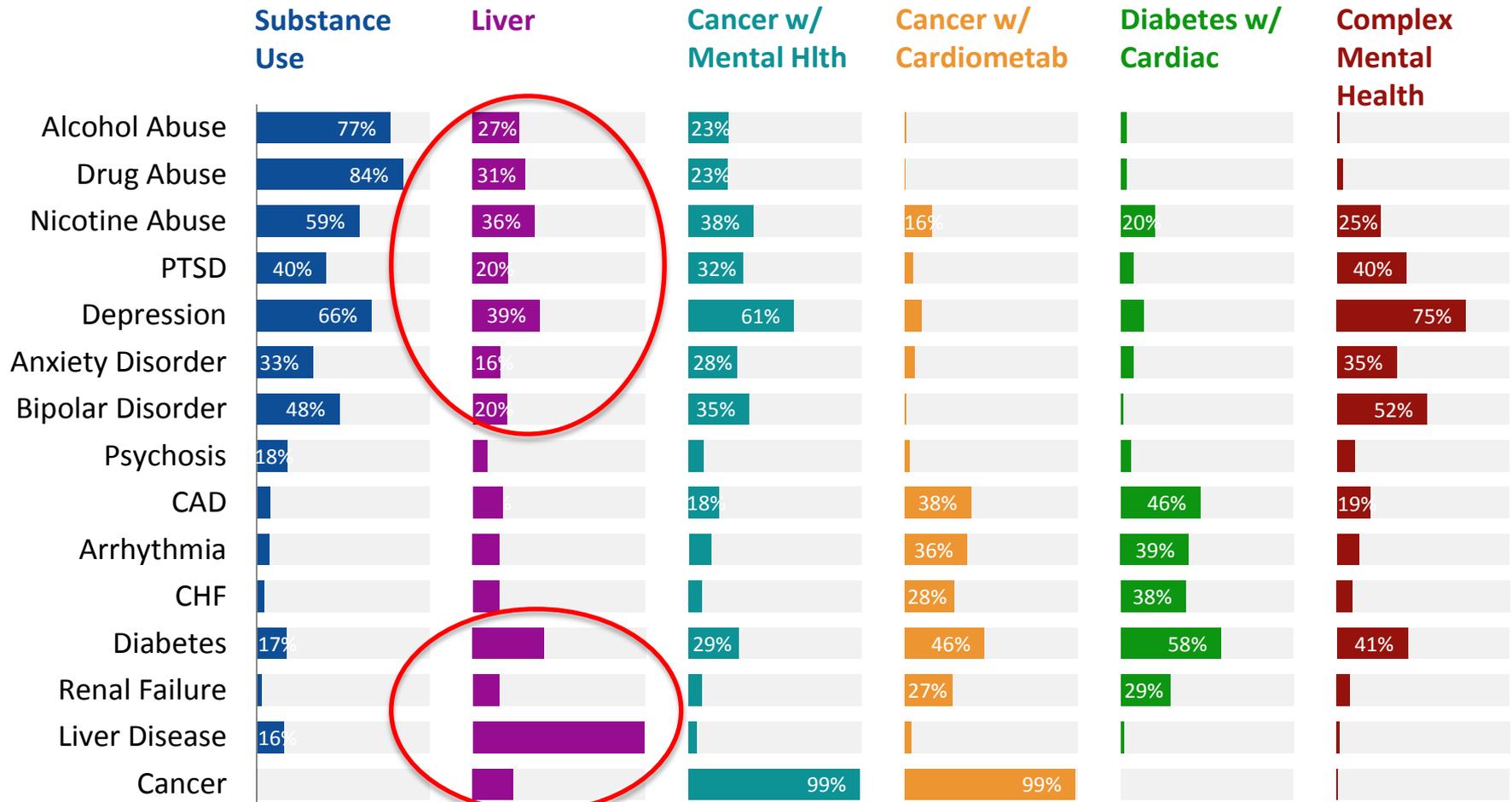
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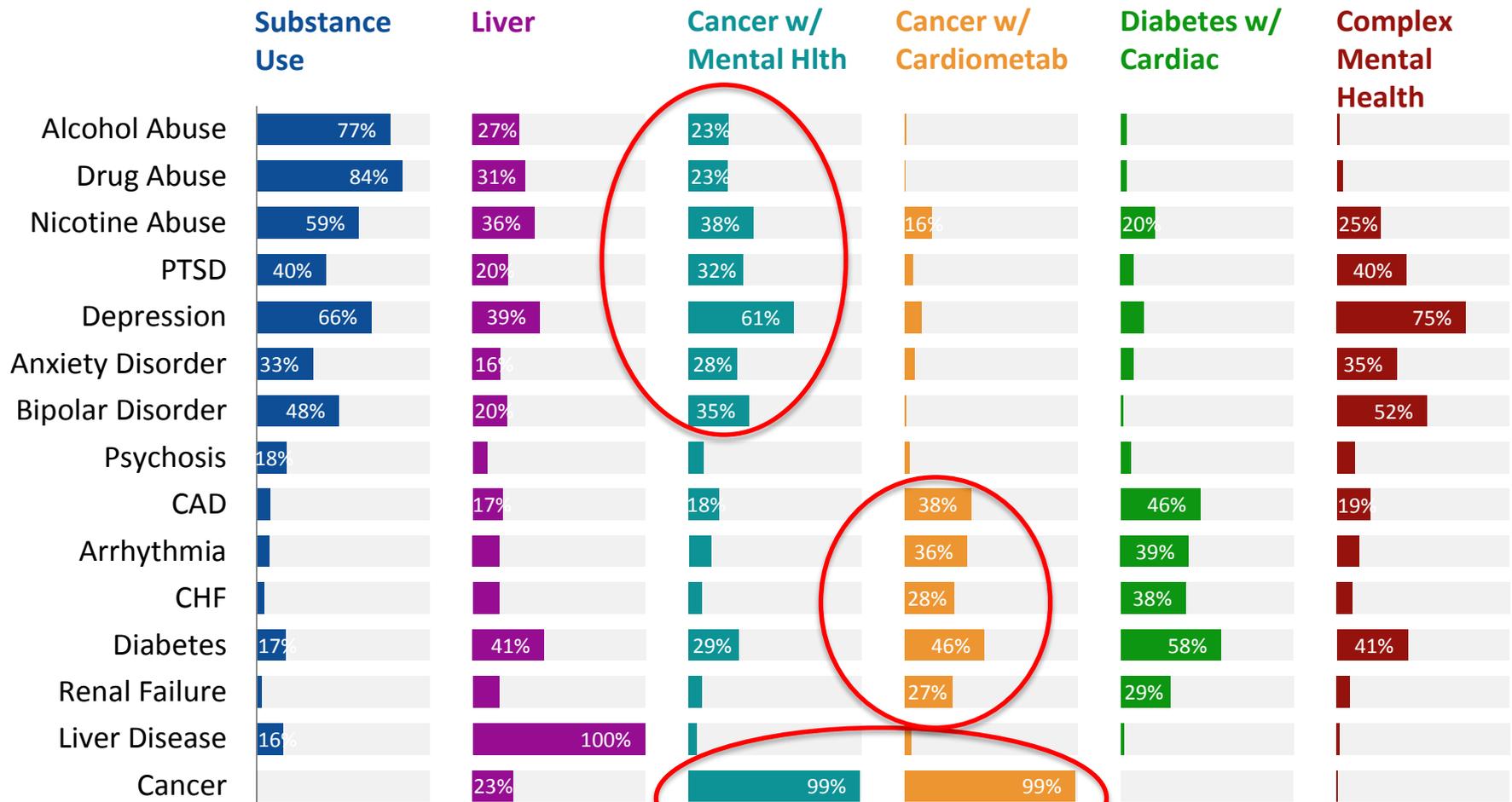
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