



UPAN Newsletter

Volume 8 Number 2 | FEBRUARY 2021

“Empowerment and Growth Through Knowledge and Unity”

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Valentine’s Day – COVID Vaccine Age 70+ & More - Video Visiting @ Draper – Save \$ on Child Support – Mental Health – Heart Health

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March 8, 2021 Meeting Location: Virtual - Zoom Registration Topic: Family meeting. Topics will be determined by participants. Free and open to the public. Live stream on Facebook Live available. Virtual Zoom Meeting – link is <https://bit.ly/2UJ2RA3> If you are on the UPAN mailing list you will receive an invite.

UPAN continues virtual meetings during the pandemic. Also available, as usual, on our Facebook page afterwards. All UPAN Meetings and those posted on this page are free and open to the public.

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Thank you for prayers regarding COVID-19 – PLUS a Health Warning!

Ed. returns. Thank you, everyone, for your concerns and prayers for me, while I was battling the pandemic virus, and also for my sister and brother-in-law, Audrae and Ernie Rogers. I was hospitalized for 9 days after an earlier Emergency Room visit of 5 hours when my oxygen level dropped to an undesirable level (79 for those who know about such things). **An additional note for readers who’ve had the virus and recovered. Stay hydrated!** Two weeks after my release from the hospital for COVID, I experienced a TIA or Trans Ischemic Attack – a mini-stroke due to blood clots – often caused by **dehydration**. I noticed the symptoms creeping up on me and prevented permanent physical damage – one aspirin is the quick treatment. If I’d been cautioned about staying hydrated, I may have avoided another trip to Emergency and several tests over a 5-hour period and MRI tests for “brain bleed” (when blood gets too thin,) a VA doctor’s term and possible condition following COVID infection. Even if drinking water must be forced, drink lots. Best wishes for good health. Ed.

“Loving someone and having them love you back is the most precious thing in the world.” N. Sparks

“Look for something positive in each day, even if you have to look harder some days.” Brian Ford

“Valentine’s Day is just one day of the year, but know that I love you every day of the year.” – Unknown

Disclaimer: Formulate your own opinions about the information presented. This information is presented for the reader’s enlightenment and evaluation.

Valentines Day in Prison

By Molly Prince

Difficult Days but LOVE Prevails

Valentine's Day can be a difficult time for both incarcerated people and their loved ones. With the lack of contact visits due to COVID, this year's Valentine's Day will be even harder than usual. Remind your loved one that they are in your thoughts. This applies to inmates as well as family and friends.

Valentine's Day Cards – Follow the Mailroom Rules

In Utah, there are mailroom rules that have significantly reduced the chance to have fun finding, creating, and sending Valentine cards into incarcerated loved ones over the past couple of years. And cards available to inmates on commissary do not always say what s/he wants to convey to those at home.

Inmates can draw their own cards, create other artwork, can write their own poems, or simply compose heartfelt letters sharing how they feel about their loved ones. Sending them early enough to get through the mailroom and to the recipient in time can be tricky, especially during COVID. A letter from the heart is often the most treasured gift a mother, father, wife, husband, girlfriend, boyfriend, child, or friend can receive.

Cards are a bit more challenging for people in the community. USP and CUCF do not allow cardstock in, so once you find a card you love to send in, you have to copy it, front and back, which can be tricky on desktop printers. Be patient with yourself.

Children can create cards, but again, they must be copied with a printer as the prison will reject crayon and marker created pictures and cards. But they will accept copies made on white paper. Use white envelopes to send everything in, but not security envelopes.

Sending Photographs & Money for Living Essentials

Sending in photographs is always appreciated by our incarcerated loved ones. They need to see you, your family, and what you've been doing. It helps them feel included in our lives out here. Be sure you are aware of the rules about what types of photos will be accepted in the prison, jail or program your loved one is in.

While Utah's incarcerated receive basic meals and some basic clothing, most essential needs are not provided in Utah's prisons and jails. Receiving a deposit to their books to purchase hygiene and self-care items, over the counter medical supplies, writing or drawing supplies and envelopes, and commissary food, or phone time is important and welcome.

"Open When..." Letters

Both incarcerated folks and family members / friends can write what are referred to as "Open When" letters. These are letters you write with a specific purpose in mind to be on hand for when your loved one is feeling a particular way. Ideas for "Open When" include "Open when sad." "Open when we are arguing." "Open when you are having a hard day." "Open when you are missing us." "Open when you are happy." "Open When" letters can be written for any topic at all, sent and kept on hand to be opened when s/he is feeling the way described on the envelope. Having a letter on hand to open at specific times can help someone feel loved, calmed, or entertained.

