Getting Out and Staying Healthy

September 1, 2008 By Laura Whitehorn

Some 25 percent of HIV-positive Americans pass through prison at some point, and staying healthy can be as hard after release as it was behind the walls.

When Teresa Sullivan landed in a Pennsylvania county jail for four months in 2007, she had to fight for her HIV meds (she went without them for a month). Oddly, that experience helped prepare her for release: She learned to advocate for herself, which she calls a key survival tool. Her other pointers:

Get back in touch with your family to help you plug in to life again.
Get right back to your doctor, or find one if you didn't have one before.
Get therapy and support. Sullivan says, "Get NA, AA or any other 'A' you need."

For a doctor and AIDS service organization (ASO) near you, click "survival tools" at poz.com. An ASO can also help you find housing and financial coverage for care.

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