

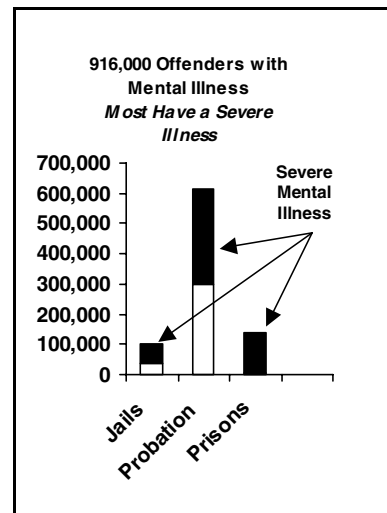
## Individuals with Mental Illnesses in Jail and Prison

### DATA

- ◆ Nearly 2 million new jail admissions are of people with mental illnesses—35,000 individuals a week.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ At the end of 2000, nearly 1 million individuals with mental illnesses were in the criminal justice system.<sup>2</sup>
- ◆ More than 16% of jail inmates have a mental illness, according to the United States Department of Justice.<sup>3</sup>
- ◆ Seventy percent of jail inmates with mental illnesses are there for nonviolent offenses.<sup>4</sup>

### OFFENDERS WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES

- ◆ **In Jails:** 101,000 individuals with mental illnesses were inmates in local jails at year-end 2000. Of these, 63,000 had a severe mental illness.<sup>5</sup> Jails are locally operated facilities that hold people pending arraignment or awaiting trial, conviction or sentencing. Sentencing is either to probation or incarceration in jail (generally under a year) or prison. There are 3,365 local jails.<sup>6</sup>
- ◆ **In Prisons:** 201,000 individuals with mental illnesses were inmates in state (191,000 or 16.2%) and federal (10,000 or 7.9%) prisons at year-end 2000. Of these, 132,000 had a severe mental illness.<sup>7</sup> There are 1,558 adult correctional facilities housing state prisoners and 110 facilities housing federal prisoners.
- ◆ **On Probation:** 614,000 individuals (16%) with mental illnesses were on probation at year-end 2000. Of these, 315,000 had a severe mental illness.<sup>8</sup> Probation represents a more moderate sanction than incarceration. It is generally given to offenders with few or no prior convictions or to those guilty of less serious offenses.



### DESCRIPTION OF THE POPULATION

New Department of Justice data confirm previous research findings that most individuals with mental illnesses in the criminal justice system have had extensive experience with both the criminal justice and mental health systems and have a severe mental disorder and poor functioning.

As seen in the following tables, on every item, in all settings—jails, state prisons, federal prisons and probation—offenders with mental illnesses are more likely than other offenders to have the reported problem.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF OFFENDERS WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES <sup>9</sup>**  
*Compared with total population*

UNSTABLE EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING				
	Probation	Jail	State Prison	Federal Prison
unemployed in month before arrest	--	47.1% vs.33.4%	38.8% vs. 30.4%	37.7% vs. 27.5%
homeless in year before arrest	--	30.3% vs. 17.3%	20.1% vs. 8.8%	18.6% vs. 3.2%
homeless at time of arrest	--	6.9% vs. 2.9%	3.9% vs. 1.2%	3.9% vs. 0.3%

DEFICITS IN SOCIAL SKILLS AND ADJUSTMENT				
	Probation	Jail	State Prison	Federal Prison
been abused physically or sexually	38.8% vs. 12.1%	36.5% vs. 12.5%	36.9% vs.15.2%	34.1% vs. 7.6%
family member incarcerated	40.3% vs. 34.0%	51.5% vs. 45.1%	41.5% vs. 38.5%	51.5% vs. 45.1%
lived in a foster home	15.9% vs. 6.5%		26.1% vs. 12.2%	18.6% vs. 5.8%
alcohol-abusing parent or guardian	32.4% vs. 19.2%	29.3% vs. 21.9%	30.6% vs. 22.2%	24.6% vs. 16.0%

SUBSTANCE ABUSE				
	Probation	Jail	State Prison	Federal Prison
history of alcohol dependence	34.8% vs. 22.1%	37.9% vs. 24.3%	34.4% vs. 22.4%	23.9% vs. 15.6%
used alcohol or drugs at time of offense	49.0% vs. 46.4%	64.5% vs. 56.5%	58.7% vs. 51.2%	46.5% vs. 33.0%
a heavy drinker	45.7% vs. 33.7%	52.9% vs. 38.0%	48.8% vs. 39.5%	43.9% vs. 29.2%
lost a job because of drinking	19.4% vs. 5.3%	18.0% vs. 10.3%	16.7% vs. 9.0%	8.7% vs. 4.7%
job or school trouble because of drinking	25.2% vs. 10.5%	--	24.0% vs. 13.8%	15.4% vs. 7.1%
been arrested or held at a police station because of drinking	45.7% vs. 41.1%	41.5% vs. 30.7%	35.2% vs. 28.3%	30.7% vs. 18.3%

1. Based on admission rates reported in Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin, *Census of Jails*, 1999 (August 2001, NCJ 186633, p. 5) multiplied by the percentage of jail inmates with a mental illness (16.3%) reported in Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, *Mental Health Treatment of Inmates and Probationers* (July 1999, NCJ 174463).
2. Calculated using the respective rates of mental illness reported in Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, *Mental Health Treatment of Inmates and Probationers* (NCJ 174463) and year-end jail and prison population numbers reported in Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin, *Prisoners in 2000* (August 2001, NCJ 188207) and probationers reported in Bureau of Justice Statistics press release of August 26, 20001.
3. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, *Mental Health Treatment of Inmates and Probationers* (NCJ 174463).
4. *Id.*
5. Based on self reports by inmates and probationers and, for severity, on overnight admissions to a mental hospital or treatment program.
6. Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin, *Census of Jails*, 1999 (August 2001, NCJ 186633).
7. Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin, *Prisoners in 2000* (August 2001, NCJ 188207).
8. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, *Substance Abuse and Treatment of Adults on Probation*, 1995 (March 1998, NCJ 166611).
9. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, *Mental Health Treatment of Inmates and Probationers* (July 1999, NCJ 174463).