Magazine Subscriptions During Trying Times

Magazine subscriptions are always welcome. USP and CUCF allow magazine subscriptions to go in from the publisher. This past year has left tons of time on our incarcerated loved one's hands with all the lockdowns and being taken off jobs due to COVID outbreaks. Having things to read or do is important. This can include magazines for topics they are interested in, as well as word search, crossword, or Sudoku puzzle subscriptions.

Free Inmate Mailing Service

There are several inmate mailing services available that can help you send postcards with photographs you have chosen. One such is Ameelio, (Google for fascinating info), but be sure you are sending what the prison or jail will allow. Check the mail policy for the facility before using such a service.

UPAN wants to wish everyone the best possible Valentine's month this year. We hope before next February, in-person contact visiting will be restored.

For all the women in prison: "She made broken look beautiful and strong look invincible. She walked with the universe on her shoulders and made it look like a pair of wings."

COVID-19 Vaccines Offered to Incarcerated over 70 in USP Draper

By Molly Prince

The Utah Department of Corrections, in coordination with the Salt Lake County Health Department, began offering COVID-19 vaccines to inmates over the age of 70 on January 25, 2021. According to spokesperson Kaitlin Felsted, the vaccines started in Draper, and are not yet available in CUCF Gunnison. She explained that

the vaccines are made available by the Utah Department of Health. However, according to the coronavirus.utah.gov website, each individual county in Utah is responsible for determining the rollout schedule for each population of citizens to receive it in their own county, including prison and jail populations.

The Corrections website states that the prison clinical services team screened and offered the vaccine to every incarcerated individual over 70 years old at USP, and 79 people chose to receive the vaccine. We do not have the total number of inmates over the age. The announcement states that the initial rollout of the vaccine began in the Draper facility because that is where the most high-risk and medically compromised individuals are housed due to proximity to USP's infirmary and local hospitals.

Nghia Cano, who qualifies for the beginning phase of vaccinations in Utah's prison system was quoted in the

UDC article. She said she did not think making the decision to get the vaccine was a difficult choice. She is quoted as saying, "I think the danger with COVID is worse than any problems with the vaccine." Mary Hansen, who also was one of the first inmates to receive the vaccine is quoted as saying "COVID is going around and I don't want to get it. I'm in the class that ought to get it" (the vaccine).

A full-scale rollout of the vaccine within Utah's prisons facilities is planned as part of the second-phase of the Utah Department of Health's three-phase approach.

COVID-19 Vaccine, Utah's Incarcerated and Other Thoughts

By Molly Prince

UDC's Special Inmate Newsletter

UDC's **new director Brian Nielsen sent out a newsletter** to all inmates on January 22, 2021 in which he assures them that he plans to keep the incarcerated informed about important issues. The vaccine was the "hot topic" the current newsletter focused on. A copy of that newsletter is available for the public to view at: https://corrections.utah.gov/images/Incarcerated_Individuals_Newsletter_COVID-19_01222021_1_1.pdf

Dir. Nielson's opening message in the newsletter stated that in mid-January, all UDC staff who interact with the incarcerated or on parole with the State were offered the opportunity to be vaccinated. The article did not indicate the percentage of officers, staff, and parole agents who chose to be vaccinated to protect others from the spread of the virus. Nielson wrote that even though the vaccine is not mandatory for inmates, "We are hopeful that many of you will take advantage of this opportunity. Such steps will help us return to normal operations."

Many UPAN families hope that this message was also given to UDC staff, officers, and agents. We further hope that corrections employees who interact with people who are justice involved opted to participate in vaccination so they can be part of the solution to keep our incarcerated loved ones safe.

Making a Decision to Get Vaccinated

The UDC **Coronavirus Update Newsletter** for inmates includes two pages of information specifically about the vaccine to assist inmates in making an informed decision about if they want to get vaccinated. It also explains how the vaccine works to assist the body's immune system in increasing defense against the virus. I was impressed with the wealth of information contained in that 3-page newsletter. It is compatible with the research and information available in the community to any of us who are considering getting the vaccine.

People are worried about the side effects of the vaccine. Just like side effects of a flu or other vaccine, the body may respond with slight fevers, headaches, or aches

and pains and while it is building immunity to the virus, while it is creating antibodies against it.

For anyone receiving the vaccine whether in prison or jails and in the community, the patient will be asked questions about their allergies and experiences with previous vaccinations. They will be given information about the vaccine and asked to sign a consent form, community standard procedure for the COVID vaccine.