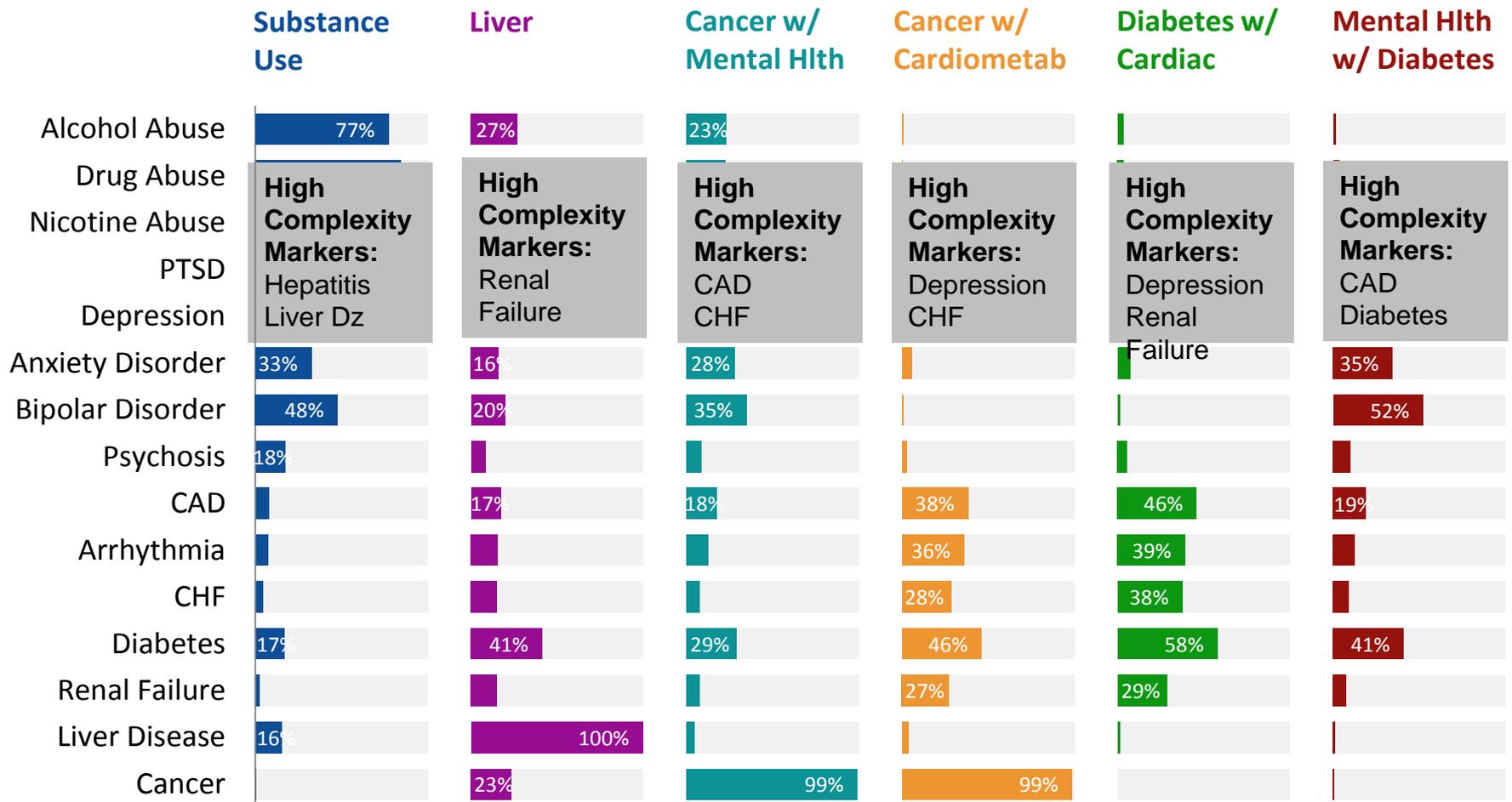
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# Clinical Subgroups of High-Risk Patients

