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Report Release
Decarcerating Correctional Facilities During COVID-19: Advancing Health, Equity, and Safety
Speaker Biographical Sketches

Emily Wang (*Co-chair*) is an associate professor in the Yale School of Medicine and directs the Health Justice Lab. The Health Justice Lab is a collaborative, innovative, interdisciplinary team focused on improving the health of individuals and communities who have been affected by mass incarceration. The Lab has received funding from the National Institutes of Health, Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute, Bureau of Justice Assistance, and Centers of Medicare & Medicaid Innovation for studies ranging from the epidemiology of incarceration and cardiovascular health to mitigating the community impact of gun violence using a participatory approach and assets based framework. Dr. Wang has cared for thousands of individuals with a history of incarceration and is co-founder of the Transitions Clinic Network (TCN), a growing consortium of 30 community health centers nationwide dedicated to caring for individuals recently released from correctional facilities by employing individuals with a history of incarceration as community health workers. Dr. Wang has served on the National Academy of Sciences/Institute of Medicine's Health and Incarceration Workshop, Means of Violence Workshop, and the Steering Committee on Improving Collection of Indicators of Criminal Justice System Involvement in Population Health Data Programs. Dr. Wang has an M.D. from Duke University and a MAS from the University of California, San Francisco.

Bruce Western (NAS) (*Co-chair*) is the Bryce professor of sociology and social justice and co-director of the Justice Lab at Columbia University. His research has examined the causes, scope, and consequences of the historic growth in U.S. prison populations. Current projects include a randomized experiment assessing the effects of criminal justice fines and fees on misdemeanor defendants in Oklahoma City, and a field study of solitary confinement in Pennsylvania state prisons. Western is also the principal investigator of the Square One Project that aims re-imagine the public policy response to violence under conditions of poverty and racial inequality. He was the vice chair of the National Academy of Sciences panel on the causes and consequences of high incarceration rates in the United States. He is the author of *Homeward: Life in the Year After Prison* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2018), and *Punishment and Inequality in America* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2006). He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He has been a Guggenheim fellow, a Russell Sage Foundation visiting scholar, and a fellow of the Radcliffe Institute of Advanced Study. Western received his Ph.D. in sociology from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Hedwig Lee is professor of sociology at Washington University, St. Louis. She holds a courtesy joint appointment at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work and is a faculty affiliate in the Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. She is also an associate director of the Center for Race, Ethnicity & Equity. She currently serves on the research advisory board for the Vera Institute of Justice and the board for the Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science. She is also a member of The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, Committee on Population. Her recent work examines the impact of structurally rooted chronic stressors, such as mass incarceration, on health and health disparities. She was a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholar at the University of Michigan from 2009 to 2011. She received her Ph.D. in sociology from the University of North Carolina.

John Wetzel is secretary of corrections for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. Secretary Wetzel's 22-year career in county corrections culminated in a position of warden at Franklin County Jail where he oversaw a 20 percent population reduction during his tenure. Secretary Wetzel has guided the department in restructuring community corrections, the mental health systems and significant security enhancements while at the same time significantly reducing spending. With 30 years of experience in the corrections field, he served as chair of the Council of State Government's Justice Center's Executive Board of which he is now a member. He is currently the president of the Correctional Leaders Association (CLA), formerly the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA), and a member of Harvard's Executive Session on Community Corrections. On the federal level, he was tapped by the Obama administration to be the corrections expert on the Chuck Colson task force – which was a congressionally-created group tasked with assessing the Federal Bureau of Prisons and providing the administration and Congress with recommendations on improvement. More recently, he was named by the Trump administration to the congressionally-created oversight committee to the federal First Step Act. He is a graduate of Bloomsburg University, and recipient of honorary doctorate degrees from both Indiana University of Pennsylvania and Chestnut Hill College.