

## Brief Jail Mental Health Screen Pilot Project

### Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program Grant

Over the course of 5 weeks in the summer of 2017, Kate Gorman, Denise Smith, and two OPD Social Work Interns conducted a pilot screening project of detainees at Baltimore Central Booking and Intake Center (BCBIC) utilizing the Brief Jail Mental Health Screen (BJMHS). The goal of this pilot was to better understand the prevalence of mental health issues among the detainee population. A positive screening result on the BJMHS indicates the presence of potential mental health issues and recommends a follow-up assessment. The screening tool that is administered by nursing staff to all detainees during intake at BCBIC, includes mental health questions, but it is not empirically validated. Additionally, data collected from the screen was not available to review.

The Pilot BJMHS Project was administered to mostly male detainees at BCBIC during attorney interviews prior to bail review. The Office of the Public Defender assigns attorneys to represent each client before bail review. During the time they are waiting to speak with their attorney, JMHP Grant staff asked detainees to voluntarily participate in a pilot project. They were asked to answer 8 yes or no questions about their mental health to help OPD better understand the mental health needs of this population. Due to the fast moving pace of this stage of the process, not all individuals were able to be screened, and some refused to participate. Women were not screened every day due to logistical difficulties within the facility. Women are interviewed by an attorney at the same time as the men in a different area of the facility. For this reason, women detainees were only screened on 2 occasions over the 5 week pilot period.

Over the course of the BJMHS Pilot, 409 detainees were screened with the instrument between July 17, 2017 and August 18, 2017. The pilot period was chosen so that the sample was large enough to produce meaningful findings. The BJMHS was administered and scored according to the protocol and each score was reviewed for accuracy. To better understand characteristics between individuals who screened positive and individuals who screened negative, a representative sample was selected from the population of individuals who screened negative. The main statistics and findings from the data are as follows:

- **Screening Period:**
  - o Monday through Friday from July 17, 2017 to August 18, 2017 (5 weeks)
- **Screening Totals:**
  - o Screened Positive: 159 (39% positive screening rate)
  - o Screened Negative: 205
  - o Refused to participate: 45
  - o Total: 409
- **Screenings administered by gender:**
  - o Men: 399
  - o Women: 10
- **Screening Result by Offense Type:**
  - o *Total Misdemeanor Offenders: 211*
    - Screened Positive: 83
    - Screened Negative: 110
    - Refused to participate: 18
  - o *Total Felony Offenders: 198*
    - Screened Positive: 76
    - Screened Negative: 95

- Refused to participate: 27
- **Individuals who screened positive were, on average:**
  - Slightly older (misdemeanors average age: 35.5 years old positive vs. 33 years old negative; felonies average age: 30 years old positive vs. 29 years old negative)
  - Had more charges per arrest/incident (i.e., one count of Assault 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree vs. multiple counts Assault 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree, Resisting Arrest, and Disorderly Conduct, etc.)
  - More likely to plead or be found guilty
  - More likely to be detained pretrial and for longer periods of time
    - 3 months after pilot period ended: 37% (58/159) positive screen population still detained vs. 22% (35/159) of negative sample still detained
    - 1 year later: 41% (31/76) of the individuals charged with felonies who screened positive never left custody vs. 17% (13/76) felony offenders in the negative sample never left custody
  - Higher average number of prior interactions with OPD
    - At least 5 previous interactions: 50% (80/159) positive population vs. 35% (55/159) negative sample population
    - 20% (32/159) of the individuals who screened positive had 9 or more previous interactions with OPD compared to 14% (22/159) of the negative sample population
- **Rates of Recidivism (*one year follow up*)**
  - Individuals charged with misdemeanors who screened positive were more likely to recidivate within 1 year compared to the negative misdemeanant sample
  - 61% (51/83) of the positive misdemeanor offenders recidivated within one year vs. 51% (42/83) of the negative sample
    - Positive screen population: 40 individuals had new charges, 15 had VOPs, and 6 FTA'ed at least once (*some people recidivated in multiple categories—new charge, VOP, and/or FTA*)
    - Negative screen sample: 36 individuals had new charges, 12 VOPs, and 7 FTA'ed at least once
  - 39% (30/76) of the positive felony offenders recidivated within one year vs. 47% (36/76) of the negative sample
    - However, 31 of the 76 individuals charged with felonies who screened positive were still in custody a year later and never left, leaving only 45 potential people to recidivate, and 30 of them did (30/45 or 67%)
    - In the negative sample population, 13 of 76 individuals were still in custody a year later and never left, leaving 63 potential people to recidivate, and 36 of them did (36/63 or 57%)
    - Positive screen population: 24 people had new charges, 10 VOPs, 4 FTA'ed at least once
    - Negative screen sample: 30 people new had charges, 8 VOPs, 11 FTA'ed at least once
  - Two people who screened positive died within one year of being screened; there is no publicly available information to indicate that any of the negative sample population died