

End-of-life Care in the Prison Environment (Supplement #9)



Photo Source: 'Prison Terminal...': <https://bit.ly/2LTYv7M>

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Aging Prison Populations

Detained and cognitively impaired: Reevaluating screening recommendations in carceral settings

JOURNAL OF GENERAL INTERNAL MEDICINE (U.S.) | Online – 17 July 2024 – Although incarceration is a social determinant of health, incarcerated persons are frequently overlooked when discussing medical interventions including preventive care. The U.S. incarcerates nearly two million people – a higher proportion of its population than nearly any other country. In addition to excess morbidity, those incarcerated have higher mortality rates, including a two year decline in life expectancy for each year of incarceration. Many incarcerated persons experience “accelerated aging,” or a disproportionately high rate of chronic health conditions and geriatric syndromes, such as falls and incontinence, presenting –ten years earlier than in non-incarcerated persons. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/46cvvxD>

Six documentaries on the impact of prison on elderly inmates

FACTUAL AMERICA (U.S.) | Online – Accessed 18 July 2024 – The challenges faced by elderly inmates within the prison system are multifaceted and often overlooked. Understanding the specific impacts on this demographic is crucial for addressing systemic problems and ensuring humane treatment. Through the lens of documentary films, viewers can gain insights into the harsh realities and struggles these individuals endure... **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/3yepVhs>

Cont.

Related:

'For Pennsylvania's aging prison population, a matter of life and death,' *City & State Pennsylvania (U.S.)* | Online – 24 June 2024 – Ezra Bozeman dealt with increasingly serious afflictions with each passing year. He struggled to get the healthcare he needed. His struggles to deal with the consequences of inadequate healthcare reflect that of many of his peers – with one exception. He was subject to the machinations of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/4f5quuz>

[Prison Health Services](#)

Health, access to care, and financial barriers to care among people incarcerated in U.S. prisons

JAMA INTERNAL MEDICINE (U.S.) | Online – 5 August 2024 – Decades-old data indicate that people imprisoned in the U.S. have poor access to healthcare despite their constitutional right to care. Most prisons impose co-payments for at least some medical visits. No recent national studies have assessed access to care or whether co-pays are associated with worse access. Of 1,421,700 prison residents in 2016, 61.7% reported one or more chronic physical conditions; among them, 13.8% had received no medical visit since incarceration. This cross-sectional study found that many people who are incarcerated with health problems received no care, particularly in facilities charging co-payments for medical visits. **Abstract:** <https://bit.ly/4ck302d>

A judge ruled a Louisiana prison's healthcare system has failed inmates for decades. A Federal law could block reforms

PROPUBLICA (U.S.) | Online – 25 July 2024 – The Prison Litigation Reform Act was passed to curtail the number of lawsuits filed by inmates over conditions behind bars. It has kept courts from forcing Louisiana to overhaul the medical system in its largest prison. Several months ago, in a lawsuit that was in its ninth year, a federal judge blasted the medical care at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola. Many inmates hoped it would be a watershed moment. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/3SiM19B>

Related:

'Five documentaries on the role of prison healthcare: Insightful views on inmate wellness,' *Factual America (U.S.)* | Online – 15 July 2024 – Exploring the intersection of incarceration and healthcare through documentaries provides a revealing look into the often-overlooked challenges within prison systems. Understanding how prisons manage healthcare is crucial for grasping the broader implications of public health and social justice. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/4cCi3p2>

'Peer education as a tool to improve health knowledge for people who are incarcerated: A secondary analysis of data from the Indiana Peer Education Program...,' *Journal of Correctional Health Care (U.S.)* | Online – 11 July 2024 – Peer-led programs aim to improve health education, increase confidence, and positively impact long-term health and life outcomes. Providing peer educators and their students with an opportunity to learn and grow may also build a sense of hope... **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/3W7ypPn>

'Healthcare in care in carceral settings: Providing alternatives for the medically vulnerable incarcerated person,' *Seattle Journal for Social Justice (U.S.)* | Online – 6 July 2024 – Imprisonment imposes torturous conditions – isolation, pain, and illness – in violation of the Constitution. The penal system's failures to create appropriate environments and provide adequate medication and health management have led to catastrophic results ... for incarcerated people who are medically vulnerable. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/4f4NdHk>

'Anti-racism in correctional healthcare,' *Journal of Correctional Health Care*, 2024;30(3):216-218 (U.S.). The National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) is charged with improving health services in correctional facilities. NCCHC recommends that correctional health professionals, administrators, and decision-makers take a number of steps to address systemic and other forms of racism to mitigate the impacts on incarcerated individuals and facility staff. **First page view:** <https://bit.ly/4eX903G>

