**Why is this Issue Important?**
- Abuse of jails as mental hospitals
- Persons with severe mental illness 1.5 times as likely to experience incarceration
- State mental health agencies involved in services for diversion and also supporting reentry of their clients

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**The Massachusetts Mental Health / Criminal Justice Cohort Study**

**N = 13,816**

A statewide sample of public mental health service recipients

**Inclusion Criteria:**
- Receiving case management, inpatient treatment or residential services from Massachusetts Department of Mental Health between 7/1/91 and 6/30/92
- Age 18 years of age or older

**Data Source:**
- “Criminal Offender Record Information” (CORI) System

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**What is the Extent of Criminal Justice Involvement Among a SMHA’s Clients?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total of Cohort</th>
<th>% Arrested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Age (1991):**
- 18-25: 16.3%
- 26-37: 15.8%
- 38-49: 22.3%
- 50-59: 26.4%
- 60-64: 14.3%
- 65+: 18.8%

**Race:**
- “White” 32.2%
- “Non-White” 17.8%

**Overall Cohort Offending Patterns:**
- 3,856 individuals were arrested at least once
- Overall 10 year prevalence of arrest for the cohort = 27.9%
- Range = 1-711
- 75% had 6 or fewer
- 17,373 total arrests (identified with CORI data)
- Many arrests involve multiple charges or “counts”
- 27,004 felony charges (serious crimes against persons and property, drug charges)
- 14,850 misdemeanor charges (e.g., “nuisance crimes,” low-level drug possession charges, prostitution, etc.)

**What Sort of Things Are They Arrested For?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense Type</th>
<th>% of Cohort</th>
<th>% of Arrested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felony Crimes Against Persons</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misdemeanor Crimes Against Persons</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Offenses</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crimes Against Public Order</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Related Offenses</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firearms Violations</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Implications:**
- Data challenge the notion that the vast majority of arrestees are “nuisance offenders” who can readily be diverted
- There is considerable variation in offense types and intensity of involvement
- Demographic risk factors are similar to what we see in the general offending population
- Male + Females (although less so)
- Younger individuals at much higher risk
- “Non-white” vs “White”

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**Are Arrests Unique Events or Part of a Pattern of Criminal Justice Involvement?**

**Characterizing Trajectory-Based Groups**

- **Trajectory Group I** (28.6%)
  - One charge early, drops off to average near 0
- **Trajectory Group II** (39.9%)
  - Stable across the time period; average one arrest every 2 years
- **Trajectory Group III** (15.1%)
  - Average one arrest per year through period
- **Trajectory Group IV** (12.4%)
  - Begins period averaging 2 per year; drops steadily over the period
- **Trajectory Group V** (4.5%)
  - Starts high (average of 5 in first year) but descends; ends period with average of 1

**Trajectory Analysis Finding:**

- Identifying a Small But Troubling Group

A small number of cohort members (“Group V”: 92 people, 4.5% of arrestees) displayed a problematic persistent arrest pattern

- Begin observation period averaging five arrests per year; and with an average of one—two
- Principal charges — drugs, “sex for hire”
- A group with severe addiction problems
- Not clustered in any demographic group (i.e., gender, age, race / ethnicity)

**Trajectory Analysis Conclusion:**

This is a group that is small but makes inordinate demands on the criminal justice system. Their propensity for drug use and sex crimes (among public health and safety issues likely frustrate the mental health system.)