Innovation Report



Washington Association for Community Health

Supporting Individuals Leaving Incarceration

CFHC

COWLITZ FAMILY HEALTH CENTER

By Providing Access to Health Care and Successful Reentry into the Community

Background of Reentry Initiative

In July 2025, Washington State Health Care Authority launched the **Reentry Demonstration Initiative (Reentry Initiative),** a new Apple Health demonstration project to provide essential health care services for individuals leaving incarceration under the Medicaid Transformation Project. Adults and youth in state prisons, jails, and youth carceral facilities who are Apple Health-eligible will receive a set of services up to 90 days before their release to ensure their health and successful reentry into their community.

Health Care Authority's goals for the Reentry Initiative include:

- Prepare people for a successful transition and reentry into their community and help them live their healthiest life.
- Improve health outcomes and reduce recidivism, emergency department visits, overdoses, and death.
- Support substance use disorder (SUD) and recovery and target infectious diseases like Hepatitis C before a person's release.
- Stabilize and treat other conditions before a person's release, so they can reenter their community as healthy as possible.

Participating facilities are required to support the pre-release services of case management, medications for alcohol and opioid use disorder and a 30-day supply of medications and medical supplies at release. Optional services that may be implemented individually are medications during the pre-release period, lab and radiology, services by community health workers with lived experience and physical and behavioral clinical consultations.

CFHC
COWLITZ FAMILY HEALTH CENTER

Cowlitz Family Health Center

- **Founded in 1970 as a project of the Community Action Program**
- **13 full clinic/service sites across Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, & Pacific Counties**
- **Serves over 20,000 patients annually**
- **Over 60,000 patient visits annually**

Up to $303 million in capacity building funding was authorized for the Health Care Authority to distribute to eligible carceral facilities to support planning and implementation.

Three cohorts of carceral facilities implemented the Reentry Initiative and began Medicaid billing at different times - Cohort 1 in July 2025, Cohort 2 in January 2026, Cohort 3 in July 2026.

Reentry Program Participation

Cowlitz Family Health Center (CFHC) is one of the community health centers participating in Cohort 1 of the Reentry Initiative because they believe in the purpose and impact of this work. They currently have an established, cooperative relationship with the Wahkiakum County Jail, and participation is a natural progression of the services they have been providing. The program aligns with their mission to improve continuity of care, reduce avoidable differences in health outcomes, and support individuals as they transition back into the community.

CFHC's Reentry Program focuses on care coordination, medical and behavioral health support, and connection to services for individuals transitioning from incarceration back into the community. The program is integrated across CFHC's service lines and in collaboration with community-based organizations, aiming to reduce barriers, stabilize care, and promote successful reentry.

For CFHC, their goals include:

- **Reducing withdrawal complications while individuals are incarcerated.**
- **Improving continuity of care upon release, including connection to SUD, behavioral health, and primary care.**
- **Reducing unnecessary emergency department utilization by stabilizing care and mitigating crises.**
- **Providing adequate support for individuals reentering society, including navigation of medications, appointments, and essential resources.**



CFHC's Wahkiakum Clinic

Successes and Challenges

What has worked well so far is the high level of engagement across the CFHC team. Staff from both primary care and SUD services have been fully committed to supporting the initiative. They've seen improved integration between the jail and CFHC. Streamlined workflows have better aligned care coordination, intake processes, and follow-up care. CFHC and the jail have a longstanding relationship, which has resulted in strengthened consistency in medication management and allowed communication pathways for this initiative to quickly be built.

Challenges encountered so far include:

- **After-hours coverage limitations**: When individuals are arrested or released when CFHC is closed, it makes timely care coordination difficult. Unexpected releases outside of business hours can delay medication continuity and create gaps in support during critical transitions.
- **Limited jail staffing**: Staffing constraints can create challenges in maintaining consistent medication security and inventory controls, requiring close coordination to mitigate associated risks.
- **Distance from emergency service**s: The jail's distance from the nearest emergency department can complicate care for urgent medical needs.
- **Border community complexities**: As a border community, some individuals incarcerated locally are not Washington State residents. This creates challenges related to benefits eligibility, follow-up care, and long-term engagement after released.

Looking ahead, CFHC anticipates continued challenges operating as a border community, where individuals incarcerated are not Washington State residents. This impacts coordination, billing, and long-term continuity of care. They also recognize that sustaining the program will depend on funding stability and community needs.

Despite these challenges, CFHC remains committed to supporting individuals during reentry and improving health outcomes for this population.

Washington Association for Community Health

The Association's innovation reports aim to support community health centers in leading innovation by identifying successful promising practices and communicating them to the statewide network.

Does your CHC have an innovation to share? Let us know!

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