



Federal Railroad Administration

Medical Standards for Safety Critical Railroad Employees

RSAC Briefing – September 21, 2006



Federal Railroad Administration Medical Standards for Safety Critical Railroad Workers

Why are we doing this?

- There are many jobs in the railroad industry where workers perform tasks that would be considered “safety critical”.
- The tasks require certain physical and mental capabilities to be un-impeded by medical conditions that could lead to sudden incapacitation.
- Sudden incapacitation of employees doing these tasks could lead to immediate harm to themselves, other employees or the public.



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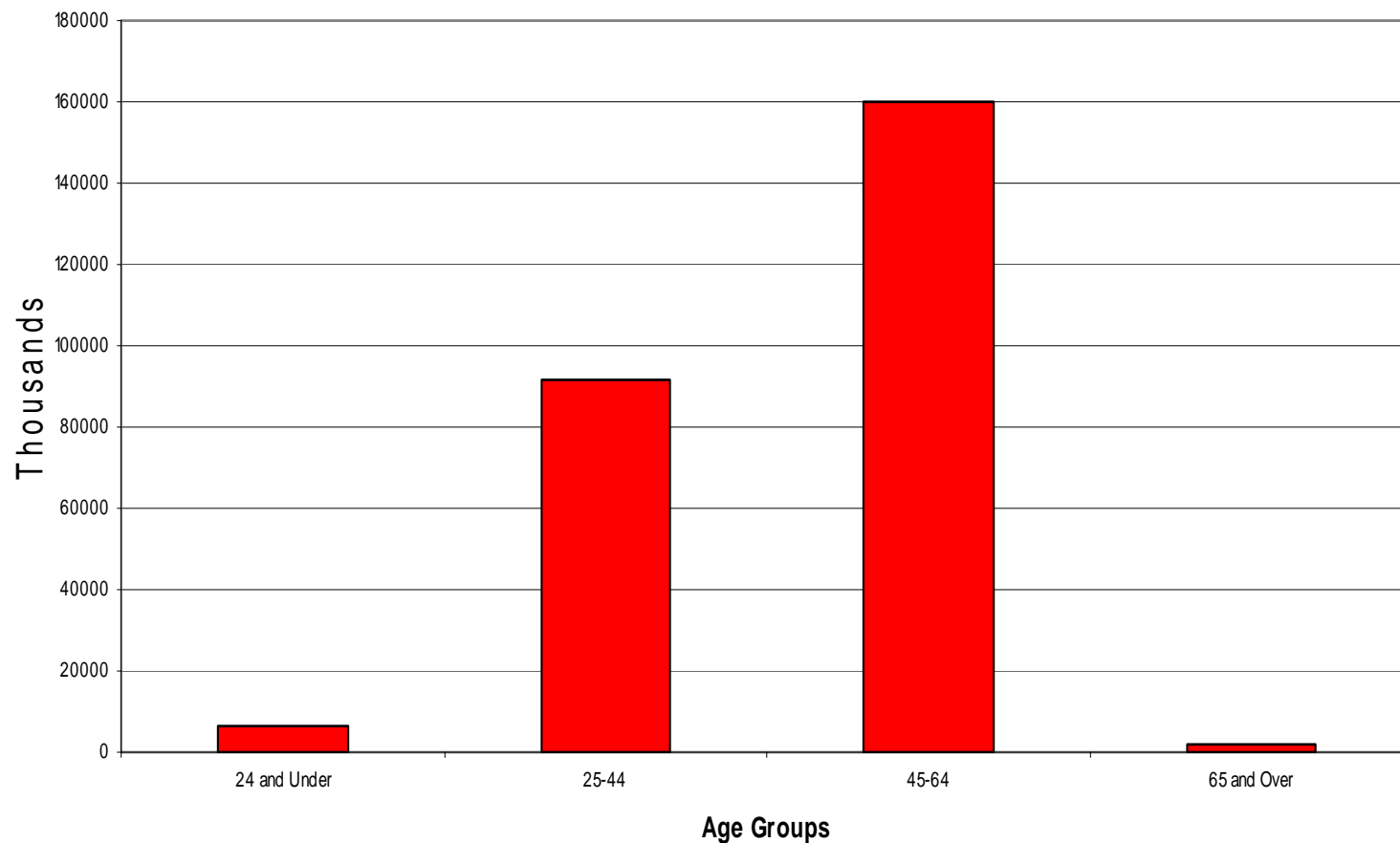
Why are we doing this?