Sharing Personal Experiences

I will share from my personal experience and experiences of friends, family, and colleagues. After having had several family members and a number of friends of all ages suffer from this virus over the past year, I have done a lot of research on COVID-19. I have also paid attention to the development of the vaccines.

Currently there are two vaccines available in Utah, one from Pfizer and one from Moderna. Both are administered as a series of two shots given approximately 4 weeks apart. There are other vaccines reported that are going through the approval process with the FDA to be used against COVID-19 that will only require one dose, but these are not currently available in Utah. I have watched family members and friends, most of whom are not elderly, continue to suffer from long term after-effects of COVID that have impacted their quality of life. I have watched others go through this illness with only a few symptoms and little impact to their lives. This virus is very unpredictable, and it is impossible to foresee who will be seriously affected by it and who will be able to quickly and fully recover from it.

Scheduling for Vaccinations

The CDC and Health Department have created schedules of suggested times to begin vaccinations of different groups of people beginning with front line essential workers in health care professions, emergency personnel, teachers, law enforcement, and others who are at higher risk due to their contact with the public. The next category is the elderly (starting with 70 years old and above). The groups that follow are medically

vulnerable people who have serious chronic illnesses and individuals age 65 and over.

I personally fall into a category that is now eligible for vaccine and have chosen to receive it because I would rather deal with a few mild side effects for a couple of days than endure and suffer through a full course of COVID-19 that has the potential to seriously impact my life with long term illness, hospitalization, or death.

My First Dose and Minimal Side Effects

I received my first dose of the vaccine the first week of February and have not experienced serious side effects.

“It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light.” – Aristotle Onassis

Scheduled Video Visiting Began in Draper on February 1st; CUCF to Follow in Future

By Molly Prince

After months and months of waiting for it to become a reality, video visiting began in Utah State Prison in Draper on February 1st. Prison administration reports that there are still technical issues in the Uintas' (maximum security at Draper) but they maintain that video visiting will be available there in the coming weeks.

According to a post on Prisoner Advocate Group's (PAG) Facebook page on February 3rd, Deputy Director Jim Hudspeth assured them that visitation will take place in the Uinta (max) housing units at USP, but they are having issues getting a strong enough signal to those housing units because of the building design and structure. According to Kaitlin Felsted in UDC Public Information Office, as progress is made toward getting video visiting into the Uintas', updates will be provided by Corrections on their website.

Felsted reported that CUCF is also working through some technological issues and that UDC “will provide an update when it launches.” Dir. Hudspeth also told PAG that CUCF should start video visits soon, hopefully by the second week of February. Fingers are crossed!

Some families had already updated their visiting approval and sent their photo IDs in prior to the roll-out and have finally been able to see their loved one's face for the first time in 10½ months. In-person visiting was cancelled at both of Utah's prisons in mid-March 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Seeing the faces of families is so very important to our incarcerated loved ones. This is a significant step in the right direction. However, families and the incarcerated alike are adamant that video visiting needs to be an available option in all housing areas at both USP and CUCF.

There has been some confusion expressed by families on what exactly people need to do to qualify for video visiting. UPAN's Shane Severson contacted Kaitlin Felsted with frequently asked questions. She has responded and that information is included in this article.

I was advised to take a Tylenol after receiving it to reduce possibility of a headache. I did not even feel the shot when it was given. The injection site began becoming tender about 12 hours later. I was warned I might feel serious fatigue, but did not experience that. I have been told by people who have had both doses that the second dose created more side effects for them than the first dose. These were all flu-like symptoms.

Only time will tell what the second dose will bring for me or colleagues and friends. I encourage everyone to read and learn as much factual information as they can in order to make the best informed decision for themselves.

Updating Visitation Status is Required

Anyone hoping to visit via the video process needs to do some preparation. All visitors must apply as a visitor, or if already a visitor, they must renew their visiting application and send in a valid color photo ID via email. You can learn more here:

<https://corrections.utah.gov/index.php/home/alerts-2/1260-udc-begins-testing-of-video-visiting-system>

How to sign up for a video visit

According to the UDC website, there will be a virtual portal to sign up for visiting set up by March. Until that happens, visitors need to email USP at uspscheduleavisit@utah.gov to schedule a visit. I have been told that there is supposed to be an email sent to the visitor specifying the online link to go to and any password required prior to the visiting time. It seems there were some glitches with this during the first days, but it is being corrected.

Ms. Felsted said that the visiting applications will be processed just like they were for in-person visiting, with a background check. She writes in an email to UPAN, “Once a visitor has passed the background check, their information will be entered into the video visiting program and the visitor will receive an email with their username and the password. This email will also include instructions pertaining to logging in to a visit.”

