

Improving Outcomes for People with Mental Illnesses Involved with New York City's Criminal Court and Correction Systems

Full Report can be found here:

<https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/improving-outcomes-for-people-with-mental-illnesses-involved-with-new-york-citys-criminal-court-and-correction-systems/>

In March 2011, New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg sought support to develop and implement data-driven strategies to improve the City's response to people with mental illnesses who are involved in the adult criminal justice system. In particular, the city wanted to understand and address how even as crime in New York City has decreased and the jail population has declined, individuals with mental illnesses represent an increasing percentage of the City's jail population (less than 25 percent of the average daily population in 2005 vs. about 33 percent in 2011).

Summary of Key Findings and Recommendations

- People with mental illnesses booked into the DOC had consistently longer lengths of stay.
 - People with mental illnesses booked into the DOC had an average length of stay (ALOS) of 112 days, almost double the ALOS for people without mental illnesses (61 days).
- Individuals with mental illnesses were less likely to make bail and stayed in jail considerably longer before making bail.

- Only about 12 percent of individuals with mental illnesses made bail post admission, compared to about 21 percent of those without mental illnesses. Furthermore, people with mental illnesses took five times as long to make bail as those without mental illnesses (48 days vs. 9 days).
- Average length of stay varied based on severity of mental illness.
 - Individuals with Serious Mental Illnesses (SMI) had a shorter ALOS than those with identified mental illnesses who did not meet the criteria for SMI (91 vs. 128 days), but both groups had significantly longer ALOS than those without mental illnesses (61 days).
- Individuals with mental illnesses experienced delays in case processing for many reasons, including limited community-based options and limited information available to key decision makers.
 - Judges, prosecutors, and defense counsel reported that the availability of alternatives to detention and incarceration (ATD and ATI) is extremely limited, and even these options are unknown to many working with this population. They also reported that information about criminogenic risk and behavioral health needs is rarely available to key decision makers, making it difficult to match a person with the combination of supervision and treatment that is most likely to reduce recidivism.

A policy framework and strategies to address these systemic issues

- *Determine levels of risks and needs for individuals* entering the DOC in order to identify appropriate considerations for community-based supervision and treatment.
- *Provide pretrial, plea, and sentencing options* that allow people with mental health needs to reenter the community while maintaining public safety. These options include pretrial alternatives to detention, alternatives to incarceration, and sentences that include post-incarceration supervision to ensure a safe transition to the community for those at the greatest risk of reoffence.
- Establish *centralized hubs to coordinate and communicate assessment information* and community-based supervision and treatment options to ensure that individuals are efficiently and consistently linked to appropriate community-based services, while allocating system-wide resources effectively.

1. Steering Committee members included:

- Honorable Jeffrion L. Aubry, Assemblyman, District 35, Chair, Committee on Correction;
- Alan D. Aviles, President and CEO, Health and Hospitals Corporation;
- Steven Banks, Attorney-in-Chief, Legal Aid Society;
- Greg Berman, Director, Center for Court Innovation;
- Honorable Richard A. Brown, District Attorney, Queens County;
- Joel Copperman, CEO/President, CASES;
- Honorable Elizabeth S. Crowley, City Council Member, District 30, Chair, Committee on Fire and Criminal Justice Services;
- Honorable Matthew J. D’Emic, Presiding Judge, Brooklyn Mental Health Court;
- Seth Diamond, Commissioner, Department of Homeless Services;
- Robert Doar, Administrator/Commissioner, Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services;
- Honorable Daniel M. Donovan, Jr., District Attorney, Richmond County;
- Thomas A. Farley, Commissioner, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene;
- John Feinblatt, Chief Advisor to the Mayor for Policy and Strategic Planning and Criminal Justice Coordinator;
- Linda I. Gibbs, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services;
- Elizabeth Glazer, Deputy Secretary for Public Safety, Office of the Governor;
- Michael F. Hogan, Commissioner, NYS Office of Mental Health;
- Honorable Robert T. Johnson, District Attorney, Bronx County;
- Rick Jones, Executive Director, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem;
- Raymond W. Kelly, Commissioner, Police Department;
- Honorable Judy Harris Kluger, Chief of Policy and Planning, NYS Unified Court System;
- G. Oliver Koppell, Council Member, District 11, Chair, Committee on Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Alcoholism, Drug Abuse & Disability Services;
- Scott Moyer, President, The Jacob and Valeria Langeloth Foundation;
- Denise E. O’Donnell, Director, Bureau of Justice Assistance;
- Ronald E. Richter, Commissioner, Administration for Children’s Services;
- Vincent N. Schiraldi, Commissioner, Department of Probation;
- Lisa Schreibersdorf, Executive Director, Brooklyn Defender Services;
- Dora B. Schriro, Commissioner, Department of Correction;
- Robin Steinberg, Executive Director, The Bronx Defenders;
- Joseph Vaccarino, Principal, Queens Law Associates;
- Honorable Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., District Attorney, New York County;
- Carolyn P. Wilson, Director, New York County Defender Services.