

CURRENT STATE OF MEDICAID REENTRY IN NEW YORK

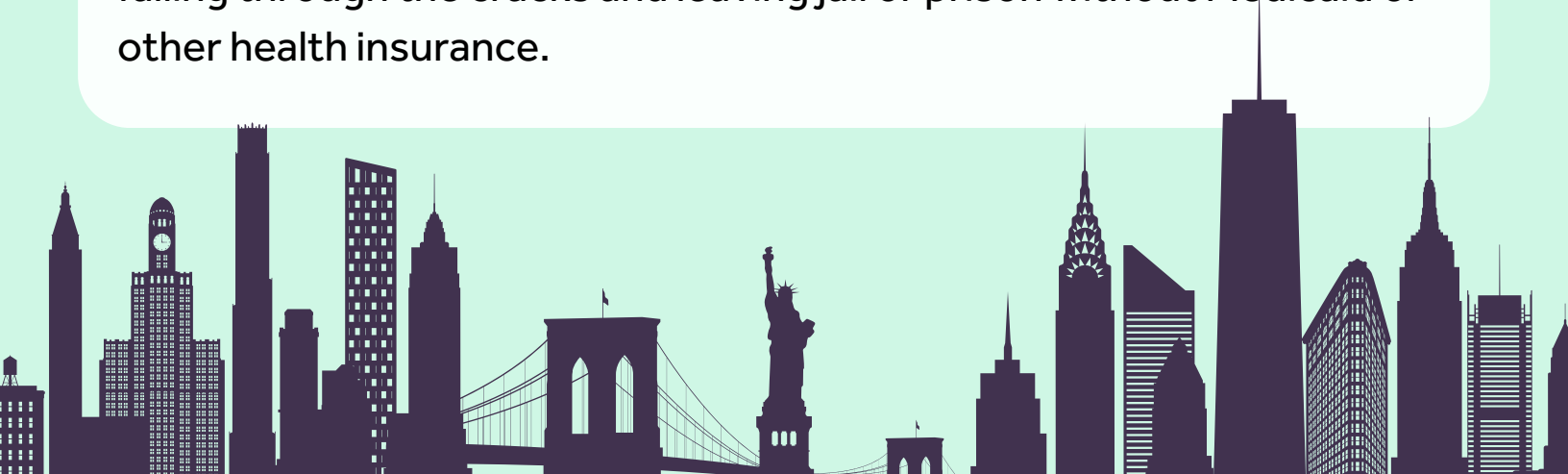


People involved in the criminal legal system at all stages including arrest, in jail or prison, and after release have significant health needs, with high rates of chronic health conditions, mental health conditions and substance use disorders. This is [especially true for Black and brown people and particularly women](#). People leaving incarceration are at an elevated risk of overdose, which is [particularly high in the first two weeks after release](#). It is critical to connect people to health services, including mental health (MH) and substance use disorder (SUD) services immediately upon release – ideally creating a continuum of care prior to release.



Medicaid Suspension and Re-enrollment

Federal law prohibits Medicaid from paying for care for anyone who is an “inmate of a public institution,” referred to as the Medicaid “inmate exclusion.” Since 2008, New York has been suspending Medicaid during periods of incarceration, and reactivating it at discharge. Other states terminate coverage, making it harder to re-enroll. But some people are falling through the cracks and leaving jail or prison without Medicaid or other health insurance.



Medicaid Coverage Before Release

The best way to limit delays and ensure a continuum in care for people leaving incarceration is for federal Medicaid dollars to begin paying for transitional health care services before people return to the community. This is now possible with the Medicaid 1115 Reentry Waiver that allows approved states to create a demonstration project where Medicaid coverage will be available for individuals prior to release from a jail or prison. As of April 2024, three states have had their applications approved; CA, MT, and WA, and 16 more have applications pending with Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). **New York must submit an application to CMS to begin utilizing this life-saving, health-promoting program.**

**Until
then...**

**Get
connected
to care
now!**

For people who find that their Medicaid is not active after reentering the community, there are steps to take to get it activated.

For those who were in Rikers Island:

Call the [Point of Reentry Transition \(PORT\) line](#). Staffed primarily by peers, PORTline operators will provide help with Medicaid activation, help accessing medication, and links to other social services. The number is 646-614-1000 (open Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm). Or contact your [Community Re-entry Assistance Network \(CRAN\)](#).

For everyone else:

Call the New York State of Health at 1-855-355-5777 or the Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) where you originally enrolled in Medicaid. Look it up: <https://bit.ly/NYSmedicaid>