

End-of-life Care in the Prison Environment (Supplement #11)

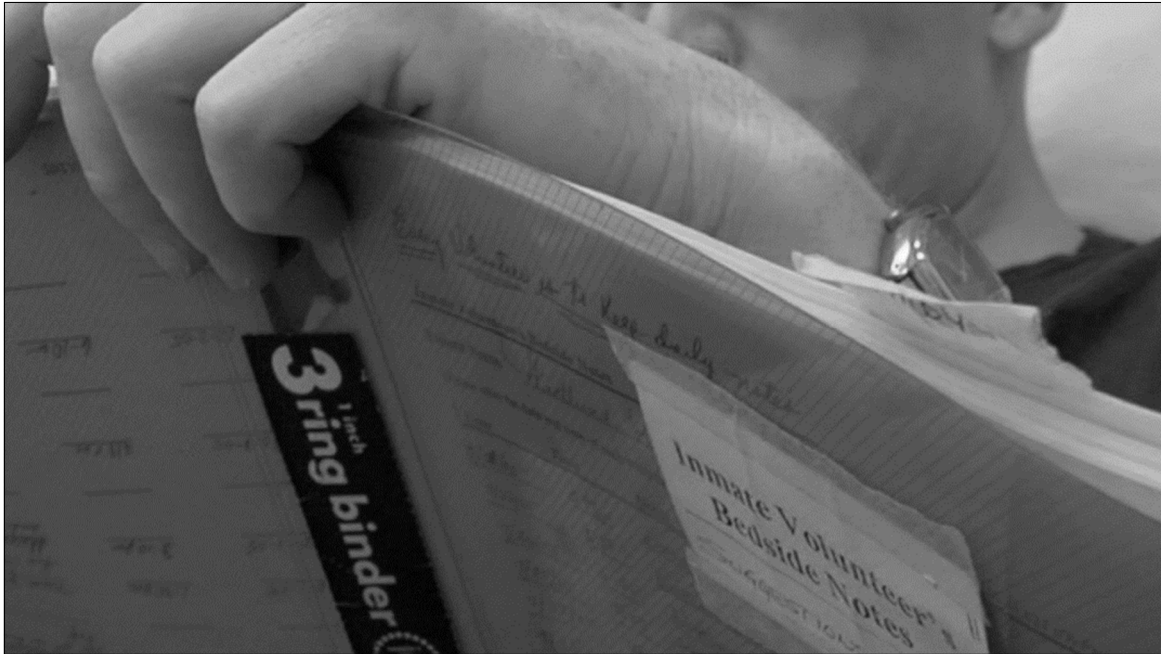


Photo Source: 'Prison Terminal...': <https://bit.ly/2LTYv7M>

Contents

Aging Prison Populations	p.1	Grief & Bereavement	p.6
Prison Healthcare Services	p.2	Compassionate Release	p.6
End-of-Life Care in Prisons	p.4	Interesting Reads You Might Have Missed	p.7

[Aging Prison Population](#)

“Mississippi Five” parole issues highlight the toll of “graying” in Gulf South prisons

NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC RADIO (U.S.) | Online – 4 October 2024 – The experiences of ... [three women] ... illustrates how prison populations are “graying,” with more people living into their 50s and beyond in lockups. Some experts say this strains prison systems, which are then tasked with providing care for serious and chronic conditions and disabilities, while not accounting for low recidivism rates among elderly people who are released. “We’re keeping people in prison long past the point where they are a danger to public safety,” said Ashley Nellis, a researcher who studies life sentences and has written about aging life prisoners for The Sentencing Project.¹ The women all applied for parole, and have been “set off” (or denied), in some cases multiple times. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/4dI08NG>

1. ‘Nothing but time: Elderly Americans serving life without parole,’ The Sentencing Project, June 2022. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/4gRA3hO>

N.B. The Sentencing Project website: <https://bit.ly/3TYPMBJ>

Cont. next page

Related:

