Prevention in Prison: San Quentin HCV Peer Health Education Program

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Centerforce’s mission is to support, educate and advocate for individuals, families and communities impacted by incarceration.
Centerforce’s History

- A leader in serving individuals with a history of incarceration—the reentry and realigned population— for nearly 40 years
- Provides evidenced-based programs that exemplify best practices in reentry today
- Founded in 1977 to provide shelter to family visiting men at San Quentin
- Programs have included prison visitor centers, transitional case management, family reunification, literacy programs, health programs, parenting education and teen mentoring
The Yellow House and our Oakland Headquarters
Other Current Programs

- **Centerforce Youth Court** – a diversion program for first-time youth offenders in Alameda County. Started in 1994 as the McCullum Youth Court, the CYC provides an alternative to juvenile court in a restorative justice and peer-based program.

- **Homeless Women’s Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Linkage to Services** – case management for homeless women in need of SUD services Alameda Count. Our SUD program provides gender-responsive services to the community’s most vulnerable women.

- **Healthy Measures** – pre-release services in the Alameda County’s Santa Rita Jail linking women and men to medical care post release. Healthy Measures assists people in jail in accessing community health services, often for the first time.

- **Healthy Marriage Responsible Fatherhood** – parenting education and coaching in San Quentin State Prison and in the community, in Contra Costa County. The Fatherhood Program provides support to parents contemplating reunion and couples-based support and family outings for improved relationships and family engagement.

- **Centerforce Women Empowered for Successful Transition (WEST)** – gender-responsive reentry case management to women reentering Contra Costa County from jail.
High risk individuals: injection drug users, poor, homeless

Concentrated in environment where high risk activity continues

Limited access to harm reduction tools

As a result, HCV prevalence rate of individuals with a history of incarceration is 9-27 times higher than the general population.

HCV Risk in Prison
Challenges to HCV Prevention and Treatment

Access to treatment – by budget if not by law

Lack of access to up to date information and resources

Lack of trust of medical providers
San Quentin Peer Health
HCV Program

Rooted in Centerforce’s 40 years of work in San Quentin

Based on earlier federally-funded HIV and HCV projects

Co-facilitated by “free” and prison-based Centerforce employees

Provided as a series of classes eligible for “good time” credits

Participants can join at any time
2017 NVHR Supported Activities

1. Free staff provided HCV Update/Refresher to new group of Peer Health Educators
2. Peer Health Educators recruited students to the 12-week class
3. Both Peer Health Educators and “students” leave as Peer Health Educators to the General Population
Liver Basics: functions, health, disease progression

Focus on viral hepatitis


Peer Educators give personal testimonials of how transmission may occur and how to engage in harm reduction education in prison
HEPARDY! – JEOPARDY-based Quiz Game
2017 Program Results

- High turnover and “lock-downs” challenged continuity and pre and post-assessments
- Classes engaged and racially diverse
- New Peer Health Educators empowered and energized – sharing the message
2018 Recruitment at Health Fair

- Health Fair “mini-classes”
- HIV focused
- Began with the ‘Live With It’ Episode about “Bobbie”
- Also discussed HCV and PrEP
- Huge uptake
Rolling series of Classes – participants may join at any time.

Each class begins with Intro to Peer Education; Cultural Humility and Harm Reduction Basics

Rotates through focus on HCV, HIV/PEP PrEP, etc. for 10 classes

Co-facilitated by “free” and Peer Staff for variety, credibility and accuracy
San Quentin Annual Health Fair
Richard “Razor” Johnson
THANKS!

For More Information or Questions:

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