SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR): A Reentry Tool for Individuals Involved in the Criminal Justice System

Presented by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

SOAR Technical Assistance (TA) Center

In Partnership with the SAMHSA GAINS Center

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

October 24, 2018

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Webinar Instructions

- Muting
- Recording availability
- Downloading documents
- Questions and Answers

Purpose and Objectives

- Key strategies for introducing SOAR to and engaging criminal justice systems
- SOAR best practices for assisting SSI/SSDI applicants who are involved in the criminal justice system

Agenda

SOAR and Criminal Justice System Implementation

- Dazara Ware, MPC, SAMHSA SOAR TA Center, Policy Research Associates, Inc., Delmar, New York
- Dan Abreu, MS CRC LMHC, SAMHSA GAINS Center, Policy Research Associates, Inc., Delmar, New York

SOAR Jail Implementation: Nashville Example

- Paul J. Mulloy, Director of Programs, Nashville Sheriff's Office, Nashville, Tennessee
- Lolita Johnson, LEAD SOAR Counselor, Davidson County Sheriff's Office, Nashville, Tennessee

SOAR Prison Implementation: Oklahoma Example

- Donna Bond, Coordinator of Mental Health Reentry, Oklahoma Department of Corrections, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- Marcus Ayers, Manager of Prison Based Reentry Services, Oklahoma Department of Mental Health Services, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Questions and Answers

- Facilitated by the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center

Welcome!

Robert Grace
Public Health Advisor
Homeless Programs Branch
Center for Mental Health Services
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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SOAR and the Criminal Justice System

Dazara Ware
Senior Project Associate
SAMHSA SOAR Technical Assistance Center
Policy Research Associates, Inc.

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What is SOAR?

SOAR WORKS

- A model for assisting eligible individuals to apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- For individuals who are experiencing or at-risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, co-occurring substance use disorder, or other physical disabilities
- Sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in collaboration with the Social Security Administration (SSA) since 2005
- All 50 states and Washington, D.C. currently participate

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SSI and SSDI: The Basics

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

- Needs based
- Federal benefit rate is $750 (2018)
- Provides Medicaid in most states

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

- Amount depends on earnings put into SSA system
- Medicare generally provided after 2 years of eligibility

Receiving Benefits: Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

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Incarceration Time	Effect on Benefits	Action Needed Upon Release
< 1 full calendar month	No effect	N/A
1 - 12 calendar months	Suspended	Can be reinstated upon release
12+ consecutive calendar months	Terminated	Must reapply*

*As a general rule, reapplication can be made 30 days prior to expected release date but benefits cannot begin until release. With a pre-release agreement, this time can be extended to 120 days prior to release.

Receiving Benefits: Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

SOAR WORKS

Incarceration Time	Effect on Benefits	Action Needed Upon Release
< 30 days	No effect	N/A
> 30 days* *convicted and confined	Suspended	Can be reinstated upon release

*Recipients are eligible to continue receiving their benefits until they are convicted of a criminal offense and confined to a penal institution for more than 30 continuous days.

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What Makes SOAR Unique?

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SOAR Leadership Structure

SOAR TA Center

- Facilitates strategic planning meetings
- Conducts Leadership Academies, webinars, & learning communities
- Develops resources, including SOARWorks, the SOAR Online Course, and OAT
- Provides TA at all stages of SOAR implementation

State Team Lead

- Facilitates state steering committee
- Directs plans to grow & sustain statewide activities
- Serves as liaison to localities
- Maintains relationships with SSA & DDS
- Submits SOAR outcomes to the TA Center

Local Lead

- Facilitates local steering committee
- Directs local implementation plans
- Facilitates SOAR Online Course cohorts
- Conducts SOAR Fundamentals trainings
- Ensures quality applications & reports outcomes

Case Manager

- Completes high-quality SSI & SSDI applications using the SOAR model
- Communicates with local SSA & DDS representatives
- Tracks application outcomes

*OAT: Online Application Tracking Program
*SSA: Social Security Administration
*DDS: Disability Determination Services
*TA: Technical Assistance

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Oh, the support you will receive!

