

As a follow-up to Senators Bates' question regarding law enforcement interactions with individuals with mental health emergencies, below are some national articles that discuss the issue, followed by Oregon specific analysis and articles. If we can provide additional information or answer any questions please let us know.

Sincerely,

Eriks Gabliks
DPSST

Federal - Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)

A 2008 BJA report on law enforcement responses to people with mental illness indicates that behaviors resulting from mental illness are a factor in 3 to 7 percent of all law enforcement calls for service. Calls for service involving people with mental illness as suspected offenders, victims or witnesses are often disproportionately time-consuming. BJA reported that a very small proportion of crisis calls involving persons with mental illness tragically result in the injury or death of officers, persons with mental illness, or innocent bystanders.

According to a 2006 Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) analysis, 24% of state prisoners report a recent history of mental illness, as do 21% of jail inmates and 14% of federal prisoners. Nearly three-quarters of these inmates also have a co-occurring substance abuse disorder. About 15% of state prisoners and 24% of jail inmates interviewed for the BJS study reported current symptoms that met Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) IV criteria for a psychotic disorder, compared to just 3% of the general population. Across all types of adult correctional facilities, the BJS study shows that a higher proportion of female than of male inmates are assessed as having mental health problems.

BJA Research <http://ojp.gov/newsroom/testimony/2009/lawenforcementresearch.pdf>

CJA/State Government Study <http://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/le-research.pdf>

International Association of Chiefs of Police Mental Health Summit

<http://www.theiacp.org/portals/0/pdfs/ImprovingPoliceResponsetoPersonsWithMentalIllnessSummit.pdf>

City of Portland – Portland State University Study: Report on Police Interactions with Persons in Mental Health Crisis

March 2012 Study

Between 2001 and 2011, suicide calls to BOEC in the City of Portland grew from 630 calls to 12,003 per year, a dramatic rise in call volume. Some of this rise in call volume may be due to increased demand for services, such as mental health and addiction services.

This increase in call volume for the police has been mirrored by a corresponding increase in adults provided with mental health services by Multnomah County. In 2004, 5,292 adults were served by Multnomah County mental health providers. By 2011, this number had grown to 10,062 persons served.

The following list contains changes over time in potential indicators related to police contact with persons in mental health crisis:

- Since 2004, Multnomah County has expanded mental health services provided to adults by 90% (this does not necessarily indicate increased need but demonstrates improved service delivery by Multnomah County and may indicate increased demand).
- Since 2001, aggregate suicides have increased by more than 33% (although rates have risen less and decreased considerably since the mid-1990s).
- Suicide calls responded to by the Portland Police Bureau have risen 90% since 2001.
- Attempted suicides (not calls but actual attempts) have risen by nearly 13% since 2001.
- Welfare check calls (a broad range of calls, only some of which are related to mental health) have risen 39% since 2001.
- Investigations by Multnomah County's Investigative Commitment Program (ICP) have risen nearly 70% since 1998 (this is exceptionally important as the ICP investigates holds for mental health issues prior to civil commitment and is an excellent indicator of increased demand related to issues surrounding mental health).

<http://www.pdx.edu/cpsso/sites/www.pdx.edu.cpsso/files/MH%20Report%20Final.pdf>

City of Bend Police Department

“Seeing more cases involving suspected mental illness”

By Claire Withycombe

The Bulletin Published Feb 16, 2015 at 12:07AM

In the past 10 years, the number of cases filed annually by the Bend Police Department involving people believed to be mentally ill has grown from less than 1 percent of total cases to about 3 percent, according to records provided to The Bulletin. Bend Police have voiced concerns that the number of such emergency calls has grown, which the case numbers appear to bear out. Overall, the department received nearly 100,000 calls for service in the past couple of years, including calls related to mental illness. Only about a tenth of the overall total results in cases. Calls concerning the mentally ill are sensitive and often more time-intensive than typical calls, police say, especially if someone is in crisis.

<http://www.bendbulletin.com/localstate/2881951-153/bend-police-seeing-more-cases-involving-suspected-mental>

Oregon State University Study: Law Enforcement Response to People with Mental Illnesses in Benton County

The police records reviewed by the study team contain information on the time spent during each police contact, which allows for analysis of the total amount of time Benton County law enforcement spent on "mental" contacts. The review shows a slight increase in time spent on all "mental" contacts from 2007 through 2010. This is followed by a dramatic rise in 2011, driven largely by the increased number of informally resolved contacts and the time spent on them. By 2011, Benton County law enforcement agencies were spending more than 400 hours per year in "mental" contacts, double the 200 hours spent on such contacts in 2007.

Another review looked at "Peace Officer Custody" that provided a different measure of police contact with mentally ill suspects. A Peace Officer Custody (POC) is an arrest that occurs because an individual is believed to be a danger to himself or others due to mental illness. The OSU analysis showed the number of POCs fluctuated between 124 and 144 each year between 2007 and 2011. In 2012, the number of POCs jumped to 245, more than 60 percent above than the previous high point. This rise in POCs is not a function of rising frequency of total arrests in Benton County, as the number of non-POC arrests declined slightly from 2010 through 2012.

<http://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/economics/akinsburkhardt28feb2014.pdf>

League of Oregon Cities - Scope of the Problem

"It is common knowledge that people with chronic mental health and substance use disorders are over-represented in the criminal justice system compared to the general population. Fifteen percent of men and 31 percent of women in U.S. jails suffer from serious mental illness and more than 70 percent of this group has a co-occurring substance use disorder. A 2013 Oregon jail survey reflects this statistic—survey respondents reported two-thirds of their jail inmates have mental health or substance use disorders. The vast majority of this population is charged with minor, non-violent crimes, and includes veterans returning from combat who are at higher risk for mental health and substance use problems. Despite these high rates, mental health treatment in correctional settings is generally inadequate. People with greater psychiatric needs are more likely to be victims of violence or suicide and to be housed in segregation while incarcerated. A significant portion of individuals with serious mental illness cycle in and out of criminal justice systems (31 percent incarcerated 10 or more times)."

"In Forest Grove, police serviced 23,514 calls in 2013. Of those, 63 percent were self-initiated and 37 percent were 9-1-1 or non-emergency calls. While it is challenging to precisely say how many of these calls involved the mentally ill, estimates put it at 30-40 percent. To say this has reached levels that are epidemic still underscores the real impact to first responders. Twenty years ago, calls involving the mentally ill were more of an anomaly. An officer would respond to such a call on a monthly basis."

<http://www.orcities.org/Portals/17/Publications/localfocus/Dec2014web.pdf>