

## **Vermont Mental Health Performance Indicator Project**

Agency of Human Services, Department of Health, Division of Mental Health  
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TO: Vermont Mental Health Performance Indicator Project  
Advisory Group and Interested Parties

FROM: John Pandiani and Olivia Hunter

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RE: Criminal Justice Involvement for Mental Health Service Recipients in 8 States

This week's brief report provides information on levels of criminal justice involvement for public mental health recipients in 8 states. This information was part of a presentation on "Data Driven System Transformation" at the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on State Mental Health Agency Services Research, Program Evaluation, and Policy in February, 2006.<sup>1</sup>

Measures of criminal justice involvement for mental health service recipients are among the core performance indicators for both mental health and substance abuse authorities at the national level. The current State Mental Health Data Infrastructure Grants for Quality Improvement require that states participate in the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) Uniform Reporting System (URS) for the Mental Health Block Grant Program. Table 19A of this reporting system includes reporting the number of adult mental health service recipients who had contact with the criminal justice system.<sup>2</sup> Criminal justice involvement is also among the National Outcome Measures (NOMs) required of states by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.<sup>3</sup> The results reported here were originally prepared for URS reporting. Seven of the states are identified; one state chose not to be identified.

As is frequently the case with cross state comparisons, the specific measures of criminal justice involvement vary among states, as do the rates of criminal justice involvement in the larger population of the state and characteristics of the public mental health caseload. Types of criminal justice involvement reported by these states include arrests, criminal charges, and correctional involvement.

This report provides two measures of criminal justice involvement: rate of criminal justice involvement for mental health service recipients, and relative risk of criminal justice involvement compared to the general population of the state. Relative risk statistically controls for variation in criminal justice involvement in the general population of different states by dividing the rate of criminal justice involvement for service recipients by the rate of criminal justice involvement for the general population. A relative risk that is not significantly different from "1" indicates there is no difference between mental health service recipients and the general population. A relative risk of "2" would indicate that mental health consumers were twice as likely as members of the general population to be involved with the criminal justice system. A relative risk of "0.5" would indicate that mental health consumers were half as likely to be involved with the criminal justice system.

The difference among these states in criminal justice involvement rates was substantial, with the highest rate being more than 10 times the lowest rate. As you will see, rates of criminal justice involvement for mental health service recipients varied from 1.8% in Kentucky to 18% in Delaware. Vermont was among the three states with criminal justice involvement rates for mental health service recipients between 7.5% and 8%.

The variation in relative risk of criminal justice involvement was much lower, with the highest relative risk being only 4 times the lowest. In Washington DC, the rate of criminal justice involvement for mental health service recipients was no greater than the rate for the general population. The other states fell into two groups. One group included three states where mental health consumers were between 2.2 and 2.6 times as likely as members of the general population to have criminal justice involvement. The other group includes four states where mental health consumers were between 3.7 and 3.9 times as likely as members of the general population to have criminal justice involvement. Vermont was in this second group.

We look forward to your questions and your comments about the utility the two measures of criminal justice involvement (actual and relative) that were presented here, and your suggestions for future cross-state comparisons of mental health program performance. As always you can contact us at 802.863.7249 or [pip@vdh.state.vt.us](mailto:pip@vdh.state.vt.us).

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## References

<sup>1</sup> Pandiani JA, and Banks SM, Data Driven System Transformation. Presented at the 16th Annual Conference On State Mental Health Agency Services Research, Program Evaluation and Policy Research to Inform the System Transformation Process February 12-14, 2006.

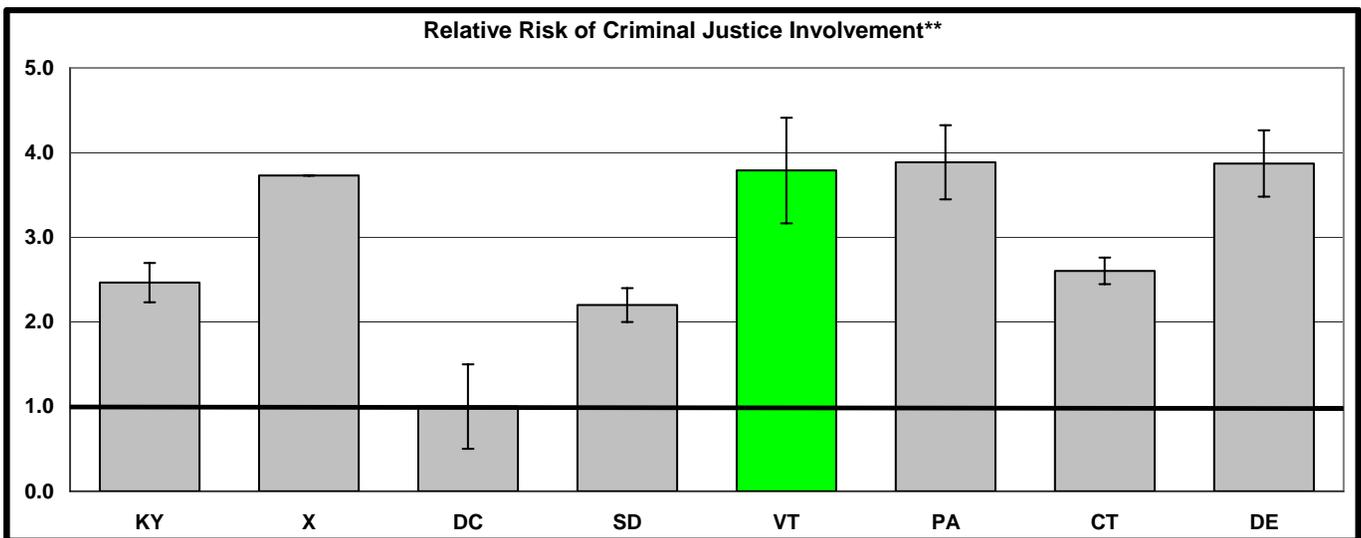
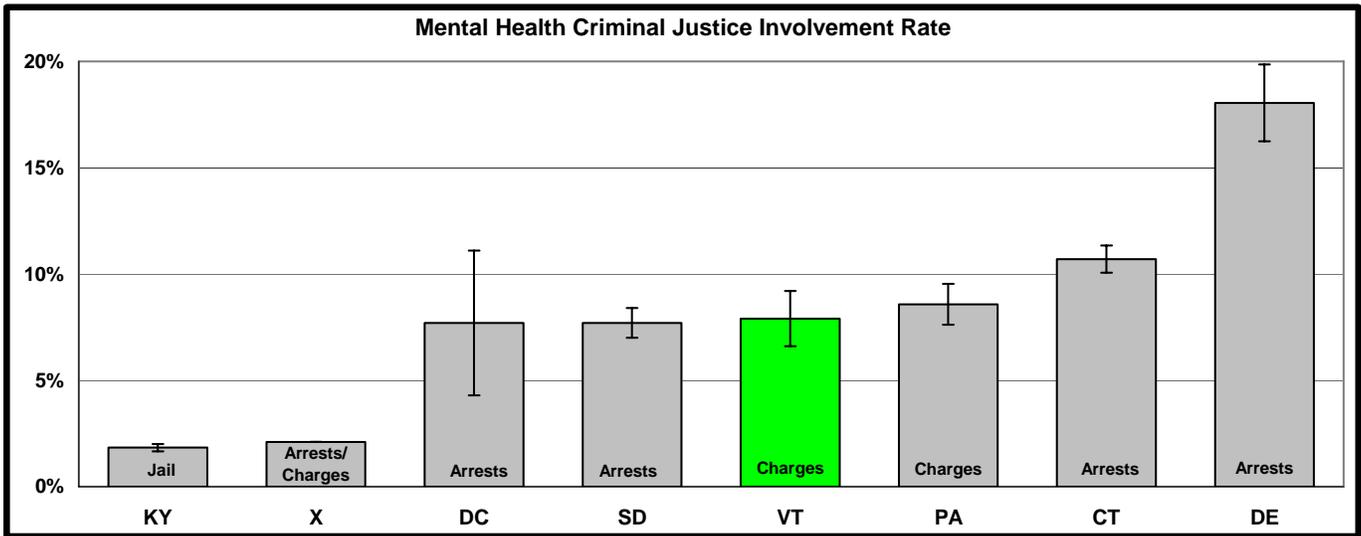
Slide Show (<http://www.nri-inc.org/Conference/Conf06/presentation/Pandiani.ppt>)

Handout (<http://www.thebristolobservatory.com/fulltext/NRI%20060212sec.prn.pdf>)

<sup>2</sup> NRI (2005) State Data Infrastructure Coordinating Center  
(<http://www.nri-inc.org/SDICC/SDICC05/05files.cfm>)

<sup>3</sup> SAMHSA. National Outcome Measures (NOMs)  
(<http://www.nationaloutcomemeasures.samhsa.gov/./outcome/index.asp>)

## Criminal Justice Involvement for Mental Health Service Recipients in 8 States



		Criminal Justice Involvement							
		KY	X	DC	SD	VT	PA	CT	DE
Mental Health Rate		1.8% ± 0.2%	2.1% ± 0.0%	7.7% ± 3.4%	7.7% ± 0.7%	7.9% ± 1.3%	8.6% ± 1.0%	10.7% ± 0.6%	18.0% ± 1.8%
General Population Rate		0.7% ± 0.0%	0.6% ± 0.0%	7.0% ± 0.1%	3.5% ± 0.0%	2.1% ± 0.0%	2.2% ± 0.0%	4.1% ± 0.0%	4.7% ± 0.1%
Relative Risk**		2.5 ± 0.2	3.7 ± 0.0	1.0 ± 0.5	2.2 ± 0.2	3.8 ± 0.6	3.9 ± 0.4	2.6 ± 0.2	3.9 ± 0.4

Analysis based on anonymous extracts from databases maintained by mental health and criminal justice agencies in 8 states. One data set includes mental health services recipients. The second data set includes individuals with criminal justice involvement. Because these data sets do not share unique person identifiers, Probabilistic Population Estimation (PPE) was used to determine caseload size and overlap with 95% confidence intervals. Measures of criminal justice involvement was different between states. The specified measure is indicated on each state in the graph above.

\*\* Relative Risk compares mental health criminal justice involvement to criminal justice involvement for other adult residents in the same state. The relative risk is calculated by dividing the rate of mental health service recipient criminal justice involvement by the rate of criminal justice involvement among the general population. A relative risk that is not significantly different from 1.0 indicates there is no difference between mental health service recipients and the general population. A relative risk of 2.0 would indicate that mental health consumers were twice as likely as members of the general population to be involved with the criminal justice system. A relative risk of 0.5 would indicate that mental health consumers were half as likely to be involved