

Come be part of NACo's efforts to reduce the number of people with mental illness in jails

NACo has partnered with researchers at George Mason University, Michigan State University, and the University of Central Florida to find out what approaches are working nationally to reduce the number of people with mental illness in jails.

The project: The **I.M. Justice Behavioral Health** Evaluation Project is collecting data on 950 counties to identify the ways counties address the needs of justice-involved people with mental illnesses in the jail and/or community. The project is led by Drs. Faye Taxman, Jennifer Johnson, and Jill Viglione and funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (R01 MH118680).



Why is this project important? Local jails house many different populations, but those with mental illness are more likely to be detained pretrial, have longer length of stay, and cycle between the community and the jail. To make progress in reducing the size of the jail population and address mental health availability and accessibility issues, we need to identify ways to improve services in and out of the legal system. Many counties suffer from a lack of services such as treatment centers, physicians, psychiatrists, mental health clinics, etc., and many services do not embrace evidence-based practices that tend to deliver high quality outcomes. This project will learn from counties to identify solutions to these problems.

What can you do?

The **I.M. Justice Behavioral Health** study is conducting a survey and/or interviewing individuals to learn about services available, the work of inter-agency teams to impact how the jail is used, and efforts to build county capacity to make reforms.

We estimate the survey will take about an hour to complete. You will need to know information about your county, practices and treatments available, and your agency budget for mental health/substance use treatment services and planning activities.

Take the survey, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/3ed8kajc> or contact us for a personalized survey link at IMJusticeBH@ucf.edu. Each county that responds will get a **feedback report** on their efforts, which can be used to motivate, encourage, and continue to think about service improvements for those with mental illness in and out of jail. It can be used to build capacity.

Click [HERE](#) or scan this QR code to see a sample **Feedback Report**:



For questions, please contact:

Faye S. Taxman | ftaxman@gmu.edu

Jill Viglione | jviglione@ucf.edu

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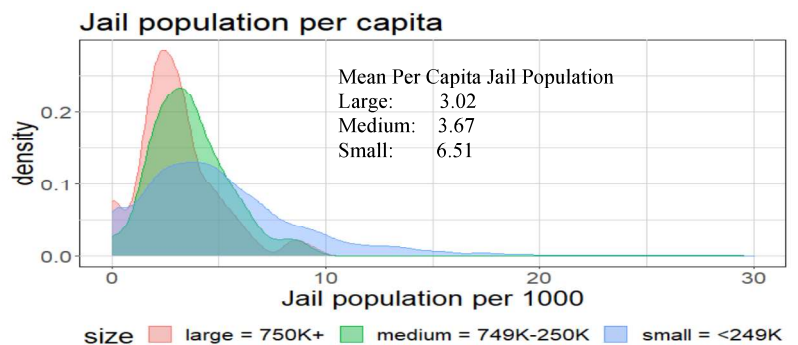
What have we learned so far?

Factors that predict the size of a jail population:

Contribute to Higher Jail Incarceration Rate	Contribute to Lower Jail Incarceration Rate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher number of physically unhealthy days reported Increased healthcare costs in a county Increased number of police officers per capita 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher percent of Medicaid payment for drug treatment services Higher rate of psychiatrists per capita in the county Higher high school graduation rates Larger size of county population

***Violent crime rate, income inequality in the county, primary care physician rates, racial distribution, and rate of community mental health centers per capita did not have a statistically significant impact on the size of the jail population. Other variables were not found to be statistically related to jail size and were not included in statistical models.

- The size of the county population is related to resources; jail population rates are defined per capita (per 1,000 people in the county).
- Smaller counties tend to incarcerate more people in their jails per capita than large- to medium-size counties.



Factors that predict the mental health resources/capacity of the counties:

Contribute to Higher MH Provider Rates	Contribute to Lower MH Provider Rates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher number of physically unhealthy days reported Higher primary care physician rate per capita Higher percent of Medicaid payments for drug treatment services Higher income inequality in the county Higher violent crime rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased healthcare costs and expenditures in a county Higher percent of Black and Hispanic population Increased number of police officers per capita Higher high school graduation rates Higher percent of rurality in the counties

***Mental health provider rates include the number of psychologists, counselors, social workers, and psychiatrists per 1,000 population.

- A county's mental health infrastructure is related to its capacity to manage individuals with mental illness inside and outside the justice system.
- Smaller counties tend to have fewer per capita mental health providers than large- to medium-size counties.

