

9TH ANNUAL ACADEMIC & HEALTH POLICY CONFERENCE ON CORRECTIONAL HEALTH: ADVANCING THE FIELD OF ACADEMIC CRIMINAL JUSTICE HEALTH

The 9th Annual Academic & Health Policy Conference on Correctional Health in Baltimore, Maryland highlighted the positive impact of criminal justice and public health collaborations, successful community transition programs post release and how implementation science can improve inmate health care. The March 16-18 conference at the Grand - Embassy Suites Baltimore Inner Harbor was hosted by the Academic Consortium on Criminal Justice Health (ACCJH), which is supported by UMass Medical School, and co-hosted this year by George Mason University.

ACCJH is a pioneering membership organization comprised of key leaders engaged in criminal justice health research, health career training and clinical care systems. Its mission is to improve the care and outcomes of justice-involved individuals. Several ACCP members are on the board and ACCP contributes greatly to ACCJH either through participation, speakers, or exhibits.

Dr. Steven Belenko, PhD, kicked off this year's conference with his keynote address, "Creating and Sustaining Effective Corrections and Public Health Collaborations: Teaming Up to Improve Health Outcomes." Dr. Belenko, a professor in the Temple University Department of Criminal Justice and adjunct professor of Psychology in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Medicine, is a nationally recognized health researcher, with funded research and published works in the field of criminal justice health.

Dr. Shira Shavit and Dr. Emily Wang co-presented an inspirational plenary session, "Transitions Clinic Network: Transforming the Health System in Partnership with Justice Involved Individuals." Shira Shavit, MD, is executive director of the Transitions Clinic Network in San Francisco and associate clinical professor of Family and Community Medicine at the University of California in San Francisco; Emily Wang, MD, MAS, is the evaluation director and co-founder of the Transitions Clinic program and an associate professor of medicine at Yale University. Together, they co-founded the Transitions Clinic Network (TCN) which is now a national network of medical homes to transition care for individuals with chronic diseases recently released from prison and jail. Each clinic employs a community health worker with a history of incarceration and is located in communities most impacted by incarceration.

This year, co-host Faye Taxman, PhD, of George Mason University organized a special session featuring representatives from the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), "Panel on Federal Initiatives and Future Issues in Grants." The speakers included Erin Iturriaga, BS, MSN, program officer/clinical trials specialist, National Heart, Blood and Lung Institute; Denise Juliano-Bult,

MSW, program chief, Division of Services and Intervention Research, National Institute of Mental Health; Ruby Qazilbash, associate deputy director, Bureau of Justice Assistance, DOJ; and Tisha R. A. Wiley, PhD, Health Sciences administrator, Services Research Branch, NIDA. The panelists discussed the new initiatives and strategic directions of organizations that provide grants in criminal justice health.

The conference expanded this year to include a track on Implementation Science. Conference founder and co-chair Warren Ferguson, MD, a professor in Family Medicine and Community Health at UMass Medical School, was awarded a

four-year grant from NIDA and a three-year grant from the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality in 2016 to study treatments for substance abuse disorder and hepatitis C in four prison and jail systems in the United States. As the principal investigator, he helped to enlist correctional systems from across New England to participate in the conference's first Implementation Science

Track, which focused on medication-assisted substance abuse treatment for incarcerated individuals before and during the transition to release. Each correctional system sent a team of five participants to the conference who worked collaboratively throughout the three days, using the interdisciplinary team science approach while aiming to adopt evidence-based approaches.

"Delivering health care to justice-involved individuals, who often have complex medical and behavioral health conditions, can be a challenge for correctional administrators struggling under limited budgets and the rising costs of health care and prescriptions," Ferguson said. "Implementation science is a key method to adapting and adopting evidence-based treatments behind bars."

More than 230 people attended the conference, with 125 organizations, 31 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and three countries represented. The annual conference plays an important role in advancing the field of academic criminal justice health by bringing together researchers, clinicians, policymakers and trainees to network and learn from each other.

Through grants from NIDA and the Jacob and Valerie Langeloth Foundation, ACCJH supported tuition and housing for eight junior investigators and 10 student scholarship recipients.

The 2017 conference will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Academic and Health Policy Conference on Correctional Health and will take place on March 15-17 at the Atlanta Airport Marriott in Atlanta, Georgia. The Call for Papers is expected to open on June 15th and ACCJH is looking forward to a more formal collaboration with the ACCP over the coming year. ■

