

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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(continued on next page)

HEPATITIS C UPDATE

Hepatitis C (HCV, Hep C) is a growing concern among prisoners in the United States. Many prisoners write to us about being diagnosed with Hep C and their problems with being refused treatment, or being told their infection doesn't require medication. In recent months we have seen a large increase in the number of letters for information about HCV from prisons all around the country.

Hepatitis is defined as inflammation of the liver, and when a vital organ like the liver is inflamed, it doesn't function as it should and your health can be dramatically impacted. Almost 4 million people living on the outside have Hepatitis C and it is estimated that between 14 and 16 percent of prisoners around the country are infected, and approximately 10,000 people a year die from the disease.

As many people know, the easiest way to get Hep C is through the sharing of needles, including tattoo equipment and works for injecting drugs. If you've shared injecting gear (such as cookers, cotton, or needles) any time in the past 10 years, there is a chance you could have contracted Hepatitis C. It is much less common, but possible, to transmit the virus through the sharing of razors or toothbrushes. Lastly, Hep C may be transmitted via sexual contact, and condom usage is always recommended when possible (using plastic wrap or baggies is better than nothing when condoms are unavailable).

According to the Centers for Disease Control, a Hep C diagnosis

requires two negative test results for Hepatitis A and B antibodies, and a positive test result for Hepatitis C antibodies. These tests don't measure liver function, and that, after all, is the critical information needed to measure your overall health.

If you test positive for the virus it is important to get as much information as you can from your health care provider, while paying special attention to the health of your liver (see below for information about maintaining a healthy liver). When available, there are a number of treatment options, many of which are not necessarily good for overall health.

The specific toxic effects of each medication used for Hep C will not be highlighted here, but it may be useful to know the names of the most common ones, with an understanding that there may be negative toxic effects associated with treatment. Alpha Interferon, pegylated Interferon, and Ribavirin are the most commonly used medications and they are sometimes given in combination. The two Interferons are injected and Ribavirin is taken orally.

Negative drug effects may include nausea, depression, headaches, fatigue, joint pain, and flu-like symptoms. These drug effects are very similar to the symptoms directly associated with actually having the Hepatitis C virus, so it may be hard to tell if you're getting better. Although controversial, some doctors believe that Interferon may do more harm than good.

Even though treatment for Hepatitis C in prison is often unavailable, you can still work to keep a healthy liver. Although difficult in prison, eating more healthfully can lessen the harm done to your liver. Eating too many carbohydrates may be damaging and vegetable (such as soy products) and dairy protein may be better for your liver than meat protein. Reducing the amount of alcohol you drink will directly benefit your liver and other organs such as the heart. All drugs are filtered through the liver and can be harmful to it whether they are prescription drugs or recreational drugs. Caffeine is also processed in the liver, so drinking less coffee, tea, and soda is also advisable.

If you work in the laundry room or a shop while you are in prison, minimize your contact with solvents (things like cleaning fluids, degreasers, and paint thinners). They are damaging to the liver even if you don't have Hep C. Finally, if you are able to take vitamins, a supplement without iron is best and you should avoid taking high doses of vitamins A and D. We Wish You Happy Holidays and Happy Livers!

Resources:

Hepatitis C Awareness Project
PO Box 41803
Eugene OR 97404

Hepatitis C Support Project
PO Box 427037
San Francisco CA 94142-7037

HIV/Hepatitis C in Prison
Committee/California Prison Focus
2940 16th Street, # 307
San Francisco CA 94103

Más hispanos nacidos en EE.UU.

Los hijos de inmigrantes hispanos nacidos en EE.UU. sobrepasarán a la población inmigrantes dentro de dos décadas, según un reporte del Pew Hispanic Center. El informe predijo que dentro de siete años, uno de cada nueve niños de edad escolar será hispano de segunda generación y estos niños contarán por la mitad del aumento en la población hispana, que subirá de 13 por ciento de la población total de EE.UU. o 35,3 millones de personas, a 18 por ciento, or 60,4 millones, en 2020.

Estos niños ganarán más que sus padres y obtendrán un nivel de educación más alto, pero no lograrán alcanzar los salarios promedios de la población angla.

Acusaciones de tráfico de bebés

Guatemala es el proveedor principal per cápita de niños para adopción en EE.UU., y se cree que entre un tercio y la mitad de estos niños son robados o llevados de sus madres de manera ilegal.

