

Resolution on Health Care and Reentry After Incarceration

An official statement from the Global Alliance on Behavioral Health and Social Justice (formerly the American Orthopsychiatric Association), prepared by the Mass Incarceration Task Force

The Global Alliance is committed to applying principles of social justice to policy development, community action, and systems change related to the behavioral health and wellbeing of populations that are vulnerable or marginalized. In keeping with our mission, we are gravely concerned about the lack of health resources available to individuals upon release from correctional facilities.

Compared to the general public, incarcerated individuals have:

- higher rates of chronic diseases (e.g., tuberculosis, heart disease, HIV, diabetes),
- 3 times the rate of mental illness
- 4 times the rate of substance abuse problems.



The Affordable Care Act (ACA) created opportunities to increase health care coverage for individuals returning from correctional facilities by making Medicaid coverage available to all individuals, including nondisabled adults without dependent children, who earn up to 138% of the federal poverty level (in those states that chose to participate in Medicaid expansion). The ACA further required Medicaid coverage of prescription drugs and mental health and substance abuse services. These provisions are critical to successful reentry, a period associated with significant stress and high risk of relapse for those with behavioral health disorders. If such disorders go untreated or undertreated, the risk for recidivism increases.

The Global Alliance supports efforts to enroll individuals returning from jail and prison in health care and recognizes that it is an essential component of improving community transitions. Any efforts to repeal or alter the ACA should maintain components that ensure health care coverage for these individuals, including for behavioral health disorders.

Additional Resources

- *A Record of Progress and a Roadmap for the Future*. Federal Interagency Reentry Council. csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Healthcare.pdf
- Health Coverage and Care for the Adult Criminal Justice-Involved Population. Kaiser Family Foundation. bit.ly/2q2qPco_123913-14
- Health Coverage for Incarcerated People. www.healthcare.gov/incarceration
- Transition Clinics. transitionsclinic.org
- Center for Prisoner Health and Human Rights. prisonerhealth.org
- Integrating Correctional and Community Health Care for Formerly Incarcerated People who are Eligible for Medicaid. (2014). *Health Affairs*. ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4028698
- *Guidelines for Successful Transition of People with Mental or Substance Use Disorders from Jail and Prison: Implementation Guide*. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. bit.ly/2niNrix