N.B. Download the full text of the NCCHC position statement at: <https://bit.ly/4df5Gzp>; see also NCCHC position statement on care for aging patients in the correctional setting at: <https://bit.ly/3VF9DpN>

Being a doctor in prison: Future prospects and ethical issues

BULLETIN DE L'ACADÉMIE NATIONALE DE MÉDECINE (France) | Online – 23 July 2024 –

As a consequence of the law passed in 1994, the responsibility of healthcare was transferred from the judicial system to the public health authorities. Since then, a medical team from a hospital unit offers healthcare to detained patients, after a first medical assessment upon arrival in detention. The healthcare provided is diverse with the aim of prioritising care for the more vulnerable patients... The foundation of carceral medicine is based on equality: to guarantee access to healthcare for all with respect of medical confidentiality. Furthermore, continuity of care must be ensured by creating a link with healthcare professionals "outside" prison... **Abstract:** <https://bit.ly/4cPjFvZ>

Related:

'Prison healthcare: Overcrowding, understaffing, a drug epidemic, and an ageing population in an unfit Victorian estate,' *British Medical Journal (U.K.)* | Online – 16 July 2024 – Healthcare in prisons has improved in the two decades since this vulnerable population came under National Health Service care. There is still a long way to go, however, to achieve equal healthcare for the nation's incarcerated... **Summary:** <https://bit.ly/3WqRHZj>

Prisons: A global imperative to promote good health

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HEALTH PROMOTION & EDUCATION (U.K.) | Online – 18 July 2024 –

With an estimated 11 million people globally, prisons are a key setting in which to promote opportunities to ensure good health and wellbeing... Prison is, however, a unique environment that has particular challenges when it comes to promoting health. It is an environment where levels of violence, enforced solitude, a lack of privacy, isolation from social networks, substance use, a lack of meaningful activity and overcrowding greatly impact the mental health and wellbeing of both the people with which this is home and those for whom it is a workplace. The wellbeing of staff in this context cannot be ignored. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/3LTSaFL>

Related:

'Health of people in prison,' Australian Institute of Health & Welfare (**Australia**) | Online – 2 July 2024 – People in prison are a particularly vulnerable population. They are generally more disadvantaged, with higher healthcare needs than the wider Australian population. With more than 62,000 receptions into and releases out of prison each year, the health of people in prison impacts and contributes to the broader public health. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/3xQGbfy>

"Just clearly the right thing to do"

Perspectives of correctional services leaders on moving governance of healthcare in custody

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PRISON HEALTH (Canada) | Online – 5 July 2024 – Four major themes relate to the rationale for this transfer: quality and equivalence of care; integration and throughcare; values and expertise; and, funding and resources. Facilitators included changes in the external environment, having the right people in the right places... **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/3VSbwiW>



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TO KEEP ABREAST OF CURRENT THINKING in hospice and palliative care check out 'Literature Search' posted each month on the website of the International Association for Hospice & Palliative Care: <https://bit.ly/3WWxUYC>

Navigating prison with disability

LAW SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES JOURNAL (Australia) | Online – 15 July 2024 – People with disability are facing cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in Australian prisons, according to a report by University of New South Wales University (UNSW) researchers and advocates with lived experience.¹ The report, which was written following last year’s ‘National Forum on Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment of People with Disability in Detention,’ reveals shocking allegations of mistreatment and harm towards people with disability in Australian prisons... Maree Higgins, a co-author of the report, said there are “workable alternatives” to the cruel treatments uncovered in prisons, that will “prioritise people’s human rights and that are much more trauma-informed.” **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/4bR1RP1>

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1. ‘National Forum on Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment of People with Disability in Detention Report,’ University of New South Wales, May 2024: <https://bit.ly/4f9ZZV6>

[End-of-Life Care in Prisons](#)

Catholic charities unite to meet prisoner hospice needs

THE CATHOLIC REGISTER (Canada) | Online – 31 July 2024 – In response to the concerns for the rising numbers of incarcerated Canadians asking to end their lives by medical assistance in dying (MAiD), Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto has brought together two organizations that serve the marginalized of society in a unique collaboration to provide end-of-life care (EoLC) for prisoners. For those involved in prison ministry, offering quality EoLC for prisoners with terminal illnesses is understood as not only a work of mercy but also as a small step towards providing an alternative to MAiD. According to Correctional Service Canada, there have been 40 requests and 11 MAiD procedures carried out since euthanasia was legalized in 2016. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/4ccZel2>

Essential yet scarce: Rational use of medical morphine...

