

For Immediate Release
March 10, 2003

Contact: Joey R. Weedon
American Correctional Association
Tel: 301/918-1885

CORRECTIONS PROFESSIONALS UNITE TO DEFEND STATE OF HEALTH CARE IN CORRECTIONS

Statement of Coalition for Truth in Correctional Health Care

“Corrections Professionals have long called upon our colleagues in public health to become involved in the health care of the incarcerated and those persons involved in the justice system within our nation. The Coalition for Truth in Correctional Healthcare’s organizations have long called for a continued improvement of healthcare needs for our offenders. We are, however, appalled that the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) report on the health status of soon to be released offenders and associated media coverage criticizes corrections, directly or indirectly, and fails to provide insight into the true issues involved in this so-called “crisis” in public health. Rather than acknowledging the efforts of thousands of corrections professionals for the advances made in correctional healthcare, the NCCHC report focuses on correctional agencies “not doing enough” to improve the overall health of offenders. The report fails to recognize that the healthcare which corrections provides is most often the best, and in many times, the only healthcare that offenders receive.

“Because courts have established a level of care for offenders which is often superior to the “free world” our nation’s jails, prisons, juvenile facilities and community corrections are held to a higher standard of healthcare than that available to many Americans.

“Corrections is willing to share in the responsibility for healthcare for offenders; however, we are not willing to share in the blame for the health status for the majority of offenders. Nearly every person requiring serious health care for communicable diseases, for instance, entered correctional systems with those diseases. Is public health not responsible for the prevention and care of Americans not incarcerated? Further, corrections cannot be held responsible, as the NCCHC report would like, from undertaking efforts that would infringe upon the freedoms of those who have completed the requirements of their release from our custody.

“The Coalition for Truth in Correctional Health Care strongly disputes that the state the health status of confined individuals is “dismal” as the Statement of the Coalition for Better Treatment states. We repeat the fact that many offenders receive better healthcare or preventative healthcare for the first time when they enter into our nation’s correctional systems. We also applaud the efforts of thousands of doctors, dentists, nurses, administrators and others who work within our systems. We hope the leadership of our nation, the media, and our profession’s members will join us in telling the factual story about the state of our nation’s correctional healthcare.

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“We stand ready to join with all interested parties to proactively and positively solve the health challenges facing our nation, whether within our nation’s correctional systems and beyond them.”

Members of the Coalition for Truth in Correctional Health Care include:

Reginald A. Wilkinson; President, Association of State Correctional Administrators
Ned Loughren; Executive Director, Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators
Thomas N. Faust; Executive Director, National Sheriffs’ Association
Stephen J. Ingley; Executive Director, American Jails Association
Arthur Leonardo; Executive Director, North American Association of Wardens and
Superintendents
Robert Jones, MD; President, American Correctional Health Services Association
Charles J. Kehoe; President, American Correctional Association

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