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Morehouse School of Medicine Examines Prison Health

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In a brief titled, “Prison Health and the Health of the Public: Ties that Bind” by Community Voices, a national initiative located at the National Center for Primary Care at Morehouse School of Medicine, researchers reported that untreated illnesses and contagious diseases in a prison population can be exposed to entire communities. Many prisoners, of the estimated 2.2 million in prisons and jails, are plagued with HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, tuberculosis, diabetes, hypertension and asthma, as well as undiagnosed or untreated mental illnesses. The report cited that the rise of HIV cases among African American women is in correlation with the release of HIV-positive male prisoners. When they are released, former inmates struggle to re-integrate into society and are coping with meeting their basic needs like jobs and housing. More than likely they return to their low-income communities with no access to necessary health services: health care, mental health care and substance abuse treatment. Community Voices is working to seek innovative models, strategies, and solutions to address these issues. *For more information, visit communityvoices.org*