

Identifying Target Populations for Diversion from the Criminal Justice System



PRELIMINARY EVIDENCE

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Mental Illness in the Criminal Justice System

- About 16% of the prison population can be classified as *severely* mentally ill.
- Est. 31% of female and 14% of male jail inmates live w/SMI.
- **Over 3,500 adults with mental illnesses were incarcerated in prisons in Arkansas.**

Mental Illness in the Criminal Justice System



- **Higher recidivism rates:**
 - 78% of mentally ill state **prison** inmates recidivate.
 - Over half of inmates w/mental illness report 3+ prior sentences.
- **Only 6 in 10 state inmates with a mental illness reported receiving treatment since their incarceration.**
 - Only 4 in 10 local inmates with a mental illness reported receiving treatment since their incarceration

Target Population?



**In CJS due to
mental illness**

**Crisis Centers;
Access to
Treatment;
Diversion Away
from CJS entirely**

**Mentally ill people who
also have some
criminogenic needs**

**CJ-based
alternative
sanctions; MH
Court**

**Criminals
who also
have mental
illness**

**Improved MH
Treatment in
prisons**

WA County Arrests

- **Disorderly Conduct would be the most likely charge under which individuals acting in crisis or manifesting mental illness symptomatology would be detained**
 - General category of nonspecific conduct
- **Analyzed reports and booking information for the subsample of Disorderly Conduct arrests.**
 - Represent at least 9.4% of total arrests for the month of September 2012

Findings

- **Approx 23% displayed erratic behavior suggestive of mental health difficulties and/or adverse substance use reaction.**
 - Based on behaviors and report identification.
 - Behavior prompted contact with authorities, primarily in the absence of other criminal activity.
- **About 3% were clearly identified as having a mental health condition (and no other actual crime)**

In the context of the larger Washington County jail population...

- **2.2% of total arrestees display behavior consistent with mental health difficulties and/or adverse substance use reactions.**
 - Approximately 22-24 individuals per month
- **.3% of bookings are probably a consequence of mental illness, rather than criminality.**
 - About 3-4 arrestees per month
- **These are the MOST conservative estimates.**
 - Assuming those with SMI are arrested for Disorderly Conduct!