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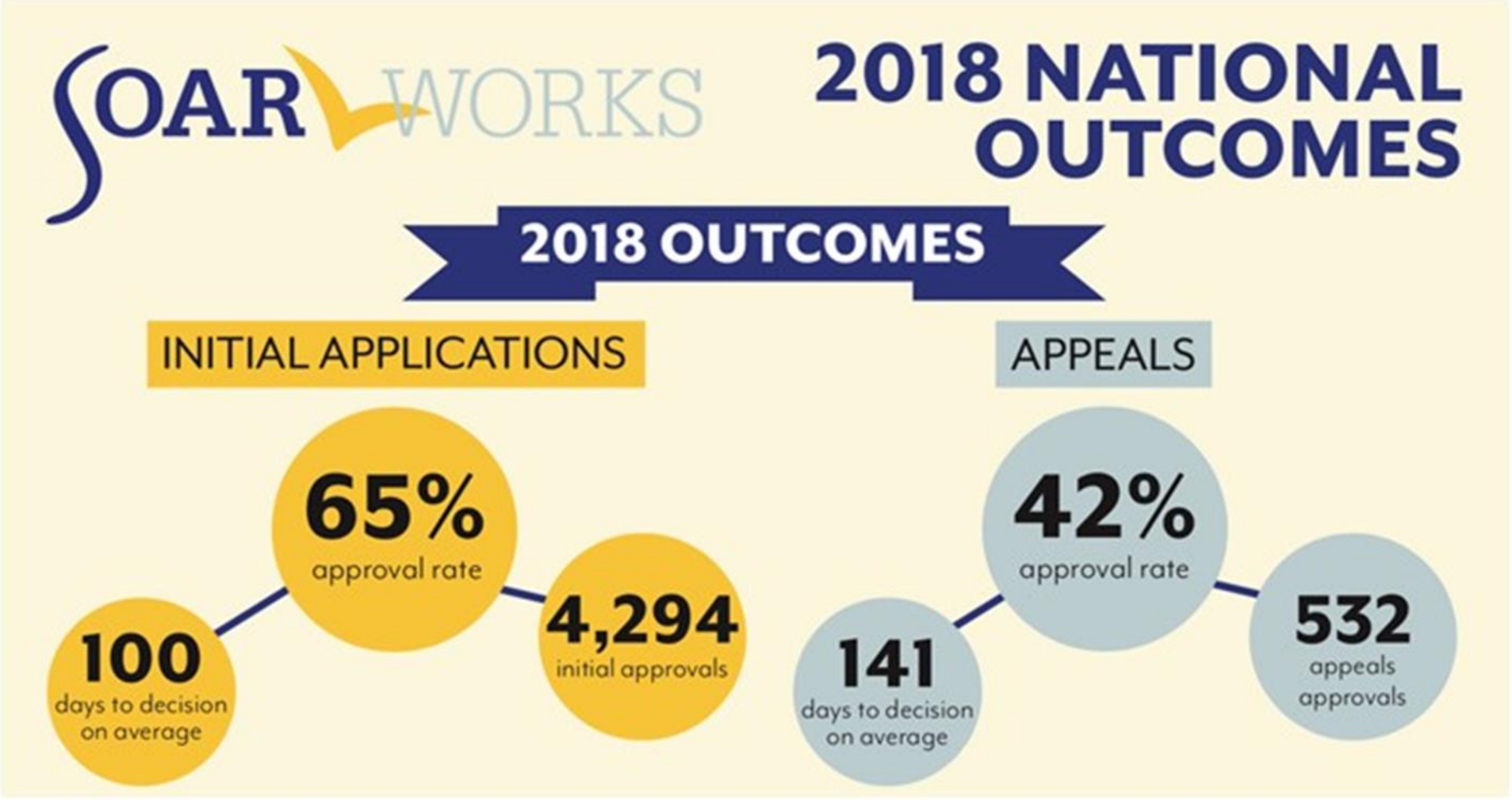
2018 National SOAR Outcomes



*As compared to a 29% approval rate for all SSI/SSDI applicants nationwide

SSI Annual Statistical Report, 2017. Table 70. SSA Pub. No. 13-11827. Washington, D.C.: SSA, September 2018

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SOAR Criminal Justice Outcomes

Cumulative total of SOAR-assisted initial SSI/SSDI applications for people residing in correctional facilities:

Average days to decision:

Approval rate:

**Data accessed from the SOAR Online Application (OAT) tracking system on August 1, 2018*

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SSI/SSDI Promotes Post Release Success