En los últimos años, Canadá, España, Irlanda y los Países Bajos suspendieron la adopción de niños guatemaltecos debido la situación. EE.UU. hace pruebas de ADN para asegurar que los niños que van a familias estadounidenses no son robados, pero los críticos dicen que esto no es suficiente. Las adopciones ahora es un negocio de unos \$50 millones al año. El año pasado 3.000 niños fueron adoptados. Las familias pagan alrededor de \$20.000 por adopción.

Coalition for Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

VOICES
FROM
INSIDE

since 1976



"WHERE'S THE JUSTICE?"

Corona CA

August 12, 20003

During my times of incarceration, I have met, lived with, and become very close to many women serving life sentences: women who have been repeatedly raped, starved, beaten, tied up and gagged like animals, threatened at gun or knife point and told that if they left, they and their loved ones would be killed. They are women who found a way to save themselves, their families, their children by standing up and fighting back. And now, once again, they're lost, forgotten and being held captive. Yet they are women who continue to strive to be peer helpers to others and try to make a positive difference in a negative place. They are women who committed their crime out of grave desperation for their own survival. These women are being denied parole...

SEND THEM IN

Rusk TX

October 22, 2003

I am currently litigating a suit in the US Northern District, Dallas Division [3:02-CV-00877(p)] concerning incoming legal mail that is open and read out of the prisoner addressee's presence and outgoing mail that is destroyed. I have also filed formal complaints with the Justice Department, the Prison and Jail Accountability Project of the ACLU in Austin and with the post office. To any and all other inmates experiencing these same problems: it is past time to stand up and be heard. Write your complaints out and send them in.

PRISON HEALTH SERVICE

Pittsburgh PA

October 24, 2003

I'm trying to be in contact with other prisoners in PA who have won civil suits against the medical department and health care provider, Prison Health Service. Contact: Sadot X. Williams, DQ3608, PO Box 99901, Pittsburgh PA 15233.

GOUGING

Appleton MN

October 25, 2003

The gouging of prisoners' families by charging exorbitant phone rates has been an on-going. Wisconsin officials insisted that the Sayre OK CCA "get in line" regarding phone rates there and AT&T demanded \$850,000 to buy out their contract. So CCA moved its 889 prisoners to Watonga OK, where they could control the phone rates, leaving the greedy Sayre officials with a huge budget deficit and 225 jobs lost.

Mailing list additions and address changes should go into effect within two months from their postmarked date. We don't have the resources to acknowledge these requests by letter. Requests for referrals and other correspondence will be answered within four to six weeks. Letters intended for publication must say "Do Print." If requesting responses, state whether you can receive mail directly from those imprisoned. The Coalition makes information available on resources and services for prisoners. We strongly urge that readers keep copies of all papers, especially legal papers, sent to those offering assistance, and be careful about sending money. In most cases we do not have direct experience with the quality or reliability of the services provided by the groups mentioned. NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS

THE VICTIMS WE ARE

Jarratt VA

October 27, 2003

The courts routinely victimize the poor and racial minorities by carelessly convicting the innocent, excessively punishing the guilty, perfunctorily reviewing convictions on appeal, and arbitrarily denying parole to qualified and deserving prisoners. We believe there is hope that sooner or later our society will evolve and do what is right by its erring members. We all have the ability for redemption and penitence. The abolition of parole and refusal to grant parole to those deserving conflicts with these fundamental beliefs. Our society owes a duty to redeem and make whole its victims: the prisoners.

SUBMIT

Susanville CA

October 29, 2003

Anyone housed at HDSP who fell victim to assault and sustained stabbing or other serious injuries as a result of prison guards' failure to provide safe conditions: submit signed affidavits stating the facts--be specific! Send to Federal District Court, Eastern District of California, 501 "I" St, Suite 4-200, Sacramento CA 95814. Case No. Civ. s-03-1980 MCE GGH-P.

UNPUBLISHED

Elizabeth City NC

November 3, 2003

Torture of disadvantaged people by police is by no means limited to convicts, detainees or even suspects. In *State v. Bartlett* (614 P02 (2003) (unpublished)), the North Carolina courts sanctioned the use of drugs, beatings and torture to change the testimony of key defense witnesses. Additional information: www.writeaprisoner.com/z-0693774.htm

FMI CONVENTION

Springville AL

November 4, 2003

Queen Sistah Roberta Franklin held a FMI convention in Montgomery AL in April, which was well attended by inmates' families, community leaders, and government officials. She solicited funds and hobbycraft items from inmates/families, and pocketed all the proceeds...



NUTRITIONAL AND MEDICAL NEEDS

Gatesville TX

November 4, 2003

Texas state prisons must now comply with state law requiring the prisoners' nutritional needs to be met before meals can be provided to staff and guards. Employees should now be served the same food and portion size as prisoners. See Administrative Directive 5.05, available in Texas prison law libraries.

Texas prison officials are now re-claiming and re-issuing medications that were provided to terminally ill, sick, dead, and dying prisoners. They are repackaged, relabeled and re-issued to others who have no knowledge over how the meds might have been handled. This violates the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetics Act as well as sec. 431.021 (w) of the Texas Food, Drug, and Cosmetics Act. Complaints may be filed with: Texas Health Department, 1100 W 49 St, Austin TX 78756.

ANOTHER GOODIE

Michigan City IN

November 12, 2003

Indiana's new DNA testing procedure IND. CODE 35-38-7-5 merged with PCR Rule 1 Sec.1(d) (SHEPARD, CJ Dec 21, 2001) works to get you a 2nd round of post conviction litigation if you meet the standard of *Williams v. State*, 791 NE 2d 193, 195 (IND 2003). This approach has been held by the Court as a PCR procedure; you must argue the TEAGUE Rule applies if you have had a PCR and lost; once in, however, asking for DNA tests alone, you can amend in claims you didn't previously argue as a matter of right. PCR Rule 1, Sec.4(c). I know; I did it.

R.I.P.

Westville IN

November 14, 2003

We have been petitioning for better treatment of patients in the Indiana prison system. We encourage prisoners to think before getting that jailhouse tattoo that means little to nothing but can cause death at an early age. In September 2003, Robert E. Gallant, Jr., 45, passed away--the past president of Indiana Advocates and the Westville chapter of the Jailhouse Lawyers Association. He had a chronic HCV infection caused by a jailhouse tattoo received 20 years ago...

NEWSLETTER

Green Bay WI

November 17, 2003

Muslims: submit political articles, poetry, and art work. We are attempting to establish an Islamic political newsletter. Submissions will be considered for publication based on the best political content. Mail all work to either: Jason Ludkg, 351644 or Darrell Broadnax, 330473 at GBCI, PO Box 19033, Green Bay WI 54307.



VOICES IN SOLIDARITY

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY ACTION, DECEMBER 10: BRING OUR PRISONERS HOME

Main messages: Abolish 3 Strikes, End illegal no parole policies, Institute and expand compassionate release, Stop the revolving door, Stop discrimination against former prisoners. Different organizations are staging different actions in cities across California on December 10. We need your help. Our work happens best when we are able to pool the energy of women inside with women outside. Contact us at: CA Coalition for Women Prisoners, 1540 Market St, #490, San Francisco CA 94102, Attn: Sisters Speak.

COMMITTEE ON PRISON ACCOUNTABILITY (COPA) - Center of Justice

COPA has reorganized and still advocates: help for families of those incarcerated, abolition of for-profit prisons, opposition to sales tax on prison commissary purchases, support for lowering the rate of incarceration. Conditions at the privately run San Miguel jail in Las Vegas are a current focus of concern. We would like to hear from our friends and supporters. PO Box 80243, Albuquerque NM 87198.

THE UNSUNG HEROS

"We save million-dollar homes for a dollar an hour. You get to help people. It's better doing this than being locked up," said one of the 2,150 or so prisoner firefighters in California in early November. The forestry department commented: "We wouldn't be halif the fire department we are now without them."

HISTORY REPEATS

"The determination of our president to prosecute the war, and the probability of his success in wringing from the people men and money to carry it on, is made evident, rather than doubtful, by the puny opposition arrayed against him. No politician of any considerable distinction or eminence seems willing to hazard his popularity with his party by an open and unqualified disapprobation of the war. None seem willing to take their stand for peace at all risks; and all seem willing that the war should be carried on, in some form or other."

--Frederick Douglass, on the Mexican-American war, January 21, 1848

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Crime of the Month

aka Crimetoppers

The Grinch stole Christmas from the Whos, which made no sense.
but he regretted his actions, and he made amends.

There is a prison in Cuba, 600 beds.
The U.\$. runs this jail, but IT has no regrets.

Even though the prisoners there are without a right,
No lawyer, no hearing, they are held out of sight.

They are questioned and tortured, not allowed to sleep.
No protest is permitted, not even a peep.

These prisoners are held without a breath of freedom.
We don't know who they are. We don't know where they're from.

We know there are children there, we know there are men.
But we do not know when this travesty will end.

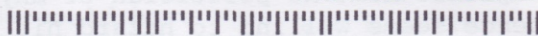
In this, the month of good cheer and gift wrapping,
our government's crimes: child abuse and kidnapping.



12/03

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