The visiting schedule for each housing unit is available on the UDC website, go to: www.corrections.utah.gov and click on the Visitation button in the middle of the home screen and navigating from there. The link is https://corrections.utah.gov/images/February_2021_Dra_per_Video_Visiting.pdf

Visits must be scheduled two business days in advance. Inmates are limited to one ½ hour visit per scheduled day. Visits that are cancelled due to technical issues (internet being unavailable, power outages, etc.) are not guaranteed to be made up.

Type of Devices and Browsers to Use

UDC is using ThrIVE software. It supports the Safari browser on an iPhone, iPad, or Apple Computer. For Android phones, Chromebooks, or Personal Computers, it supports Chrome, Edge, or Firefox browsers. Internet Explorer is NOT approved.

In order to make sure you are set up on ThrIVE for Utah prison video visits, please visit this link:

https://corrections.utah.gov/images/Visitor_Email_Template-ThrIVE.pdf The link to this document and other links to set up ThrIVE are also found on the Corrections web-site under Video Visiting.

Prison Video Visiting Differs from Jail Video Visits

Some UPAN families have felt frustrated that the prison video visitation is different than jail video visits. In many jails, the scheduling process is more simple with less planning, or visitor can just agree on the time of a video call with their incarcerated loved one when the family member will connect through that jail's video visit inmate communication service account that they set up, and it goes to a video kiosk in the jail housing unit.

Reason for 48-Hour Advance Scheduling

UPAN asked PIO Felsted why the prison video visitation has to be scheduled so far in advance and only on certain days, with the schedule that is just like the in-person visiting schedules were. She clarified that the 48-hour notice to schedule a visit is to give the prison's limited number of visiting staff, time to receive the email from the visitor and ensure that the visitor and inmate are in the video visiting system. She states, "This is a manual job that two Visiting Sergeants are assigned to complete."

With the high number of people wanting visits, this procedure is going to take time and Felsted said that the Visiting Sergeants are working as fast as they can to approve and schedule visits. Felsted went on to say that the video visiting company (ThrIVE) that the prison uses is working to create software that will be used to schedule visits more quickly and efficiently.

Good News on Video Visiting Expenses

Currently, the cost of video visiting is being paid for by the UDC. That includes the cost of the tablets, hardware that was installed in the visiting areas for WiFi connections and airtime. She said the system works much like a cell phone plan. She wrote in her email that "The Department of Corrections purchased a significant amount of airtime and can purchase more when needed." She went on to write that it has not yet been decided if or when the UDC will transition to charging fees per visit like county jails do.

Personal Experience with Prison Video Visiting in Another Prison System.

In many prisons, due to the large population and the different security or classification levels of inmates, video visits are much more monitored and tightly scheduled than they are in county jails. I will share some experiences others and I have had with video visiting in another state.

The higher level of approval and monitoring in a prison setting often includes the prison visiting office sending an email notice or confirmation of the scheduled visit or an "invite" with the link information and password information, if any, to the visitor. It is important that the visitor's email address is correct in the system.

The visitor logs on at the designated time. A few minutes before the scheduled time is best in case there are challenges logging on. The ThrIVE program must allow the connection with the inmate once s/he arrives at the visiting location. I have signed in for a pending video visit and been accepted, and then sat for up to 10 minutes after the scheduled start time before the video started working, so patience is important. Had I given up and logged off, we would not have received even the partial visits in those instances. In our case, one delay was due to technical difficulties and another delay was due to a lockdown and movement issues in the prison where my loved one is. UPAN director Faye Jenkins has experienced the need to try several times before she was able to successfully log on. Persistence and patience helps when doing video visitation.

Many prisons require the visitor to hold their ID up to the camera to verify they are approved to visit, but those who have video visited in USP say they do not have to show ID. Generally, anyone who is not on the approved visiting list will not be allowed to be on camera / screen during the video visit or it could be stopped.

In virtually all prisons (and I am sure USP is no different), video visits are monitored by staff either in person in the inmate video visiting room or by cameras with the staff sitting in a different room watching the screens. Some prisons record the visits and review them. Adhering to the visiting policies, rules, and dress code is important so your visits are not discontinued or disrupted.

All of us at UPAN are hoping that every housing unit in both of Utah's prisons will soon have full video visitation capabilities. Seeing loved ones faces is vitally important to mental and emotional well-being for the incarcerated, as well as friends and family members. Utah's prison families are starving for this type of visit with their incarcerated family members!

