

## **The Significance of Interagency Collaboration in Developing Opioid Agonist Programs for Prisoners**

Many incarcerated individuals have heroin dependence upon arrest and relapse to compulsive heroin use soon after release from custody, thus continuing to commit crimes, obtain and spread lethal infectious diseases, and suffer other adverse consequences of unremitting heroin addiction. Unfortunately, most prisoners are not exposed to treatment while incarcerated; furthermore, effective opioid agonist treatment (with methadone or buprenorphine) is rarely offered in American prisons, despite extensive evidence for its effectiveness in community-based settings. The purpose of this paper is to share the authors' experiences in creating and evaluating two opioid agonist treatment programs in a Maryland prison. Barriers to program implementation and how collaboration among correctional, drug abuse treatment, and research agencies overcame them are illustrated to guide future efforts in developing such interventions.