## Diagnoses by Subgroup



# VA Hospitalizations/Urgent Care Rates

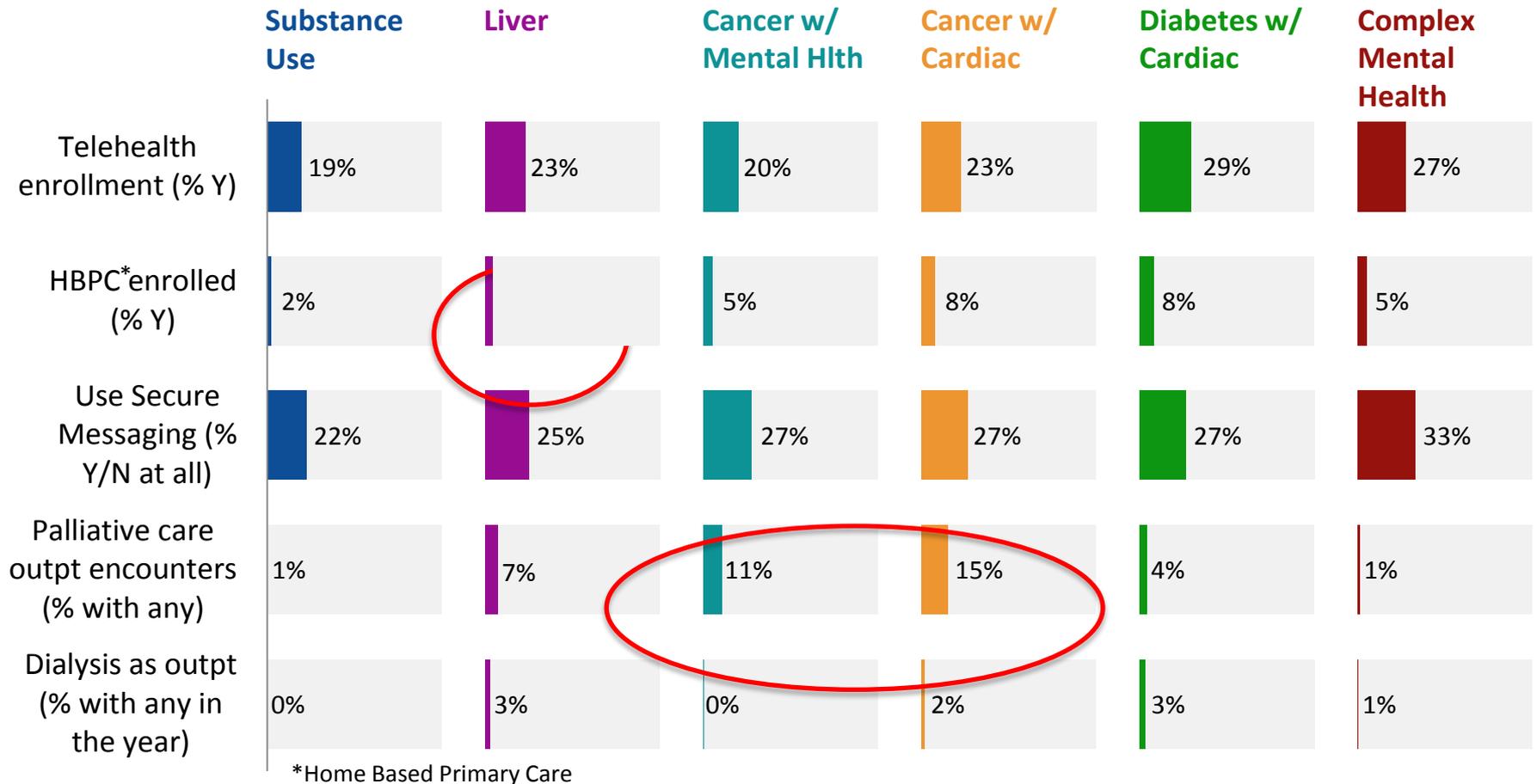
Subgroup	Substance Use	Liver	Cancer w/ Mental Hlth	Cancer w/ Cardiac	Diabetes w/ Cardiac	Complex Mental Health
<b>N patients</b>	10,579	5,826	5,026	8,628	23,691	14,649
<b>All VA Hospitalizations Per Pt/Per Year Mean (SD)</b>	0.76 (1.35)	0.90 (1.38)	0.63 (1.08)	0.85 (1.26)	0.67 (1.05)	0.43 (0.83)
<b>Psychiatric Hospitalizations Per Pt/Per Year Mean (SD)</b>	0.24 (0.71)	0.05 (0.35)	0.05 (0.29)	0.01 (0.09)	0.01 (0.15)	0.09 (0.40)
<b>Readmissions within 30 days Per 100 Discharges (prelim)</b>	21.0	21.1	21.0	20.3	21.4	20.3
<b>Length of Stay 8+ days % of All Hospitalizations</b>	65.6	53.2	49.4	52.6	45.7	40.2
<b>ED Visits Per Pt/Per Year Mean (SD)</b>	2.72 (3.81)	2.28 (2.99)	1.95 (2.84)	2.00 (2.50)	1.95 (2.55)	2.08 (2.70)

# VA Outpatient Utilization Rates

Subgroup		Substance Use	Liver	Cancer w/ Mental Hlth	Cancer w/ Cardiac	Diabetes w/ Cardiac	Complex Mental Health
		<b>N patients</b>	10,579	5,826	5,026	8,628	23,691
Per Patient/ Per Year: Mean (SD)	<b>PCP visits in person</b>	4.65 (4.74)	5.17 (4.33)	4.94 (4.33)	4.98 (4.54)	5.18 (4.77)	5.51 (4.74)
	<b>Primary care phone visits (all providers)</b>	0.25 (0.52)	0.48 (0.68)	0.48 (0.68)	0.55 (0.72)	0.48 (0.70)	0.38 (0.64)
	<b>Outpatient specialty visits</b>	4.70 (7.47)	10.59 (12.76)	11.15 (14.25)	14.40 (17.18)	9.54 (12.10)	6.70 (8.84)
	<b>Mental health clinic outpatient encounters</b>	29.18 (34.58)	10.16 (23.08)	8.85 (18.08)	0.94 (4.47)	2.27 (9.65)	12.13 (19.27)
	<b>Integrated PC Mental Health (in person &amp; phone)</b>	0.71 (2.44)	0.43 (2.05)	0.62 (2.53)	0.11 (0.79)	0.20 (1.34)	0.73 (2.78)

# VA Programs/Services, % Using

## Utilization by Subgroup



# Care Management Tool Possibilities

## Highest Hospitalization Risk Patients

	Subgroup	Patient theta	High-risk Comorb	Persistent High Risk	Services Recommended
Will Smith	DM w/CV	26.2	R		<a href="#">Primary Care</a> <a href="#">Mental Health</a>
Elle Jones	SA	37.5	R		<a href="#">Hepatitis Screen</a> <a href="#">My HealtheVet</a>
Lucas Johnson	DM w/ CV	40.1			<a href="#">Nephrology Referral</a>
Dustin Hayes	MH	22.5		R	<a href="#">Diabetes Classes</a>
Mike Whalen	Liver	33.0	R	R	<a href="#">Home Based Primary Care</a>

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# Innovative Care Models for High-Need Patients

VIEWPOINT

VITAL DIRECTIONS FROM THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF MEDICINE

## Tailoring Complex Care Management for High-Need, High-Cost Patients

David Blumenthal, MD  
The Commonwealth  
Fund, New York,  
New York.

Melinda K. Abrams,  
MS  
The Commonwealth  
Fund, New York,  
New York.

*The* NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL *of* MEDICINE  
Perspective  
SEPTEMBER 8, 2016

### Caring for High-Need, High-Cost Patients — An Urgent Priority

David Blumenthal, M.D., M.P.P., Bruce Chernof, M.D., Terry Fulmer, Ph.D., R.N., John Lumpkin, M.D., M.P.H.,  
and Jeffrey Selberg, M.H.A.



NATIONAL ACADEMY OF MEDICINE

## MODELS OF CARE FOR HIGH-NEED PATIENTS

A National Academy of Medicine Workshop

*...funded by the Peterson Center on Healthcare*

# Intensive Outpatient Care



Integrated Care Management Program



## Other Team Members

Clinical Pharmacy  
Social Work  
Nutrition  
Case Managers  
Behavioral Health

## Teamlet (1 team per ~ 1200 patients)

Provider (MD or NP)  
Care Manager (RN)  
Clinical Assoc (LPN, MA)  
Clerk

## Patient

and  
caregivers



Intensive Management Patient Aligned Care Team

# Core Elements of ImPACT

- Multidisciplinary Team: NP, MD, SW, Recreation Therapist, Clinical Coordinator
- Comprehensive intake; goal-concordant care
- Frequent in-person/phone contact
- After-hours access
- Chronic condition case management
- Coordination of primary and specialty care
- Rapid response to health status deterioration
- Support during transitions from hospital to home
- Access to social and community resources



# Partnered Research

- VA Office of Specialty Care Transformation (ImPACT)
  - Support for ImPACT Pilot Program (team FTEs)
  - ImPACT was implemented as QI pilot
- VA Palo Alto Leadership
  - Agreed to enrollment of random sample of patients to facilitate a rigorous evaluation
- HSR&D
  - Pilot grant (13-117)
  - Evaluation of ImPACT program, comparing high-risk Veterans randomly invited to participate in ImPACT with high-risk Veterans receiving usual PACT care

# Study Design

- Population

- 150 high-risk/high-cost patients randomly selected for ImPACT
- 433 high-risk/high-cost patients in usual PACT care

- Outcomes

- Cost
- Utilization (hosps, ED visits, outpt services)
- Patient experience (satisfaction with program and with VA)
- Access, care coordination, end of life care
  - Frances Wu (VA HSR fellow), Deb Hummel (ImPACT NP)
- Implementation barriers/facilitators; how to improve program
  - Jessica Breland (VA HSR fellow, now CDA!)

