

PRISON MEDICAID BILL: TALKING POINTS

In Illinois, Medicaid benefits are terminated upon entry to prison or jail. The Department of Corrections pays for medical and mental healthcare services provided to individuals during incarceration.

- a. Eligibility determinations frequently take a significant amount of time, and by law, the process can extend as long as 90 days during which former prisoners go without medications and therapy.
- b. Without access to services, individuals leaving prisons and jails cannot get the medical care and social services they need to establish stability in the community which can frequently lead to homelessness and return to criminal activity.
- c. Approximately 8-16 percent of all jail detainees have a severe mental illness.
- d. Prisoners are two to four times more likely to be schizophrenic, depressed, bipolar, or suffering from post traumatic stress disorder than the general population.
- e. Of teens in juvenile detention centers, nearly 66% of boys and 75% of girls have at least one psychiatric disorder.
- f. 73% of mentally ill inmates also suffer from a co-occurring substance abuse disorder and 80% of all prisoners have a history of substance abuse.

The national recidivism rate is 66%. Studies have shown that states or counties where detainees with severe mental illness who had Medicaid upon release had about 16% fewer detentions over the following 12 months than those detainees with severe mental illness who did not have Medicaid at time of release.

Effective reentry policies save money and make better use of limited resources by establishing a more coordinated and comprehensive continuum of care and supervision.

A prison-bed costs an average of \$22,650 per year and the average time served is 19 months for technical violators and 31 months for releases convicted with new sentences

Even small reductions in recidivism rates will generate substantial cost-savings by avoiding more costly re-incarceration.

For example, according to research conducted by the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the net cost for cognitive skills training programs is approximately \$308 per person, while the net benefit, in terms of reductions in criminal justice expenditures and victims costs, is \$7,104 per person. Likewise, well-run prison industry programs cost around \$1,800 per person, while the net benefit is \$9,413.