



National Commission on
Correctional Health Care

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National Correctional Health Care Providers Convene for Suicide Prevention Summit

(Chicago) – Representatives from five national providers of correctional health care came together for a day of discussion and problem-solving in the shared interest of preventing suicide in jails and prisons.

At the invitation of the National Commission on Correctional Health Care, senior staff from Corizon Health, Correct Care Solutions, MHM Services/Centurion, NaphCare and Wexford Health Sources met in Chicago for a daylong summit on suicide prevention.

Suicide continues to be a leading cause of death in jails and prisons. Compared to the national community suicide rate, the rate among incarcerated individuals is alarmingly high. These deaths are tragic and highly traumatic not only for the person's loved ones, but also for facility staff, health professionals and other inmates. Many are preventable.

The August 30 meeting was convened by NCCHC as a unique opportunity to bring together national experts from the largest private providers of health care services to jails and prisons. The participants examined the issues surrounding suicide, shared challenges faced in their facilities and approaches that have been helpful, brainstormed possible process and training improvements, and discussed other ways to keep suicidal inmates safe.

"The five companies represented at the summit are battling the same things," said Brent Gibson, MD, CCHP-P, chief health officer for NCCHC. "Collectively, they provide care to a huge number of patients. It was incredible to see these individuals work together to develop solutions to share with the correctional health care community."

The meeting began with a presentation by Lindsay Hayes, MS, director of jail suicide prevention and liability reduction at the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives. Mr. Hayes, widely regarded as the nation's foremost experts on the topic, presented his "Guiding Principles to Suicide Prevention in Correctional Facilities."

The day ended with several proposals for possible components of a national response and a commitment to ongoing conversation, starting with a meeting at NCCHC's National Conference on Correctional Health Care in November. Ideas to be explored include improvements in data collection and analysis, suicide screening tools, psychological autopsies, suicide watch protocols, training for mental health professionals and corrections/security staff, communication among staff, use of electronic health records and continuous quality improvement.

"The work you have done here today demonstrates your commitment to saving lives," NCCHC CEO James Pavletich, MHA, CAE, told the participants. "Your correctional health care colleagues—and the nation's inmate-patients—will benefit tremendously from this work."

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About the National Commission on Correctional Health Care

NCCHC is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization working to improve the quality of care in our nation's jails, prisons, and juvenile detention and confinement facilities. NCCHC establishes standards for health services in correctional facilities; operates a voluntary accreditation program for institutions that meet these standards; produces and disseminates resource publications; conducts educational trainings and conferences; and offers a certification program for correctional health professionals. NCCHC is supported by the major national organizations representing the fields of health, law and corrections. Each of these organizations has named a representative to the NCCHC Board of Directors.

NCCHC Supporting Organizations

Academy of Correctional Health Professionals, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of PAs, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law, American Bar Association, American College of Correctional Physicians, American College of Emergency Physicians, American College of Healthcare Executives, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American College of Physicians, American College of Preventive Medicine, American Correctional Health Services Association, American Counseling Association, American Dental Association, American Health Information Management Association, American Jail Association, American Medical Association, American Nurses Association, American Osteopathic Association, American Pharmacists Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, American Public Health Association, American Society of Addiction Medicine, International Association for Correctional and Forensic Psychology, National Association of Counties, National Medical Association, National Partnership for Juvenile Services, National Sheriffs' Association, Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine