

New Medi-Cal Program Ensures Continuity of Care for Individuals Being Released from Incarceration

Health Equity

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California leads the way once again in spearheading efforts to improve health equity and outcomes for its population. Early last year, [Medi-Cal received federal approval](#) for its [Justice-Involved Reentry Initiative](#) (JIRI) which offers targeted services to address some of the most critical health care needs of Medi-Cal eligible individuals returning to their communities after incarceration. Among these services will be mental health and substance use disorder (SUD)-related care that will begin 90 days prior to an individual's release from custody. Effective October 1, 2024, the initial rollout of JIRI services will be available in 3 counties (Inyo, Santa Clara, and Yuba), but will expand to every California county by October 1, 2026. Given that a disproportionate percentage of the state's incarcerated population is comprised of racial and ethnic minorities, this program will have a particular impact on individuals who are most at risk for their health care needs not being adequately addressed post-release.