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The Correctional Association of New York

FOUNDED 1844

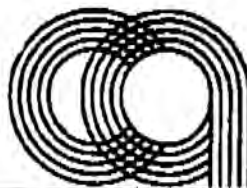
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FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION SHEET

TO:	Kristine M. Gebbie, AIDS Policy Coordinator		
AGENCY:	The White House		
DATE:	6/7/93	TIME:	12:00
FROM:	Nancy Mahon, Esq., Dir., AIDS in Prison Project		
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July 7, 1993

Kristine M. Gebbie
AIDS Policy Coordinator
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Ms. Gebbie:

I congratulate you on your selection to be Coordinator of AIDS Policy for the White House. AIDS is inevitably a national crisis, and the United States is sorely in need of a leader who can unite all communities in this fight against the disease.

It is my honor to invite you to be a keynote speaker at a conference which will unite one such community for the first time -- the First National AIDS in Prison Roundtable, which will be held in San Francisco, California on October 14 and 15, 1993. If your schedule allows, we would like you to speak on Thursday, October 15, at 9:15 a.m., for 15 to 30 minutes.

The AIDS in Prison Project of the Correctional Association of New York has been at the forefront of service, activism, policy-making and research on behalf of prisoners and former prisoners living with AIDS/HIV. In sponsoring the first national forum of this kind, the Project seeks to create a vigorous network among many different constituents working not only on the issue of AIDS/HIV in prisons and jails--but also on the relationship between AIDS/HIV in correctional institutions and in the communities to which prisoners return. Participants in the conference will include health care providers, correctional officials, substance abuse counselors, housing advocates, legal advocates, and former prisoners and their advocates. We expect some 250 participants from around the country as well as several dozen from other countries, including Canada, England, Australia and Spain.

Over the last twelve years, a rapid expansion of the prison population has combined with an increase in chronically, acutely and terminally ill inmates to place correctional institutions among the largest health care providers in the country. In New York State, correctional officials conservatively estimate that 8,000 state prisoners are living with HIV, of which 1,500 are symptomatic. Twenty-six percent of women and 16% of men held in New York City jails are HIV-positive, totaling approximately 2,000 men and 400 women at any given time. The AIDS crisis in New York prisons serves as a potent precursor of the course of the epidemic in

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Kristine M. Gebbie
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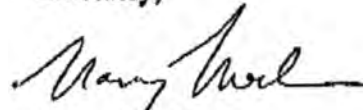
correctional facilities nationwide. Nationally, the number of AIDS cases in prison and jails increased 606% between 1985 and 1989, according to the National Institute of Justice. Based on a CDC study and on our own data, at the AIDS in Prison Project we estimate that 50,000 people are currently living with AIDS/HIV behind bars in this country.

The National Roundtable will bring together leading experts from around the nation and provide them with a forum in which to share and augment their own knowledge, and to educate participants on the latest research, policy and innovations. Through informative panels, skill-building workshops, and regional round-ups, advocates and correctional officials -- often too overwhelmed to do more than attend to urgent local needs -- will have a rare opportunity to learn from the experiences of their counterparts from around the country and beyond its borders. As a speaker and participant at the International AIDS Conference in Berlin, I can attest to the power of such a forum both to educate and to inspire renewed efforts and collaborations.

As the voice of this Administration in matters of AIDS policy, your contribution to the Roundtable would be invaluable. Your presence would also focus much-needed national attention on the critical issue of AIDS/HIV both in prison and in the communities to which prisoners return.

I enclose a brief summary of the work of the AIDS in Prison Project. If a time other than 9:15 a.m. on October 15 would be more convenient for you, then we will gladly arrange the Roundtable schedule accordingly. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Nancy Mahon, Esq.
Director,
AIDS in Prison Project

**AIDS IN PRISON PROJECT
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CONTACT: Nancy Mahon, Esq., Project Director

Project Summary

The Correctional Association

The Correctional Association has been performing policy and research work on behalf of prisoners and former prisoners since 1844. In 1846 it received a legislative mandate to report on prison conditions in New York State. In establishing the AIDS in Prison Project in 1986, the Correctional Association was one of the first organizations to recognize that prisons and jails were epicenters of HIV seroconversion and disease.

Population Served

State correctional officials conservatively estimate that 8,000 inmates out of a prison population of approximately 63,000 are living with HIV, and over 1,500 are combatting full-blown AIDS. In New York City jails, the rate of seropositivity ranges from 16% of men to 26% among women inmates. The vast majority of prisoners living with HIV survive their terms and return to their communities.

Community Served

In this state, more than 80% of inmates return to the poorest neighborhoods of New York City. Many of these people find a primary source of health care in correctional institutions. Prisons and jails are not responding adequately either to the needs of inmates living with HIV, or to the opportunity presented for comprehensive AIDS/HIV and health education of this high-risk population. The AIDS in Prison Project looks toward a time when former prisoners return to their families and communities linked to adequate health care and educated in HIV-prevention, testing, treatment and illness management. By providing prisoners and former prisoners access to this information and these services and skills, the Project seeks to have an impact on the course of HIV in New York's most troubled communities.

Program Description

The AIDS in Prison Project encompasses five complementary components.

