



UPAN Newsletter Volume 10 Number 12 | **DECEMBER 2023**
“Empowerment and Growth Through Knowledge and Unity”

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Ideas To Celebrate Holidays With Your Kids – Thanksgiving Gratitude Message – Donated Books – Female Warden at CUCF – New Postconviction Appellate Div – New S O Mgmt Board
UPAN Visits TOSA – Medical Phone Line Update – CHS Updates – *Dell-Emerald Topics*

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Next Meeting: Monday, January 8, 2023 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm. **Speaker:** Ian L. Quiel, Head of Postconviction Division with the Utah Indigent Appellate Defense Division. Meetings are **FREE** and open to the public. **Join at** <https://bit.ly/3vqQjiA> ****NO MEETING IN DECEMBER****

Following Monthly Meeting: Monday, February 12th, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm. **Join at** <https://bit.ly/3vqQjiA>

Unless otherwise stated, UPAN continues virtual meetings. Available on UPAN Facebook Live and on Facebook page afterwards. Use link above or visit UPAN website for link (p. 10), or Utah Prisoner Advocate Facebook Page for link to current monthly meeting. Free to the public.

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

“This Christmas, we pray that happiness be at your door. May it knock early, stay late, and leave behind the gifts of peace, love, joy, and good health for yearlong enjoyment.” From the UPAN Directors

Ideas on Ways to Celebrate the Holidays with Incarcerated Loved Ones
 By Molly Prince, LCSW (with a summary of ideas from many of our UPAN families)

A Utah mother of three young children is unable to visit her husband in prison due to UDC policy regarding her previous conviction several years ago, despite her successful completion of probation and remaining drug free for the past 6 years. Their children have not seen their father in person, on video, or in a photograph for over two years. The youngest was a newborn when he went to prison and the second youngest a toddler.

She reached out to the UPAN Family Facebook group asking for ideas on how to start some holiday traditions

with their kids that can include their father while he is incarcerated.

There were many good ideas and numerous traditions shared. In addition to ideas of traditions that can only be enjoyed in the community, people offered a variety of ideas for traditions which include the incarcerated parent. This article is going to focus on those ideas which connect the children with their incarcerated parent.

Letters. (Here are some ideas that involved letters and additional ones I have heard about.)

- ♥ Have the children write him a letter. Instead of the 12 days of Christmas they can focus on the 12 traits I love about you! (This is also a good idea for the adults!)
- ♥ Send in a letter every day beginning December 1 for the 12 days of Christmas with the kids' words or drawings. This way the parent should have received all by December 25th. Remember – in Utah, all drawings in crayon or marker must be copied on a copier onto white copy paper and sent in a plain white envelope so they won't be rejected.
- ♥ Parents in prison can send out a letter or postcard daily to the children for the 12 days of Christmas including drawings, poems, jokes, or other sentiments for the children to receive through December.

Special gifts or pictures.

- ♥ Photographs of the children, in whatever Christmas outfits they may have, will be cherished.
- ♥ The children can create ornaments out of construction paper or other items that are flat. Once they have made them, color copy them onto plain white paper, cut them out and mail them into their parent with their names or signatures on the back. The kids can hang the original ornaments on their tree (or refrigerator, or in their room) and their incarcerated parent will have the copy to cherish and hang in their living area.
- ♥ The mom who started this conversation realized that because her two younger babies are too young to write or draw, she could have the babies put their little footprints on the ornaments for their dad and she could send them.
- ♥ Parents in prison can use whatever hobby craft they are able (and can afford) to purchase to make ornaments or drawings and other items for the children as gifts. Those who crochet can make a variety of items to send out to the children. Knowing their mom or dad made their little stuffed animal or blanket is so precious to them.

Other ideas.

- ♥ Sing holiday songs together on the phone. Parents in prison can sing to the younger ones who don't know the songs, and with the older kids who do know them.
- ♥ Over the phone, or in a visit, say one thing they are grateful about for each person in the family. This can even be done in letters.

- ♥ Making paper chains to count the days down to Christmas. The length and number of chains would depend on the age. For example, 30 days for older kids, 2 weeks for elementary school age, or just the last five nights for preschoolers and very young children. Take a link off the chain each day or night. This would need to occur each day, but could include happening during a phone call from their parent or a video visit. And between calls or visits, they take the chains off, when they do get to talk to their parent, the parent can ask how many chain links are left.

- ♥ Creating Secret Santa between the children.

- ♥ Baking and frosting Christmas cookies. Leave one out for Santa. Leave another out for Mom or Dad. Santa's will be gone in the morning. The absent parent's cookie will still be there. You can make a ritual of taking bites out of it for them and enjoying it for them, to talk to them about later on the phone if possible. For very young kids they may not understand, but for pre-school and school age kids, they will understand the remembering Mom or Dad and having eaten it "for them."

