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## Health Care for the Formerly Incarcerated

**M**etroHealth Medical Center has established the Community Advocacy Program (CAP) at the MetroHealth Broadway Medical Center, located at 6835 Broadway Ave., and the program could have a significant impact on the quality of health care that is provided for formerly incarcerated individuals returning to Greater Cleveland. The program is part of an overall strategy developed by the Legal Aid Society to have an impact on at-risk populations. The Society provides services to clients in the population areas of pediatrics, youth, seniors, immigrants, and those returning from a period of incarceration. "The goal is holistic, and the program is designed to positively affect all aspects of the clients' lives, which includes legal and medical," said Anne Sowell,



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the manager for the Center for Community Health, which is assisting in managing the program. The program was funded by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson

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## "Second Chance Bill" Introduced in Ohio Legislature

Legislation would allow formerly incarcerated individuals the right to obtain professional licenses

**S**tate Representative Sandra Williams (D- 11th District) recently introduced House Bill 171, legislation that would stifle Ohio's professional boards and commissions' longtime practice of denying professional licenses to ex-offenders simply because of a felony or misdemeanor conviction. The bill is currently before the House Commerce and Labor committee.

Current law allows boards and

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— *State Rep. Sandra Williams, (D-11th District)*

commissions to deny a professional license for a variety of criminal acts, which may or may not be related

to their profession. The bill would change current law so that all citizens are regulated by the same standards for licensing. "House Bill 171 and similar reentry legislation is a step in the right direction," said Rep. Williams, "I believe that once an individual completes their sentence in Ohio, all rights should be restored."

The legislation contains four components. First, it prohibits boards

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**Health Care continued** Foundation, and additional funding was obtained from area law firms by Legal Aid lawyers.

Currently, the clinic is open every Monday from 8a.m. – 12:30 p.m., and serves patients with chronic health conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, kidney and liver diseases, cancer, asthma and related lung diseases, STD/HIV/AIDS, mental health disorders and other chronic health conditions.

Prisoners tend to have higher rates of chronic and infectious diseases and mental illness than individuals in the general population, according to the Urban Institute's April 2007 policy brief, "One Year Out: Experiences of Prisoners Returning to Cleveland." In the Cleveland study over half of the men interviewed reported being diagnosed with a chronic physical condition. Despite this, 79 percent of these men expressed positive opinions about their physical health shortly after release from prison. Health insurance was not available to most of the men one month after release and of the 16 percent that had coverage, half were under Medicare or Medicaid. A year after release the number of men with insurance had increased to only 27 percent.

The period immediately after an individual is released from prison can be critical and stressful in many ways. Many formerly incarcerated individuals run out of prescribed medication before they are able to see a doctor. However, individuals who utilize CAP services can address this problem by receiving medical care shortly after release from prison, so that needed medications can be prescribed and/or refilled before they run out.

MetroHealth financial counselors will work with

patients to see if they qualify for free (or reduced) health services and prescriptions.

**Individuals who want to participate in CAP should take the following documents to their first visit if they have been released within the last three months:**

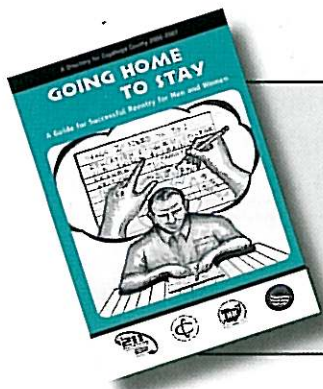
- a photo ID;
- a release letter from prison;
- persons residing in a shelter should bring a letter from a staff member stating they are a current resident; if they reside with a family member or friend they need to bring a notarized letter stating that the person is providing them with the "necessities of life."

**Persons who have been out of prison longer than three months should bring the following:**

- a photo ID;
- a notarized letter from a shelter or whoever is providing housing and/or support;
- a letter stating they receive food stamps; or proof they have filed an income tax return.

CAP patients will be able to visit a doctor, get a prescription filled if needed, pick a primary care doctor for ongoing medical care, and select a MetroHealth clinic close to where they reside.

**To schedule an appointment, individuals may call 216-957-1689, or for more information they can call Anne Sowell at 216-957-1718.**



To receive a copy of **Going Home to Stay** call First Call for Help at 216.436.2000 or go online and download a copy at: [www.211cleveland.org/pdfs/communityreentry.pdf](http://www.211cleveland.org/pdfs/communityreentry.pdf)