

Evaluating Formerly Incarcerated Individuals' Perspectives on Re-entry Programs: A Single-Participant Longitudinal Qualitative Design.

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Introduction

Formerly incarcerated individuals face unique barriers during re-entry: housing, employment, healthcare access, and stigma. Recidivism is affected by offense type, substance use, and community support.

Researchers in the reentry fields have suggested that in the most effective reentry programs, recidivism extends well beyond the life outside of the prison as formerly incarcerated individuals go back to their regular life outside of incarceration. Qualitative insight from parolees can reveal gaps missed by system-level planning.

Aims and Objectives

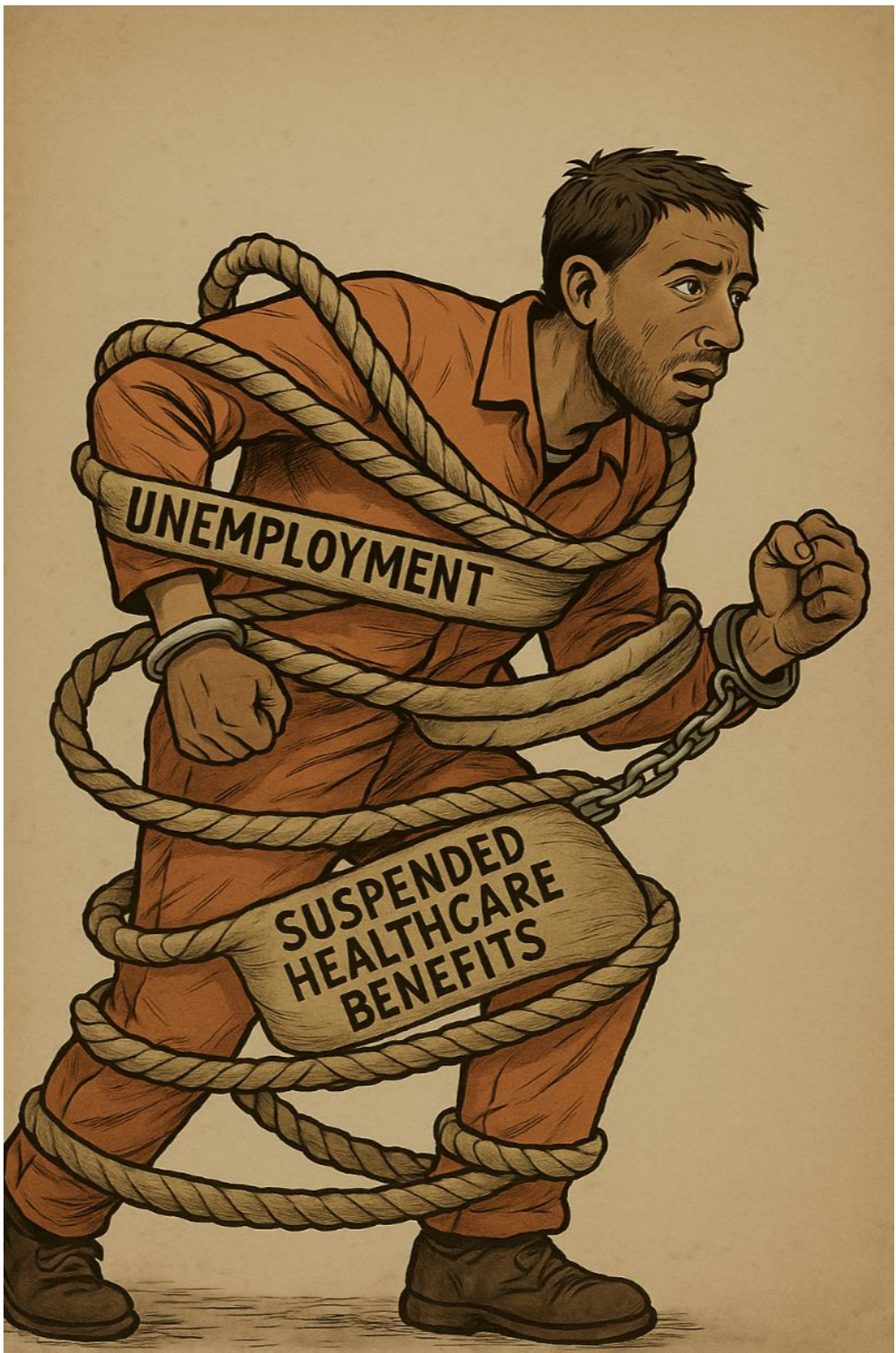
Aim: Explore perspectives of formerly incarcerated individuals on re-entry programs.

Objectives:

- Identify local obstacles for newly released individuals
- Describe barriers to seeking help (medical & non-medical)
- Inform local improvements to reduce recidivism and improve health outcomes

Methods

- **Design:** A 30-year-old male participant was interviewed twice, first in March 2024 shortly after release and again in May 2025 after more than a year in the community.
- **Recruitment:** Alliance of Coalitions for Healthy Communities (flyers, local outreach)
- **Eligibility:** ≥6 months incarceration within past 2 years; excludes certain sex offenses
- **Procedures:** ~30-minute semi-structured interviews focused on healthcare access, employment, housing stability, social support, and legal obligations (audio-recorded, de-identified transcripts)
- **Analysis:** Thematic analysis to identify emergent themes



Unemployment and suspended healthcare benefits illustration. Created by Paoula Choobchian (concept and design) using AI assistance, 2025.

Results

- Key themes from interviews (n=1 completed):
- **Support:** Family/spouse often primary supports; peers can be risky influences
 - **Employment:** Background checks and pending charges limit hiring even though the participant holds a masters degree in engineering
 - **Healthcare:** Medicaid lapses, medication continuity problems, and difficulty accessing mental health services
 - **Housing & finance:** Property damage, lost income, difficulty navigating benefits
 - **Ideal services:** Trauma-informed therapy, job & housing assistance, simpler healthcare reactivation

Representative pull-quote:
"I left jail with \$3.17... I wasn't given any paperwork when I was released."

Themes	March 2024	May 2025
Employment	Unemployed	Employed through second-change employers
Healthcare	Benefits suspended; unsafe meds	Still limited ADHD treatment/therapy
Support	Family reliance	Stronger relationships
Stability	Instable housing	Maintained housing

Conclusions

Re-entry services are fragmented and hard to navigate; continuity of care often fails at release. Some of the ways to bridge the gaps in society for previously incarcerated individuals are as follows:

- Healthcare continuity critical for reintegration.
- Second-chance employment matter.
- Individualized, trauma-informed reentry support reduces recidivism.

Next steps: complete more interviews with previously incarcerated individuals from different backgrounds, perform thematic saturation analysis, and present targeted local recommendations.

References

Select references (AMA):

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