



MEN'S HEALTH INITIATIVE

A PROGRAM OF THE
NATIONAL CENTER FOR PRIMARY CARE
AT MOREHOUSE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

The Health of Incarcerated Men in Georgia

AN OVERVIEW OF PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND ORAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE

The face of Georgia is changing and so are its demographics. It has become one of the country's fastest growing states both economically and socially. But not all aspects of its growth and changes have been positive. A close review of health data reveals significant disparities in the distribution of health care by gender and race. Approximately 2.36 million Georgia residents under 65 years of age (almost 1 out of 3) were uninsured at sometime in 2001-2002.

Socio-economic conditions in Georgia place men at high risk of morbidity and mortality. Compared to the rest of the nation, these men experience significantly high rates of heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic respiratory diseases, accidents, infectious diseases, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, and kidney disease. These elevated rates of preventable conditions translate into high mortality rates. For instance, the risk of death from cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke) for both Black and White men in Georgia is one of the highest in the country (CDC, 2003). Achieving optimal health is a challenge for all, but for men of color at risk in Georgia, it is an ordeal. For Black men, there is an even greater risk of mortality.

When addressing the health status and health care of men, we also must also take into special consideration the health of incarcerated men. Data indicate that the incidence and spread of certain diseases are magnified among inmates, making it critical that this population receive appropriate and adequate health care services while they are incarcerated and upon their release. Consequently, it is critical that community-based re-entry programs that focus on health, in addition to housing and employment, be developed, supported, and sustained. Such programs will help these newly released men connect with networks of social services agencies and community-based organizations that provide ongoing services and mentoring relationships. This interface and definitive link with public health is critical for the success of re-entry initiatives.

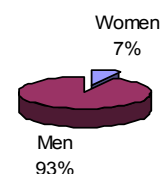
Overall, the U.S. held 2,078,570 persons in Federal and State prisons and in local jails at mid-year 2003, a total increase of 2.9% from mid-year 2002.

- In June, 2003 there were an estimated 480 prison inmates per 100,000 U.S. residents.
- At year-end 2002, U.S. State prisons were operating between 1% and 17% above capacity, while Federal prisons were operating at 33% above capacity.
- In 2002 there were 47,424 prisoners under State and Federal jurisdiction, in the Southern region of the United States, 4,573 in privately operated facilities, and 4,975 in local jails.

Gender, Age and Incarceration

- Male prisoners account for approximately 93% of the total prison population in the U.S.
- More than 44,000 men (1.1% of the total male population) in Georgia are in prison.

Gender and Incarceration



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Georgia Population		Total Population in GA %	Total Prisoners in GA #	Total Prisoners in GA %
Female	4,286,070	51	3,129	7
Male	4,046,770	49	44,316	93
Total	8,332,840	100	47,445	100

Source: U.S. Census 2000 and Bureau of Justice- Prisoners under the jurisdiction of State and Federal correctional authorities, yearend 2001-2002

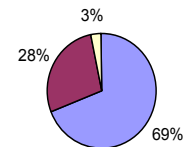
- Among the more than 1.29 million men between the ages of 20 and 39 sentenced at year-end 2002 in the U.S., an estimated 442,300 (47.4%) were Black.
- Approximately 40% of men in Georgia are of working age (ages 20-44). Men of this age group also have the highest incarceration rates.

Race, Ethnicity and Incarceration

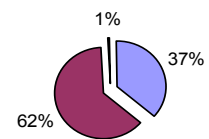
Minorities, especially Black men, make up a disproportionate share of the inmates in prisons and jails. Unemployment, low or limited education, and the peculiarities of state and federal drug laws contribute to this disparate rate of incarceration.

- At midyear 2003, in the U.S., there were 4,834 per 100,000 Black men in prison or jail, compared to 1,778 per 100,000 Hispanic males, and 681 per 100,000 White males.
- The Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) reported that in 2004, approximately 62% of all prison inmates were Black; 37% White; and 3% other. (Note: these percentages do not include those who race was not reported.)
- The incarceration rate of Black men in Georgia is 1/29, while that of White men is 1/183.
- More than 91% of Georgia's male prison population is from urban areas, while 9% are from rural regions.

Men by Race in GA



Incarcerated Men by Race-GA



White Black Other

Health and Incarceration

- *The Health Status of Soon-to-be Released Inmates* reported that approximately 11.5 million persons were released into the community in 1998. In Georgia approximately 16,000 inmates come in and out of the system each year.
- In 2003, heart disease, HIV-AIDS, cancer and liver disease were the top causes of death in Georgia prisons.
- Overall infectious disease rates among inmates are upward of 10 times those found in the general population.
- According to the GDC, there are currently 340 chronic care male patients per 1,000 inmate population. Chronic care includes, but is not limited to, treatment for HIV, hepatitis, tuberculosis, diabetes, hypertension, pulmonary diseases and seizures.
- Behavioral profiles and anecdotal evidence suggest that inmates are disproportionately affected by STDs and hepatitis in the U.S. and in Georgia.

- The prevalence of AIDS among inmates is five times higher than among the total U.S. population.
- Of incarcerated men in Georgia with HIV/AIDS, 87% were Black and 13% were White.
- High-risk behaviors for HIV transmission -sex, drug use, sharing of injection materials, and tattooing occur in correctional facilities. However, men in Georgia facilities are not provided with any means of preventing infections.
- It is estimated that 16% of all Hepatitis C virus (HCV) carriers in the country pass through the jail or prison system and are at risk of transmitting the disease to the general population.
- According to the Georgia Department of Corrections, the actual cost of healthcare services (for physical, mental and oral health services) per inmate for FY03 was \$3,332.45 or \$9.13 per inmate per day.

Mental Health

- It is estimated that 230,000 Georgians (2.8% of the population) have a severe mental illness.
- Georgia prison system's mentally ill population more than quadrupled, from 1,251 in 1991 to an estimated 6,700 presently. It is expected to increase to 9000 by 2007.
- In June 2003, approximately 15% (6,786) of the total inmate population in Georgia were mental health patients. Nearly 79% (5,335) of the incarcerated mental health patients were male.
- The GDC reports that mental health programs are offered at all facilities, regardless of the security level. Eight facilities have Crisis Stabilization Units.
- Annual spending for mental health services in Georgia's prisons rose from \$2.6 million in FY 1990 to \$25.5 million in FY 2003.
- The state of Georgia spent \$3,760 per incarcerated mental health patient per year in FY 03. In comparison, the average cost of treating an adult with mental illness in DeKalb County, Georgia per year is \$3,076.
- Nationally, approximately 94% of Federal prisons, 56% of State prisons, and 33% of jails provided on-site substance abuse treatment.
- More than 60% of all offenders in Georgia who are paroled from prison are required to obtain assessment and guidance for substance abuse.

Oral Health

- Newly incarcerated Georgia inmates receive dental screening and recommendations for service. Whether they actually receive treatment depends upon whether they choose to follow-through and seek services. Approximately 50-60% of provided services are emergent and/or urgent care.
- In the Georgia prison system, there are 30 dental clinics with 24 fulltime dentists; 26 dental assistants, and 8 hygienists. This amounts to 0.5 dentists per 1,000 inmates.
- There are approximately 40,000 contacts a year with an oral health provider in Georgia prisons.
- According to the Georgia Department of Correction's Office of Health Services, the total dental expenditure for FY 2003 was \$3,871,600 amounting to \$0.25 per inmate.

Updated June 2004

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