"The honorary duty of a human being is to love." Maya Angelou

"My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together." – Desmond Tutu

Child Support Obligations when Incarcerated

By Faye Jenkins

Incarceration disrupts many aspects of a person's life. One area that may be severely impacted is the ability to pay child support obligations. In the State's effort to remove a person from society, it does not equally remove a parent's responsibility to provide for dependent children. (A problem not thoroughly considered when choosing incarceration as the preferred method of punishment.) Although one's income dramatically decreases while incarcerated, the obligation to pay child support is not automatically adjusted to match new income levels. Unpaid support obligations do not magically disappear during a person's incarceration, potentially resulting in significant debt a person faces when released.

This article includes the State's rules and regulations regarding child support to help incarcerated individuals and families know their options. This article is not intended to teach people how to legally avoid paying full child support obligations. The intent is to provide awareness of certain allowances the State provides for those who are temporarily incarcerated and transitioning back into society when released.

Be Proactive.

In regard to child support payments, the first thing to remember is to be proactive. Do not wait for the Office of Recovery Services/Child Support Services to contact you about missed child support payments or the need to adjust payment obligations due to the loss of income. Contact ORS/CSS to notify them of your incarceration. Incarceration of more than 6 months is NOT considered VOLUNTARY unemployment (UT Code 78B-12-203 (6)). This is a significant change in circumstances where child support obligations can be modified. ORS/CSS Addresses are listed at the end of this article.

Here is an example letter to ORS/CSS from a former inmate.

This letter is an official and legal notice that I, (name) am currently incarcerated. I am exercising my right to have my child support obligation modified due to the fact that I am incarcerated. This is a substantial change in my ability to obtain income and meet the previous child support obligation in place. My estimated release date is (include your estimated release and the date you became incarcerated). I will be filing this notice with the court as well. Please send receipt of this notice to me in writing at this address (address of your facility).

To file this letter properly with the court, you will need to send copies to the Attorney General's Office as well as the other parent or their attorney. (Addresses below).

The Low-Income Table.

The State allows those who are incarcerated for 6 months or more to recalculate their child support obligations according to the "low-income table" during

their incarceration. The minimum obligation for child support is \$30 per month, even for those who are not employed in prison. Requesting the recalculation of child support by an inmate must be done while the person is incarcerated, it cannot be done retroactively once released.

While incarcerated, the prison's financial department helps inmates pay their child support obligations. Inmates may make out their own money transfers, or the prison may automatically deduct amounts owed from wages earned and other money put on inmates' accounts when notified of obligations by ORS. If the ORS notifies the prison of child support owed, the prison inmate accounting office will deduct the \$30 monthly obligation from prison wages and an additional 50% of earned wages or money placed on an inmate's account toward past child support obligations leaving a minimum of \$5 in the account.

Upon release, a person is financially responsible for any unpaid child support obligations while they were incarcerated.

Understanding the difficulties many people face finding employment after being released from prison, the State does provide a onetime option of forgiveness of the unpaid child support that accrued while incarcerated. This forgiveness rule is found in Utah Administrative Code R527-258-2 and 3. The rules also apply when someone is in a qualified treatment program.

Here is the ORS Policy: R527-258-2. Collection from Ex-Prisoners.

1. If the obligor (parent owing child support) has been incarcerated for thirty days or more and notifies the Office of Recovery Services/Child Support Services (ORS/CSS) or the office is made aware of the release within 30 days of the release date, the office will only collect current support and one dollar toward the past-due support debt for six months after the incarceration release date.
2. The ORS/CSS will enforce a support order that requires the obligor to provide medical insurance coverage for the children, if appropriate.

R527-258-3. Enforcing Child Support When the Obligor is an Ex-Prisoner.

1. The federal title IV-A past-due support debt which accrued while the obligor was incarcerated may be forgiven one time if the obligor makes both the full monthly current support payment and the full monthly assessed payment toward the past-due support debt for twelve consecutive months. The twelve consecutive month period begins when the obligor is released and they have contacted the office to make payment arrangements within the allotted 30 days.
2. The office will use the federal income withholding notice and procedures to enforce and collect the current

support and an arrears payment, when appropriate. (This means garnishing income tax refunds). The office will use the federal National Medical Support Notice and procedures to enforce insurance coverage for the children, if appropriate.

- a. If the obligor does not make the full payment in each of the first six months, additional collection or enforcement action may be taken.
 - b. If the obligor makes the full required payment each month for twelve consecutive months, the remaining IV-A support debt that accrued during the most recent period of incarceration shall be forgiven. IV-A debt forgiveness due to incarceration will only occur one time per obligor.
3. If the obligor owes IV-A arrears only, s/he must make twelve consecutive payments to the office based on an assessed amount determined by ORS/CSS.
4. The obligor's arrearage payment shall be reassessed by the office if his/her financial situation changes during the twelve-month period.

