

## Self-Assessment for Identifying Potential Challenges in your Facility

### Review Policy and Procedures

- Does your facility have policies and procedures in place that identify the key areas on which health staff need to advise correctional staff regarding the special needs of inmates/patients (i.e., housing, work assignments, etc.)?
- When inmates are transferred to the facility, does health staff promptly communicate with custody staff which patients have special health needs?
- Do the policies and procedures address all aspects of the NCCHC standard?
- Does your policy list the top 10 chronic diseases and special needs that need to be communicated on a regular basis (i.e., diabetes, seizure disorders, dialysis, etc.)?
- Is there an established training program regarding communication of the special needs or chronic health issues of inmates/patients?
- Do you have a policy and procedure in place for evaluating the inmate's safety related to their health needs?
- Do you have a policy and procedure for adolescents in adult facilities?

### Talk with Custody and the Health Care Team

- Verify that a communication system or process is in place regarding inmates/patients with special health needs.

- Ask custody and health care staff how they communicate about inmates/patients with special needs
  - Verify the communication is documented.
  - Verify custody staff know where to get the information.
  - Verify that the communication process is used consistently across all shifts.
- Ask custody staff to tell you how they pass on important information from shift to shift.
- Ask custody staff if the training provided adequately prepares them to handle the different types of special needs that arise.
- Ask custody staff if they feel confident making housing decisions when it comes to transgender inmates.
- Ask custody staff if they feel confident making work assignments for inmates/patients with special health needs such as asthma, seizure disorders, diabetes, and mental health issues.
- Ask the health care team if they feel that the communication process works, and that custody knows who has special needs. If not, who do they notify? What process do they follow? Verify with your policy.
- Ask the health care team if they document all communication with custody staff in the medical record. Ask to see a few medical records and the documentation.

### Assess the Environment

- Review the housing and work assignments of inmates with special needs or chronic health conditions. Are the assignments reasonable? Do they follow policy?
- Review the facility policy on the care of pregnant women, and verify staff are following it. Verify if the pregnant inmate/patient has special needs and that they have been communicated and implemented and followed by custody.
- For inmates on dialysis, verify their health needs have been communicated. Also, verify they have been going to their appointments.
- Check their diet to verify if their health needs have been communicated to dietary.
- Review 10 to 15 recent admissions or transfers and verify that all special health needs were communicated per your policy (health staff notify custody).

### Key Takeaways

- Any issues that arise during your discussions might include opportunities to enhance policy, procedures, or training.
- CQI process studies are a great way to understand specific root causes and can help to focus improvement efforts where needed.

### Share what you learned with your custody staff and the health care team.