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## Exploring cancer health disparities among formerly incarcerated African Americans

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## Abstract

### *Exploring Cancer Health Disparities among Formerly Incarcerated African Americans*

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Incarcerated populations have a higher burden of chronic disease and elevated risk factors for cancer (BJS, 2012). In 2013, cancer (31%) and heart disease (26%) accounted for over half of all prisoner deaths. The Genomics Research Program of the National Cancer Institute's Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences (2016) identified incarcerated persons as an understudied population about which there is limited data regarding cancer risks and outcomes. A majority of studies on corrections populations focus on health issues associated with reduction of infectious diseases such as HIV, Tuberculosis, and Hepatitis. Scant research has been conducted on issues associated with cancer prevention and control among African Americans with a history of incarceration.

This qualitative, participatory, pilot research study explores the domains of cancer health disparities among African American men and women who were formerly incarcerated in Illinois prisons. Four qualitative focus groups will be conducted. The primary purpose of the focus groups is to collect and qualitatively analyze preliminary data on the barriers to access, utilization and treatment of cancer. This presentation seeks to: (1) describe the need for enhanced access to cancer care and treatment, (2) advocate for the inclusion of best practices in cancer care in corrections systems and, (3) identify policy recommendations and initiatives aimed at reducing cancer disparities among incarcerated and formerly incarcerated persons.