

# A Look Into Healthcare Behind Bars

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Prisons are falling short of their constitutional duty of providing adequate healthcare to those in custody, resulting in many prisoners being in a constant state of illness. <sup>1</sup>



870 out of every 100,000 U.S. adult citizens are in prison or jail. <sup>2</sup>



From 2001 through 2014, approximately 3000 deaths occurred in US state prisons. The leading cause of those deaths were cancer, heart disease, liver disease, respiratory disease, suicide, and AIDS. <sup>3</sup>



**↓ 5 years**

The life expectancy in the United States has decreased by 5 years for those who are incarcerated. <sup>4</sup>

In some United States prisons, the staff to prisoner ratio is...

**1:100**

... which means that a single nurse is responsible for preparing and passing medications to at least 100 prisoners. <sup>1</sup>



The prevalence of hepatitis C in prisons is...

**17.4%**

... compared to the 2.0% prevalence in the general population. <sup>3</sup>



Compared to people who have never been incarcerated, current and former incarcerated individuals have significantly higher rates of: <sup>3</sup>

## Communicable diseases



Sexually transmitted infections, HIV, hepatitis C, and tuberculosis

## Chronic conditions



Hypertension, arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, and asthma

## Mental health disorders



Mental health conditions and substance use disorders

Prisoners in the United States are guaranteed a right to healthcare through the Supreme Court Decision *Estelle v. Gamble*, which was passed in 1976... yet they still receive inadequate healthcare. <sup>3</sup>



## The problems: <sup>4</sup>

- Limited resources
- Staff shortages
- Lack of funding
- Poor sanitation
- Inadequate healthcare facilities
- Increased costs



## The cure: <sup>5</sup>

- Increased staffing
- Increased funding
- Improved living conditions
- Education and resources for prisoners
- Establish minimum healthcare standards
- Higher quality screenings at intake

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