



Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana Awarded \$800,000 Grant to Work with Offenders with Brain Injury

U.S. Department of Justice Funds Research Project Aimed at Reducing Recidivism

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, UNITED STATES, February 19, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana (RHI) has received an \$800,000 grant from the United States Department of Justice to work with offenders with traumatic brain injuries (TBI) who are preparing for release from prison. The five-year project will continue pilot studies which cut return to prison rates nearly in half.

RHI has pioneered methods to identify and treat offenders with previously undiagnosed brain injuries in partnership with the Indiana Department of Correction over the last six years, working with offenders released from the Putnamville Correctional Facility. The newly funded study will begin treatment of offenders who screen positive for a moderate to severe brain injury six months prior to release. Treatment includes participation in a coping skills group, connecting offenders awaiting release with TBI-specific services designed to better help them return to school or work, and education to help participants better manage the anger and aggression issues that commonly result from a TBI.

"This grant gives us the opportunity to build on RHI's earlier research by working with offenders for a longer period time and by helping them build coping skills and connect with needed services before they are released," said Dr. Devan Parrott, principal investigator and Director of the Research, Training, and Outcome Center for Brain Injury at RHI. "Our goal is to reduce criminal behavior and the rate at which these offenders return to prison."

Previous work started with ex-offenders upon release. In those pilot studies, participants joined a Brain Injury Coping Skills (BICS) group developed at RHI to educate participants about their brain injuries and teaches them to manage the consequences of that injury. Ex-offenders in the pilot study also were connected to TBI-specific services through a program called Resource Facilitation (RF). RF at RHI has identified people who are on average 10 years post-injury and helped them return to work at nation-leading numbers reaching as high as 70 percent.

A new addition to the treatment in this study is Intervention to Change Attributions that are Negative (ICAN). This treatment, being researched at the Indiana University School of Medicine (IUSM) through an NIH grant, has shown early promise at minimizing anger and aggression in people with brain injury.

"This treatment teaches people to give others the benefit of the doubt when interpreting the actions of others. This tends to be particularly challenging for people with a brain injury and fuels their anger and aggression" said Dr. Dawn Neumann, co-principal investigator and Associate Professor at Indiana University. "This treatment can help equip offenders with brain injuries develop the skills they need to manage their emotions and behaviors in a constructive manner."

"Successful re-entry is a priority for the Indiana Department of Correction," said IDOC Commissioner Rob Carter. "We thank Warden Fran Osburn, who originally championed this

important work, for providing offenders with previously undiagnosed brain injuries the best possible chance of successful re-entry into our communities."

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