Connecting Justice-Involved Populations to Medicaid Coverage and Care Coordination:

A Guide for Managed Care Organizations

Managed Care Organizations and Justice-Involved Populations

Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) have a unique opportunity to connect Justice-Involved Populations to vital, continuous, and quality healthcare. Justice-involved individuals face significant barriers to accessing healthcare services and are at higher risk for significant, chronic health conditions. In this educational guide, Equifax will highlight the critical role Care Coordinators can play in improving health outcomes and operational efficiencies by outlining the points of opportunity for MCOs to connect justice-involved populations to Medicaid coverage and care.

Justice-Involved Care Snapshot

Health Statistics for Justice-Involved Populations[1]

65%
meet criteria for Substance Use Disorder

Prison and jail inmates are 7 times likelier to have a substance use disorder than individuals in the general population.
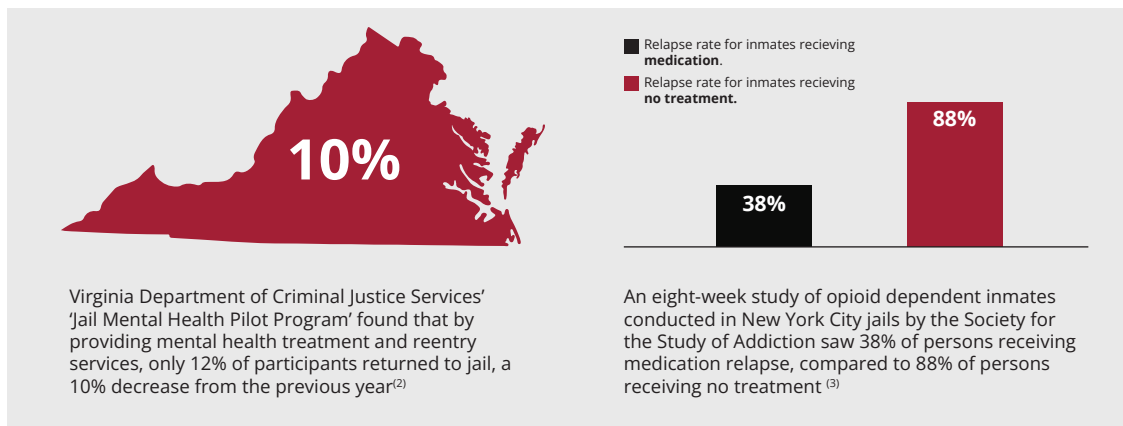
64%
are affected by a Mental Health Problem

It is estimated 16% have symptoms of serious mental illness.

Compared to the general population, individuals in jails and prisons suffer:

4x the rate of active tuberculosis
9x the rate of Hepatitis C
8x the rate of HIV infection
3x the rate of serious mental illness
4x the rate of substance abuse disorders

Access to Medicaid and Treatment Improves Health Outcomes and Reduces Rates of Re-Incarceration

10%

Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services' 'Jail Mental Health Pilot Program' found that by providing mental health treatment and reentry services, only 12% of participants returned to jail, a 10% decrease from the previous year[2]

■ Relapse rate for inmates recieving **medication**.
■ Relapse rate for inmates recieving **no treatment.**

88%

38%

An eight-week study of opioid dependent inmates conducted in New York City jails by the Society for the Study of Addiction saw 38% of persons receiving medication relapse, compared to 88% of persons receiving no treatment [3]
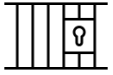
Challenges in Connecting Justice-Involved Populations to Medicaid Include

- Exchanging data across prisons/jails and state Medicaid agencies.
- Coordinating with eligibility and enrollment systems to suspend/reclassify status.
- Identifying resources and staff available to conduct enrollment in jails and prisons.
- Identifying Justice-Involved Populations

POINTS OF OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT JUSTICE-INVOLVED POPULATIONS TO MEDICAID COVERAGE AND CONTINUED CARE

Identifying Justice-Involved Populations

The first point of opportunity for MCOs is to identify justice-involved populations. Justice-involved populations are individuals who have been incarcerated, detained, or are involved with the criminal justice system. MCOs can work with jails, prisons, and strategically utilize pointer data solutions like Equifax's Incarceration Intelligence to help in their investigations to identify justice-involved individuals and assist with enrollment in Medicaid.

Assisting with Enrollment

Once justice-involved individuals are identified, MCOs and their care coordinators can assist with enrollment in Medicaid. Justice-involved individuals are often eligible for Medicaid coverage upon release, but face barriers to enrollment. MCOs can work with community organizations and partners to provide enrollment assistance and educate justice-involved individuals on their coverage options, including managed care plans.

Coordinating Care

Coordinating care is a critical component of improving health outcomes for justice-involved populations. MCOs can work with healthcare providers to ensure justice-involved individuals receive the appropriate care and services. Care coordination services can include connecting individuals with primary care providers, mental health services, and substance abuse treatment. Lowering costs of care by avoiding relapse and costly ER visits.

