

2007 Hartford Geriatrics Health Outcomes Research Scholars Awards Program  
RESEARCH PROPOSAL

**Name:** Brie Williams, M.D., M.Sc.

**Title of Proposed Research:** The health, functional status and health outcomes of older adults in prison and after release

**A. Abstract**

**Background:** The rapidly growing population of geriatric prisoners is causing a healthcare crisis. Geriatric prisoners are at high risk for disease, disability and death in an environment designed for younger prisoners. They are also expensive, costing more than \$70,000 per year – two to three times that of younger prisoners. Over 90% of geriatric prisoners will be eventually released back into the community, where many confront serious challenges to their health and independent function. Despite the public health and economic implications of this rapidly growing population, older prisoner health has not been studied.

**Methods:** Our proposal consists of 3 aims. In Aims 1 and 2 we will describe the health and functional status of the 8,534 older prisoners residing in Texas during 2005, and describe the health of those who will be released within the next year. In Aim 2, we will use 2-year follow up data to determine risk factors and develop a clinical prediction tool for adverse health outcomes among geriatric prisoners. In Aim 3, we will design and pilot test a health questionnaire for recently released elders.

**Outcomes:** This will be the largest study to (1) determine the health and functional status of geriatric prisoners and those who will be released within the year, (2) create a clinical tool that can be used by correctional departments to identify geriatric prisoners at high-risk for adverse health events, and (3) develop and pilot test a health questionnaire to determine the health, functional status, health care needs, and health care utilization patterns of older adults recently released from prison. These projects will lay the groundwork for future independently funded research to develop, implement, and evaluate interventions to improve the health of older persons aging in prison and after their release to the community.