

Bedlam Revisited: Jails, Police, & Mental Health Courts as the New Psychiatric Care System

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My thesis is simple:

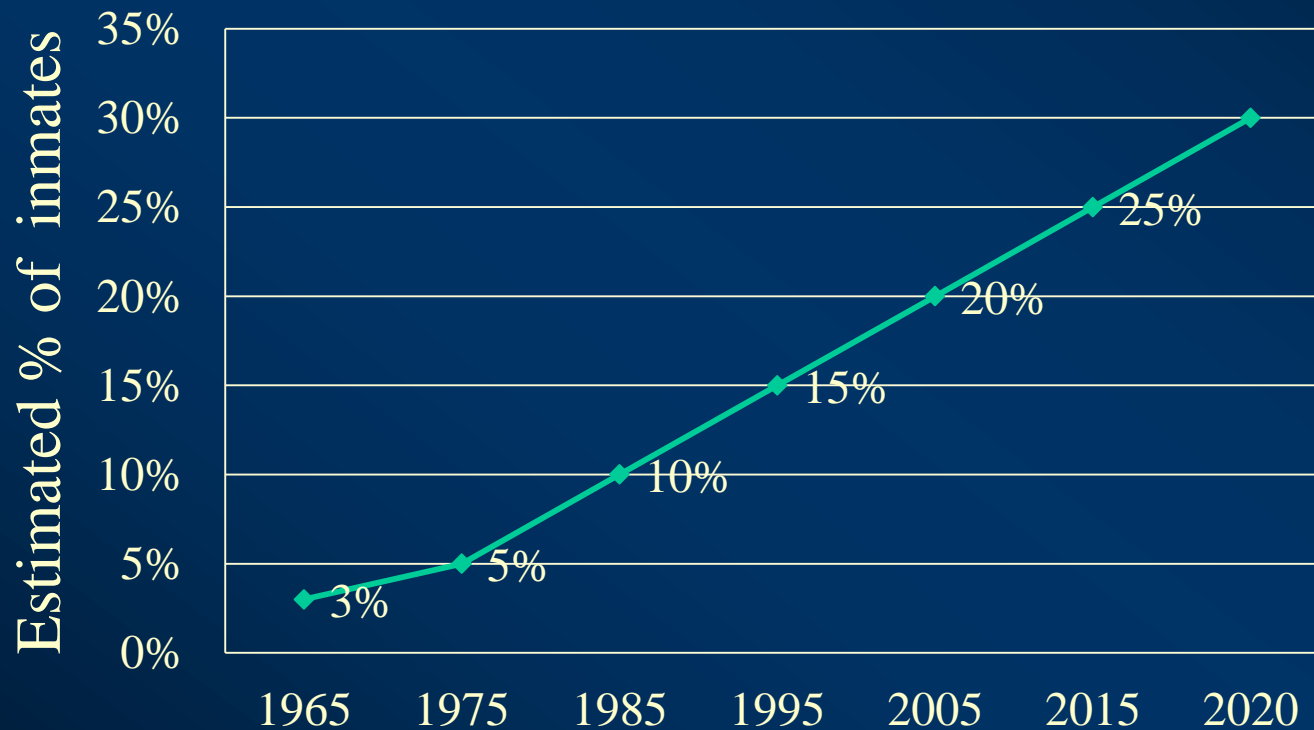
- I. New psychiatric inpatient system: Jails & Prisons
- II. New psychiatric outpatient system: Police & mental health courts

Jails & Prisons

New psychiatric inpatient system

- **July 1969 – Lanterman-Petris-Short Act took effect in CA**
- **1972 – Dr. Marc Abramson reported an increase in the number of mentally ill persons in the San Mateo County, CA jail**

Jail & Prison Inmates with Serious Mental Illness



SMI Jail & Prison Inmates: Current Estimates

Year	Location (State)	Estimate %
2007	Roanoke County jail (VA)	25-30%
2009	Correction Center of NE Ohio (OH)	25%
2010	Broward County jail (FL)	23%
	Harris County jail (TX)	25%
	El Paso County jail (TX)	40%
2011	Tennessee prison system (TN)	32%
	Rikers Island jail (NY)	33%
	Stark County jail (OH)	30%
2012	Massachusetts jails (MA)	26%