In Summary

For those who are confused by the rule stated above, the short answer is to contact ORS/CSS within 30 days of being released from prison and get on a payment plan. Beginning as soon as possible after release, pay the required amount for 12 months and all remaining child support debt that accumulated while incarcerated will be forgiven. This is a onetime deal. You must request forgiveness, it will not be automatic. Keep this article to show your ORS/CSS caseworker so that you can share the rules about this opportunity, not all ORS workers are familiar with this rule.

ORS Child Support Services
P.O. Box 45011
Salt Lake City, UT
84145-001

The Office of Recovery Services
515 E 100 S #8
Salt Lake City, UT
84102

Attorney General's Office
515 East 100 South
P.O. Box 45088
Salt Lake City, UT 84145-0088

"I've learned that you cannot make someone love you. All you can do is be someone who can be loved. The rest is up to them." Roger Knapp

Segregation and Inmates with Mental Illness

By An Bradshaw

The prevalence of mental illness among prison and jail inmates is of grave concern to the criminal justice system. Nationally, approximately 64% of jail inmates, 56% of state prisoners, and 45% of federal prisoners have mental health problems (Hector and Khey, 2018). Most of these individuals do not receive treatment during their incarceration and many leave with more severe manifestations of their illnesses. Corrections and police officers are not hired or trained to be mental health workers. Housing inmates with severe mental illness is a drain on Corrections budgets. Cook County Jail in Chicago found that housing an inmate with mental illness costs three times more than housing an inmate without mental illness. More telling is the cost of

The trick is to find fulltime employment as soon as possible after being released from prison. Those who do not find fulltime employment may have their child support calculated based on imputed wages. The standard imputed wage for someone who is temporarily unemployed is the federal minimum wage (\$7.25) at 40 hours per week. One may be able to contest the imputed wage by requesting consideration of extenuating circumstances that decrease "employment potential and probable earnings" such as, employment opportunities, work history, occupation qualifications, education attainment, literacy, age, health, criminal record, other employment barriers and background factors, and prevailing earnings and job availability for persons of similar backgrounds in the community (UT Code 78B-12-203 (8)(b)).

The take home message is even when you are incarcerated, there is still a minimum obligation of providing support for dependent children. Contact ORS/CSS once you are incarcerated and again when released to inform them of your changing circumstances. Upon notification, support obligations can be reduced during your incarceration and unpaid amounts can be forgiven with consistent payment of obligations after release from prison. Additionally, it is very important to maintain well documented records of all communications with State agencies, including the courts, and the custodial parent or their attorney. The system is not perfect but following these procedures may help minimize the accumulation of exorbitant child support debt during one's incarceration.

treatment in the community vs. the cost of jailing a person with mental illness; it costs more than 16 times as much to jail someone with mental illness than to treat them in the community (Vice News, 2015).

Mental Health Court is one of the tools the judicial system uses to keep people out of jail while ensuring they receive treatment, monitoring, and supervision. Miami Dade County in Florida found its Mental Health Court saved considerable dollars in the following ways:

- (1) In an agreement with the court, police officers were trained in Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. After this training was implemented, they arrested far fewer people who were in mental health crisis, reducing the

county arrest rate by more than half. This kept large numbers of jail beds empty, resulting in the closing of jail facilities and a savings of 84 million dollars over 12 years.

(2) Police shootings dropped from an average of two per month to less than one per year after the county implemented Mental Health Court and CIT training, saving the county millions of dollars in lawsuits and settlements.

(3) The county's bond rating was raised due to lower corrections and legal costs. This saved millions of dollars in interest payments on bonds (Vice News, 2015). Of course, Mental Health Court and CIT training cannot succeed if tax dollars are not used for providing community-based mental health facilities and treatment.

Just as important as the savings in dollars is the lives improved through treatment rather than incarceration. People with mental illness can become more functional and many go on to have successful jobs and families. Society does better when those who suffer with mental illness are helped to lead normal lives and kept out of the criminal justice system.

How can the Dual Loyalty between Safety and Security be Addressed for People with Mental Health Challenges?

One challenge every society faces is how to deal with people who suffer from mental illness. Their breaks from reality, odd and occasionally violent behaviors, and reduced ability to function, render them vulnerable. Many suffer from co-occurring substance use disorders. When people see someone who is in psychosis or acting strangely, a common response is to call the police. Without a proper understanding of mental illness, the responding officers may escalate the situation to the point of arrest and taking the person to jail. Obviously, some mentally ill are dangerous and need to be taken into custody. Ideally, all people with mental illness would be taken to an appropriate facility for treatment, whether it be inpatient or outpatient, assessed and given a correct diagnosis, and provided with the needed treatments and support. Our mental health system is far from ideal and, sadly, our jails and prisons remain the primary repository of those suffering from mentally illness.

