

California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) Justice-Involved Adults and Youth

The Issue

People who are now, or have spent time, in jails, youth correctional facilities, or prisons are at higher risk for injury and death than the general public. They face disproportionate risk of trauma, violence, overdose, and suicide.



Incarcerated individuals in California jails **under active care for mental health issues rose by 63 percent over the last decade.**



66 percent Californians in jail or prison have high or moderate need for substance use disorder treatment.



Overdose death rates are **more than 100 times higher in the two weeks after release from incarceration** than for the general population.



In California, **28.5 percent of incarcerated males are Black, while Black men make up only 5.6 percent of the state's total population.**

California is taking significant steps to address poor health outcomes among justice-involved individuals. Key to that is ensuring continuity of coverage after incarceration. At least 80 percent of justice-involved individuals are eligible for Medi-Cal. CalAIM has the potential to make a significant difference in the health of this population.

Faces of CalAIM: Meet Cameron

Cameron is completing his time in jail. He was formally diagnosed with bipolar disorder and is on medication to manage his condition. He will need care after he is released but is unsure what he needs to do to get it. Under CalAIM, Medi-Cal will extend services to Cameron prior to his release from county jail. He will work with a care manager and receive a physical and behavioral consultation to assess his health, social, and economic needs to prepare for a successful transition. Cameron's re-entry plan will include "warm handoffs" to behavioral health providers, medication, and other transition services. He will also be given 30 days of medications and any equipment or medical supplies he needs for a successful re-entry. Cameron will also have access to Community Supports, including housing and food supports so that he can improve his life trajectory.

Key CalAIM Initiatives to Improve the Health of Justice-Involved Individuals

CalAIM builds on Whole Person Care Pilots, Medication Assistance Treatment in criminal justice settings and community mental health services block-grant funding in county jails. These initiatives focus on ensuring continuity of coverage through Medi-Cal pre-release enrollment strategies and provide key services to support a successful re-entry into the community. CalAIM will build on existing requirements through new initiatives across jails, youth correctional facilities, and prisons that will:

- Ensure all eligible individuals are enrolled in Medi-Cal prior to release from county jails and youth correctional facilities by 2023 (this process is already in place in all state prisons).
- Engage with individuals who meet specific clinical criteria (e.g., pregnant or chronically ill, including behavioral health) in the 90 days prior to re-entry to stabilize their health, and to assess their health, social, and economic needs to prepare for a successful re-entry.
- Provide “warm handoffs” to health care providers to ensure that individuals who require behavioral and other health care services, medications, and other medical supplies (e.g., a wheelchair), have what they need upon re-entry.
- Offer intensive, community-based care coordination for individuals at re-entry, including through Enhanced Care Management.
- Make Community Supports (e.g., housing supports or food supports) available upon re-entry if offered by their managed care plan.
- Provide funding to build capacity for workforce, technology changes, data sharing, and infrastructure to support justice-involved initiatives.

California is one of a few states requesting federal authority (and federal matching funds) to provide these services that align with the Biden-Harris Administration and congressional priorities.

CalAIM's Positive Impact on Justice-Involved Individuals

The overwhelming majority of Medi-Cal individuals leaving jail and prison are people of color, often incarcerated due to inequitable treatment and stigmatization. Providing targeted pre-release services to Medi-Cal eligible individuals leaving incarceration will avoid unnecessary admissions to inpatient hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, nursing homes, and emergency departments. The justice-involved component of CalAIM will also help realize the goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act as affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court's 1999 Olmstead decision by strengthening community integration for individuals with mental illness and other disabilities.

CalAIM will allow California to address the unique and considerable health care needs of justice-involved individuals. It will help to improve health outcomes, deliver care more efficiently, and advance health equity across California.