

An Innovative Condom Distribution Program for Jail Prisoners

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Project Description: Working in collaboration with the San Francisco Sheriff's Department we will interview staff and prisoners regarding their attitudes about condom distribution in prison. Next, we will install a free condom dispensing machine in a common space at the jail. After 4 months, during which we will monitor various aspects of utilization and impact, we will again interview staff and prisoners, assessing any changes in attitudes as well as prisoners' behavior related to condom acquisition and use.

Significance: The US boasts the highest per capita incarceration rate in the world. Prisoners, who are primarily young men of color, are disproportionately impacted by HIV and STIs. Although condom distribution in prisons has been controversial in the US, it has been in the HIV prevention repertoire of European countries for many years and one by one distribution of condoms by health professionals has been used in several US jurisdictions. In this study, we address the limitations of this procedure (e.g., lack of privacy, lag between request and condom availability) by offering condoms via a free condom dispensing machine placed in a public area of a county jail. Should this approach prove to be feasible, results of our study have important policy and prevention implications.

Project Recruitment Dates: We will recruit staff and prisoners at San Francisco County Jail to participate in surveys and interviews in March – August 2007.

Project End Date: January 2008