2010 Survey Results

Treatment Advocacy Center

- 3x more SMI persons in jails & prisons than hospitals
- 3 largest psychiatric inpatient facilities are county jails in LA, Chicago, & NYC
- County jails hold more SMI persons than public psychiatric inpatient facilities in all US counties

Torrey EF et al, "More Mentally Ill Persons are in Jails & Prisons than Hospitals: A Survey of the States." Treatment Advocacy Center, May 2010

Problems Associated with Mentally Ill Prisoners

- Unable to understand or follow rules
- Costs of antipsychotic medications
- Costs of special monitoring
- Longer stays
- Psychotic behavior
- Suicides
- Lawsuits
- Victimized
- Assaults on staff

Bricks & Mortar Evidence

Jails & Prisons increasingly use special sections set aside for mentally ill inmates

- **2007 (ME) – Proposed turning some county jails into “special facilities for people with mental illness”**
- **2007 (Broward & Dade Counties, FL) – Proposed building first ever county jails built specifically for inmates with chronic and severe mental illness**

Bricks & Mortar Evidence

- 2007 (MT) – Proposed opening special prison for the mentally ill currently housed in the regular prison
- 2012 (NC) – Currently opening a new 5-story hospital for mentally ill prisoners
 - Directly across the street from closed state hospital

Bricks & Mortar Evidence

New York - Marcy State Psychiatric Hospital

1991: Closed &
given to State
Corrections to be
used as a prison

2009: Prison opens
special 100-bed
psychiatric unit
for prisoners

- Thus, some psychiatric patients originally treated in state hospital were later treated in state prison in the same building
- State officials proudly called this “an innovative approach”

Bricks & Mortar Evidence

- 2011 (MS) – In process of emptying psychiatric hospitals
 - Issued mandates requiring jails to become certified to hold the mentally ill

Police & Mental Health Courts: The new outpatient system

- **Police & sheriffs are frontline community health outreach workers and first responders**
 - Mental health calls now exceed calls for robberies, etc.
- **Training of police officers to become mental health workers is widespread**
 - CIT program is an example

Examples of Police & Mental Health

- **Seattle, WA - police departments hire mental health professionals**
- **NC (2010) – sheriff deputies report >32,000 trips to transport psychiatric patients for involuntary commitments**

Examples of Police & Mental Health

- **Ventura County, CA & Hillsborough County, FL – police officers give prisoners rides to first appointments at treatment facilities upon release from jail**
- **San Rafael, CA – police work with local MH Center & drive prisoners to doctor appointments**

Examples of Police & Mental Health

- LA County – “Our local police forces have become armed social workers”
- Over 300 mental health courts exist today & are essentially psychiatric outpatient clinics under judicial jurisdiction

Examples of Police & Mental Health

- **Virginia Beach (2011) – city officials cut \$121,596 from mental health budget**
 - Sheriff offered to transfer \$121,596 of his department's funds to local mental health program
 - “This is money well spent, and it will decrease the money I’d spend housing them [untreated mentally ill individuals]”

What is going on?

- Potential financial savings by mental health departments
- Domino et al. reported increase in the probability of jail use for persons on Medicaid followed by a decrease in expenditures in county mental health system for outpatient care.

Domino et al., "Cost shifting to jails." Health Services Research. 2004; 39:1379-1401.

Possible Next Steps

1. **Status quo: Continuing increase of mentally ill persons in jails & prisons**
2. **Abolition of state and local departments of mental health**
 - **Transfer their funds to Department of Corrections**

Possible Next Steps

3. Mental health section does their job

- Assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) shown to decrease incarceration rate of SMI individuals

- 87% reduction in NY (Kendra's Law Final report, 2005)
- 91% reduction in CA (Nevada County, unpublished, 2012)

Possible Next Steps

4. Further crisis:

Summit County, OH - Sherriff Drew Alexander announced his jail would no longer accept violent mentally ill people arrested by police (Feb 2012)

- First sheriff to take this step

The number of persons distempered in mind and deprived of their rational faculties has increased greatly in this province. Some of them going at large are a terror to their neighbors, who are daily apprehensive of the violence they may commit.

**Pennsylvania Assembly
Benjamin Franklin, 1751**

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