PALLINEWS (International Association for Hospice & Palliative Care) | Online – 1 August 2024 – On Nelson Mandela International Day, the United Nation’s Office of Drugs & Crime highlights the U.N.’s standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners. These provide the blueprint for 21st century prison management that preserves the safety, rights and human dignity of all. The rules include a right to standard healthcare, which includes palliative care. **Download at (scroll down to ‘Prison Hospice’):** <https://bit.ly/4cbP8qV>

Perceptions and experiences of clinicians and correctional officers facilitating palliative care for people in prison: A systematic review and meta-synthesis

PALLIATIVE MEDICINE (Australia) | Online – 28 July 2024 – Quality and accessibility of prison-based palliative care (PC) has progressed in recent decades, but it is evident from the reflections of stakeholders and people in prison that there is more to be done. Continued commitment to service improvement, particularly in countries with underdeveloped prison PC systems and growing need is an essential first step. Despite different models of prison-based PC between countries, there is considerable value in exchanging knowledge and sharing of good practice to drive progress. Supporting this process at a national level by formalising policies and standards and creating resources to facilitate practice change will further improve PC provision beyond the local context. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/3YoS6oQ>

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Palliative care training initiative launches to improve quality among incarcerated populations

HOSPICE NEWS (U.S.) | Online – 12 July 2024 – The California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation's Medical Facility (CMF) has launched a new palliative spiritual care training program aimed at improving services for incarcerated individuals. The new two-week spiritual training program was recently provided to palliative care (PC) service workers and volunteers to assist CMF's clinical and nursing staff caring for patients at the facility's hospice, correctional treatment center and memory care units. A dozen trainees recently completed the program... Any incarcerated individuals ... selected may participate in the spiritual PC training alongside its staff. The model is purposeful in developing an interdisciplinary care team approach – particularly with those in the PC unit. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/4cAI4oX>

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Related:

'A chance to care: First compassionate care program in state offers inmates chance to care,' *The Daily Progress (U.S.)* | Online – 6 July 2024 – In the middle of a May night, Kelley Tibbs walked through the halls of Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women to sit in the infirmary next to a dying woman. Tibbs held the woman's hand... The woman occasionally woke up, looked at Tibbs and smiled. Tibbs herself has asked for a hospice program for a long time. **Access at:** <https://bit.ly/4bBjG5e>

'What happens to terminally ill inmates in prison?' MSO.Com (U.S.) | Online – Accessed 5 July 2024 – Even though incarceration aims at punishing inmates for crimes, states must give medical treatment to prisoners. However, the quality of such treatment is often lacking. The prisoner does not have a say in their medical treatment; the state decides. Death may mean dying alone in a jail cell, a state-run infirmary with only occasional visits from a nurse and prison volunteers... **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/3xQVl86>

'Relatively limited attention has been directed toward matters of dying and death in U.S. prisons,' *Journal of Correctional Health Care*, 2024;30(3):147-148. A growing number of researchers, policymakers, and advocates have discussed the particular challenges of caring for the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health of older people in prisons. ¹ Surprisingly, however, relatively limited attention has been directed toward matters of dying and death in U.S. prisons. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/3Y1cfRw>

1. 'Supporting older, frail, and vulnerable adult prisoners through peer care: Observations, reflections, and recommendations based on a U.K./U.S. researcher exchange visit,' *Journal of Correctional Health*, 2024; 30(3):149-152. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/4buryWs>

[Grief & Bereavement](#)

I lost a loved one while in prison. The what ifs haunt me

THE APPEAL (U.S.) | Online – 10 July 2024 – Being incarcerated makes it uniquely difficult to process loss or offer support to your loved ones during difficult times. In prison, there is no space to grieve. We're surrounded by people who reject and exploit signs of weakness. Reluctant to burden our loved ones, we often cope by compartmentalizing our emotions. There is a feeling of powerlessness, too, knowing that we couldn't be there and can offer little more than a phone call and some words of consolation. Anyone who has lost a loved one like this knows the sinking, desperate feeling of wondering what you could have done to prevent it. The answer may be nothing, but having to ask yourself that question from prison is particularly painful... **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/4bQQsiK>

Comparing public perceptions of child and adult grief responses to familial incarceration

OMEGA – JOURNAL OF DEATH & DYING (U.S.) | Online – 21 July 2024 – Children of incarcerated parents may grieve this loss, yet perceptions of their grief are understudied. Participants [in this study] rated grief response appropriateness, comfort providing support, and grief therapy recommendations for the grieving person... They perceived resilience as more appropriate than prolonged grief. Age did not predict outcomes. **Abstract:** <https://bit.ly/4cRHG5k>

[Care Planning & Serious Illness Conversations](#)

Medical decision making in correctional facilities: Highlighting gaps and advocating for policy change

