

# 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!