

## For Immediate Release

### Media Contact:

Margot Cronin-Furman, [media@healthandreentryproject.org](mailto:media@healthandreentryproject.org)

## HARP Announces Expanded Advisory Committee, Inaugural Meeting

Washington, D.C., January 14, 2025 — The Health and Reentry Project (HARP) announced the expansion of its Advisory Committee, a group of cross-sector leaders who lend their expertise and experience to advance HARP's work improving the lives, health, and safety of people and communities. This announcement follows the first meeting of the expanded committee, which took place in December.

HARP's Advisory Committee is composed of people who have led correctional agencies, law enforcement, health care organizations, direct service providers, and policy organizations, among others. Collectively, they have worked at the local, state, tribal and national level, and include leaders who have been directly impacted by the justice system.

"Building stronger, safer communities and conducting this critical work requires bringing together diverse leaders and stakeholders from across the health care and criminal justice systems, including people who are directly impacted," said Vikki Wachino, Founder and Executive Director of HARP. "We are honored to have these accomplished, dedicated leaders advising HARP as it improves access to health care with a goal of promoting public safety and public health, breaking cycles of incarceration, and helping people successfully rejoin their families and communities. These leaders' expertise, vision, and commitment are central to HARP's achieving these goals."

The meeting of the expanded committee marks a pivotal milestone as HARP grows its work and impact. In late November, in partnership with the Bureau of Justice Assistance, HARP released a [new set of implementation resources](#) designed to help correctional administrators navigate the implementation of new Medicaid policies for youth and young adults leaving incarceration.

HARP also recently brought on new staff member James Pagano as Coordinator of Criminal Justice Initiatives. Mr. Pagano brings expertise from ten years in state government working for both the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Illinois Department of Corrections. Mr. Pagano's hands-on experience building stronger pathways for people as they return to communities will advance HARP's work with state and local officials who are leading implementation of new health and reentry policies.

Across the nation, policies to improve health and safety have gained substantial momentum over the past year. Currently, over half of all states are proposing or implementing policies to improve continuity of healthcare at reentry, including expanding access to substance use disorder treatment. Additionally, the first national policies to connect youth and young adults to health services as they leave incarceration are rolling out next year. During its December meeting, the Advisory Committee reviewed this policy progress and discussed ways to continue

to expand access to health care as people leave incarceration, which can promote rehabilitation and reduce recidivism, help people live longer, healthier lives, and reduce spending in prisons, jails and hospital emergency rooms.

**Full Membership of the HARP Advisory Committee:**

**Dr. Donald Berwick**, Former Administrator of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services

**Lisa Clements**, Senior Behavioral Health Advisor, Bureau of Justice Assistance Visiting Fellow, NRI - National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors Research Institute

**Khalil Cumberbatch**, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Council on Criminal Justice

**Valerie Nurr'araluk Davidson**, Former Lt. Governor of Alaska

**Adam Gelb**, President and CEO, Council on Criminal Justice

**Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian**, Middlesex County, Massachusetts

**Sheriff Michelle LaJoye-Young**, Kent County, Michigan

**Topeka Sam**, Founder and Executive Director of The Ladies of Hope Ministries

**Amy Solomon**, Former Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice

**Dr. Michelle Staples-Horne**, Medical Director, Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice

**Juliana Stratton**, Lt. Governor, Illinois

**Kellie Wasko**, Secretary of Corrections, South Dakota

**Whitney Westerfield**, Director of Legal and Governmental Affairs at LifeSkills, Inc.

**Dr. Tyler Winkelman**, Co-Director, Health, Homelessness, and Criminal Justice Lab, Hennepin Healthcare

**Pamela Winn**, Founder and President of RestoreHER US America Inc.

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**About HARP**

The Health and Reentry Project (HARP) is dedicated to building healthier, safer communities by improving access to health care as people return to community from incarceration. HARP provides expert policy analysis and education, supports state and local implementation of new policies, and convenes cross-sector stakeholders from health care and criminal justice, people who are directly impacted, and community-based organizations. For more information, contact [media@healthandreentryproject.org](mailto:media@healthandreentryproject.org) or visit our website, [www.healthandreentryproject.org](http://www.healthandreentryproject.org).