



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Reentry Support in Illinois: State leaders, service providers, and community members
rediscover, reimagine, and rebuild equitable practices in criminal, health, and social justice**

CHICAGO, IL - On March 3, the 2022 Illinois Reentry Conference: Advancing Criminal, Health, and Social Justice kicks off online at 10:00am CST. More than 250 people have registered this year, representing leaders, community members, and activists in the fields of public health, healthcare, social services, and criminal justice. This annual conference is designed to build skillsets around health equity, social justice, and reentry services to support justice-involved individuals. This year's speakers will address topics such as health equity, social justice, the impact of COVID-19 on correctional facilities, decriminalizing HIV, trauma-informed care, and much more.

Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC), through its Community Reentry Project (CRP), hosts the Illinois Reentry Conference annually. CRP provides HIV health education to approximately 2,290 detainees in the Cook County Department of Corrections, assists approximately 600 formerly incarcerated individuals with obtaining legal identification, and distributes approximately 2,475 discharge planning packets annually, under PHIMC's direction. Additionally, CRP hosts a variety of networking and training opportunities for people with lived experience and professionals working in reentry, HIV, behavioral health, healthcare, corrections, and criminal justice. These opportunities include bimonthly statewide meetings, quarterly corrections discharge planning trainings, and annual Illinois Reentry Conferences, engaging more than 250 individuals each year.

For more than twenty years, CRP has provided a comprehensive system of HIV prevention, care, and support services to ensure people living with HIV or at risk of HIV transition smoothly from incarceration to communities. Initially known as Corrections Demonstration Project, CRP was founded in 1999 by Centers for Disease Control and Health Resources & Services Administration. In 2010, Illinois Department of Public Health granted funds to PHIMC to lead CRP.

Conference sessions this year include:

- Keynote by Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx, called *Healthy Communities Through Meaningful Opportunities for Release*
- Opening Plenary by Commissioner of the City of St. Louis Department of Health, Dr. Fredrick Echols
- *Reentry, Transition, and No-entry* by a team from Transforming Reentry Services/MWIPM
- *HIV Decriminalization* by Michael Maginn, HIV Prevention Director, HIV Prevention Lead Agent, Illinois Public Health Association
- *Mapping Your Future: Facilitating Reentry Through the Use of the Education Justice Project's Illinois Reentry Guide* by a team from Education Justice Project at University of Illinois
- *Program Driven Corrections: The Pathway to Successful Reentry* by Kenneth Osborne, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer - Programs, Illinois Department of Corrections

- *The Intersection of HIV, COVID-19, and Correctional Facilities* by Roslyn Taylor, PhD, Routine HIV Screening Program Manager, Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago
- *Reentry and Aging During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond: What Have We Learned and How Must We Do Better?* by panelists from Jane Addams Center for Social Policy and Research at University of Illinois Chicago and Acclivus, Inc.
- *Kept Away*, an artistic performance by LaWanda Jackson and Eric Sattersfield from Prison Performing Arts' Alumni Theatre Company
- *Community Reentry Project Champion Award Presentation*

“I continue to be blown away every year by this conference and the conversations provoked when we bring people into the same room, even a virtual room,” says Rashonda Johnson, Manager at PHIMC, who is in her fifth year of organizing the Illinois Reentry Conference. “People share their lived and professional experiences, what they’ve learned and what they hope for. We talk about equity and social justice. What we do together at this conference and beyond leads to stronger and more effective support and collaborations for formerly incarcerated individuals returning to their communities. I couldn't be prouder.”

The 2022 Illinois Reentry Conference is funded by Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and sponsored by ViiV Healthcare and HIV Care Connect.

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Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) enhances the capacity of public health and healthcare systems to promote health equity and expand access to services. Through organizational development, systems transformation, fiscal management, and program implementation, PHIMC leads efforts to strengthen public health infrastructure in Illinois.

Community Reentry Project (CRP) is a multi-stakeholder project that coordinates efforts to ensure that people living with and at highest risk for HIV transition smoothly from incarceration to communities. CRP facilitates a comprehensive system of HIV care and support services throughout Illinois. Partners include Cermak Health Services of Cook County and Transforming Reentry Services.