



Session 22 | Care in Custody: Oversight of Correctional Health and Mental Health Care
August 31, 2020
3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. EDT

People in jails, prisons, and police lockups have significant health and mental health care needs. They have disparate rates of chronic medical problems, substance use disorders, and severe mental illness. A majority of people in jail and prison have at least one disability, impacting needs and how care is delivered. An increasingly older prison population leads to increased health issues. In addition to preexisting health issues and vulnerabilities, incarceration itself is a major health and mental health risk. Incarcerated individuals also often face fees for treatment, and at least 35 states collect medical copayments and other fees for medical services in jails and prisons. People held in custody have a right to quality health care that meets community standards, but the provision of care in a security setting and effective coordination between security and health present unique ethical and practical challenges.

Since providing quality health care is a primary and difficult function of jails and prisons, it must also be at the forefront of correctional oversight practice. Just as a correction system's security apparatus needs oversight, the health care system – whether provided by private contractor, the corrections agency itself, or an independent public health provider – demands effective independent oversight, too. Poor care is, unfortunately, a frequent topic of high-profile investigations and litigation. Ultimately, a lack of early intervention and quality medical treatment may lead to costlier care, both while the individual is incarcerated and when they return home. This panel will detail strategies for investigating, monitoring, and reporting on the quality of and access to correctional healthcare, including roles for clinicians and non-clinicians alike.

Speakers:

- Andrea Armstrong, JD, Professor of Law, Loyola University New Orleans, New Orleans, LA
- Robert Cohen, Board Member, New York City Board of Correction, New York, NY
- John Fabricus, Cohort Leader, Reframing Justice Project, Tucson, AZ
- Ronald Simpson-Bey, Director of Outreach and Alumni Engagement, Just Leadership USA, Phoenix, AZ

Moderator:

- Kate Horton, Ph.D., Director of Research for Health and Mental Health, N.Y.C. Board of Correction, New York, NY

Speaker Biographies

Andrea Armstrong | Andrea Armstrong is a Professor of Law at Loyola University New Orleans. Her research focuses on the constitutional dimensions of prisons and jails, specifically prison labor practices, the intersection of race and conditions of incarceration, and public oversight of detention facilities. She teaches in the related fields of constitutional law, criminal law, race and the law, and constitutional criminal procedure. Andrea Armstrong also serves on the board of the Capital Appeals Project and is a



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founding board member of the Promise of Justice Initiative, a new non-profit dedicated to abolishing the death penalty and advocating for prisoners' rights. She recently received a research fellowship from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to lift up the medical needs of directly impacted people by exploring medical treatment (or lack thereof) within prison walls, reviewing the transition services currently available to people in Louisiana, and evaluating the effectiveness of Louisiana's Medicaid expansion to include people with convictions.

Robert Cohen | Robert Cohen is a Board Member of the New York City Board of Correction, one of the oldest independent correctional oversight agencies in the country. The Board carries out independent oversight and enacts regulations to support safer, fairer, smaller, and more humane jails. Its regulations address conditions of confinement, health and mental health care, and sexual abuse prevention. Dr. Cohen also served as an expert witness in *Parsons v. Ryan*, a class action lawsuit in Arizona challenging years of inattention to the health needs of state prisoners and improper and excessive use of solitary confinement, resulting in serious harm and unnecessary deaths.

John Fabricius | John Fabricius works as a directly impacted advocate for criminal justice reform in Arizona and abroad. During the 15 years he served in the Arizona Department of Corrections, John earned a degree in Paralegal Studies and assisted numerous fellow incarcerated individuals in accessing the courts through civil rights and post-conviction relief claims. Upon his release in August 2018, John began his advocacy work with the American Friends Service Committee of Arizona. John serves as a cohort leader for the organization's ReFraming Justice Project, an initiative that challenges the narratives surrounding mass incarceration, re-entry, and policy/legislative change in Arizona. John is the lead author of "Truth in Corrections: Restoring Public Trust in the Arizona Department of Corrections," a proposal and framework outlining a Citizen's Advisory and Oversight Board. John worked closely with state lawmakers to craft oversight legislation that was proposed during the 2020 legislative session.

John created Info World Arizona, a website dedicated to sharing news and information in Arizona through the lens of the criminal justice system.

Kate Horton | Kate Horton is the Director of Research for Health and Mental Health at the New York City Board of Correction, where she leads the agency's efforts to investigate, monitor, and assess the Department of Correction and Correctional Health's compliance with the Board's Minimum Standards on Health and Mental Health in NYC's jails. Prior to joining the BOC, Kate completed her Ph.D. at the University of California, San Francisco. Her doctoral program was based in the specialty Health Policy program within the School of Nursing. Kate's graduate research was a critical ethnography examining the health and human rights of sex workers, and the intersections of criminalization, criminal justice, advocacy, and health. Kate was a member of the unique UC Criminal Justice and Health Consortium, where she drafted policy briefs as part of a multi-disciplinary research group focused on the health impacts of incarceration and criminal justice involvement. Before beginning her doctoral program, Kate worked as a nurse in the Neuro Trauma ICU at the Royal London Hospital.



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Ronald Simpson-Bey | Ronald D. Simpson-Bey is a national leader in the movement to decarcerate America and currently working as the Director of Outreach and Alumni Engagement for JustLeadershipUSA. He is also a 2015 LwC Fellow with JLUSA committed to cutting the national prison population in half by 2030. Ronald is also a contributing author to the book, *Smart Decarceration: Achieving Criminal Justice Transformation in the 21st Century*. Ronald serves as a board member for the National Legal Aid & Defender Association (NLADA); the board of the Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency (MCCD); a steering team member of the Michigan Collaborative to End Mass Incarceration (MI-CEMI) and Nation Outside organizations as well as a co-founder and advisory board member of the Chance for Life (CFL) organization in Detroit. He is an engaged, thoughtful, and creative leader, founding many enrichment programs rooted in transformation, redemption, and self-accountability. Ronald attended Eastern Michigan University, Mott Community College, and Jackson Community College. @BeySimpson, ronald@jlusa.org.



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