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When incarcerated, a person with mental illness is likely to have their condition worsen. Because their behaviors are odd and they oftentimes don't respond appropriately to requests from officers, the inmates are seen as noncompliant. Using solitary confinement and/or restraints are some of the more severe methods of dealing with problem inmates. These types of punishments can result in permanent trauma to anyone, but especially to someone struggling with mental illness (Roth, 2020). Solitary confinement is usually unrelated to the offense for which the inmate is incarcerated, but instead is used as a tool to punish behavior. According to Roth (2020), more than eighty thousand people in the United States are in solitary confinement. Even those who have no mental illness going in can end up developing serious mental problems after extended periods in solitary confinement. Does this enhance security and safety for the officers or the inmates? Not likely. So how can the criminal justice system address people with mental illness who engage in criminal behavior in ways that benefit society and people with mental illness?

The initial meet up is with law enforcement officers (LEOs) who have the difficult task of being the first responders to situations the public cannot fathom. Because society has designated LEOs as the initial point of contact, LEOs should have sufficient training to deal with these challenging situations. Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) should be given to all law enforcement and corrections officers (COs) so they are better equipped to handle these people. More training in mental health results in increased understanding and better outcomes. Additionally, because LEOs and COs have to deal with horrendous situations they commonly develop PTSD, depression, and anxiety. CIT training helps the officers lessen these problems (Franken, 2020). Mental health experts agree that solitary confinement should almost never be used for the mentally ill and the length of time a prisoner is kept confined should not exceed three days, except for rare circumstances (Roth, 2020). The implementation of community-based mental health treatment opportunities, Mental Health Courts, and CIT training for LEOs and COs are important components of helping people stay out of jail while receiving the treatment and support they need. Research shows adopting these measures save money and, more importantly, lives.

“As love grows older, our hearts mature and our love becomes as coals, deep-burning and unquenchable.” Bruce Lee

The Impact of Incarceration on Heart Health

By Molly Prince

February is American Heart Month and it seems fitting to share some information on the impact of being a prisoner on heart health, particularly after months of lockdowns and inability to get regular exercise in gyms or rec yards.

According to an article entitled “*Cardiovascular Disease in Incarcerated Populations*” in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, Volume 69, Issue 24, 20 June 2017, pages 2967-2976, incarceration is associated with increased risk factors for cardiovascular disease (CVD). CVD includes heart disease, heart attack, stroke, heart failure, arrhythmia, and heart valve problems, many of which are related to a process called atherosclerosis.

Atherosclerosis is a condition that develops when a substance called plaque builds up in the walls of the arteries. This buildup narrows the arteries, making it harder for blood to flow through. If a blood clot forms, it can block the blood flow. This can cause a heart attack or stroke.

The JACC article reports that, “Individuals with a history of incarceration have many known risk factors for CVD, such as poor diet, lack of exercise, comorbidities (diabetes, HIV/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and drug addiction), and stress.” These are in addition to factors that are specific to incarceration which includes exposure to the prison environment that have the potential to increase the risk of CVD.

The article further states, “Prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of CVD in the incarcerated population are complex, and improvement of cardiovascular health requires individual behavioral modification, as well as correctional health care system changes.”

Since incarcerated populations have little control over the nutritional content of meals or quality of care they receive from prison medical services, they have the responsibility to themselves of doing what they can to try to lessen the factors they do have control of which contribute to heart disease while in prison. This includes exercise and how they choose to eat what is offered by the prison culinary service, often lacking in nutrients and high in empty calories.

The article cites the variability in the quality and funding of prison medical services, combined with prison lifestyle that limits opportunities for a healthy diet and regular exercise which contributes to increased likelihood of developing risk factors for CVD. These risk factors include diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. Further, the lack of independence and autonomy by incarcerated persons to control and manage their own medications and the lack of necessary and timely treatment for various illness and conditions

combined with exposure to infectious diseases and the emotional stress inherent to living in a prison setting also increase the risk of people who have been incarcerated to develop risk factors and ultimately suffer from CVD while inside, as well as after release.

The American Heart Association suggests everyone do what they can to keep their blood pressure managed. The AHA states that high BP is considered 140/90 or above, which can put someone at risk for heart disease, stroke, or other serious medical problems. Here are the AHA recommendations to manage blood pressure and reduce risk of CVD.

