

# Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, Hartford, CT

## Enhancing Services for Recently Incarcerated People and Their Families

**Jeri Hepworth, PhD; Ashley Negrini, MS; Arth Patel, MD, MPH; Heidi Tucker, DO;  
Rebecca Crowell, PhD; Marcus McKinney, DMin, LPC; Lawrence Young, MPH**

**Background:** Our goal was to facilitate the equitable health of people who have been incarcerated and their families. We wanted to help clinicians feel more comfortable about assisting patients with incarceration history, an identified vulnerable population.

**Methods:** We identified and met with regional experts in correctional managed health and in innovative clinical treatment programs and held educational sessions in July 2016. With key informants, we developed pretest and posttest measures to evaluate the educational session. We also planned and held a follow-up discussion with residents that focused on reflection, communication skills, changes in behavior, and best practices.

**Results:** Pretests and posttests compared level of knowledge, understanding, and comfort before and after the educational session. The data revealed significant differences in participants' reports about importance and awareness of the issue, in likelihood of asking about incarceration, in comfort level when asking, in perceived knowledge of health issues, in confidence in linking patients with resources, in awareness of barriers to care, and in empathy. The data showed a mean increase pretest and posttest in providers' likelihood to ask about incarceration (from 2.9 to 5.61) and their comfort level in asking if a patient had been incarcerated (from 3.6 to 5.17).

**Conclusion:** The educational session resulted in an increase in awareness, likelihood, and level of comfort in asking about incarceration, as well as an increase in perceived knowledge of health issues and barriers to care. Follow-up discussions are important to affirm learning and continue to address unconscious bias and equitable care.

### PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLAN – Enhancing Services for Recently Incarcerated People and Their Families

Vision Statement	We will facilitate the equitable health of people who have been incarcerated and their families. We will identify unmet needs and community resources, develop and implement an educational module, and assess its effects.
Team Objectives	We created an educational session about the health impacts of incarceration and its sequelae for residents, faculty, and staff. Resources included regional and national experts. The second phase included a follow-up discussion with residents focused on communication skills, changes in behavior following the educational session, and best practices. The project resulted in education for residents and clinical teams and helped them communicate with patients and families, identify best practices, and better serve this vulnerable population.
Success Factors	The most successful parts of our work were having engaging discussions about the needs of this vulnerable population and establishing best practices to have the conversation about incarceration and increase awareness. We were inspired by the residents' initiation of this topic based on their experiences and by the work done by the team at Yale Transitions Clinic.
Barriers	The largest barrier encountered was resident time constraints along with the realities of resident developmental interests. We worked to overcome this challenge by modifying the project plan.
Lessons Learned	The single most important piece of advice to provide another team embarking on a similar initiative is to ensure that considerable and consistent time is built into the residents' schedules for them to continue working on the project throughout the 18 months.