- Income: Reduces state costs
- Insurance: Healthier individuals; healthier communities
- Access to housing: Becoming a paying customer
- Integration into community
- Decrease in incarcerations and hospitalizations

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Collaborations

- The areas of criminal justice, behavioral health, and homelessness share the same clientele
- No single program can address every need
- Collaboration is key to successful reentry

SOAR Implementation in Criminal Justice Settings

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How to Start a SOAR Initiative in CJ Settings

- Identify the need
- Prepare a proposal
- Use outcomes to gain leverage for funding
- Work with SSA and DDS on pre-release agreement
- Communicate, Collaborate, Initiate

SOAR Implementation in Criminal Justice Settings

Dan Abreu
Senior Project Associate
SAMHSA GAINS Center
Policy Research Associates, Inc.
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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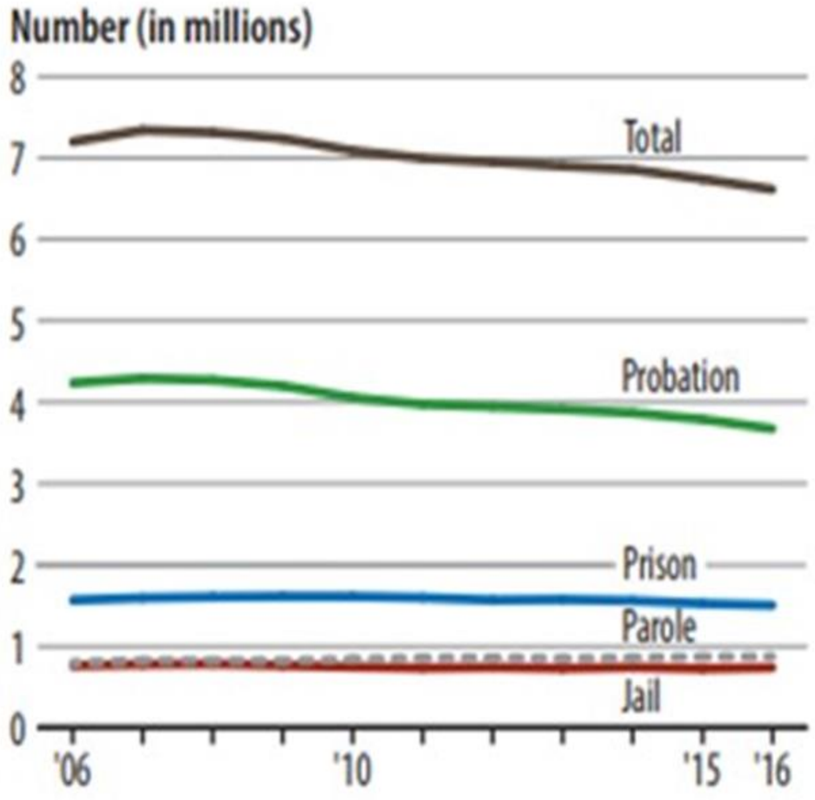
The Numbers

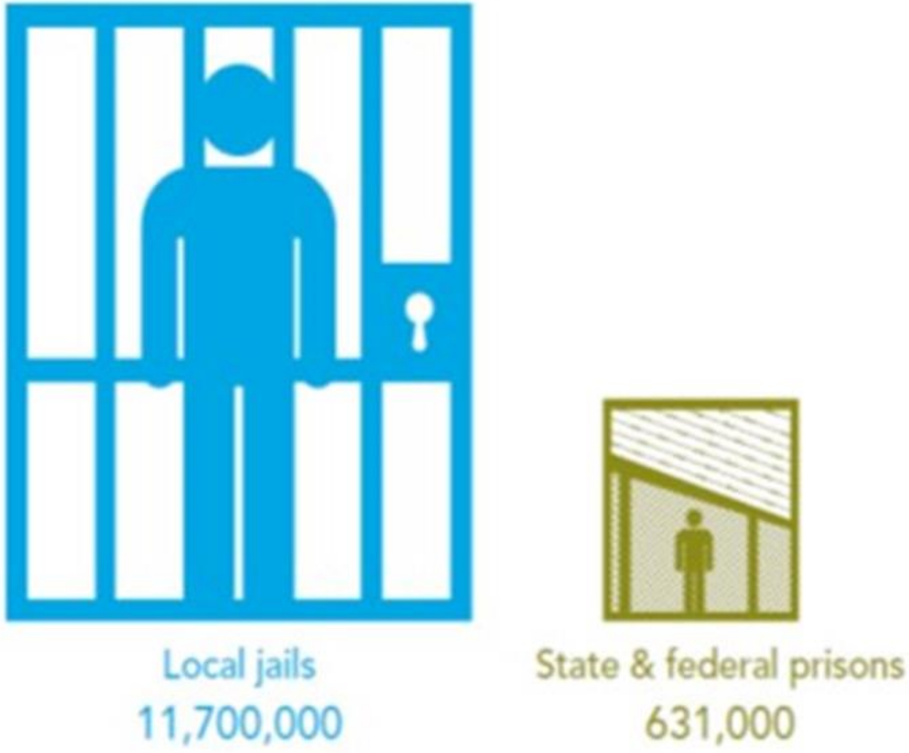
FIGURE 1
Total population under the supervision of U.S. adult correctional systems, 2006–2016



