

A Call to Action: The Role of Community Health Centers in the Era of Mass Incarceration

Warren J. Ferguson, MD

Professor and Vice Chair,
Department of Family Medicine and Community Health
Director of Academic Programs,
Health and Criminal Justice Programs
University of Massachusetts Medical School

I Have No Conflicts
of Interest

Objectives

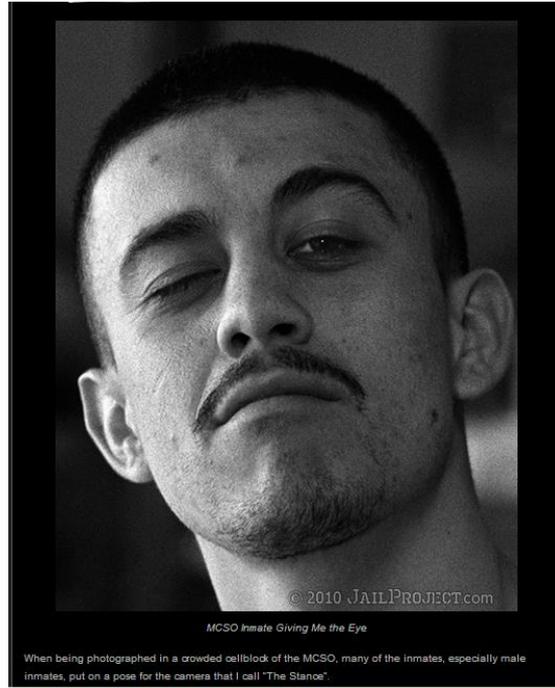
- Cite four population health statistics describing mass incarceration in the United States
- Name mission characteristics of criminal justice health work that resonate with community health center mission
- Make a commitment to one meaningful contribution to improve the outcomes of “justice involved” persons and their families in the United States

I hope we can agree that...

- Mass incarceration is a national problem of historic significance
- Criminal justice (CJ) involvement is a predominant root cause of health disparities
- Criminal justice health is relevant to care of patients in community health centers