'New Jersey is ready for a geriatric parole law,' NJ.com (U.S.) | Online – 3 October 2024 – As older individuals face an increased risk of health issues with costly healthcare bills attached, prisons would need to make updates such as increased staffing, additional intensive training to properly help the elderly, and updates to the facilities such as railings and ramps. The taxpayer burden for incarcerating individuals is high. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/3ZOVSIA>

“Move elderly prisoners to secure care homes”

INSIDE TIME (U.K.) | Online – 18 September 2024 – Older prisoners should be moved out of prisons and into secure care homes, a report by a leading charity has suggested.¹ The report also calls on the Ministry of Justice to publish a national strategy for the care and management of older prisoners as a matter of urgency. The number of over-50s in prison in England and Wales has nearly trebled in the past 20 years, rising from around 5,000 in 2003 to almost 15,000 in 2023; one in six of the people currently in prison. Having spoken with 121 men and women aged over 50 serving sentences in 39 U.K. prisons, the report describes their experience of being old in prison, as well as proposals to ensure that their views are considered as part of developing an older prisoners' strategy. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/47w1oSt>



1. 'Growing old and dying inside: Improving the experiences of older people serving long prison sentence,' Prison Reform Trust, September 2024. **Download at:** <https://bit.ly/3zbqCIT>

[Prison Health Services](#)

Governance of prison healthcare

Bridging the health gap in Portugal's prisons

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION | Online 1 October 2024 – Portugal has embarked on an ambitious journey to integrate prison health services into its National Health Service. This initiative seeks to close the health equity gap between the general population and those incarcerated, ensuring that individuals in prisons receive the same quality of healthcare as those living in the community. Historically, prison healthcare in many countries, including Portugal, has been fragmented, with services managed separately from the national health infrastructure. This has led to huge disparities in care with those in prison often facing greater health challenges than the rest of the population, with higher rates of infectious diseases, mental health issues and substance use disorders. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/3XQuhnP>



Cancer care delivery in prisons: From barriers to best practices

JCO ONCOLOGY PRACTICE (U.S.) | Online – 30 September 2024 – Incarceration imposes multiple barriers to cancer care delivery, but clinicians [i.e., study participants] identified numerous tools to improve cancer care in prison. Common barriers identified included underscreening/delays in diagnosis, complex logistical coordination, poor communication (between patients and oncologists, and prison clinicians and oncologists), inadequate symptom management, dehumanizing practices, loss-to-follow-up after release and that patients often come from marginalized populations. Common facilitators were better access to insurance, cancer screening, and general medical and cancer care than incarcerated patients might receive before/after incarceration. **Conference abstract:** <https://bit.ly/3XOBftz>

Cont. next page



Share this resource with a colleague.

Related:

'Disability rights and disability justice in prison: The limits of state-protected rights and the possibilities of mutual support,' *Disability & Society (U.S.)* | Online – 28 September 2024 – A focus on the life of persons with disabilities in prison shows that the government often ignores the rights of disabled persons in prison. It also shows that persons with disabilities in prison and others work together to take care of each other. **Abstract:** <https://bit.ly/3TTfmlw>

'Poor healthcare underlines array of problems at major transit point for prisoners,' *The New York Times (U.S.)* | Online – 26 September 2024 – One of the country's busiest federal prisons, a transit point for 27,000 inmates a year, is buckling under a staggering array of problems, including substandard healthcare, crumbling facilities and harassment of employees by other staff, a Justice Department watchdog announced. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/3Y5CFBg>

'Incarceration and health: An overview of conditions and solutions,' *International Encyclopedia of Public Health (U.S.)* | Online – 9 September 2024 – This article summarizes recent research on the health of incarcerated individuals, with sections focused on mental health, infectious diseases, and chronic conditions. The authors examine the unique challenges encountered by members of special populations such as women, children, and older adults. **Abstract:** <https://bit.ly/4dW5yFt>

'Inmate says medical delays still plague federal prison in Oregon,' National Public Radio (U.S.) | Online – 1 September 2024 – Delays or substandard healthcare for prisoners in the U.S. carceral system are not uncommon. NPR published a report showing that nearly 5,000 federal prisoners died over the past decade from treatable conditions after not getting timely diagnoses or treatment while incarcerated.¹ Lawmakers have begun to put the U.S. federal prison system under more scrutiny. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/47NBPMB>

