

CHCF CHIP Summary

Name, Degree: Shira Shavit, MD

Professional Title, Organization: Executive Director, Transitions Clinic Network, Clinical Professor Family & Community Medicine, UCSF

CHIP Title: Building a System of Care Between Prison and Community Health Systems

Project Description:

People returning from incarceration face a myriad of health inequities, including increased emergency department utilization, hospitalization and death. In the first 2 weeks post release, people are 12 times more likely to die than their community counterparts from health conditions that could be treated in the primary care setting (including SUD, cardiovascular disease, mental illness and cancer).

Transitions Clinic Network has 21 affiliated FQHCs in 14 counties across California that have special programs to care for people returning from incarceration. However, no organized system of care coordination exists between state prisons and primary care systems. This CHIP project aimed to leverage the TCN network and existing relationships with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to create an organized system of continuity of care between state prison and community health systems.

By late spring 2020, COVID-19 was spreading like wildfire across state prisons due to congregate housing and cramped conditions. By fall of 2020, incarcerated people were 5 times more likely to contract COVID. Under community pressure, California state prison officials sought to release tens of thousands of people early to slow the spread of COVID-19 necessitating the immediate creation of care coordination systems.

Key Findings and Lessons Learned:

- Successful collaboration between TCN sites and CDCR to facilitate care coordination from prisons statewide in April 2020.
- Online referral platform created to allow for direct referrals pre-release from CDCR nurses to TCN clinics. 5,000 direct referrals from prison made to primary care clinics statewide (TCN affiliate and non-affiliated sites).
- Reentry Hotline created by TCN CHWs to allow for direct line of communication from incarcerated people/recently release people to TCN CHWs statewide. Over 1200 hotline calls received.
- Funding secured (\$ 475,000) through Returning Home Well Initiative (Office of the Governor), Molina Care Foundation, California Health Care Foundation.

Next Steps:

- Improve show rates at community clinics by increasing engagement with CHWs pre-release.
- Enhance systems for data collection and quality improvement efforts across carceral and primary care systems.
- Leverage CalAIM Reentry to support dissemination and sustainability of model.