

COPE

NEWSLETTER

POLICY BRIEF

Passion, Proactive, Prophetic...

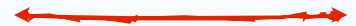
SUPERVISOR JOSIE GONZALES AGREES TO PARTNER WITH COPE TO FORM THE PUBLIC HEALTH RE-ENTRY TASK FORCE IN SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY.



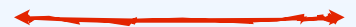
Jim Lindley, Public Health Director, Supervisor Josie Gonzales, and Dr. Maxwell Ohikhurue M.D., Public Health Officer.

DID YOU KNOW?

California houses more women in prison than any other state...



Prison population growth for women is expected to outpace men during the next 5 years...



Children with one or more parents in prison or jail have more than a 70 percent chance of going to prison or jail during their lifetime...

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The Public Health Re-Entry Task Force Will Examine The Public Health Implications Of Ex-Offender Re-Entry. Supervisor Joise Gonzales who represents the 5th District in San Bernardino County whose district has one of the largest population of returning offenders in the Inland Valley, has agreed to assist COPE in achieving the following:

- 1.) Formalizing the task force process in San Bernardino which will consist of several meetings with such stakeholders as the Department of Public Health, Mental Health, AIDS/HIV Divisions, Department of Social Services, Parole Department, and County Sheriff's Office, to develop a set of Policy Recommendations to be introduced and adopted by the County Board of Supervisors.
- 2.) Participate in a Town Hall Meeting with the next 90 days to publicly announce her support and to celebrate with the constituents of COPE.
- 3.) Facilitate a face-to-face meeting with Supervisor Gary Ovitt who is the Chairman of the Board.



Families, government, and the general public will benefit from the Public Health Re-Entry Task Force.

Families, government, and general public need accurate information and awareness of their health status and treatment options to responsibly reintegrate residents returning from prison. Community health and safety depend on it.

State prison and county jails are people custodians. They are potential incubators for communicable disease consequently. Many recently released residents have been exposed in custody to hepatitis, drug-resistant staph infections and other communicable diseases. Elected officials and the general public are largely unaware of the problem's extent. California's parolees are released from state prison health services systems that are in shambles. Reentry seriously impacts the fiscal health of California counties. Counties are responsible for providing aftercare to returning residents. Mental health care, communicable and chronic disease care effectively fall under county jurisdiction.

Returning residents should not be demonized. They have paid their debt to society and they deserve adequate public health care services provided to them.

INMATE HEALTH STATUS: WHAT WE KNOW...

California Parolees Experience:

- 4 times greater rate of active TB...
- 9-10 times greater rate for hepatitis C...
- 5 times higher rate of AIDS (8-9 times higher)...
- 1.5-5 times higher rate of mental illness...
- Higher rates of substance abuse...
- Higher rates of chronic diseases...

Prisoner Reentry: What Are The Public Health Challenges (RAND, 2003)



Partial Policy Recommendations

1. Mandate testing for all communicable diseases 120 days prior to release.
2. Establish confidential electronic medical record transference system to notify county public health department of returning residents that test positive for communicable diseases.
3. Identify culturally competent faith-based and community-based health care and treatment providers to offer services for returning residents.
4. Returning residents should be provided with a :Re-entry Tool Kit: that will include, among other things, a resource guide to direct the person to services based on their medical needs.
5. Suspend, rather than terminate. Medi-Cal eligibility and/or their eligibility for other categorical funding services during incarceration.