1. '1 in 4 inmate deaths happens in the same federal prison. Why?' National Public Radio, September 2023: <https://bit.ly/3EWrAYN>

'Clinical care of adults during incarceration,' UpToDate (U.S.) | Online – 30 August 2024 – The provision of medical care in jails and prisons has been strongly informed in the U.S. by the legal case of *Estelle v. Gamble*, 1976. In this case, the Supreme Court deemed that deliberate indifference to serious illness or injury in a prisoner can be considered cruel and unusual punishment, in violation of the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution. **Access full text at:** <https://bit.ly/3MNdvkl>

Health needs assessment of individuals within community justice services and untried in custody (remand)

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE GREATER GLASGOW & CLYDE (U.K.) | Online – Accessed 26 September 2024 – Currently there is no direct and robust evidence of the health needs of community justice service users available. Some evidence is available on current health concerns, particularly in relation to mental health or addictions needs, via individual patient records ... but this data cannot easily be amalgamated into population-level datasets without significant resource and time investment to interrogate. Further, this data is not held consistently across all community justice services, Scottish Prison Service or Prison Healthcare. Throughout the literature there is a clear message to seek out the voices of and listen to the experiences of people in the justice system... **Download report at:** <https://bit.ly/3XUolvi>

Convict and/or patients – Ethical and organizational issues of healthcare services in prison

UNIVERSITY OF KRAGUJEVAC (Serbia) | Online – Accessed 19 September 2024 – Prison in itself endangers the health of prisoners, and the experience of going to prison overlaps in many ways with the experience of a serious (incurable) disease. This internal contradiction also opens up a special organizational-ethical dimension of healthcare in prisons, due to which healthcare services in prisons still have a strong tendency to oscillate in the space between punishment and medical care, between control and human rights, and a convict with health problems is evidently not (still) in the same position as every other patient. Security reasons can often be in conflict with the principle of complete professional independence of the medical staff... **Abstract (click on pdf icon to access full Serbian text):** <https://bit.ly/4eoxUst>

Global Prison Trends 2024: Healthcare in prisons

PENAL REFORM INTERNATIONAL | Online – 11 September 2024 – Prison systems across the globe continue to face unabated levels of crisis in providing adequate levels of healthcare to the people they detain, fuelled by overcrowding and poor detention conditions, underfunding and understaffing. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, attention has turned to improving the resilience of prison health systems. Despite some promising innovations, research suggests that many prison healthcare systems were back to “business as usual” after the pandemic, while others got worse. Both health and harm reduction services have been found to still be weak, underfunded and difficult to access. External crises continue to lay bare the fragility of prison health systems. **Download at (scroll down to p.22):** <https://bit.ly/4glWyLo>

THE PROPORTION OF OLDER PERSONS IN PRISON IS INCREASING GLOBALLY



Prison systems lack appropriate healthcare, palliative and end-of-life care

Page | 4

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

The Voices of Underserved Communities in Palliative Care

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND (New Zealand) | Online – Accessed 26 September 2024 – Incarcerated people typically have high and complex physical and mental healthcare needs before entering prison. As a result, they experience age related physical deterioration at an earlier age than the general population. Respectful, dignified, and caring palliative care (PC) is possible even in the current context of New Zealand prisons as outlined in a case study of a prisoner in a forensic mental health unit. He had been resident in the unit for 25 years when he was diagnosed with an incurable cancer. The staff worked with him to develop a bucket list. However, as he deteriorated the staff found it difficult to provide the necessary physical care to keep him comfortable. They were not adequately re-

sourced, or trained, to provide PC and eventually the man had to be transferred to the local hospital where he died. **Download report at:** <https://bit.ly/3BkQsuQ>

Extract:

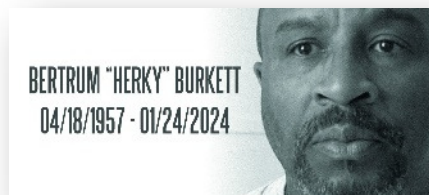
Due to the on-going impacts of colonisation, Māori make up 53.4% of the prison population. It's terrible for their *whānau* if they can't be there to be with them in their last moments. Just providing better care in prisons won't fix everything because then if they pass away in prison, there's little chance for *whānau* to be involved.

N.B. *Whānau* is Māori for extended family.

Palliative care for incarcerated adults

UPTODATE (U.S.) | Online – Accessed 16 September 2024 – While policies exist to enable some patients with serious life-limiting illness or severe medical disability to be released from correctional facilities to die in the community (“compassionate release”), these processes are logistically challenging and few individuals achieve release under these mechanisms. As the population of aging and/or seriously ill incarcerated patients continues to grow, so does the need for palliative care (PC) and hospice services. Most incarcerated persons have similar end-of-life goals as those in the community... Described are some of the health concerns of incarcerated patients in the U.S. and approaches to the provision of PC, including barriers and strategies for overcoming these barriers. **Access full text at:** <https://bit.ly/4dVEpm9>

Spirit of prison hospice: One man's legacy



Click on 'In Memoriam' on the home page of the End-of-Life Care website to access tribute.

Cont. next page

Related:

'Hospice care for the incarcerated dying inmates receive "comfort care" in prison program,' *Wisconsin State Journal (U.S.)* | Online – 3 September 2024 – The program ... draws terminally ill inmates with less than a year to live from all 19 of the state's adult-male prisons. Specially trained inmate volunteers provide most of the "comfort care" for which hospice programs, inside of prison or out, are best known ... including standing vigil around the clock ... when death is imminent. **Access by subscription:** <https://bit.ly/47yHHcs>

Ireland's first "end-of-life" suite to be opened in Midlands prison

IRISH EXAMINER (Ireland) | Online – 15 September 2024 – The first "end-of-life" suite in the Irish prison system is to be completed shortly in the Midlands prison. The facility will provide terminally ill prisoners who are not in hospice, hospital, or family care a dignified alternative to dying in a cell on a prison landing, according to the Irish Prison Service. In the prison visiting committee report for 2022 for the prison, published by the government two weeks ago, it was noted that nine inmates died in custody of the Midlands prison that year.¹ The suite has been developed in support of the Irish Prison Service End-of-Life Framework, said the spokesman. The framework was developed following the death of a 56-year-old Midlands inmate in November 2021. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/4esgRoZ>

1. 'Prison Visiting Committee Annual Reports 2022,' Department of Justice, Government of Ireland, August 2024: <https://bit.ly/4esh5wI>

Palliative care needs and experiences of people in prison: A systematic review and meta-synthesis

PALLIATIVE MEDICINE (Australia) | Online – 29 August 2024 – Globally, the prison population is growing and ageing, as is the need for palliative care (PC). Yet, little is known about how people in prison perceive (PC) provision in this setting. Experiences of people in prison regarding PC related to two themes: 1) expectations versus experiences of PC; and, 2) prison context complicates access to and provision of PC. People in prison with PC needs want to feel safe, cared for, and acknowledged, as they face an expected death. The prison environment can severely restrict access to PC, leaving people in prison feeling isolated and powerless. People in prison expect to receive high-quality PC, but their experiences often do not match their expectations. **Abstract:** <https://bit.ly/3ZsYtI4>

**Prisoners are people too**

THE CHURCHILL TRUST (U.K.) | Online – 3 August 2024 – To facilitate a human being to die with dignity is an integral part of humanity... It should be afforded to the wealthy as well as those who dwell in the shadows of our prison world where they may die alone. Being a prison nurse gives you multiple opportunities to mature and share knowledge and gold standard care. Yes, it can be challenging but its rewards are often underestimated. Imprisonment, and associated loss of liberty, is the punishment for crimes committed. Denying the same health and care services that any of us may need is not. It is evident that health inequalities within the prison population present major challenges to hard-pressed health in justice services, both for disci-

pline staff and healthcare teams. **Download report at:** <https://bit.ly/4ed8ei1>

