



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**2025 Illinois Reentry Conference for Health and Healing:
Navigating Reentry with Dignity, Support, and a Commitment to Health Justice**

CHICAGO, IL - On March 13, 2025 at 10 a.m. CST, the Illinois Reentry Conference kicks off, both at UIC Student Center West and online. More than 250 people have registered, representing leaders, community members, people who are justice-impacted, service providers, and advocates in the fields of public health, healthcare, social services, and criminal justice. Those gathered will explore the theme of Health and Healing: Navigating Reentry with Dignity, Support, and a Commitment to Health Justice.

This annual conference builds skills and creates space for conversation around health equity, social justice, and reentry services to support justice-impacted individuals. Plenary and breakout speakers will address topics such as social emotional learning, strategies for systemic change, how art reduces crime, wraparound support, eliminating permanent punishments, partnerships to address HIV/STIs, supporting justice-involved Medicaid members, creating a trauma-informed approach to being, living, and working with justice-involved people, and more. Creative artists who are justice-impacted will share a piece of their stories, and the day will culminate in the presentation of the Community Reentry Champion and Health Justice Legacy Awards.

Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC), through its Community Reentry Project (CRP), hosts the Illinois Reentry Conference annually. Through partnerships with Cermak Health Services and Transforming Reentry Services, CRP provides HIV health education to approximately 3,000 detainees in the Cook County Department of Corrections, assists approximately 800 formerly incarcerated individuals with obtaining legal identification, and distributes approximately 8,000 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 quarterly statewide meetings, quarterly corrections discharge planning trainings, and annual Illinois Reentry Conferences, engaging more than 300 individuals each year.

2025 Conference sessions on the mainstage include:

- *Transforming Reentry: Building Pathways to Health, Stability, and Opportunity*, Opening Plenary by Andre Peart (he/him), Founder/CEO of Untapped Solutions

- *Breaking Barriers: Addressing Resource Deficiencies Impacting Returning Citizens and How They Decrease Physical, Mental, and Financial Health of our Communities*, Afternoon Plenary Panel moderated by Vance White, Executive Director for School of Opulence, with panelists Marlon Chamberlain with the Illinois Coalition to End Permanent Punishments, Dr. La'Shawn Littrice of Make Noize for Change, Tony Lowery with the Safer Foundation, and Jeannette Webb with The Chicago Center for HIV Elimination at University of Chicago Medicine
- *To Cut a Barber's Hands, The Reunion, Damage, and Palm Angels*, a monologue, motivational speech, and songs by Anthony Spaulding, Derrick Loyd, and Rakeem A'Jahn Day Sr.
- *Community Reentry Project Champion and Legacy Awards Presentation*

Breakout Sessions will also be offered by presenters and facilitators from ACLU of Illinois, AIDS Foundation Chicago, Art from the Heart, Cara Collective, Central States SER, Cook County Health, Farming and Healing, Illinois Coalition to End Permanent Punishments, Institute for Nonviolence Chicago, Leading by Example – MS, Live Free Illinois, Phoenix Recovery Support Services, The Porchlight Collective SAP Greater STL Metro East Area, Untapped Solutions, and YWCA of McLean County:

- *Breaking the Chains: The Health Impacts of Permanent Punishments and Grassroots Strategies for Change*
- *Creating a Trauma-Informed Approach to Being, Living, and Working With Justice-Involved People*
- *Earning Your Name Back*
- *The Education of Reentry*
- *The Future of Reentry*
- *Healthy Return to the Community: CountyCare's Approach to Supporting Justice-Involved Medicaid Members*
- *How Art Can Foster Healing and Reduce Crime*
- *How to Offer Real Chances and Change the Narrative*
- *Identifying Crisis for Justice-Impacted People Once Returning Home*
- *Innovative Pathways to Decarceration: Strategies for Systemic Change*
- *Lived Experience Panel: Voices from the Reentry Journey*
- *Recovery Housing as a Catalyst for Reentry Success*
- *Resilience, Rights, and Resistance: Effective Strategies to Counter Increased Criminalization in Public Health and Policy*
- *Social Emotional Learning – A Tool for Improving Mental Health Among Justice Impacted Youth*
- *Sowing Seeds of Healing: The Role of Agriculture in Justice Reform*
- *Wiping the Slate Clean: Advocating for Automatic Record Clearance*

"At the Illinois Reentry Conference, we will engage in honest dialogue around the intersection of health justice and reentry, focusing on how to navigate the reentry process with dignity and unwavering support," says Brittany Spralls, PHIMC Community Reentry Project Manager and organizer of the conference. "This conference will challenge us to commit to creating pathways that foster healthier lives

and healing for individuals who are justice impacted, experiencing incarceration and returning to communities.”

The 2025 Illinois Reentry Conference is funded by Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and sponsored by Quattrro Business Support Services, HIV Care Connect, and Illinois Public Health Association.

For more information, please visit <https://phimc.org/initiatives/crp/illinois-reentry-conference/>

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Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) advances health justice and strengthens public health through innovation and partnerships that align people, strategies, and resources. Through organizational development, systems transformation, fiscal management, and program implementation, PHIMC leads efforts to ensure systems are compassionate, affirming, and racially equitable, supporting health and well-being for all people.

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.