Jorge's Story



Epidemiology of Mass Incarceration

**100 million Americans
with criminal records**

**14 million
arrests annually**

**1 in 35 adults
CJ supervised**

**Veterans at
increased risk**



**2.4 million
incarcerated
(1 in 108)**

**80% of convictions
involve substances**

**15% with serious
mental illness**

Sesame Street Goes to Jail



Photo: ©2013 Sesame Workshop

Recidivism Translates to a Life Sentence

95% of detainees return to the community

Recidivism rate of 75% over five years

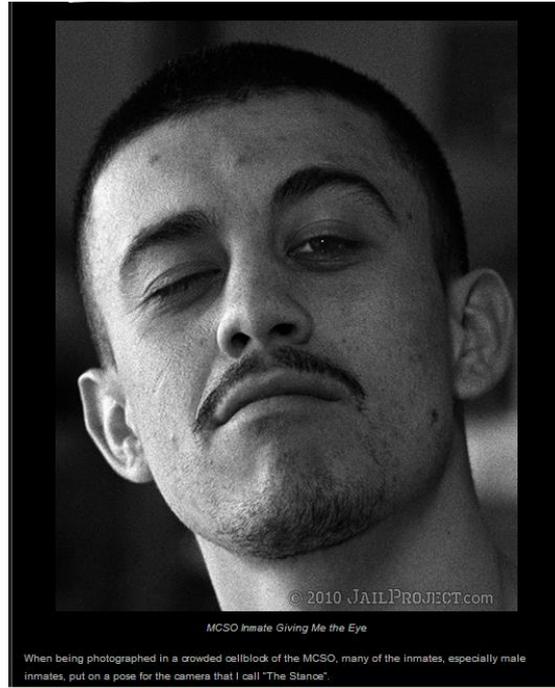


11 million people cycle through jail annually

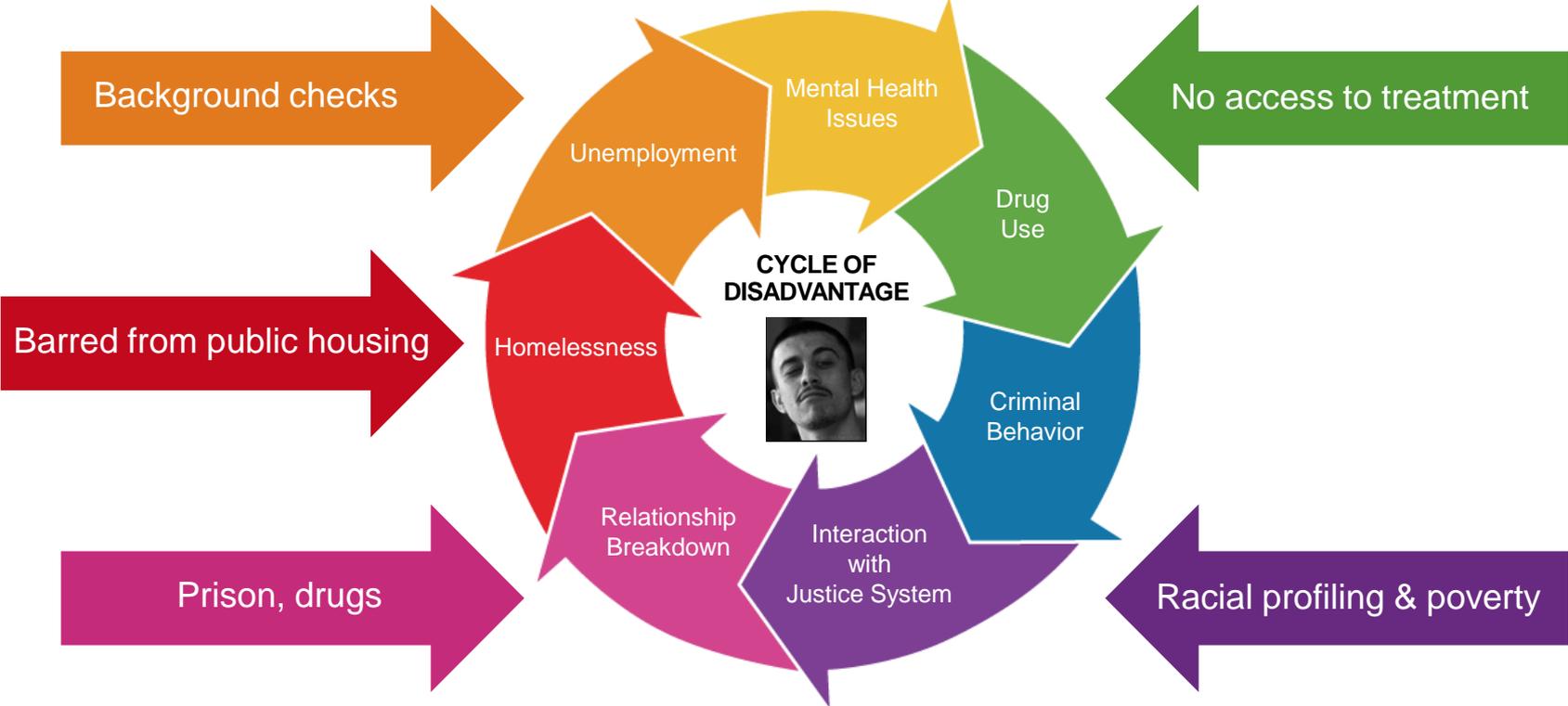
700,000 prison releases annually; 2,000 a day

Source: Ferguson et al. JHCPU. May 2016. In Press.

Jorge's Story



Cycle of Disadvantage & Justice Involvement



Source: www.complexneeds capable.org.au/why-be-complex-needs-capable.html

Economic & Generational Impact

**No male
role models**

**Poor
Schools**

**Stringent
juvenile
detention**



**High dropout
rates**

**Gang culture
& crime**

Public Health Threat at Release

- Chronic infections as a result of injection drugs
- High mortality from overdose post-release
 - Source: Binswanger et al: N Engl J Med 2007; 356:157-165
- Juveniles have 4x risk of death in 10 years
 - Source: Teplin et al: Pediatrics. 2005 Jun; 115(6): 1586–1593



“We live in an era of mass incarceration that threatens our democracy and the health and wellbeing of our patients and loved ones.”

