

## Medical Advisory Program

Launched in 2003, the Medical Advocacy Program (MAP) was developed to address the growing number of formerly incarcerated persons returning to San Diego County with significant health issues, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease, Tuberculosis, Hepatitis C, and HIV/AIDS.

The California Endowment funded the MAP pilot: this funding ended in 2004. Because the need was so great, UAAMAC made a conscious decision to continue MAP, albeit in a limited form, because of the importance of having good health when one is seeking gainful employment.

Our experience working with ex-offenders for approximately ten years has taught us that we cannot effectively deal with the healthcare needs of our clients without the provision of intensive case management services and medical advocacy. The MAP Initiative is the best model of case management and advocacy that we have seen, and it has proven to be of great benefit to our clients and their families. Among other things, we provide increased access to healthcare at a greatly reduced cost because of our advocacy.

Despite inadequate funding in recent years, the MAP Initiative has been sustained, although not an optimal level, because it has been integrated with another UAAMAC program, the Health Disparities Ministries Initiative. Integration takes place on two levels: First, members of the churches that participate in the Health Ministries Initiatives function as reentry advocates who, among other things, assist in the medical, dental and vision referral process. Second, they provide information on preventative and curative measures of the various diseases that disproportionately affect our clients.

The specific goals of MAP are:

- To improve client access to health-related services;
- To provide a structured approach for access to medical, dental and vision screenings;
- To provide a non-threatening, stable and supportive environment for the formerly incarcerated;
- To promote mental health and well-being;
- To promote responsible behavior and prevent the spread of infectious diseases;
- To decrease the high rates of recidivism

UAAMAC was awarded a two-year contract from the Alliance Healthcare Foundation to operate the MAP initiative on a somewhat limited basis. Since its inception, we have provided medical, vision and dental referrals to over 500 clients.