- Analyses

- Intention-to-treat, difference-in-differences (16-month pre, 17-month post)
- Instrumental variable analysis: treatment effect for those with  $\geq 3$  encounters
- Stratified analyses (e.g., age, MH condition, HF/DM/COPD, recent hosp)

# ImPACT and Usual Care Patient Characteristics

	<b>ImPACT (n=140)</b>	<b>Usual Care (n=405)</b>	
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>P-Value</b>
<b>Age, mean (SD)</b>	66 (14)	66(13)	0.62
<b>75+</b>	24	24	
<b>Male</b>	93	90	0.33
<b>Urban Location</b>	89	92	0.27
<b>Non-VA Insurance</b>	53	55	0.62
<b>Medicare/Med Advantage</b>	49	51	
<b>Major Medical</b>	9	9	
<b>Medicaid</b>	3	2	
<b>Homeless in 9 mo baseline</b>	25	26	0.87
<b>Chronic Conditions, mean (SD)</b>	10 (4)	11 (3)	0.38
<b>Med/Surg Hosp in 9 mo, mean (SD)</b>	1.2 (1.4)	1.2 (1.4)	0.70
<b>ED Visits in 9 mo, mean (SD)</b>	3.4 (3.3)	3.3 (3.3)	0.70

# ImPACT and Usual Care Patient Characteristics

	<b>ImPACT (n=140)</b>	<b>Usual Care (n=405)</b>	
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>P-Value</b>
<b>Hypertension</b>	71	71	0.94
<b>Joint Disorders</b>	57	59	0.78
<b>Coronary Artery Disease</b>	36	28	0.07
<b>Diabetes Mellitus</b>	34	38	0.40
<b>Renal Failure or Nephropathy</b>	29	25	0.40
<b>Heart Failure</b>	24	21	0.49
<b>Cancer (solid/heme/melanoma)</b>	21	28	0.11
<b>Liver Disease/Hep C</b>	21	26	0.24
<b>Mental Health (Any)</b>	68	69	0.78
<b>Depression</b>	49	48	0.93
<b>Drug Use Disorders</b>	29	25	0.34
<b>PTSD</b>	23	28	0.20
<b>Schizophrenia</b>	8	6	0.42
<b>Alcohol Use Disorders</b>	21	25	0.34

# Key Findings

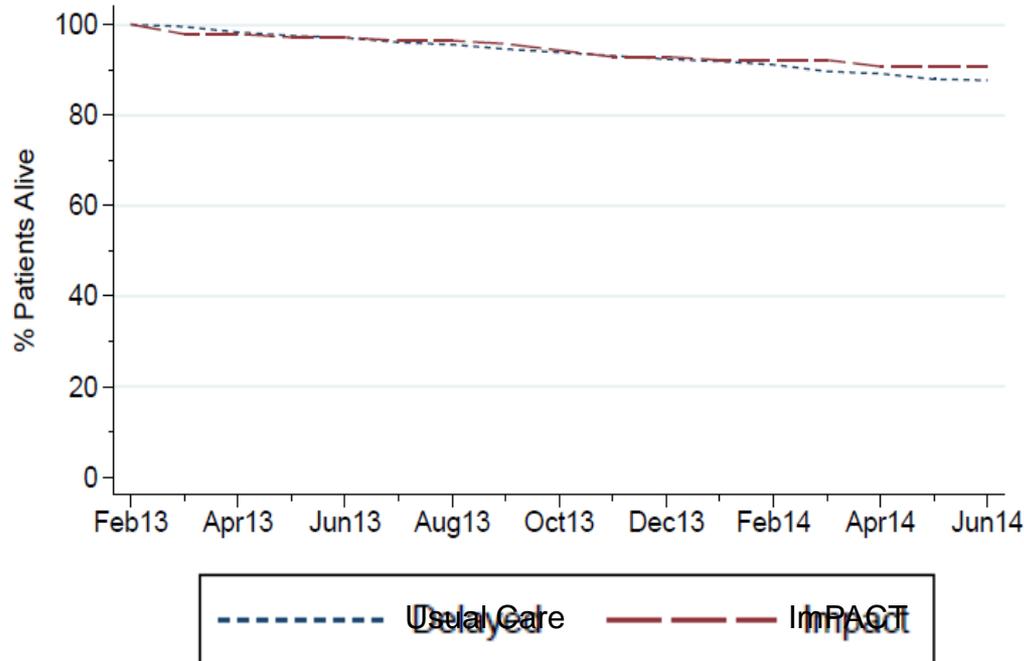
- **2/3<sup>rds</sup> of invited patients engaged in ImPACT**
  - Engaged patients were more likely to be:
    - Older
    - Residing closer to VA Palo Alto
    - Lower serious mental illness/alcohol/substance use rates

# Key Findings

- 2/3<sup>rds</sup> of invited patients engaged in ImPACT
- **Improved satisfaction among ImPACT participants**
  - 96% reported they would recommend program to others
    - *Having a liaison between myself, my doctor, hospital and pharmacy is so very crucial to me and ImPACT fits the bill!*
  - Modest increase in satisfaction with VA care (2.90 to 3.16, p = 0.04)

# Key Findings

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- **There was no effect on mortality**



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- **Improved primary care access and continuity**
  - ImPACT patients had 3x more primary care (22 vs. 7 visits,  $p < 0.001$ )

# Access and Continuity

	ImPACT (%)	Usual Care (%)	P-Value
% Primary care encounters with assigned provider	38	32	< 0.001*
% Primary care encounters conducted by telephone	44	24	<0.001*
Telehealth referral	15	6	< 0.001^
New My HealthVet registrations	18	8	< 0.05^

\* P-value reflects significant D-in-D (baseline rates not shown)

^ P-value reflects significant difference in follow-up values (among eligible patients)

# Key Findings

- 2/3<sup>rds</sup> of invited patients engaged in ImPACT
- Improved satisfaction among ImPACT participants
- There was no effect on mortality
- Improved primary care access and continuity
- **Improved end-of-life planning and care**

# End-of-Life Planning and Care

	ImPACT (%)	Usual Care (%)	P-Value
New advance directive	24	6	< 0.001 <sup>^</sup>
New advance directive completed or discussed	56	13	< 0.001 <sup>^</sup>
Hospice referral (among patients who died, n = 19 ImPACT, n = 63 PACT)	74	45	< 0.05 <sup>~</sup>

<sup>^</sup> P-value reflects significant difference in follow-up values (among eligible patients)

<sup>~</sup> P-value reflects significant difference among patients who died (n = 15 vs. 67)