Kabele, D., & Cowhig, M. (2018). *Correctional populations in the United States, 2016.* Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

1.9 MILLION in jail or prison

Jails have a much broader reach than prisons. Although state and federal prisons hold about twice the number of people on any given day than jails do, jails have almost 19 times the number of annual admissions than prisons do.



Local jails
11,700,000

State & federal prisons
631,000

Subramainian, R., Delaney, R., Roberts, S., Fishman, N., & McGarry, P. (2015). *Incarceration's front door: The misuse of jails in America.* New York: Vera Institute.

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Medical Problems of State Prisoners

Ever had a chronic condition/disease?	State and federal prisoners	General population
Chronic Condition	**43.9**	**31**
High Blood pressure	30	18
Diabetes	9	6.5
Heart related	9.8	2.9
Infectious Disease	**21**	**4.8**
Hepatitis	10	1.1
Tuberculosis	6	.5
HIV/AIDS	1.3	.4

Maruschak, L.M. Berzofsky, M., Unangst, J. (2016). Medical Problems of State and Federal Prisoners and Jail Inmates, 2011–12. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

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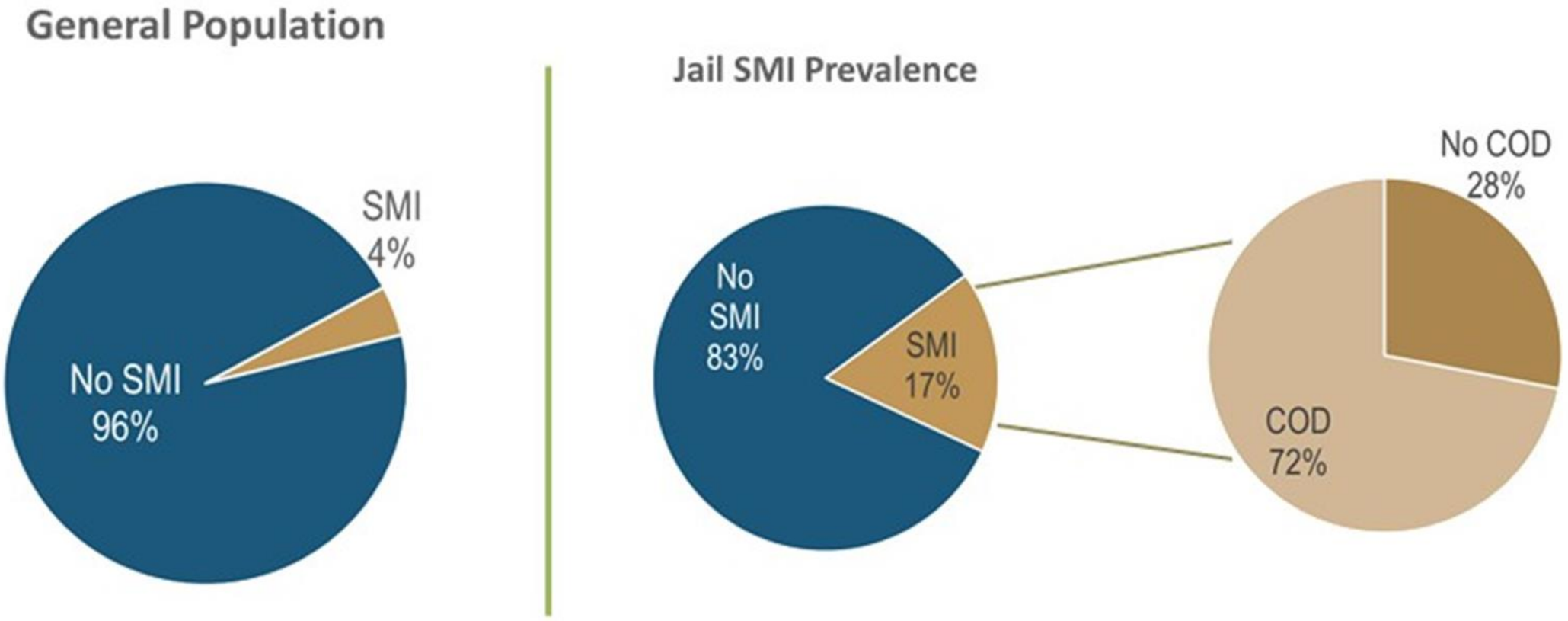
Jails and Mental Disorders



