



# Philadelphia



## Conference Overview



## A very “Philly Special” Congress of Correction

**T**he cradle of American liberty, the City of Philadelphia, was the site of the 153<sup>rd</sup> Congress of Correction from August 9<sup>th</sup> to August 13<sup>th</sup> 2023.

The Conference activity started early each morning as many attendees began each day with early morning yoga provided as part of the extensive Health and Wellness Expo.

A full day of workshops had the Philadelphia Convention Center buzzing with activity.

The Health Care Special Session and Luncheon on Thursday was the first big event of the Congress.

Dr. Francis S. Collins MD, Ph.D. from the National Institutes of Health and special advisor to President Biden and Dr. Carolyn Wester MD, MPH of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention talked about the impact of hepatitis

C, proposed elimination efforts and the role of correctional professionals in achieving national eradication.

The Health Care Network Reception allowed conference goers to relax and socialize Thursday



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evening with the Marriott Ballroom filled to overflowing with conference attendees.

Friday began with Accreditation Panel hearings starting early in the morning and another day filled with very well-attended workshops.

The General Session opened in the afternoon with several tribute videos for retiring Executive Director of ACA James A. Gondles, Jr.

Then General Session speaker Sugar Ray Leonard wowed the crowd in the Grand Ballroom and left the standing-room only crowd with this bit of wisdom gleaned from his years as an Olympic Gold Medalist and six-time World Champion boxer:

“Everyone needs a corner for success and keep your guard up!”

Conference attendees left the Grand Ballroom buzzing and headed down to the Exhibit Hall where nearly 200 exhibitors were waiting to show off the best and brightest in corrections technology and services.

Other conference goers took advantage of their location to visit Eastern State Penitentiary which was once the most famous and expensive prison in the world or the Juvenile Justice Services Center a 150,000 square foot facility providing a range of services for teens and young adults.

7 a.m. on Saturday saw a contingent of Congress goers head a few blocks over to the steps of the Philadelphia Art Museum for the Rocky Walk Memorial challenge.

Workshops, accreditation hearings and the exhibit hall all saw surging crowds throughout the day as others took a visit to The State Correctional Institution (SCI) at Chester or the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility.

The day ended at the Marriott ballroom with a special event celebrating the career of retiring Executive Director James A. Gondles, Jr.

Several awards were presented at the Accreditation Breakfast on Sunday morning the final day of the Congress.

Participants finished up with a day of workshops, Exhibit Hall visits and the capstone event of the 153<sup>rd</sup> Congress of Correction: the E.R. Cass Awards Banquet.

Four awardees were honored: Gary C. Mohr, Past President of ACA, Viola Riggan, BHSA, CHSA, CCE Chief Executive Officer VitalCore



Health Strategies Strategies, LLC, Derrick D. Schofield, Ph.D. Executive Vice President, The Geo Group, Inc. and Michelle Staples-Horne Medical Director Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice.

The next Congress of Correction is scheduled for August 15–20<sup>th</sup> in Nashville Tennessee. The ACA Winter Conference will be held in National Harbor, Maryland from January 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>.

— KIRK RAYMOND