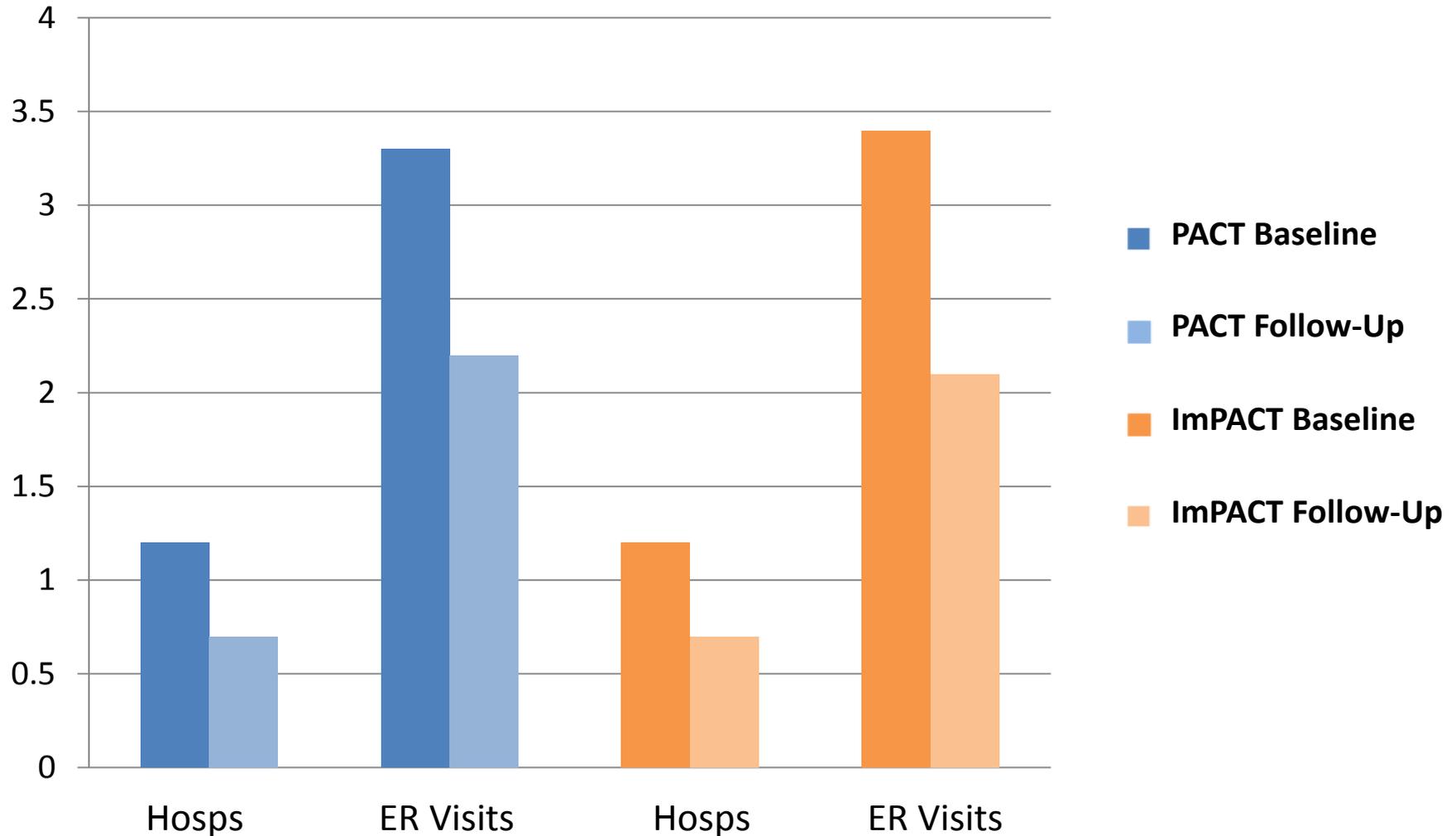
Wu F, et al., *Medical Care*, 2017

Hummel D, et al., *Journal of Nurse Practitioners*, 2017

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- **Hospitalizations/ED visits declined at similar rates**

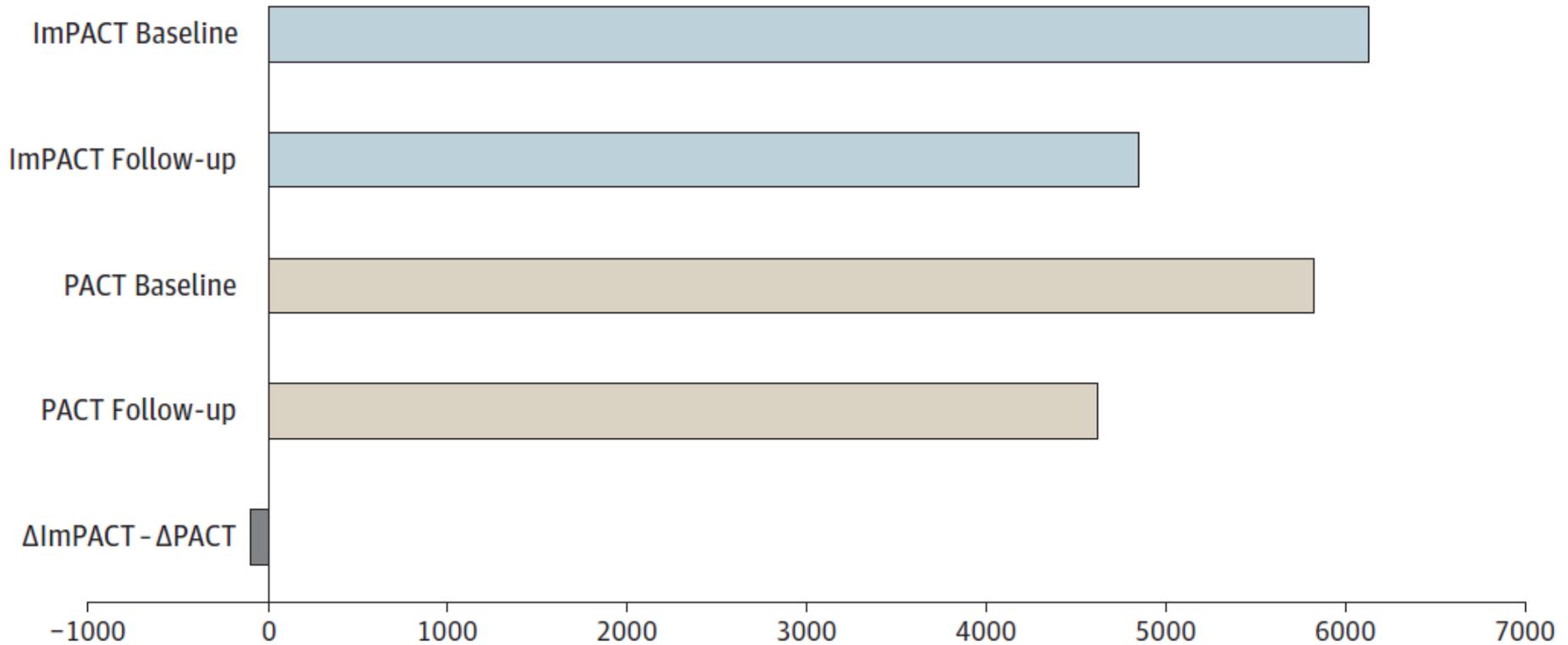
# Changes in 16-month hosp/ER visit rates



