

The Role of Pediatricians as Advocates for Incarcerated Youth

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In the United States, an estimated 88,000 youth are released from juvenile detention facilities each year. Youth exiting the juvenile detention system suffer from high rates of health risk behaviors and a disproportionate share of morbidity and mortality. These youth often lack access to the health care system, and their incarceration is their only contact with a physician outside of any emergency setting. The time of their release provides a critical opportunity for connecting these youth with the medical system to establish a medical home. During their reemergence into the community, these youth need as much support as possible, and physicians can play an important role.

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