- **AIDS/HIV Clearinghouse**

In the closed institution of a prison or jail, even very motivated individuals face enormous obstacles in obtaining information on AIDS/HIV prevention, treatment, and resources. In response to the urgent need for a single, comprehensive source of such information, the AIDS in Prison Project established the first **AIDS/HIV Clearinghouse** for prisoners and former prisoners in January 1992. Clearinghouse staff and volunteers respond to written inquiries from prisoners, former prisoners, their advocates and friends with free copies from its library of over 200 pieces of AIDS/HIV informational materials. To reach an even greater number of clients, in August 1992 the AIDS in Prison Project instituted a tollfree **AIDS/HIV Hotline**. By arrangement with the Department of Correctional Services, inmates of New York State prisons have been granted access to the Hotline, which is staffed by English- or Spanish-speaking volunteers, the majority of whom are former prisoners living with AIDS/HIV. Discharge planning has been the number one concern of calls and letters to the Clearinghouse: 25% seek information on preparing for a life after prison. Through calls, letters, and visits to prisons, the Clearinghouse in its first year of operation served 2,000 clients. Over the coming year, the Project will continue to expand the work of the Clearinghouse, both in terms of the range of information and services offered as well as in the number of clients served.

- **The Alliance for Inmates with AIDS (ALLIA)**

ALLIA is a national grassroots coalition committed to addressing the needs of prisoners and former prisoners living with AIDS/HIV. Formed under the leadership of the AIDS in Prison Project in 1991, ALLIA embraces over 350 individual members and 100 organizations from all over the country, drawing its membership from churches, hospitals, drug treatment centers, housing organizations, legal clinics, activist organizations and groups representing the interests of women, African-Americans, Latinos and the homeless.

Monthly ALLIA meetings alternate between skill-building workshops focused on the nuts-and-bolts of responding to client need, such as federal entitlements and access to clinical trials, and discussions of systemic problems affecting members' clients in and out of correctional systems, including compassionate release and HIV testing policies. In addition, ALLIA sponsors teach-ins and forums, which draw individuals from state and federal agencies as well as

community-based organizations. ALLIA has held two Regional AIDS in Prison Conferences, the first in March, 1992 and the second in May, 1993. Each was attended by over 150 people. The Project will sponsor the First National AIDS in Prison Roundtable in October, 1993 in San Francisco.

In response to an urgent need for an informational source integrating the State's myriad public officials, service providers and advocates working on the issue of AIDS/HIV in prison, ALLIA members, through the work of the AIDS in Prison Project staff, produced in May of 1993 a *Directory of Programs and Resources for Prisoners and Former Prisoners Living with AIDS/HIV in New York State*. In June of 1993 ALLIA will produce a *Manual of Discharge Planning Services*, which will be both a comprehensive guide to available services and a primer on how to obtain federal entitlements and other resources to meet client needs. In an effort to extend the achievements of ALLIA's largely regional network to the national level, the AIDS in Prison Project in May of 1993 began publication of a quarterly *National Newsletter*.

- **Research**

Recognizing that, compared to other communities at high risk for HIV-transmission, prisoners and former prisoners have received scant attention, the AIDS in Prison Project has embarked on several research projects committed to illuminating the experiences and needs of this population. At the 1993 International AIDS Conference in Berlin, Project staff orally presented a study of barriers to TB prevention and care for prisoners and former prisoners in New York City, a comparison of the HIV-related and non-HIV-related needs of HIV-infected prisoners, and an examination of strategies for AIDS/HIV education in the context of incarceration. In the first edition of its *National Newsletter*, the Project published a survey of correctional policies for compassionate release of the terminally ill prisoner in jurisdictions around the country. In the summer of 1993, the Project will conduct a study of high-risk sexual behavior on both sides of the prison walls. In the spring of 1994, the Project hopes to embark upon a study of prison health care delivery through the lens of AIDS/HIV.

- **Policy and Advocacy**

The Project's policy and advocacy branch has existed since the Project's inception in 1986. Since January, 1992, the Project's energies have focused on (1) discharge planning -- the link between penal and community health care; (2) the TB epidemic, and (3) the effective implementation of medical parole. The Project's current work on TB entails evaluating TB

education and care in prisons and jails, monitoring the actions taken by the City and State to address the disease, and producing reports on TB and its impact on prisoners and parolees. Seeking to ensure full implementation of New York's medical parole law, the Project sponsors panel discussions -- involving, among others, administering State officials, distributes synopses of the law in English and Spanish to prisoners and their families, and monitors the progress of the law's administration. Since the law was enacted in March, 1992, only 9 prisoners have been released on medical parole, while in that same span, over 150 people died of AIDS-related causes in New York State prisons. During the upcoming legislative session, the AIDS in Prison Project will press for amendments to the law as well as increased agency accountability in the processing of applications. Finally, the Project will conduct letter-writing campaigns in response to legislative initiatives, such as a recent proposed bill in the State Legislature asking for mandatory HIV-antibody testing of all New York State prisoners.

- **Technical Assistance**

Because of its established state-wide role as well as its growing presence in the national and international communities of HIV/prison advocates, the AIDS in Prison Project offers substantive technical assistance to a wide range of clients, including community-based organizations and churches, prisoners seeking to establish AIDS/HIV support groups, defense attorneys who work with HIV-positive clients, as well as people who seek to perform advocacy in correctional systems outside the Project's purview, such as in county and local jails. The Project currently fulfills between 4 and 10 requests for technical assistance each week, responding to such questions as how to establish and conduct an HIV support group in prison, or how to obtain adequate medical treatment for detainees held in a country jail. Its accomplishments in this area are reflected, in essence, in the increased ability of other organizations and individuals to meet the needs of prisoners and former prisoners living with AIDS/HIV. This work is ongoing, and continues to be both stimulated and supported by the relationships the Project has developed with the members of the Alliance for Inmates with AIDS.