

# Good Prison Health is Good Community Health!

## Project UNSHACKLE'S Community Partnership in Chicago

In Chicago, Project UNSHACKLE is partnering with Men and Women In Prison Ministries, an organization dedicated to increasing awareness of HIV/AIDS and providing support to people in prison, their families and the community at large. With the assistance of the policy team at AIDS Foundation of Chicago, we are working to ensure access to condoms in the Illinois state prison system.

### Know the Issue

Condoms are a vital tool for health promotion and protection, yet only a handful of county jail and state prison systems ensure access for people behind the walls, including the state prison systems in Mississippi and Vermont, the District of Columbia, and in county jails in Los Angeles, New York City, Philadelphia, and San Francisco.

Our partnership is founded on the belief that good prison health is good community health. Providing condoms to people who are imprisoned is not a moral, social or a political issue; it is a health issue. We want our loved ones behind bars to have access to have access to the same tools that the rest of us use to protect our health and keep ourselves safe. Click here to read Rev. Doris Green's powerful testimony before the Illinois House on why condoms should be made available to all people in prison.



### Organizing to Win

In September, we will host our inaugural half-day community mobilization forum on the intersection of HIV and imprisonment in Chicago and nationwide. This event will provide space for open dialogue about the health concerns of who are living at the intersection of HIV and imprisonment – whether in prison themselves, or supporting loved ones behind bars and the role that access to condoms behind bars can play in keeping imprisoned individuals healthy.

Building from this half-day forum, we will take our work to the grassroots, educating and mobilizing community organizations throughout Chicago. Through community teach-ins, we will address hot topics around HIV and corrections; strategies for building community support to provide access condoms in prison; broader issues, such as the need to address the physical, spiritual and mental health issues people face through jail, prison, and reentry; and the particular needs of those most impacted by imprisonment, including young people, LGBTI communities, women, and people of color.

By uniting an informed and unified grassroots coalition, we will harness our collective power not only to pressure Illinois legislators to guarantee condom access behind bars, but also to mount future campaigns to ensure the health and well-being of all of our most vulnerable community members.

### Learn More

For more information on Project UNSHACKLE's work at the intersection of HIV and imprisonment, please go to <http://www.champnetwork.org/unshackle>.

For more information on Men and Women in Prison Ministries, please go to <http://mwipm.com/>.