Tuberculosis in Prison:  
The Balance of Public Health and the Justice System  

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Tuberculosis (TB) is a contagious airborne disease caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* which adversely affects public health around the world. Prisoners are not representative of the general community. It has been well established that TB strikes in populations that are minority, poor, homeless or living in overcrowded and/or unsanitary conditions. TB strikes with equal vengeance in populations with physical vulnerabilities caused by alcoholism, drug addiction, malnutrition, Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and other immune-suppressing conditions. These are the same populations that are overrepresented in the criminal justice system. Movements of individuals within a prison system, as well as between the community and the prison system, are common. Tuberculosis infection contracted in the community could initiate an epidemic when brought into the prison or vice-versa. Addressing the resurgence of tuberculosis serves the inmate, the correctional workforce and the community at large.