Dying well in custody charter: A national framework for local action

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE ENGLAND (U.K.) | Online – Update 19 June 2024 – The charter mirrors the ambitions for palliative and end-of-life care and provides a framework for establishments to act, help and support all staff who are involved in the care of an individual preparing to die, many of whom will not have experienced supporting an individual in their planned death. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/4evqEQ>

[Grief & Bereavement](#)

Oklahoma non-profit hosts weekly grief counseling sessions in jail, women's prison

Page | 6

NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO (U.S.) | Online – 9 September 2024 – A new grief counseling program is helping people cope with loss in their lives at an Oklahoma prison. This year, Calm Waters expanded its services to include women incarcerated at Mabel Bassett Correctional Center. Their team is led by Bailey Maxey, who, along with a recovery support specialist from TEEM [The Education & Employment Ministry] and the prison's chaplain, will lead participants through a grief support curriculum designed for incarcerated people. Maxey said most detainees have a story of grief. Many have never had the opportunity to work through their pain. People behind bars are often overlooked when it comes to mental healthcare. It's a population that's sometimes considered "invisible." **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/3TuZGLa>

N.B. 'Serving detained men and women experiencing grief,' Calm Waters: <https://bit.ly/3ZOQ2XR>

[Compassionate Release](#)

Some thoughts on dying in prison

FILTER (U.S.) | Online – 2 October 2024 - Gary Garrett, 72, has been in prison for 39 years and now has cancer in his thyroid and throat. His cancer predates his first parole hearing. Though the chemo made him sick every day, to the point that he could barely eat, he was optimistic that it would be worth it. The days that followed Gary's 2022 parole denial were miserable. But he kept up with the chemo, because there was still hope. After he was denied again in July, he decided not to put himself through chemo anymore. To him, the point of doing so was to live long enough to be freed, and even if against all odds he did hang on until 2026, he knows the board's decision at that time would be the same. The basis for his denial was "seriousness of offense." **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/4eIQGuN>

Compassionate release: Call for humility and more leniency

THE AGING POPULATION IS A UNIVERSAL PHENOMENA; accompanying it is unsettling, corresponding increase in more and more people living with disability, or with a chronic or terminal illness. Nowhere is this more evident than in the prison populations of almost every country. Prisons and correctional facilities, consequently, are caught between the proverbial "rock and a hard place," between issues of security and public safety, and the civil rights of incarcerated persons to healthcare comparable to what is available to the populace-at-large ...and yet, there is widespread evidence that few inmates are successful in applying for early release so that they may live out their last days no longer confined within the four walls of a prison cell. **Click on 'Spotlight' tab on the End-of-Life Care Behind Bars website to access full text.**

Related:

'Breaking boundaries: Reframing clinical ethics discussions of healthcare for incarcerated patients,' The Hastings Center (U.S.) | Online – 30 September 2024 – Regardless of the severity of his crime, what we know for certain from the clinical ethics essay is that W will not receive the care he needs due *entirely* to his circumstance of incarceration. The most ethical solution is to clear the way for him to receive appropriate care, which requires removing him from prison. **Full report:** <https://bit.ly/4duL5gc>

'Aging and illness in prison: Who gets compassionate release?' Evident Change (U.S.) | Online – 18 September 2024 – There are people who have been granted compassionate release (CR) but are still in prison because they have nowhere to go. In other cases, people in prison have no family members or community able or willing to care for them in their last days. And there are thousands of people who might qualify for CR on paper but who are not granted it. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/4gyMIWy>

'Compassionate release false hope for terminally ill inmates,' Monterey Bay Justice Project (U.S.) | Online – Accessed 8 September 2024 – The aging population and increasing number of inmates with chronic health conditions in California state prisons led the state to adopt measures that can release these prisoners from custody. However, due to the slow nature of the process and high denial rate, many terminally ill patient inmates die waiting for a decision. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/3XumWtU>