Steadman, H. J., Scott, J. E., Osher, F., et al. (2005). Validation of the Brief Jail Mental Health Screen. *Psychiatric Services,* 56: 816–822.

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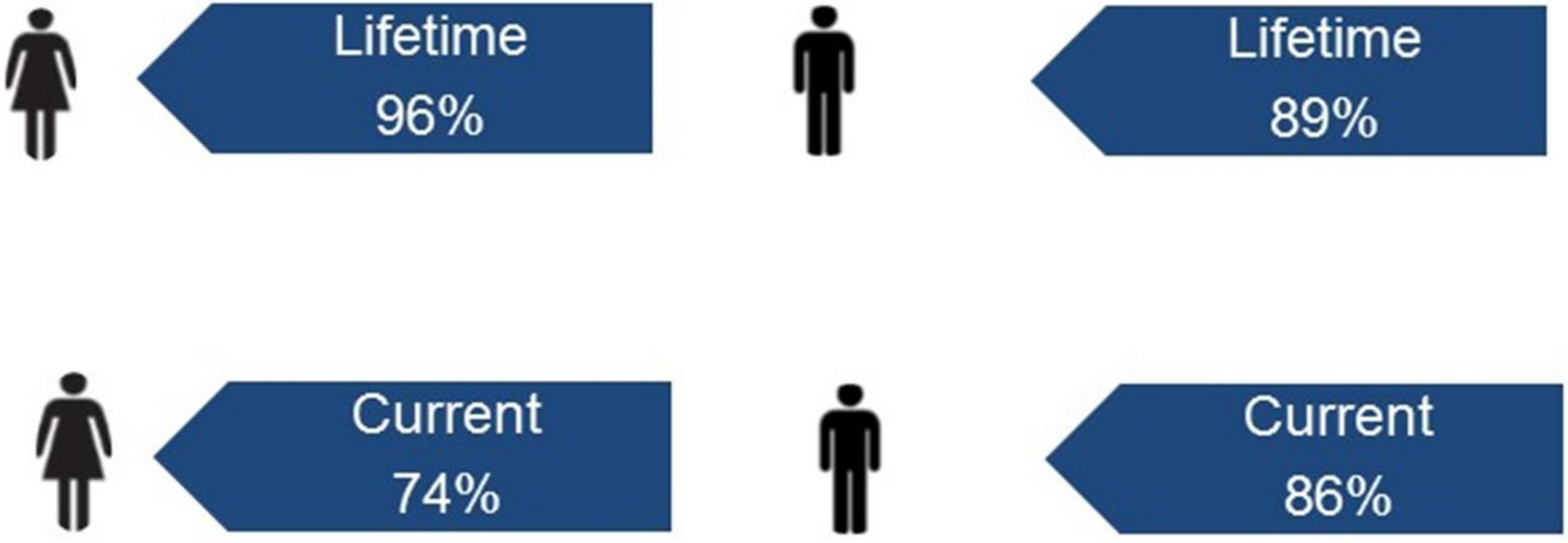
Diversion of People with Serious Mental Illness

High Rates of Physical and Sexual Abuse



Policy Research Associates, Inc. (2012). Evaluation of the CMHS Targeted Capacity Expansion for Jail Diversion Programs: Final Report. Delmar, NY: Author.

