

## MICJS Data Sharing Initiative Briefing Sheet

**Problem:** Colorado is grappling with increasing numbers of individuals with mental illness in the criminal justice system. Deinstitutionalization reforms, the war on drugs, and fragmented care have contributed to this increase,<sup>1</sup> which some have termed “the criminalization of mental illness.” A 2003 National Alliance on Mental Illness member survey found 44% of individuals with a serious mental illness have been arrested or detained at some point in their life.<sup>2</sup> Nationally, there are more than three times as many individuals with seriously mentally illness in jails and prisons than in hospitals.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, one group determined that there is a 4.1 to 1 likelihood that individuals with serious mental illness will be incarcerated versus hospitalized in Colorado.<sup>3</sup>

Currently there are several Colorado efforts to address the growing number of individuals with mental illness in the criminal justice system. Despite these efforts, there are significant gaps in information as offenders move between the criminal justice system and community treatment providers.

**Goal:** Improve behavioral health information sharing between criminal justice agencies and community mental health centers to improve outcomes of justice involved individuals with mental illness while maintaining public safety and standardizing data to plan and evaluate policy initiatives.

### Planned Efforts:

- A BJA grant proposal was submitted on March 10, 2015. We anticipate hearing the results of the application in September 2015. The proposal seeks funds to develop a statewide interagency strategic plan for a justice and health information exchange infrastructure. The structure will facilitate community and criminal justice health provider access to prior assessment and treatment data for continuity of care when offenders transition to different systems. This infrastructure can reduce gaps in service, facilitate evidenced-based treatment, and ultimately reduce recidivism of offenders with serious mental illness. Agencies that receive grant awards may be eligible for implementation funds of up to one million dollars per year for three years after successfully completing the strategic planning phase.
- If the grant proposal is not funded, MICJS will submit a BJA technical assistance request to seek funds for the strategic planning phase.
- MICJS has collaborated with IJIS Institute to submit the BJA grant proposal. IJIS institute is a nonprofit corporation that provides government agencies technical assistance, training, and support services for information exchange and technology initiatives. They are currently developing a framework for criminal justice and health practitioner technology system exchanges. Once the project is complete, IJIS Institute will provide technical assistance to two pilot sites. This might provide another possibility for strategic planning resources.
- MICJS will continue to seek additional funding opportunities for this initiative.

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<sup>1</sup> Lurigio, A.j., & Harris, A. (n.d.). The mentally ill in the criminal justice system: An overview of historical causes and suggested remedies.

<sup>2</sup> Hall, L.L., Graf, A.C., Fitzpatrick, M.J., Lane, T., & Birkel, R.C. (2003, July). Shattered Lives: Results of a National Survey of NAMI Members Living with Mental Illnesses and Their Families. Arlington, VA: NAMI TRIAD

<sup>3</sup> Torrey, E. F., Kennard, A.D., Eslinger, D., Lamb, R., & Pavle, J. (2010, May). More mentally ill persons are in jails and prisons than hospitals: A survey of the States. Arlington, VA: Advocacy Treatment Center and National Sheriffs' Association.