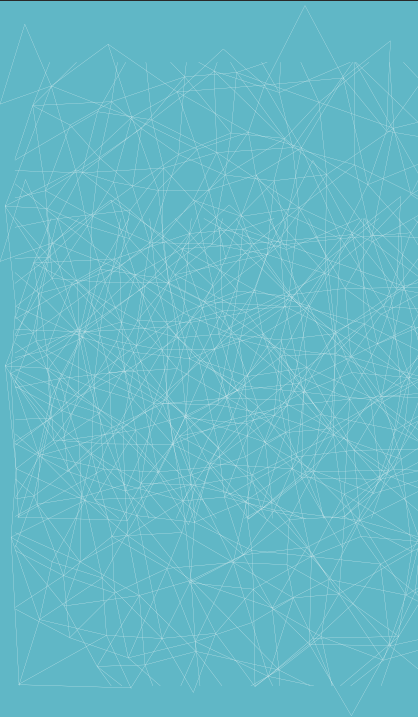


# PSYCHIATRIC NEEDS OF THE US INMATE POPULATION, OUR MOST UNDERSERVED POPULATION



**CFG RESIDENCY OUTREACH  
RESOURCE LIBRARY**

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**FOR MANY, IT WILL BE THE FIRST TIME  
RECEIVING A MENTAL HEALTH EVALUATION**

**By Ted Costa**

CFG Health Systems manages healthcare for the jail populations in over a dozen facilities throughout New Jersey and New York. Being the correctional healthcare branch of CFG Health Network, Health Systems provides medical, dental and mental health services to incarcerated individuals, an often underserved population. For many of the inmates that enter the system, it will be their first time ever receiving a mental health evaluation.

When I first took an educational tour hosted by the CFG Residency Outreach program and attended by Rutgers RWJ Psychiatric Residents, it was noted again how little access most people have to address mental health issues. Additionally, the stigma that society places on individuals with mental health issues is an added deterrent to access to care. I am surprised at how many Americans will go through their lifetime never dealing with this illness.

## CONTINUED...

For so many individuals in our correctional facilities, where those with mental illness end up, it is especially important that inmates are seen and treated with just as much care as one would receive in the community.

You'll hear it said by many healthcare providers within CFG - we see "patients" not "inmates". Inmates become patients when they cross the thresholds of the healthcare departments and with any encounter with health staff.

In my role at CFG, I was able to get a really good understanding of Essex County Jail in Newark, NJ. Led by Mental Health Director of Corrections, Dr. Dennis Sandrock, we were taken through the initial booking process which involved a mental health screening for all new intakes and evaluation for those with positive screenings. One of the greatest challenges within the jail system is the sheer volume of patients. It is important that each correctional facility has enough clinician-hours to fully cover services, so that every inmate can receive a thorough evaluation and treatment if necessary. From medication management to suicide prevention and crisis intervention, overseeing the mental health needs of inmates is a demanding job that requires full dedication to delivering the highest quality services to correctional facilities.

## 3 IMPORTANT MENTAL HEALTH STATISTICS REGARDING INMATES:

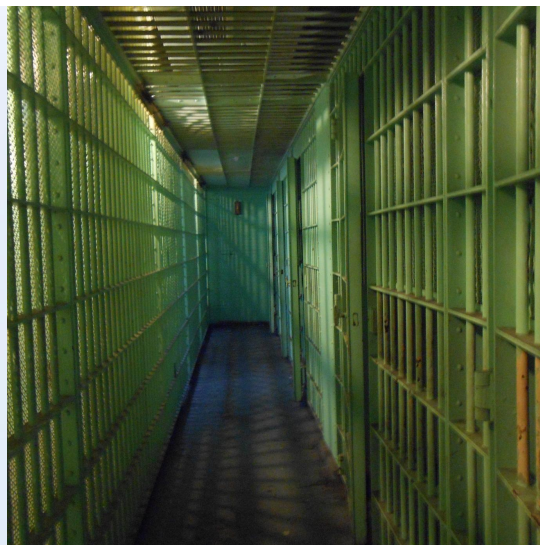
**1. According to one study, there are "more than three times more seriously mentally ill persons in jails and prisons than in hospitals."** This means that the largest population with mental health needs are actually within correctional facilities.

a. Torrey EF, Kennard AD, Eslinger D et al. More Mentally Ill Persons Are in Jails and Prisons than Hospitals: A Survey of the States (Arlington, Va.: Treatment Advocacy Center, 2010).

**2. In a jail, the average stay for a mentally ill inmate is longer than a non-mentally ill inmate.**

a. Jails and mental illness, Criminal Justice/Mental Health Consensus Project, [http://consensusproject.org/infocenter/factsheets/fafct\\_jails](http://consensusproject.org/infocenter/factsheets/fafct_jails), last accessed April 3, 2006.

**3. Up to 1/3 of inmates are estimated to have mental health issues, even if undiagnosed.**



**“THERE ARE MORE THAN THREE TIMES MORE SERIOUSLY MENTALLY ILL PERSONS IN JAILS AND PRISONS THAN IN HOSPITALS.”**

# THE NUMBER OF INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS AS A WHOLE IS STAGGERING



In America, the numbers of incarcerated individuals as a whole is staggering. Awareness of the needs of this underserved population that is within the system is a great starting point for where mental health providers can truly contribute to a dire need. Social workers, Nurses, APN's, Psychologists and Psychiatrists, etc. – all are important in the roles of treating the mental health needs of inmates.

For years, CFG Health Systems has come to the table to design and implement customized programs based on the specific needs, resources and operational characteristics of our clients. Every individual working within CFG Health Systems is part of making a difference in the lives of this underserved population of incarcerated individuals.

If you are a mental health clinician who wants to make a difference in an underserved community, I invite you to reach out to me. We can talk in-depth so you can determine if a rewarding healthcare career in Corrections could be a good fit. You might be surprised!

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**“ AWARENESS OF THE NEEDS OF THIS UNDERSERVED POPULATION THAT IS WITHIN THE SYSTEM IS A GREAT STARTING POINT FOR WHERE MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS CAN TRULY CONTRIBUTE TO A DIRE NEED. ”**