- 70,825 of 154,656 (46%) Class I railroad workers belong to UTU, BLE, BRS, ATDA or UTU-YMD
- RRB reports total US railroad employment = 222,500
- Potential population of safety-sensitive workers = 101,894 (46% of 222,500)



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US Railroad Employee Population by Age Group

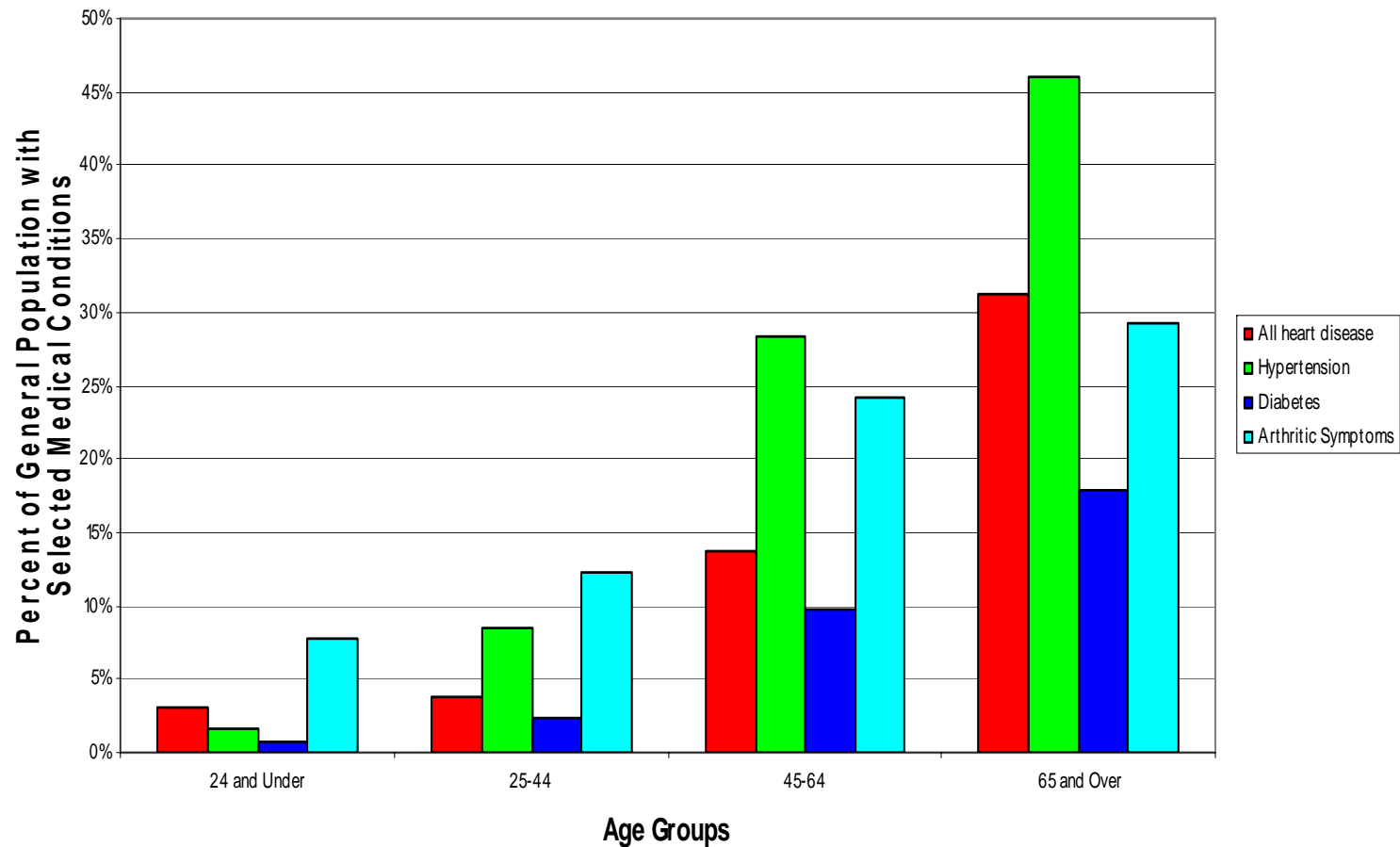


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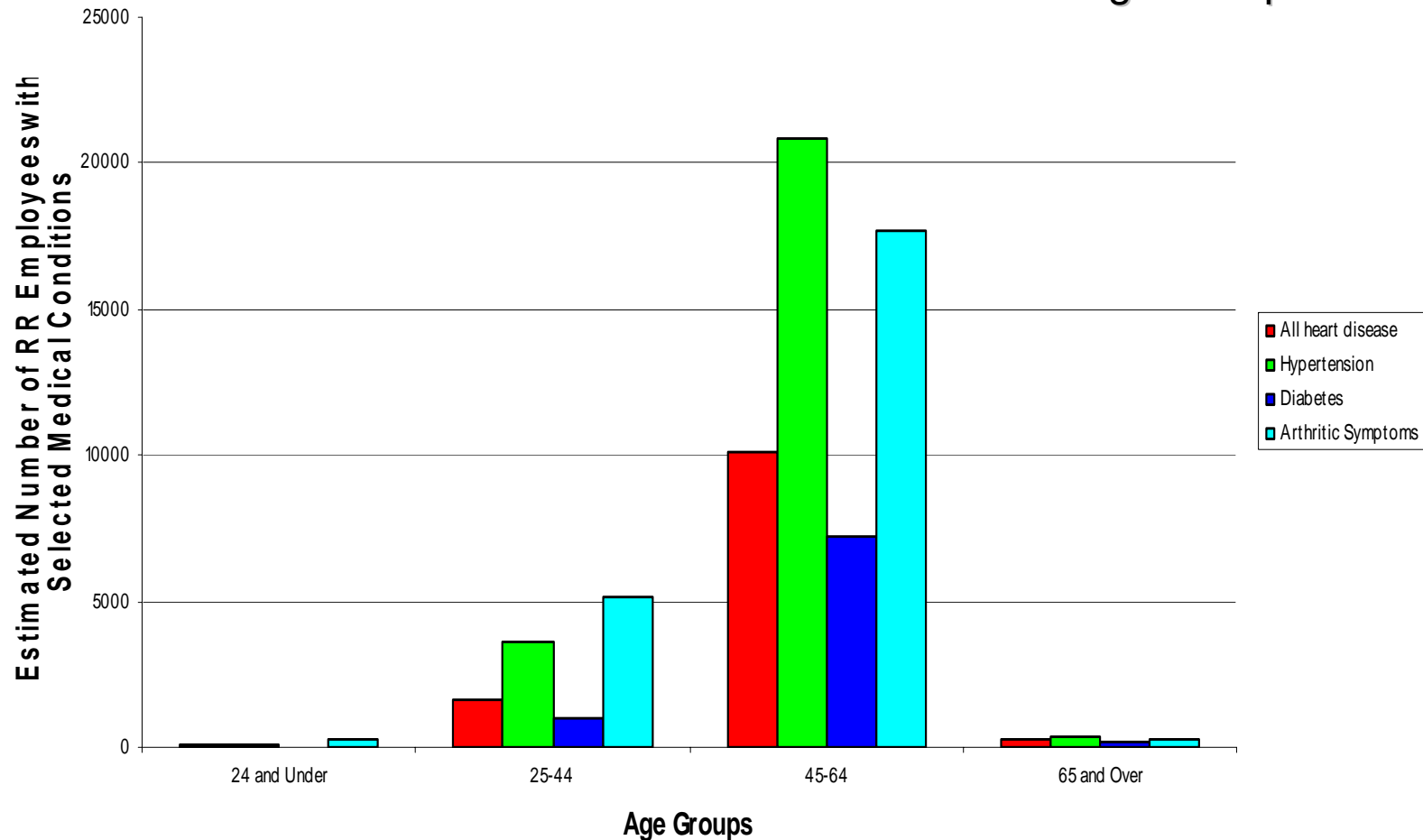
US Chronic Medical Conditions, % by Age Group





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Estimate of Chronic Medical Conditions in RR Age Groups



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The NTSB has recommended:

- “Develop a standard medical examination form that includes questions regarding sleep problems and require that the form be used, pursuant to 49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 240, to determine the medical fitness of locomotive engineers; the form should also be available for use to determine the medical fitness of other employees in safety-sensitive positions.” (R-02-24).
- “Require that any medical condition that could incapacitate, or seriously impair the performance of an employee in a safety-sensitive position be reported to the railroad in a timely manner.” (R-02-25).



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What Other US DOT Modal Administrations and other Countries Cover:
(Equivalent to railroad positions)

Agency	Railroad Occupation			
	Locomotive Engineer	Conductor/ Trainman	Dispatcher	Signalman
FMCSA				
FAA - Airman				
FAA - ATCS				
USCG - Mariner				
Transport Canada				
NTC - Australia				
RSSB - UK				

[illegible]



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Foreign Railway Agencies – Medical Standards Programs:

All countries examined have more extensive medical standards programs than US

- Mexico is most centralized.
- Australian, Canadian and UK programs allow railroads to select examiners and make final determination of medical fitness.
- Railroad and labor representatives involved in development of Canadian and Australian standards.
- Canada and Australia allow railroads discretion in identifying safety-sensitive positions.
- Canada and Australia have public welfare systems to cover medically disqualified workers.

[illegible]



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What are the next steps going to be?

To define and resolve the following major issues
(among many) :

- How narrow/broad should the standards be?
- Who will be covered?
- Who determines the criteria?
- How will the criteria be kept up-to-date?



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- Who decides fitness for duty?
- How will these rules effect current FRA rules?
- What appeals process is appropriate?
- How can the processes be done to permit auditing while maintaining medical confidentiality?
- Etc.
- Etc.
-



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