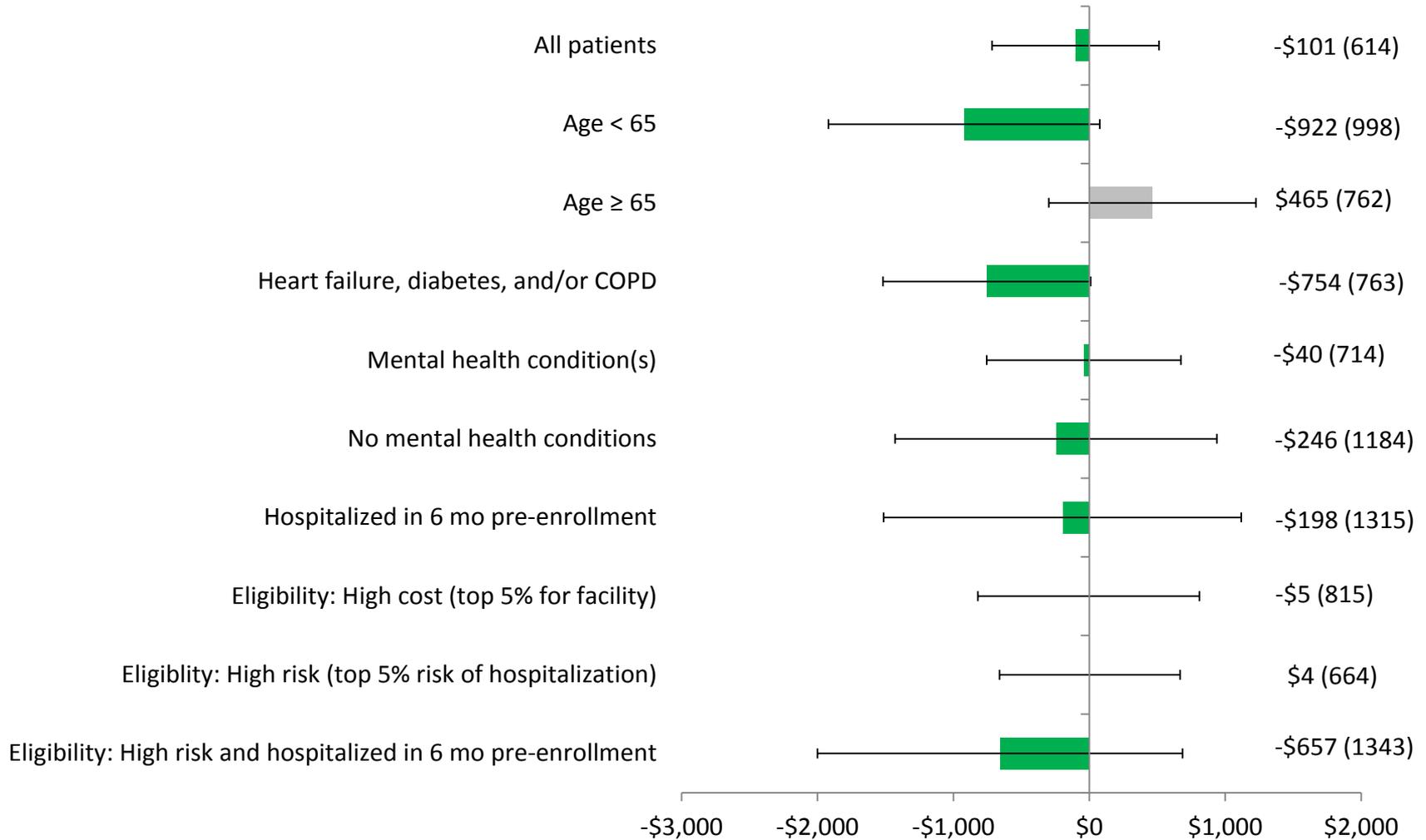
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- Improved end-of-life planning and care
- Hospitalizations/ED Visits declined at similar rates
- **ImPACT paid for itself, but did not significantly reduce costs**

# Unadjusted costs declined by ~20% in ImPACT and PACT



# Stratified Analyses of Subgroups



# Where did modest savings come from?

Utilization	ImPACT		PACT		$\Delta$ ImPACT- $\Delta$ PACT
	Baseline	Follow-up	Baseline	Follow-up	
Acute Med/Surg Admissions	1.3	0.7	1.3	0.7	0.06
Acute Med/Surg Days	7.0	3.2	7.1	4.1	-0.73
Acute MH Admissions	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.1	-0.03
Acute MH Days	3.3	1.7	3.8	1.8	0.38
Extended Med Admissions	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	-0.02
Extended Med Days	8.4	11.5	4.2	8.4	-1.08
Extended MH Admissions	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.04	0.04
Extended MH Days	9.3	4.3	11.9	4.9	1.97
ED Visits	3.4	2.1	3.3	2.1	-0.12
Primary Care Visits	10.9	21.8	10.6	7.4	14.04*
Specialty Care Visits	14.5	12.0	14.8	11.4	0.97
MH Outpatient Visits	10.1	8.0	10.0	9.3	-1.34

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# Potential explanations for modest cost impact

- Evaluation focused on program's first year- establishing best practices and relationships with other VA services takes time
- Benefits of intensive management may require longer enrollment (e.g., to build trust, change behavior and chronic condition management, decrease complication rates).
- Program may increase utilization for some patients (e.g., identifying unmet needs, shifting care into VA for older adults).
- Focusing on highest-risk/highest cost patients may not be the ideal target for cost savings

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# VA PACT-Intensive Management (PIM) Demonstration Sites



# PIM Partnered Initiative

PIM Demonstration Site Leads: Parag Dalsania, Jessica Eng, Nate Ewigman, Deborah Henry, Jeff Jackson, Neha Pathak, Brook Watts

PIM Executive Committee: Gordon Schectman, Kathy Corrigan, Tim Dresselhaus, David Atkins, Carrie Patton, Belinda Black (Velazquez)

## PIM National Evaluation Committee

Lisa Rubenstein (CSHIIP, Los Angeles)

Steve Asch (Ci2i, Palo Alto)

Evelyn Chang (CSHIIP, Los Angeles)

Donna Zulman (Ci2i, Palo Alto)

Jean Yoon (HERC, Palo Alto)

Michael Ong (CSHIIP, Los Angeles)

Susan Stockdale (CSHIIP, Los Angeles)

Marian Katz (CSHIIP, Los Angeles)

Elvira Jimenez (CSHIIP, Los Angeles)

Mingming Wang (CSHIIP, Los Angeles)

Ava Wong (PIM NEC, VA Palo Alto)

Angel Park (HERC, Palo Alto)

Karen Chu (CSHIIP, Los Angeles)

Andrew Lanto (CSHIIP, Los Angeles)

Shoutzu Lin (Ci2i, Palo Alto)

Cindie Slightam/Terri Rogers (ImPACT, Palo Alto)

Alissa Simon (CSHIIP, Los Angeles)

Debbie Delevan (CSHIIP, Los Angeles)

