



## CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM FACT SHEET

### Overview

The Department of Corrections estimates that over 41% of the current inmate population has some level of mental health need, and that nearly 20% of those individuals have a serious mental illness.

Without proper treatment, these individuals have a greater likelihood to recidivate and return to prison.

Treatment for mental illness and substance abuse can be effectively treated in the community for much less than the cost of keeping the individual in jail or prison.

- It costs between \$25,000-60,000 per year to keep an individual in a Colorado prison
- It costs between \$6,000-8,000 per year to treat a seriously mentally ill offender in the community

CBHC members are working on innovative jail diversion programs and prison transition options for individuals with serious mental illness.

### **SB07-097— Offender Mental Health Services Fund**

SB07-097 directs 12% of the unused tobacco settlement money to the Offender Mental Health Services Fund to allow for a funding stream for Colorado's Community Mental Health Centers (CMHC) to create treatment programs for adults and juveniles involved in the criminal justice system.

Last year, six CMHCs created offender treatment programs through this fund, with five more adding programs this year.

### **Denver Metro Area County Commissioners (MACC) Study**

The MACC commissioned the study, Transforming Services for Persons with Mental Illness in Contact With the Criminal Justice System, in 2008.

Initial findings show that mentally ill inmates in the seven-county, Denver-metro area have an average jail stay of **121 days vs. 25 days** for non-mentally ill inmates. They also have much higher rates of recidivism.

The MACC also found that these severely mentally ill inmates cost the seven counties an **average quarterly cost of nearly \$8.5 million**.

[www.CommunityReachCenter.org](http://www.CommunityReachCenter.org)

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