- ♥ Pick a night to drive around and look at Christmas lights. Grab some cheap 3D glasses for the kids to wear to make it extra fun.

- ♥ Go to the store and each child can pick out an ornament for themselves, and the parent or guardian with them picks one out for themselves. Then pick one out for the absent parent. Hang on the tree. To extend the tradition, after you take the tree down, put the ornament in a box with the child's name on it and save it through the years. When they move out and have a tree of their own, they have ornaments and memories. You can also put the absent parent's ornament in a box each year until they come home and then the children can present them with it at their first Christmas together.

- ♥ Include the absent parent by buying them presents from each of the kids (or from all together), wrap and put them under the tree. During video visits they can unwrap the presents for him.

- ♥ Mom or Dad in prison can discuss with the kids what they want for Christmas and the other parent or guardian can purchase and wrap them. And it can say that the gift is from the absent parent.

Be creative! There are many more ideas that came in response to this topic. **Happy Holidays!**

My Message of Gratitude this Season By Faye Jenkins

This is a very exciting time for my family as my husband was granted a release from his parole the first week of November. What an incredible feeling to be free, to go where you want to go and do what you want to do without first asking permission or being denied permission to go somewhere with our family.

This thanksgiving season I am very grateful we made it to the end! The criminal justice journey has been a very eye-opening, aggravating, humbling, emotional, scary, and rewarding experience, among many other constantly

changing feelings and emotions. As I look back and reflect upon our nearly 8-year journey, many people warrant my deep and sincere gratitude.

I have much gratitude for the many professional licensed therapists who chose the challenging career of working with offenders, and as a result were able to help guide my husband along his path of healing and change. The principles and tools the therapists taught him, he now uses to maintain healthy emotions and teaches to other men to help them address and stop unhealthy and

addictive behaviors that may eventually lead to hurting others and a life of misery.

I am grateful for the many generous volunteers who regularly go to the prisons and jails giving their time in religious services and education, along with many other areas to help people who are incarcerated be seen, know they have value, use their time productively, and learn and develop new skills and talents.

I am grateful for the many inmates who watched out for my husband's safety during his incarceration, along with providing support and friendship to him. I enjoyed reading his letters where he shared the many types of service and kindness demonstrated in the prison that helped create a positive community despite their incarceration.

I am grateful for the correctional officers in the prison who accepted a challenging career of working with people who are incarcerated. I am especially grateful for those officers who do not let the negativity of the prison affect their positivity and kindness when supervising inmates and greeting families who come to visit. I appreciate the level of care given to assure a safe environment for people living, working, and visiting the prisons. Over the past 2 years I am grateful for my husband's parole officers who verified his accountability and helped him earn new privileges in the community

which prepared him to successfully terminate parole this year.

I am grateful for the UPAN directors who spend many hours voicing the concerns of people who are incarcerated, and advocating for better, healthier living conditions inside the prisons. I am grateful for the community of support I found within UPAN so I did not navigate this journey alone. I am grateful for the many organizations in the community that strive to support people as they transition from the prisons back into the community, knowing stable housing, employment, and family and community connections are essential for maintaining lasting change and healthy lives.

I am grateful that my husband used every opportunity and resource provided to him both inside and outside the prison to make important life changes. I am grateful for his strict adherence to prison and parole rules and restrictions, because that is how he earned trust from his supervising officers, personal freedoms, and an early release from his sentence by the Board of Pardons & Parole.

I am grateful that I survived this challenging criminal justice experience, made many new friends, helped advocate for more considerate laws and conditions for people with criminal records, and realized an improved husband in the end. I find much to be grateful for during this Thanksgiving and Holiday season!

“Christmas, my child, is love in action. Every time we love, every time we give, it’s Christmas.” – Dale Evans

All My Friends Are Felons Books Donated to USCF and CUCF

Karen Thompson is UPAN's Director of Special Projects. She worked with Chaplain Jared Anderson and Christie Jensen, UDC's Facility Library Director, allowing her to order 20 copies of Mark Hugantobler's book, *All My Friends are Felons*, to be placed in the USCF and CUCF libraries. Each prison will receive 10 books. They should have been received by the prisons on November 6, and now by December, should be placed in the libraries in both prisons. Thank you Karen!

Making History - UDC Has Appointed Utah's First Female Warden at CUCF

Adapted from the UDC November 27, 2023 News Release by Karen Tapahe, Public Information Officer

Kristen Keisel has been named the new warden at Central Utah Correctional Facility (CUCF) in Gunnison. She is the first female prison warden in Utah's history. Keisel will fill the position as CUCF Warden Bart Mortensen moves to the position of warden at the Utah State Correctional Facility (USCF) in Salt Lake City.

Warden Keisel began her career with UDC in 2006 as a correctional officer at CUCF, and later served as a correctional case manager in maximum security. She worked in the HOPE program as a lieutenant. She collaborated with county jails on correctional standards before being named deputy warden at CUCF in 2021.

“Being part of UDC has given me the opportunity and ability to serve in different capacities,” stated Keisel, “but my goal has been the same along the way—to positively impact the life of every person I encounter.”

UDC Executive Director Brian Redd stated, “Being the warden is a challenging job and we're excited to see Keisel in this role. She will be balancing management of the inmate population, staffing, and the facility itself.”

CUCF opened in Gunnison, Utah, in 1989. It houses up to 1,800 male inmates and has approximately 500 employees. It is split into three large housing facilities.

The Utah Indigent Appellate Defense Division's new Postconviction Division

By Ian L. Quiel, an attorney serving as head of the Postconviction Division, with Utah Indigent Appellate Defense Div.

As anyone involved in the criminal justice system knows, mistakes can happen. This is why the Utah **Post-conviction Remedies Act** exists. Known as the

'PCRA,' this law allows the wrongfully convicted to petition the court to fix problems with their criminal convictions. The PCRA exists to right the injustices that

may slip through the cracks in the trial court and on direct appeal. Until recently, getting a court-appointed lawyer to help in a PCRA case was extremely difficult. Courts could only appoint lawyers on a *pro bono* basis to represent petitioners in their PCRA cases. Finding a willing and able *pro bono* attorney was incredibly difficult. Few attorneys were available to accept cases. This forced many petitioners to wait months or sometimes years for *pro bono* counsel. Others gave up or decided to represent themselves.

For these reasons, the Utah legislature amended the PCRA in 2022. The legislature passed a bill that allows courts to appoint lawyers from the **Indigent Appellate Defense Division**, 'IADD' for short (pronounced *eye-add*) to represent qualifying petitioners. It is a state public defender agency representing clients throughout Utah. Since 2022, the Postconviction Division has been available, when appointed by the court, to represent indigent petitioners in actions and appeals for postconviction relief under the PCRA.

If you wish to file for postconviction relief, you must still do significant work on your own before you may get a court-appointed lawyer. Unless you can afford to hire an attorney, you will have to prepare and file your petition for relief on your own. Petitions can be very complicated and are long legal documents. To write a strong petition, you will need to know all the facts in your case, as well as understand the PCRA's grounds for relief.

The PCRA identifies various grounds that entitle a petitioner to relief. These include innocence-type claims, such as DNA or biological evidence or the discovery of new evidence that negates guilt. But the PCRA is not limited to just innocence claims. Grounds also include constitutional defects in the conviction, changes in the law, illegal sentences, and ineffective assistance of counsel—both trial & appellate. Learn about the PCRA's grounds, review section 78B-9-104 of the Utah Code.

Time is limited to file a petition for relief under the PCRA. Many events in your case may impact the statute of limitations to file a claim. A petitioner generally has one year from certain events to file a petition. The

laws dealing with the statute of limitations may be found in section 78B-9-107. In most circumstances, a petition must be filed before the statute of limitations expires. Counsel may only be appointed after you file your petition and only after the court completes a process called "summary review." A court must review all newly filed PCRA petitions and dismiss certain claims before the matter proceeds any further. Claims that are "frivolous on their face" or have been "previously adjudicated in a prior proceeding" are subject to immediate dismissal, often without further notice. If the court decides that your petition passes this test, you may request a court-appointed lawyer. **If the court dismisses your case at this stage, you will need to file a notice of appeal within 30 days.** Otherwise, your PCRA case will likely be gone forever.

To request a lawyer, you must file a motion. The court must first decide that you are "indigent" in order to qualify for a lawyer. The court will then evaluate several factors to determine if you should be appointed a lawyer. These include:

- (a) whether the petitioner is incarcerated.
- (b) the likelihood that an evidentiary hearing will be necessary.
- (c) the likelihood that an investigation will be necessary.
- (d) the complexity of the factual and legal issues; &
- (e) any other factor relevant to the particular case.

IADD has fill-in-blank petitions, motion templates, and other general materials, mailed to you, on your request.

Contact Us If you or someone you know has filed a PCRA petition and needs help, we encourage you to file a request with the court to determine if you qualify for the appointment of IADD. Also, though IADD cannot formally represent you or offer legal advice until we are appointed by the court, we are always happy to send people more information about the PCRA process. You can call or email the Postconviction Division at 385-270-1650 or iadd@utah.gov or visit our website: <https://idc.utah.gov/iadd> or reach us by mail at 370 E. South Temple, Suite 500, Salt Lake City, UT 84111.

New Sex Offense Management Board Is Already at Work By Molly Prince, LCSW

In the 2023 Legislative Session, HB268 set up a Sex Offense Management Board (SOMB). It is separate from the Sex Offense Task Force (SOTF) that has been in place since the mid 1990's. The SOMB is part of Utah's Commission on Criminal & Juvenile Justice (CCJJ).

Mandate. This new board is mandated to review research regarding the treatment, risk assessment, and probation / parole supervision of people on the sex offense registry in Utah. While Utah already has Treatment Parameters established by the SOTF and a Treatment & Supervision Manual updated regularly by the SOTF, the new SOMB will dig deeper into the

research and look at policies that are in place in order to update them where necessary.

The SOMB will also advise and make evidence-based recommendations to other councils, boards, and offices within the CCJJ regarding the following:

- (a) sentencing and treatment practices for individuals on the registry to reduce recidivism and promote public safety.
- (b) policies to promote public safety and protect victims of sex offenses.
- (c) practices related to Utah's sex offender registry that promote public safety, account for risk, and protect the rights of individuals on the registry.

Regarding the registry, this new board will advise and make recommendations to the UDC and the Department of Health and Human Services regarding evidence-based standards for supervision of individuals on the registry. It will also make recommendations regarding the updating and revision of the current evidence-based standards for training, certification, and evaluation of community treatment providers for this highly specialized treatment, polygraph examiners, evaluators, and other professionals who provide treatment & related services to individuals who have offended sexually.

More information about HB268 and the SOMB can be found in an article in the **May 2023 UPAN Newsletter**, *40 Years of the Sex Offense Registry in Utah*.

Monthly Meetings are open to the public. Since October, there have been two meetings of the entire board which consists of 18 criminal justice stakeholders. These consist of representatives from the following agencies: the Department of Corrections, the Department of Public Safety, the AG's office, AP&P, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Administrative Offices of the Courts, the Office for Victims of Crime, the Division of Juvenile Justice Services, and the Board of Pardons and Parole.

Additional board members from the community include: a sex offense therapist experienced in treating adults in the community, a sex offense therapist experienced in treating juveniles in the community; 2 criminal defense attorneys (one specifically experienced with indigent criminal defense), a prosecuting attorney, a member of law enforcement, a victim advocate, a polygraph examiner, and a person previously convicted of a sex offense who has successfully completed treatment and supervision for the offense.

The meetings have been a hybrid of in-person and online. Visitors are welcome to view or watch it online.

Two committees have been formed and have already been meeting to look closely at the two primary issues the SOMB is researching and addressing: the Treatment Committee and the Registry Committee. Volunteers from the community are on these committees in addition to members of the board.

Utah is one of a few states with a management board. In the Nov. 1st meeting, Dr. Michele Leslie stated, "We're one of the few states who have some kind of management board. And it is a really big step for this state."

Dr. Leslie, a Doctor of Psychology with years of experience in sex offense evaluation, treatment, and management, was selected by the CCJJ to serve as the board's director.

She reminded everyone in the meeting that Utah's population of people who have offended sexually is a population that has not really been focused on or discussed regularly at the level the SOMB will be doing until something happens that is "potentially big" or gets into the news. But when the attention in the media dies down, discussion is not continued. She stated in an interview with KSL, "The creation of this board is so that we can make sure that it doesn't die down; that we continue to move forward."

UPAN is pleased to know that with the creation of the SOMB, discussion will be held and research will continue on a broad basis about the best evidence-based approaches to manage this population in a manner that creates community safety, while also allowing them to live prosocial and productive lives.

Daniella Rivera's November 2, 2023 report on KSL TV quotes Dr. Leslie, "We want to make sure that we're implementing evidence-based policies — that we're really listening to what not only the public concerns, hopes, and wants are, but also those who are in this population (of sex offenders) as well," Leslie explained. <https://www.ksl.com/article/50773395/newly-created-sex-offense-management-board-looking-into-issues-with-utahs-registry>

The focus on the Sex Offender and Kidnap Registry is timely. A KSL Investigation recently revealed that more than 100 people convicted of sex offenses who should have been on Utah's registry were missing. That report resulted in an internal audit by the UDC and is being discussed within the SOMB. As it turned out, not everyone missing from the Registry's database was out of compliance. Many of those registrants had reported and updated their registry information as required by law, including addresses, and it never made its way into the state's database or on the public information registry website.

In the November 1st meeting, Dr. Leslie and SOMB members discussed and reported on the subcommittee created to look into issues with the registry. The registry subcommittee is also going to do research requested by lawmakers to consider changing the registry to a risk based registry. The use of risk assessments rather than simply basing it on the offense the person is convicted of would inform decisions about who should be on the registry and for how long.

Dr. Leslie explained that the goal is to determine if the current design of the registry is the most appropriate with this population or is there another way to design the registry that would contribute to increased public safety.

SOMB's committees will continue to meet. The full board is scheduled to meet next in January. It will meet more frequently during 2024 legislative session in order to provide feedback on proposed legislation.

"Millions in this country observe the holidays without their loved ones at home. Millions in this country have an empty place at the table because their loved one is incarcerated. It does not matter why they are incarcerated in our prisons and jails. What does matter is they are human beings. We can be thankful for the lessons they bring us as families and as a society. Hard lessons. Important lessons. Think deeply. Sending love this holiday season." Molly Prince

UPAN Visits with The Other Side Academy By Kennedie Starr

During UPAN's November meeting, UPAN volunteers gathered in person at The Other Side Academy (TOSA) for a special visit, presentation, and tour led by TOSA students and peer mentors.

TOSA is a non-profit organization that supports individuals through on-the-job vocational and life-skills programming. It is a comprehensive residential program that transforms people's lives thru transitional services, education, community, and mentorship. The program offers support to men, women, and individuals who were incarcerated, as well as our neighbors and loved ones who are experiencing homelessness and substance use disorders. The program is 30 months in length. Many individuals opt for a longer stay, participating until they feel fully equipped to leave and utilize their training and growth in another setting of their choice. Between the Salt Lake City and Denver campuses, TOSA supports about 200 students.

The organization is **peer-run and based on classic therapeutic community principles**, meaning those guiding the program and mentorship have completed TOSA programming themselves and understand substance use, incarceration, or homelessness **firsthand**. This approach is distinct from other programs that are guided by medical professionals, including therapists and doctors, who may not share a similar experience of incarceration.

UPAN had the opportunity to join students for dinner and hear about their experiences with the programs and on-the-job training assignments offered at TOSA. While eating delicious shrimp scampi and garlic knots, students shared insight about how meaningful the principles of TOSA are in their daily lives. The dinner was prepared and served by students—the entire **TOSA facility is operated by students and peer mentors**. Each day, hundreds of meals are prepared by students assigned to work in the kitchen. The dining area was filled with conversation, laughter, and pride in the amazing life transformations happening because of TOSA.

Following dinner, UPAN attendees gathered in the conference room for a presentation about TOSA's values, program model, and requirements. TOSA is rooted in **personal accountability** and **peer accountability**. Not only are students expected to take accountability for their personal actions and behaviors, but they are also expected to help those around them remain accountable. If a student sees behavior or action from a fellow student that doesn't represent TOSA's values, it is called out and addressed. All students strive to maintain their individual responsibilities and push each other to develop, learn, communicate, and grow. A student during the presentation said, "Every piece of myself that was missing, I found at The Other Side Academy."

Students at TOSA receive on-the-job vocational training and development through a variety of opportunities. Some of the enterprises that students participate in include **The Other Side Builders, The Other Side Movers, and The Other Side Thrift Boutiques**.

Routinely practicing the act of hard work is part of TOSA's programming, transforming the lives of students. The proceeds from these businesses support the **entire** operation of TOSA. The program is free of charge for students and is fueled by their hard work and dedication to completing their jobs with quality and determination at the forefront.

In addition to participating in these businesses, students also manage on-site facilities at TOSA, including laundry, yard work, haircuts, cleaning, and other duties to support the maintenance of the residence. All students live on-site in dorm-style quarters at TOSA, meaning rooms are shared between students with space for personal belongings. The beautiful campus is located east of downtown Salt Lake City.

Because TOSA is *not* a medical facility with professional medical providers on-site, they do not accept individuals with dual diagnoses into their traditional program. Dual diagnosis is when a person has both a mental health disorder and a substance use disorder at the same time.

However, TOSA understands the interconnections between mental illness, substance use, homelessness, and incarceration, so they helped establish a sister program known as [the Other Side Village](#). The Other Side Village operates under similar principles, but it is tailored to provide different services to support other needs, including dual diagnosis and chronic homelessness.

Individuals, including both men and women, can be accepted into TOSA pre- and post-sentencing. There is no fee for becoming a student and living at TOSA. Apart from having a dual diagnosis, there are a few disqualifiers to the program. To apply, one can either come to TOSA in person for an interview, or they can request an interview while incarcerated. If you are incarcerated, you can write a letter to TOSA for an interview and a summary about yourself and why you want to begin TOSA programming. The mailing address is 661 East 100 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84102.

Every student and peer mentor encounter during UPAN's visit was deeply moving. TOSA's impact is far-reaching, lifelong, and transformational. The support, training, and pathways the organization provides are exceptional. It is no wonder TOSA's enterprises have received special recognition and awards statewide—they are driven by dedicated students who are committed to changing their lives and the lives of others.

UPDATE on the Family Medical Phone Line & Communication with CHS

By Molly Prince & Shane Severson

The Family Medical Line is Undergoing an Overhaul

The UDC and the Department of Human Health Services (DHHS) have been diligently working to improve the Family Medical Line. This is a crucial communication channel established during the COVID pandemic that provides the opportunity for families to call and leave messages regarding concerns about the health of their loved ones, ask questions, and receive information from Correctional Health Services (CHS).

In the recent Stakeholders Meeting on November 15, Dr. Marcus Wisner addressed the technical challenges encountered with the previous system which was failing to properly route the calls to working numbers that could receive messages. He assured us that UDC is troubleshooting the problem and they are working toward putting a new system into place. There has not been a timeline determined for when it will become operational yet. When it becomes operational, the new line will function Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., excluding holidays and weekends.

In the meantime, if you call the Family Medical Line and there is no way to leave a message, please send the relevant information to Jade Watkin jwatkin@utah.gov. She will log the concern and forward the email to the appropriate person. The Family Medical Line phone number remains 801-522-7293, M–F 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

The Impact of Civil Communication

UDC's previous dedicated operator of this phone line, Amy, has transitioned to a new role within the organization—presenting UDC with the challenge of finding committed individuals who can continue her legacy of compassionate service. The role of handling the Medical Line calls is time consuming and demanding. It involves listening to the messages, glean the relevant information in order to research the situation and responding.

Unfortunately, a recurring issue of rude and abusive language from callers leaving messages has contributed to the difficulty in filling this position. It's imperative to understand that the DHHS administrators overseeing CHS, UDC administrators and staff, and the UPAN team share the concerns of families and incarcerated patients. While it may not be apparent to everyone who has a loved one incarcerated who has missed medications or has not received timely medical care, UPAN's Med Team is working daily with DHHS and UDC administrators to advocate for those housed in Utah's prisons.

The fears and frustration that families go through are understandable. The executive teams of UDC and DHHS understand this. We would like to acknowledge that the stress that correctional staff and medical providers experience is also difficult.

We have found that resolving concerns is the result of thoughtful and courteous communication, whether it is in writing emails, phone calls, or in meetings. While it is easy when under stress to give into emotion and forget our communication skills, we want to urge everyone who will be leaving messages, emailing, or talking to correctional staff to strive to be courteous, no matter how fearful or upset we are.

Effective Advocacy: Tips for Calm and Constructive Communication

Finding ways to keep the channels of communication open is vital as we work together to improve the situation related to delivery of medical care in our prisons. All of us respond more positively and openly to calm and respectful communication. That is the path when interacting with UDC staff as we advocate for our incarcerated loved ones.

To ensure that your concerns are heard and addressed efficiently, we encourage the following:

1. **Process your feelings and thoughts:** If possible, talk your feelings through with someone you trust before calling or emailing. Sometimes you might be able to get feedback and ideas from others who have been in your situation through the UPAN Family Facebook Group.
2. **Pause and Reflect:** Before calling or writing, take a moment to gather your thoughts. This can help to communicate your concerns more clearly and effectively.
3. **Be Specific:** Clearly state the purpose of your call or email. Stick to the relevant details without veiling them in criticisms or unrelated comments.
4. **Draft and Review:** When sending an email, write your draft and then allow some time to pass before you review it. This ensures that your communication is thoughtful and precise.

When we are highly emotional, cognitive processes are lowered and our brains do not process information objectively or rationally. This makes it difficult to communicate calmly and effectively. When information or the situation is filtered through anxiety or fear, it limits our ability to look at and understand the entire situation accurately. This is why stepping back and allowing some time to pass before reviewing and hitting send on that email or making that call is helpful.

The Role of UDC Staff

The staff managing the Family Medical Line are there to facilitate, not to formulate policies or provide direct care. They want to help. They are similar to customer service representatives, tasked with ensuring your message reaches the right professionals. We must treat them with the same respect and civility we expect in return.

The Medical Information Release Authorization

The only way UDC can provide information about medical status is if your loved one has completed the Medical Information Release Authorization Form. Without that, they can receive your concerns but won't be able to answer your questions. This Medical Information Release Authorization is actually titled Limited Power of Attorney to Request and Receive Private Medical Records and Information from the Utah Dept. of Corrections. Please make sure your loved one has completed this form and submitted it to Medical.

The Way Forward

Establishing the Family Medical Line was a significant milestone, borne out of necessity during the pandemic. UDC implemented it as an opportunity for families to call in and share concerns and ask questions about the health of their incarcerated loved ones. It provided a way for the prison to respond to those messages with whatever information they could legally share. This

phone line represents a step forward in transparency and responsiveness. Dr. Wisner echoes our sentiment, urging everyone to "keep it civil" to maintain the dignity and usefulness of this essential service.

A Call to Unity

UPAN has made significant strides in fostering professional relationships and open communication with UDC's new administration and Correctional Health Services. It's a collective endeavor—UDC staff, UPAN, incarcerated patients, and most importantly, you—the families of the incarcerated. Your engagement is crucial in continuing to build upon these relationships, leading to enhanced medical services and overall improvement for Utah's incarcerated population.

We thank you for being part of the solution and for your continued support in these challenging times.

***"Do what you can to show you care about other people, and you will make our world a better place."
Rosalynn Carter 1927 – 2023***

November 15th Updates on Correctional Health Services

By Molly Prince, LCSW

The following summarizes some of the updates and information provided to the November Stakeholders online meeting by Dr. Marcus Wisner, Director of Correctional Health Services (CHS) at Utah Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS).

NEW HIRES IN MEDICAL In the first two weeks of November, UDC Correctional Health Services hired 12% of its needed workforce. Currently 20% of the workforce is going through the onboard training. This is progress in filling positions in CHS.

DIABETIC PILL LINES AND CARE Dr. Wisner stated that they have been having a lot of meetings and focus on addressing the challenges with Diabetic Management. With two types of diabetes, they are working to figure out how best to approach medication and diet management. They are focusing on figuring out how to coordinate the dispensing of the insulin with the timing of meals.

He discussed the difficulty of delivering care on a timeline that is recommended between meals and giving insulin in a prison setting due to staffing issues, lockdowns, and other factors that impact the length of time they have to provide meals within that 30-minute window of giving insulin.

Currently Dr. Wisner and Dr. Michelle Hoffman (Executive Medical Director, Clinical Services at DHHS) have been consulting with the State Medicaid Physician who is an Endocrinologist (which covers diabetes) who also used to work at San Quentin Prison. He said they had just completed three days of meetings focusing on diabetic care in the prisons. They are working to be

creative and think outside the box for ways to deliver diabetic care consistently and on schedule to all diabetic patients in the various housing units in both prisons. He said they have not come up with a final process or policy update yet. They are working on it.

FLU CLINICS HAVE ALREADY BEEN HELD IN BOTH USCF AND CUCF for anyone who wanted these shots. If you missed it and want a flu shot, please request one via ICR.

WAITING FOR NEW COVID VACCINES IN BOTH PRISONS. I did not have the opportunity to ask why it is taking so long for them to get the new COVID boosters which have been available in the community since September, but believe it is because they have to receive it from the Dept. of Health, which may not have received all the doses to cover the unsheltered, uninsured and incarcerated in Utah.

PNEUMONIA & RSV VACCINES will not be offered in clinics in the housing units. Incarcerated people need to ask for them specifically. Put in an ICR for this. The same with **SHINGLES** vaccines.

CARE NAVIGATORS - Dr. Wisner stated they now have 4 Care Navigators on staff to work with those patients who are high utilizers of medical services or need assistance to help them get the care they need.

CPAP Machines. Concerns and complaints about CPAP machines have been reported. It should be noted that even in the community, CPAP machines are sometimes on back order when a new patient is prescribed one.

Dr. Wisner explained that UDC received a shipment of CPAP machines they ordered. These machines were distributed to some incarcerated patients. However, they turned out to be the wrong machines. CHS had ordered CPAP machines, but instead of CPAP, they received BIPAP, which are different and reportedly harder to operate.

Medical had to take back the machines that had already been given to incarcerated patients, in order to return the BIPAPs so they can get the correct CPAPs. This left patients confused as to why they were taking back the “wrong ones” and did not have the correct ones to replace them yet. It is our understanding that CPAPs are easier and more effective for patients to operate in a prison setting.

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH OUTSIDE MEDICAL CARE.

Dustin Banks is the person at the University of Utah Medical Center that coordinates in the partnership with Correctional Health Services. He coordinates outside care with Christy Johnson, over CHS who is a UDC employee. I asked about the process of referral and follow up for medical conditions that require specialist and outside treatment. Here is a summary as I understand it.

- 1) Once the patient is seen by CHS in the prison and determined to need referral to, or consult with a specialist, the prison is supposed to arrange an appointment at the University. This could be telemedicine if appropriate to the problem, or in person if it requires a more thorough examination or imaging, etc.
- 2) Transportation must be arranged on the date of the appointment, so those dates must be coordinated. It was asked about people who have not been transported due to lock downs or lack of transport staff. The answer is that if it is something like cancer treatment, their transport is not supposed to be cancelled due to lockdown, they can be escorted out of their housing and transported for that cancer treatment. They will cancel appointments if no transport staff is available. (Dr. Wisner said they are recruiting to hire more officers for transport staff.)
- 3) If the University doctor recommends treatment or further tests, there are orders that are supposed to be input into the system and any paperwork is put in an envelope that is given to the transport officers to return to the prison Medical Department.
- 4) Dustin Banks and Dr. Wisner also advised that any appointments that may be cancelled due to transportation problems would be more limited to the routine appointments versus critical care

appointments. The bottom line in these situations is that is up the Infirmary to make that decision.

Unfortunately, there is not any allowance for patients to take their own paper and pens to write down information to refer to when they get back. This may contribute to some confusion and misunderstandings of what is remembered when they return to the prison. Everyone may forget what their doctor said unless they write it down, particularly when stressed with a diagnosis that is scary or the explanation is given by the doctor so fast it is hard to hear it all and absorb and understand it all.

Discussion was held about other options for providing information about a diagnosis and proposed treatment for the patient. I asked questions about providing the patients with written material from the specialist or handouts on their condition, or other possibilities of having something they can take back to their housing unit with them. He said they can look into that.

UDC administrators involved in the meeting suggested this is something that could be put on the tablet under the patient’s ID and password so the patient can log in and read it later. I asked about the Healthy U app that University of Utah uses for patients in the community. Dr. Hoffman said she sees no reason something cannot be worked out with UDC to help patients have access to a Healthy U account on the tablet. The Healthy U account is used in the community for a patient to be able to access their medical records, summaries of appointments, medications, and other information. This approach would be reasonable.

Dr. Wisner discussed his awareness of the vital importance of figuring all of this out. He acknowledges that the health of incarcerated patients as they age is much worse than their counterparts in the community. We have a large aging population in our prisons but prisons are not designed to have a lot of major and long term health care services. He wants to focus on shifting operations to be based on patient need.

MEDICATIONS Dr. Wisner reported that they are continuing to work on improving the process of making sure prescriptions are refilled and also the consistency of medication delivery.

This meeting clearly demonstrated that DHHS and UDC Correctional Health Services are continuing to review and work on improving their approaches to delivering timely and necessary medical care. It will not happen overnight, but we have more movement forward now than in decades past.

For more information about Correctional Health Services and DHHS oversight including FAQs, go to: <https://dhhs.utah.gov/chs/>

"Santa Claus is anyone who loves another and seeks to make them happy, who gives himself by thought or word or deed in every gift that he bestows." Edwin Osgood Grover

"If we want peace, we have to be peace. Peace is a practice, not a hope." Thich Nhat Hahn

Between October 31 and January 1 there are several major holidays and numerous minor ones. The months of November and December can be stressful for those living in prison, as well as their families in the community.

From Halloween to Veterans Day, to Thanksgiving to Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza, and New Year's Day, there are repeated reminders that we are separated from our families and loved ones that we normally would be spending these days with.

Lexi Handlang, who has spent 9 years in prison (not in Utah) wrote an article in 2022 for the Prison Journalism Project entitled "Inside, New Traditions Help Spark Old Holiday Joys." She describes how she works to create new holiday traditions during her incarceration, while maintaining some of her family's traditions.

Halloween. She describes Halloween as being the most difficult to keep old traditions, as she can no longer join her family in passing out candy, visiting haunted houses, carving pumpkins, and decorating their home.

In the prison where she is they can share candy between friends. She decorates her cell by displaying greeting cards she has received from her family from past Halloweens. She tries to watch Halloween movies. In her prison, they have a housing unit decorating contest and the winning unit enjoys a movie night in the gym.

Thanksgiving. Lexi writes how her family celebrates Thanksgiving by watching the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade on television and cooking and eating a good meal. She writes, "While I can't personally be with my family, I am there in spirit." Like so many prisoners, she writes of the joy she takes in sending her family Thanksgiving cards and conveying her feelings and sentiments to them.

For new Thanksgiving traditions, she writes that she

Couple of Smiles and Maybe a Laugh Where do you buy a Christmas gift for your pet pig? Hamazon ~~ What's red, white, and blue at Christmas? A sad candy cane ~~Who is never hungry on Christmas Day? The turkey, it's stuffed. ~~ How many gifts can Santa fit in an empty sack? Just one. After that, it's not empty.

Thanksgiving and Christmas are Great, New Year's Day a New Beginning. Keep that Proper Attitude, stay Cool. Ed.

"December is a time to reflect on the blessings of the past year and to embrace the opportunities of the coming one." Oprah Winfrey

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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

buys a can of Bluebird orange juice off commissary to have Thanksgiving morning. She states, "It costs \$1.20 per can, so it is a very special drink that I don't have often. As I slowly sip the ice-cold orange juice, I reflect on what I am thankful for."

She is thankful that she has a TV, so she can still watch Macy's Parade, and watches the same time as her family does. She finds a sense of connection, peace and joy knowing they are watching at the same time.

Her prison provides a good Thanksgiving Day meal that sounds better than some. For this, she writes that she feels "truly grateful because there are plenty of people in the world who can't afford such a meal."

Christmas. Lexi shares memories of helping to decorate for Christmas and driving around looking at decorations. She decorates her cell with snowflakes made from paper. She has some Christmas pop-up cards she received in the past that she sets out. She makes red and green paper garlands they are allowed to hang in their cells.

She again purchases the costly can of orange juice for Christmas morning and spends most of the day watching Christmas movies and is happy when her favorites come on. The prison serves a Christmas meal that sounds delicious by most prison standards: turkey, ham, yams, stuffing, green beans, rolls, cranberry sauce, and pie.

She writes that adapting to some traditions and creating new ones helps her get through the holidays and find ways to bring herself some joy.

<https://prisonjournalismproject.org/2022/11/23/how-i-adapted-holiday-traditions-prison/>

UPAN is interested in collecting some stories about how you have created new traditions to find some joy in holidays throughout the year (pick one or all), despite being in prison. Please send your stories to UPAN - Stories, PO Box 464 , Draper, UT 84020