Lisa Tarr (CSHIIP, Los Angeles)

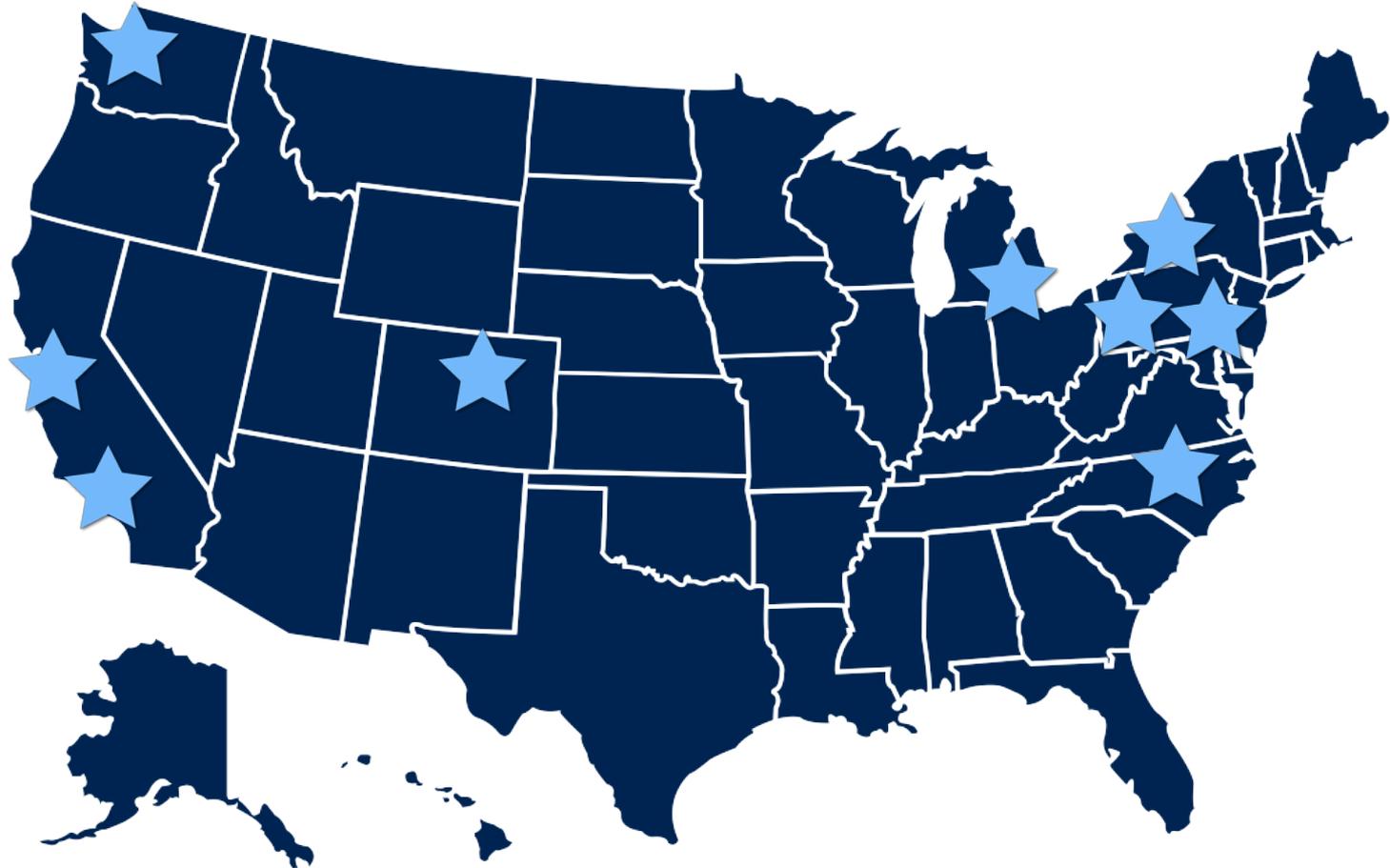
# PACT-Intensive Management Sites

<b>PIM Site</b>	<b>Distinguishing Elements</b>	<b>Team</b>
San Francisco	Incorporates elements of GRACE (for frail older adults) & MHICM, includes home visits	SW, RN, psychiatrist
Milwaukee	Patients enrolled during hosp, emphasizes post-discharge care and patient goals	RN, clinical educator, psychologist
Cleveland	NP and military medics co-manage care, emphasizes reducing PACT provider burnout	NP, medics
Salisbury	PIM provider assumes care, emphasizes care coordination and patient engagement	PCP, SW, RN, psychologist, peer support
Atlanta	Incorporates home visits and telehealth, emphasizes patient activation	SW, NP

# VA PACT High Risk Patient Workgroup

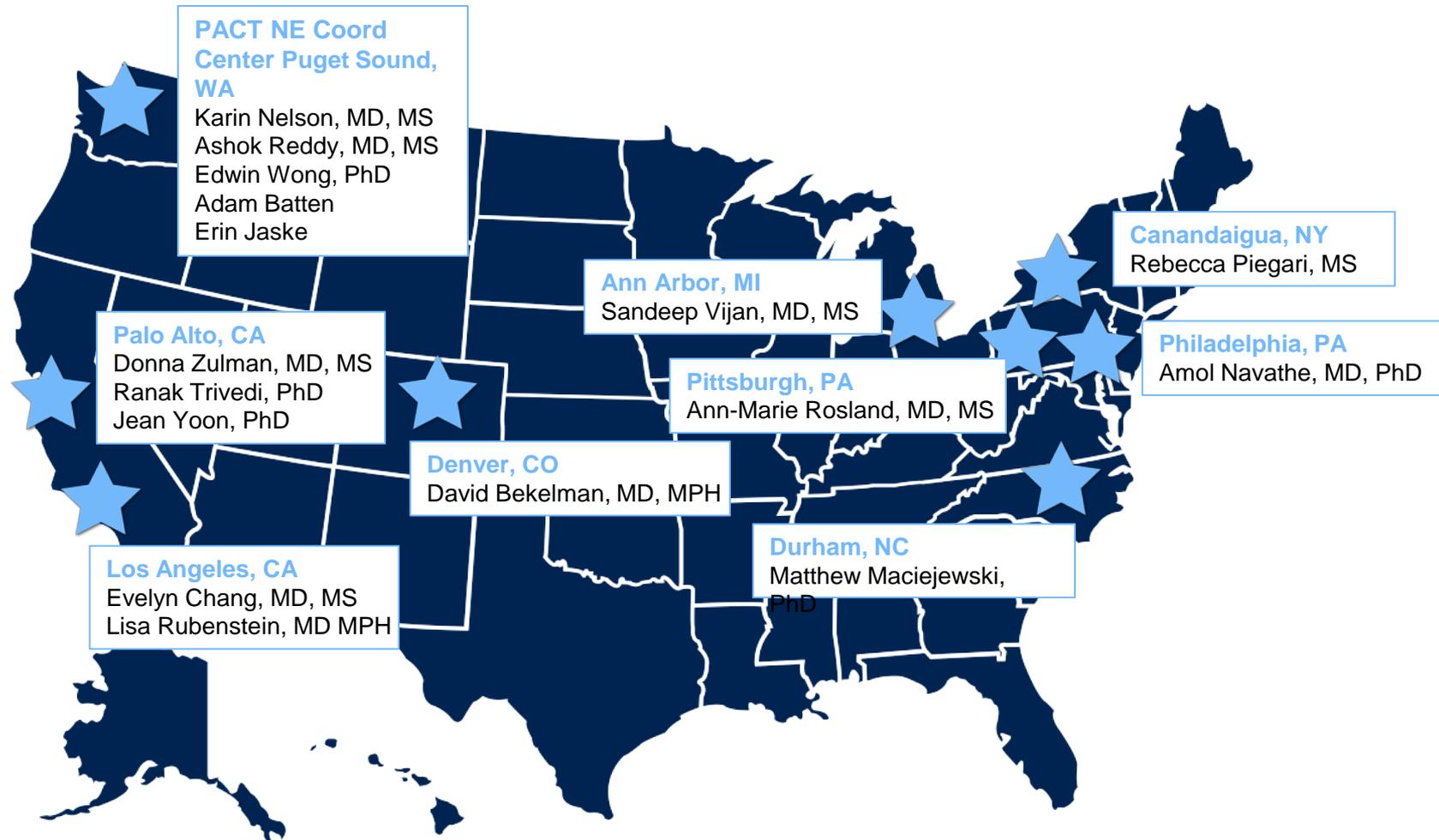
Part of the VA PACT National Evaluation Coordinating Center