“Nobody wants to die in prison”: Limited access to healthcare and obstacles to early release for federally incarcerated persons in Canada

Page | 7

UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA | Online – 16 September 2024 – The Canadian federal prison population is aging, with facilities operated by the Correctional Service of Canada struggling to adequately meet the healthcare needs of these incarcerated persons. The Correctional Investigator of Canada and the Canadian Human Rights Commission recommended that expanded access to early forms of release, including compassionate release, for aging incarcerated persons would address many of these deficiencies.¹ Access to early release is complicated, lengthy, and often not approved. As a result, many aging incarcerated persons die in prison. Improved access to healthcare and expediting and expanding access to early release offer opportunities... **Click on ‘Files’ to access full text of thesis:** <https://bit.ly/3N4T8zr>

1. ‘Aging & Dying in Prison: An Investigation into the Experiences of Older Individuals in Federal Custody,’ Office of the Correctional Investigator, February 2019: <https://bit.ly/3y7wltD>

[Interesting Reads You Might Have Missed](#)

The operations of the prison service towards the social inclusion of convicts: The cooperation with palliative care institutions

SOCIAL STUDIES: THEORY & PRACTICE, 2018;4(1):31-43 (**Poland**). The author presents a bold idea carried out in Polish prisons, consisting of preparing and directing prisoners to help the terminally ill pass away in a dignified manner. The implementation of this program is very difficult and involves great responsibility. However, many years of experience ... confirm that this is a very good direction for activating convicts who have an opportunity to experience their humanity on a daily basis. Hospice, contact with other people, contact with patients – all this transforms their thinking, behavior, allows it to verify the hierarchy of personal values. This experience is powerful for the prisoners and therefore very moving and transformative. **Full Polish language text:** <https://bit.ly/3Zign04>

End-of-life care in prison

SOCIAL WORK TODAY, 2018;18(6):16 (**U.S.**). For many of the individuals incarcerated across the U.S., dying is more than a possibility or passing thought. Given their sentences, their age, and, often, their health, dying in prison is inevitable. The circumstances of the death vary based not only on the person but the facility as well. For some, dying in their cell with their cellmate nearby is the best of terrible options. “They die in their ‘homes,’ where their cellmates are, their friends are,” says Marvin Mutch, of the Humane Prison Hospice Project and director of advocacy at the Prisoner Reentry Network. Mutch was imprisoned for 41 years after a wrongful conviction in 1975 and was released in 2016. Dying in one’s cell, however, is difficult, not only for the prisoner but also for their cellmate, Mutch says. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/2w8vvOl>

Ensuring the quality of palliative care in Australia’s prisons

DEEBLE INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH POLICY RESEARCH | Online – 10 May 2022 – Australia’s prison population is growing and growing older. This is placing an increasing burden on the provision of palliative care (PC) in prisons and yet little is known about the actual requirements of PC services, how they are provided, and whether PC services in prison are equitable with services in the community. This brief highlights the significant gap in national data about all elements of PC need and provision in prisons, and describes how data collection could be improved through collaboratively designing PC data collection strategies, identifying nationally consistent data and health indicators about PC in prisons, prioritising new data items about PC for collection... **Download at:** <https://bit.ly/4gnrfjB>

404

Page not found

Please report any broken links.

Bereavement behind bars: Prison and the grieving process

PRISON SERVICE JOURNAL, 2021:254:17-23 (U.K.). Every prisoner has a right to grieve, but the complexities of incarceration pose a challenge for criminal justice professionals as they strive to meet the needs of offenders without compromising order and security. Institutional barriers hamper the healthy processing of grief and often dramatically reduce a prisoner's chances of resolving his losses in a healthy way. These disruptions have significant implications for successful reintegration back into the community, and can manifest as offending behaviours. The more that is understood about bereavement behind bars, the stronger the position for supporting prisoners through their grief, so that fewer people are released from prison with mental health and pastoral care needs. **Full text:** <https://bit.ly/47SVydR>

Page | 8



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>

Barry R. Ashpole, Ontario, CANADA

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