Jeremy Travis

President, John Jay College

Source: Travis, Western and Redburn. The Growth of Incarceration in U.S., National Academy of Sciences

Agreement that Reform is Needed

- Bipartisan support for reform due to cost
- Alternative sentencing
- Reform sentencing guidelines
 - Comprehensive Addiction & Recovery Act
- Second Chance Act: housing & jobs to reduce recidivism
- All are criminal justice strategies



Mainstream medicine is missing from conversation

Preventive Strategies Needed

- The social history include questions about justice involvement
 - Stimulus for advocacy
- Risk assessment for youth?
 - Trauma, parental incarceration, ADHD, school probation/expulsion
- Quicker access post-release
 - Expansion of Transition Clinic



Call to our community: Get Involved

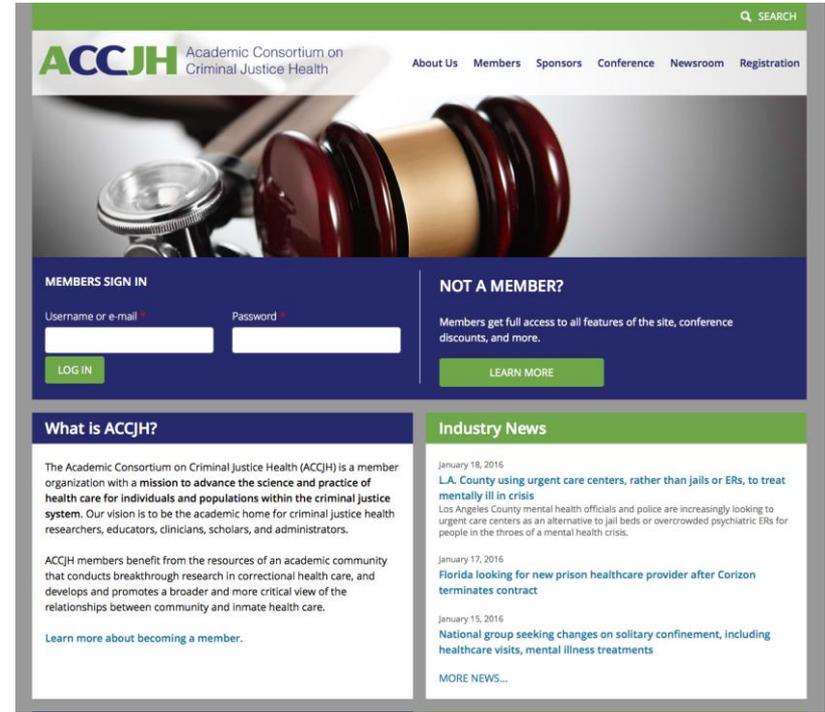


Photo: ©2013 Sesame Workshop

ACCJH Academic Consortium on Criminal Justice Health

- **Mission:** to advance the science and practice of health care for individuals and populations involved with the criminal justice system
- **Vision:** to be the academic home for criminal justice health clinicians, educators and researchers

Join at: www.accjh.org



The screenshot shows the ACCJH website homepage. At the top, there is a green navigation bar with a search icon and the text "SEARCH". Below this is the ACCJH logo and the full name "Academic Consortium on Criminal Justice Health". To the right of the logo are navigation links: "About Us", "Members", "Sponsors", "Conference", "Newsroom", and "Registration". The main content area features a large image of a gavel and a stethoscope. Below the image, there are two columns. The left column is titled "MEMBERS SIGN IN" and contains a login form with fields for "Username or e-mail" and "Password", and a "LOG IN" button. The right column is titled "NOT A MEMBER?" and contains the text "Members get full access to all features of the site, conference discounts, and more." and a "LEARN MORE" button. Below the login form, there is a section titled "What is ACCJH?" with a brief description of the organization's mission and vision. To the right of this section is a "Industry News" section with a green header, listing several news items with dates and headlines, such as "January 18, 2016 L.A. County using urgent care centers, rather than jails or ERs, to treat mentally ill in crisis" and "January 17, 2016 Florida looking for new prison healthcare provider after Corizon terminates contract".



Mentorship



Scholarship



Camaraderie



Innovation



Networking



Membership



Take Home Points

- Mass incarceration in the U.S. threatens our greatness as a nation
- Criminal justice disparities lead to health disparities
- There is relevance for community health centers. These are our patients.
- If not us, then who?