- (1) **Get moving** – At least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most days of the week can help lower blood pressure.
- (2) **Eat healthy** - Reduce the amount of salt you eat. Eat more fruits, vegetables, and fat-free or low-fat dairy products.
- (3) **Maintain a healthy weight.** Excess weight can raise blood pressure.

While the above recommendations are fairly easy for most people to accomplish in the community, a correctional institution can severely inhibit one from doing the above three things on a regular basis. Incarcerated folks are very creative, and many have figured out ways to exercise and work out regularly, even when locked down and when gyms or rec yards are closed due to the pandemic. Even people who have other medical problems that limit physical activity can do some exercises sitting down. Intermountain Healthcare suggests the following six exercises to strengthen the heart:

(1) **Walking** – even pacing back and forth can get the heart pumping to strengthen it. Speed walking is a great way to strengthen the heart. Walking fast increases the heart rate and is easier on the joints than other types of exercise.

(2) **Weight training** – This type of equipment may or may not be available in all jails or prisons. Some prisoners use other methods to weight train in their cells or pods. Building the other muscles in your body will help your heart. Weight training helps to build muscle mass and burn fat. Some of the most effective weight training happens when you use your own body weight. Things like push-ups, squats, or even pull-ups all help build muscle and contribute to bone and heart health.

(3) **Swimming** - Well, swimming is not an option in a prison or jail.

(4) **Yoga** – Although it might not seem like it, yoga is great for your heart health. Doing yoga helps strengthen and tone muscles. Certain types of yoga can really get

the heart rate up, while still providing the calm that will lower blood pressure.

(5) Interval training – This alternates between short bursts of high-intensity exercise with longer periods of active recovery. It is a great way to get a full-sized workout in a short amount of time. For example, you can run for one minute and walk for three minutes, then repeat the cycle. Raising and lowering your heart rate helps to burn calories and improves the function of your blood vessels.

(6) Cycling – Jumping on a stationary bike in the gym (or in the community, riding your bike) can do more than you think. Cycling has been shown to help reduce the

risk of heart disease. It uses your large muscles in your legs, which helps to elevate your heart rate. Bonus: Cycling has even been shown to improve your mental health.

Whether you choose to attend a yoga class (or create a routine in your housing unit), go walking around the yard, pod, or dorm with a friend, go to the gym when it opens up, or strength train in your cell, exercise is essential to taking care of your heart.

It is recommended that no matter where you are, talk to your healthcare provider before you begin an exercise routine and start out slow and easy to accommodate your health conditions and current fitness level.

<https://intermountainhealthcare.org/blogs/topics/heart/2019/02/6-best-exercises-to-strengthen-your-heart/>

History has shown us that Courage can be contagious and Hope can take on a life of its own. Michelle Obama

A Couple of Smiles and Maybe a Laugh

The problem isn't that obesity runs in your family, it's that no one runs in your family. ~~ Today a man knocked at my door and asked for a small donation toward the local swimming pool. I gave him a glass of water. ~~

Last night my girlfriend was complaining that I never listen to her...or something like that. ~~

What kind of flowers should you not give on Valentine's day? Cauliflowers!

I don't know how our imprisoned loved ones handle the difficulties they encounter. I couldn't! You are really cool. Ed.

Preview of Things to Come – by Ed.

I'll be looking into an area where Google and Bing don't have any info. And reading Utah Criminal Justice Laws and what requirements the Utah Board of Pardons and Parole have, won't be an easy task. Here's what I have in mind.

Specifically, must a parolee have a job as opposed to an income? The word "job" has been hammered into inmates minds for so long that "job" has seemingly become the only word used for "a source of income" for parolees. Can parolees work for themselves as independent contractors? If not, why not! I know of one career field that has about 27 special niches that people can specialize in. Those niche (specialty) jobs often have 6-figure incomes within a couple of years if a person works at it and learns more as they work. And the MOST IMPORTANT PART, no one cares if you have a criminal record. The only consideration is, can you produce what is needed. And these niches DON'T need a college education. High school is fine if you have the interest and can form a few ideas in your head. Another example, the country music icon Merle Haggard, left San Quentin and soon was earning a living as an entertainer (singer/guitar player) in Bakersfield clubs and honky-tonks – a pioneer in the Bakersfield Sound. There are literally hundreds of income opportunities available if the Board is openminded and flexible at what a parolee is allowed to do to earn an income and follow a career field. If Board restrictions or Utah laws prohibit these income opportunities, we must change the rules, allowing a person to seek their calling, live a happy, full life, and contribute to society. Let's get at it! Ed.

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“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead