



CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES

VULNERBLE PEOPLE ARE SUBJECT TO DIMINISHED HEALTH AND DISABILITY IN THE EVENT OF ECONOMIC DOWNTURNS

There are effective evidence based programs that prevent diminished health of people with disabilities exiting the criminal justice system during economic downturns.

A forum was held by the Urban Institute on “Help Wanted: Mitigating the Recession’s Toll on the People Most at Risk”. Presenters at the forum were staff from the Urban Institute, a labor economist, and researchers on economic condition of the elderly and an advocate for incarcerated persons attempting to gain self-sufficiency after release.

Summary

One third of incarcerated people have physical or mental impairments and half have substance abuse problems. In addition, long sentences contribute to diminished health through chronic health conditions that result in disability. The median age of entry into the prison system is 17 with more than one-third associated with the juvenile justice system. Half of the prisoners had barriers to overcome to receive training for self-sufficient life in the community. In addition, people with disability have additional barriers of generalizing skills for self-sufficiency in the community.

Disability Prevention Issue

Two-thirds of released prisoners rely on family and friends for their subsistence. There are effective evidence based programs that can prevent diminished health and disability and secondary disabling conditions and prevent recidivism. However, these evidence based practices are utilized for prisoners with disabilities in only 5% of the cases. Thus, effective evidence based protocols may facilitate re-entry of incarcerated vulnerable people with good health into the community and prevent recidivism. There are better options for released incarcerated vulnerable persons than reliance of families and friends, who may have, in part, be compliant for incarceration conditions in the first place

Intervention

A letter was sent to the author of a research paper concerning provisions for assistance and supports for basic human services to prevent diminished health and disability of released prisoners.

Recommendation

Incarcerated people with disability should be provided with effective medical care, health promotion and education to maximize health to prevent potential recidivism.