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COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH JOURNAL (U.S.) | Online – 29 July 2024 – In the U.S., a disproportionately high number of incarcerated individuals suffer from serious mental illnesses, substance use disorders, chronic medical conditions, infectious diseases, and traumatic brain injuries. Correctional facilities are often ill-equipped to address the incarcerated community's physical and mental health needs. Current laws and policies remain outdated and do not adequately address the complex health issues faced by incarcerated individuals, particularly the aging and terminally ill patients in correctional settings. The case studied underscores the urgent need for policy revisions to assign medical decision-making authority for individuals in custody and highlights potential interventions... **Abstract:** <https://bit.ly/4c79H83>

Related:

'Correctional nurses' practices and perceptions of family engagement,' *Nursing Outlook (U.S.)*
Through family engagement, nurses educate, problem-solve, answer questions, reassure, collaborate on a plan of care, and connect the patient and family with resources. The findings of this study indicate correctional nurses do not engage with families as part of their nursing practice, except in specific circumstances. **Abstract (w. Section Snippets, References, etc.):** <https://bit.ly/4bVOW0H>

[Compassionate Release](#)

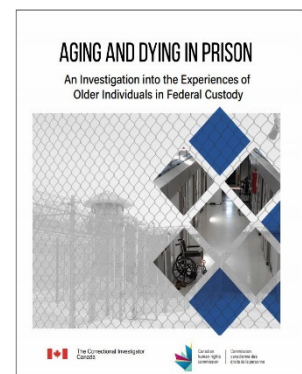
Michigan House committee passes bill that would allow terminally ill inmates out of prison

CBS NEWS (U.S.) | Online – 18 June 2024 – The new law would allow medically fragile inmates to live out the final days of their sentence and their lives in hospice care at home. "It's about recognizing that prison isn't going to be the right setting for certain people who are at end of life," said Kyle Kaminski for the Michigan Department of Corrections. Along with expanding the definition of medically fragile, the new law would also allow an inmate to apply for hospice care with family in a home setting instead of a nursing home. Kaminski says that previous versions of the law have been too narrow. "In practice, it's been difficult to actually utilize, and only one person has been paroled to date. So the bill contains some much-needed updates and clarifications to that law," Kaminski said. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/3WoTlmm>

[Interesting Reads You Might Have Missed](#)

Aging & Dying in Prison: An Investigation into the Experiences of Older Individuals in Federal Custody

OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONAL INVESTIGATOR (Canada) | Online – 28 February 2019 – Prison is not the appropriate environment to provide end-of-life care. Hospice and palliative care are specialized services and should not take place in a prison setting. A community placement would more easily facilitate visits from family and friends and ensure that federally sentenced individuals have access to care that is equivalent to that offered in the community. Human rights protection requires these kinds of appropriate alternatives. Moreover, community placements would also bring a more humane approach to very difficult situations. This review and assessment of chronic health conditions in individuals in federal custody age 65+ could help inform which individuals with terminal disease should be transferred from prison. **Download report at:** <https://bit.ly/3y7witD>



Motivation and training needs of prison healthcare professionals: Findings from a qualitative study

BMC PSYCHOLOGY (Switzerland) | Online – 20 May 2023 – Healthcare in prison is a challenging task. The conditions of imprisonment create distinct difficulties for those providing healthcare in this setting. These particular circumstances have led to a shortage of quality professionals, working for the health of imprisoned people. The aim of this study is to elaborate reasons for healthcare professionals to work in a prison environment. The main research question is: why do healthcare workers choose to work in prisons? This study identifies training needs in various fields ... [and] ... points out the need for more specific training programs for healthcare workers in prison and provides suggestions to ameliorate the recruitment and education for future prison healthcare workers. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/45h1wDL>

Terminal illness and compassionate release: Lessons for the International Criminal Court from the United Nations tribunals and national jurisdiction

JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE (Ireland) | Online – 2 April 2023 – The practice of granting compassionate release is not new in international criminal law. Persons convicted by the Nuremberg Tribunal and imprisoned in Spandau Prison, Berlin, were granted early release following a diagnosis of terminal illness. Compassionate release is “an ethical and just response to managing terminal illness” in custodial contexts. Despite this, neither the UN Tribunals nor the ICC’s legal framework contain an explicit right or procedure to grant compassionate release to terminally ill prisoners. This lacuna has created legal obstacles for seriously ill prisoners who had not served the required amount of time to be considered for typical early release. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/3ZHtuVI>



PAST ISSUES OF ‘END-OF-LIFE CARE IN THE PRISON ENVIRONMENT’ can be downloaded from the Palliative Care Network website – #1, #2 & #3 (July, September, November 2023) at <https://bit.ly/3QGRyXC>; #4 & #5 (January, March 2024) at: <https://bit.ly/2RdegnL>

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Biosketch: <https://bit.ly/3XMTRs4>