

# Vera Institute of Justice

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

**<https://www.vera.org/publications/on-life-support-public-health-in-the-age-of-mass-incarceration>**

## Policy Issue Resources

### Publication

Mass incarceration is one of the major public health challenges facing the United States, as the millions of people cycling through the courts, jails, and prisons every year experience far higher rates of chronic health problems, substance use, and mental illness than the general population. Mass incarceration's role as a driver of health disparities extends beyond prison walls as well, affecting the health of entire communities. This publication, the first in a series released as part of Vera's Justice Reform for Healthy Communities initiative, focuses on individual and community-level health impacts of incarceration with a focus on the relationship between mass incarceration and health disparities in communities of color and on opportunities presented by the Affordable Care Act.

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