Goal: Conduct and coordinate evaluations of the impact of PACT on the care and outcomes for complex patients nationally

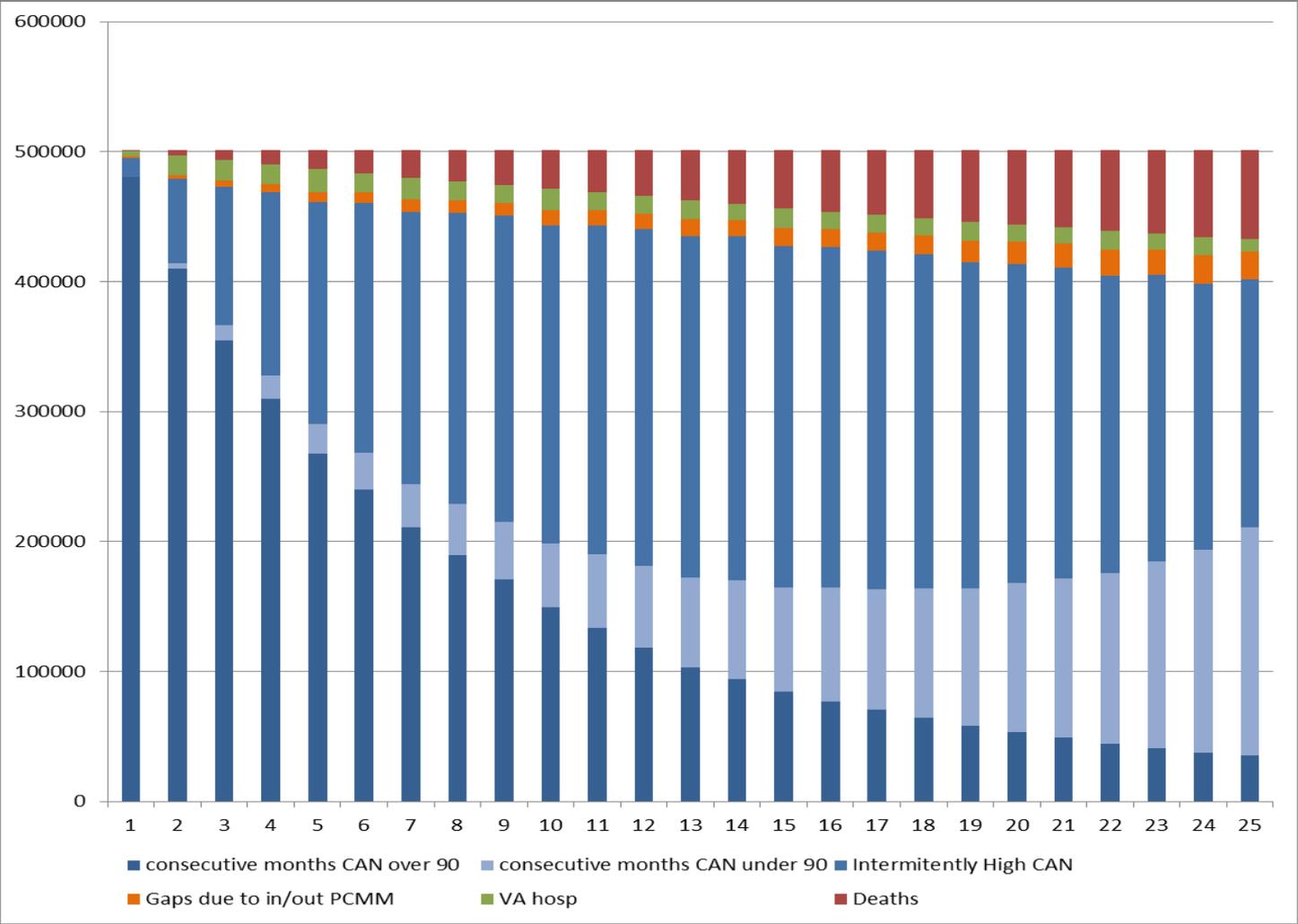


# VA PACT High Risk Patient Workgroup

Goal: Conduct and coordinate evaluations of the impact of PACT on the care and outcomes for complex patients nationally



# Observational CAN score trajectories



Credit: E. Chang, B. Piegari, E. Wong, J. Yoon

# IF-THEN SURVEY

## **Interconnected Factors That Influence Health, Experiences and Needs (IF-THEN)**

- 10,000 High Risk Veterans (CAN>75<sup>th</sup>%), nationally representative
- Social Det. of Health, Psychosocial, Functional, Behavioral measures linked to VA clinical records
- Which factors improve prediction of health outcomes, and segmenting of high-risk population?

# Overall Goals / Future Vision

- How best to support Primary Care teams in caring for their high-risk patients
- How best to structure special Intensive-Primary Care teams
- How best to use (or enhance) Health System data and tools to support care management and coordination for complex patients

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## VA Palo Alto Ci2i Investigators and Staff

### ImPACT Clinical Team & Advisors

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### ImPACT Evalution

Steve Asch, Christine Chee, Jessica Breland, Cindie Slightam, Donn Garvert, Tyson Holmes, Frances Wu, Ava Wong

### PIM Sites & Evaluation Team

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## PACT High Risk Clinical Subgroups Team

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Adam Batten, Rebecca Piegari

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VA Office of Primary Care Services

VA HSR&D and VA QUERI

VA Ann Arbor and VA Pittsburgh HSR&D COINs

# Questions/Comments?

Donna Zulman

[donna.zulman@va.gov](mailto:donna.zulman@va.gov)

Ann-Marie Rosland

[ann-marie.rosland@va.gov](mailto:ann-marie.rosland@va.gov)

Twitter: [@roslandam](https://twitter.com/roslandam)