Addressing Social Determinants of Health

Justice-involved populations often face social determinants of health that can impact their overall health outcomes. MCOs can work to address these social determinants of health by providing access to resources such as housing assistance, employment services, and transportation. By addressing social determinants of health, MCOs can help improve healthcare continuity and quality for justice-involved populations while reducing healthcare costs.

Providing Culturally Competent Care

Culturally competent care is essential for justice-involved populations, who often come from diverse cultural backgrounds and may have unique healthcare needs. Care coordinators can provide culturally competent care by ensuring their healthcare providers are trained to work with justice-involved populations. Culturally competent care can include providing interpreters, offering healthcare services that are sensitive to the needs of justice-involved individuals, and providing education on healthcare services and resources available to justice-involved populations.

Improving Health Outcomes

By connecting justice-involved populations to Medicaid coverage and care, MCOs can improve health outcomes and reduce healthcare costs. Justice-involved populations frequently have complex health needs that require specialized, ongoing care. By providing coordinated care and addressing social determinants of health, MCOs can help improve health outcomes for justice-involved populations and reduce the risk of chronic health conditions.

Collaborating with Community Organizations

Collaboration with community organizations is essential for improving health outcomes for justice-involved populations. Community organizations can provide valuable resources and support services that can help justice-involved individuals successfully transition back into their communities. MCOs can work with community organizations to provide care coordination services and connect justice-involved individuals with resources such as housing assistance, employment services, and transportation.

IMPLEMENTATION IN ACTION: AN OHIO PRE-RELEASE ENROLLMENT CASE STUDY

In 2014, Ohio initiated a pre-release enrollment program aimed at providing health insurance coverage to justice-involved individuals. The program, operated by the Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM), allows eligible individuals to enroll in Medicaid before their release from incarceration, enabling them to access healthcare services upon their release.

The program was designed to address the healthcare needs of justice-involved individuals at a higher risk of chronic health conditions, substance abuse disorders, and mental illness due to factors such as poverty, prolonged substance abuse, and limited access to healthcare services. By enrolling individuals in Medicaid before their release, the program aimed to ensure continuity of care and reduce the risk of negative health outcomes.

The pre-release enrollment program proved successful in providing coverage and care to justice-involved populations. According to a report by the Urban Institute[4], the program enrolled over 24,000 individuals between 2016 and 2019 and saw justice-involved individuals who enrolled in Medicaid before their release possess higher rates of healthcare utilization, including preventive care, primary care, and behavioral health services, compared to those who enrolled after their release.

The program was also cost-effective and reduced healthcare costs associated with frequent emergency department visits and hospitalizations. The report found that justice-involved individuals who enrolled in Medicaid before their release had lower rates of emergency department visits and hospitalizations compared to those who enrolled after their release, resulting in cost savings for both the state and taxpayers.

In conclusion, Ohio's pre-release enrollment program has been successful in providing health insurance coverage and improving healthcare access for justice-involved individuals. The program has also been cost-effective, resulting in reduced healthcare costs and improved health outcomes. By addressing the healthcare needs of justice-involved populations, the program has the potential to reduce recidivism and improve public health.

BUILDING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Collaborating with MCOs across the country, we have identified a critical need for access to timely incarceration pointer data to help avoid gaps in care while beneficiaries are in the various stages of custody.

Our Incarceration Intelligence solution gives MCOs and care coordinators access to reliable and near real-time pointer data, positively affecting continuity of care, quality of care, and cost of care for justice-involved beneficiaries. This is the only solution for Medicaid MCO operators and clinical care coordinators that helps MCOs address the impact of the justice-involved population, providing data and notifications relevant to social determinants of health, supporting health equity goals, while helping save time and resources.

CONNECT WITH US

Visit our website to learn more about our Incarceration Intelligence solution or contact us today to determine how our innovate solution meets the needs of your organization.

 totalverify.equifax.com/solutions/medicaid-managed-care-organizations

About Equifax

With decades of experience serving the public sector, Equifax leverages trusted, unique data, analytics, technology, and expertise to help clients drive innovation and transform knowledge into insights. Equifax empowers state Medicaid agencies and managed care organizations to collaborate and make more informed decisions, streamline operations, maximize program efficiency, reduce fraud and improper payments, and enhance the user experience.

Sources:
(1) Medicaid and CHIP Learning Collaboratives, Medicaid and Justice-Involved Populations: Strategies to Increase Coverage and Care Coordination (2017).
(2) Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, Evaluation of the Jail Mental Health Pilot Programs (2022)
(3) National Institute of Health: Opioid treatment at release from jail using extended-release naltrexone: a pilot proof-of-concept randomized effectiveness trial. Addiction. (2015)
(4) Urban Institute " Ohio's Medicaid pre-release enrollment program" (2017)