ACCESS TO MENSTRUAL HYGIENE PRODUCTS IS NOT A PRIVILEGE – IT IS A RIGHT
Reproductive Justice is an intersectional theory, strategy, and movement founded by women of color to work against reproductive oppression - the exploitation of women, girls, and others through their reproduction, labor, and sexuality. This framework considers how race, class, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, ability, education, geography, immigration status, and other factors impact and determine reproductive futures. Reproductive Justice is having the freedom to make decisions about our bodies throughout one's lifespan, including if, when, and how to grow our families, and the ability to parent in good health, with safety and dignity.
Reproductive Justice Inside (RJI) is a statewide coalition advocating for increased access to quality sexual and reproductive healthcare for women and girls in Maryland's correctional and detention facilities.

Through story collection, policy research, and organizing, RJI aims to increase public awareness of healthcare issues in Maryland’s correctional systems and address conditions of confinement where systems-involved individuals are not in complete control of their reproductive futures and freedom.
Principles of Reproductive Justice

1. Reproductive freedom is a human right.
2. Reproductive Justice is an intersectional issue. We recognize that groups with more marginalized identities will have less overall access to the education, healthcare, and resources needed to make healthy, autonomous decisions.
3. Incarceration is inherently a system based on power, control, and limiting the freedoms of those incarcerated.
4. Many different Marylanders are impacted by the criminal justice system. Reproductive Justice Inside works to uplift the personal stories of a diverse range of perspectives and identities. (This includes geographic diversity.)
5. Reproductive Justice Inside values the expertise of those with direct experience with the criminal justice system. Our coalition strives to maintain accountability to the priorities and concerns of the directly impacted, which is done best when directly impacted individuals are leading.
Beginning in 2017, the RJI Coalition formed and took on as its first task, an evaluation and assessment of the conditions of confinement for incarcerated individuals who are pregnant. The coalition sought input from formerly incarcerated individuals, and directly impacted family members in addition to the partner organizations working with incarcerated individuals. Through this work, the coalition identified the need for all corrections facilities in the state to have written policies regarding the health care and wellness of pregnant individuals who are incarcerated. In 2018, the coalition was able to pass this legislation, which went into effect on October 1, 2018.
Our Leadership

The work of RJI is shaped and driven by members who have been or are currently directly impacted by the criminal justice system. They are committed to the goals and mission of RJI and incorporate their voices and lived experiences in the decision-making process of coalition matters.
Our Coalition Continues to Grow

Baltimore Doula Project
Center on Applied Feminism, University of Baltimore School of Law
Gender Violence Clinic, University of Maryland School of Law
Incarceration and Health Justice Collective
If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice
University of Baltimore School of Law
Interfaith Action for Human Rights
Justice and Recovery Advocates

Life After Release
Maryland Justice Project
Maryland State Conference of the NAACP
NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland
Not Without Black Women
Planned Parenthood of Maryland
Power Inside
Pregnancy in Prison Statistics
The Women’s Law Center of Maryland, Inc.
Whole Woman’s Health of Baltimore
Women’s Justice Initiative
Menstrual Hygiene & Dignity for Women

“I’m a grown woman but this made me feel as embarrassed about my body as if I was an adolescent all over again.”

DIGNITY FOR WOMEN PRISONERS

ACLU Nebraska
Getting your period in prison is hell
Menstrual blood is the only source of blood that is not traumatically induced. Yet in modern society, this is the most hidden blood, the one so rarely spoken of and almost never seen, except privately by women ...  
-Judy Grahn
Community Forums

**RJI Public Forums**

**Real Stories About Women & Healthcare in Maryland’s Correctional Facilities**

FREE! Doors open 5:30

Jan 2, 6-8pm @ Towson Library
Jan 3, 6-7:30pm @ Laurel Library
Jan 4, 6-8pm @ C. Burr Arts Library (downtown Frederick)
Jan 8, 6-8pm @ Washington County Free Library
Jan 9, 6-8pm @ Silver Spring Civic Center, Spring Room

Forums are drop off locations for RJ’s (unscented) menstrual pad drive. We are collecting unopened packages of pads for the ladies at MCN.

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**Do you have a story about women’s healthcare and incarceration?**

YOU decide how anonymous to be. Personal identifying information will never be released without consent.

We want to speak with you about what you or your loved one experienced to improve healthcare for other women.

Contact us for more information!

We are seeking voices of mothers, teens, women who are LGBTQ, undocumented, or not born in the US.

Your story matters.

**Reproductive Justice Inside**
Our coalition organizer Kimberly Haven shares her experience making homemade tampons while incarcerated at MCIW-

“Feminine hygiene products are a commodity at MCIW.”
Incarcerated Individuals will often:

- Turn down visits with their families
- Turn down visits with their attorneys
- Make their own tampons
- Put their own reproductive health in jeopardy
- Beg and borrow to get the basic supplies they need
- Humiliate themselves by having to ask for what they need
- Suffer the stigma of being a menstruating individual
- Suffer the shame of being incarcerated and unable to provide for their self

No one should EVER have to decide between buying necessary supplies and calling their children or buying things like food and laundry detergent.
2018 Legislative Session

SB 629/HB 787

Correctional Services - Inmates – Menstrual Hygiene Products

Requires all correctional and detention facilities to provide menstrual hygiene products free of charge and in the quantity the person needs and upon request.
A Job
Well
Done
AND YET…

They still have to pay for what they need.
Our prisons are the most closed system we have.

We cannot fight what we cannot see..

We cannot see what they won’t show us!

When the lockdowns first started it had a definite footprint on our incarcerated population. Outside vendors were prohibited from entering facilities to provide commissary. Our institutions do not maintain an adequate supply should a disaster strike.

Is our incarcerated population getting the basic hygiene supplies that they need?
WE DO NOT SIMPLY KNOW
As we push forward in this movement and fight to remove those barriers, it's critical for us all to remember that many genders menstruate and shouldn't be removed from the conversation.

It's easy to be inclusive in your activism.
Looking to the Future

- Continue to develop our Leadership Circle
- Grow our coalition across the state
- Work with state and local officials to implement our Model Pregnancy Policy
- Support the offering of emergency contraception at intake and at release
- Monitor implementation of menstrual hygiene policy
- Monitor implementation of restrictive housing policy
- Work with local jurisdictions on a robust RJ effort
- Continue to support ally and coalition partner legislative agendas
- Work with the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to create and sustain a collaborative relationship
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https://www.facebook.com/rjinside/