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Differences with Serious Mental illness (SMI)

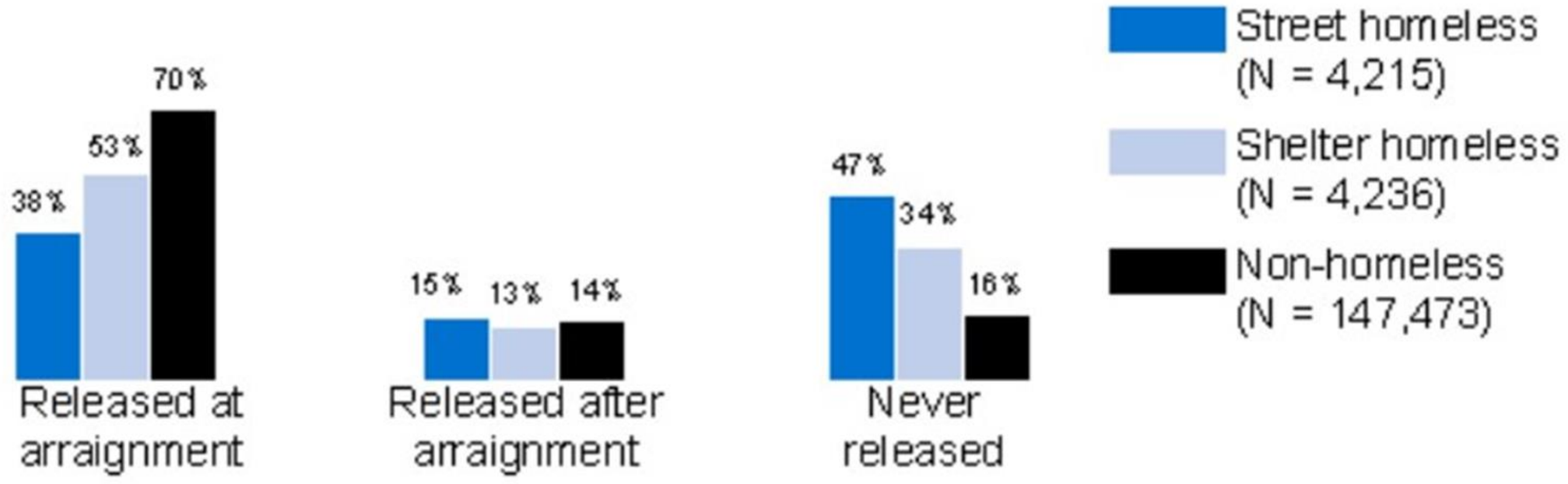
How are justice-involved persons with SMI different from those without SMI?

- More likely to experience homelessness
- More likely to have co-occurring disorders
- Use a greater variety of services (higher cost)
- More likely to have disciplinary problems
- More likely to be unemployed
- More psychological impairment (incl. extensive trauma histories) (1)
- Longer Length of Stay (2)

1. James, D.J., Glaze, L.E. (2006). Mental Health Problems of Prison and Jail Inmates Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ 213600
2. Council of State Governments Justice Center. (2012). Improving Outcomes for People with Mental Illnesses Involved with New York City's Criminal Court and Correction Systems.

Justice Involvement Compounds Homelessness and Vice Versa

Figure 8
Release Outcomes of Cases Continued Beyond Arraignment for Homeless and Non-Homeless Arrestees, 2013



Peterson, R. P. (2015). *Arrested and homeless in NYC* (Research Brief). New York: New York City Criminal Justice Agency .

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Nature of Jails

Figure 1: Convicted and unconvicted jail inmates, 2013

Source: Todd D. Minton and Daniela Golinelli, *Jail Inmates at Midyear 2013 - Statistical Tables.* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014), appendix table 3, p. 11

Jail's revolving door in New York City, 2008 - 2013

473 people were admitted to jail 18 times or more:

- > 85% charged with misdemeanor or violation
- > 21% had a serious mental illness
- > 99.4% had a substance use disorder

Accounting for more than **10,000** jail admissions

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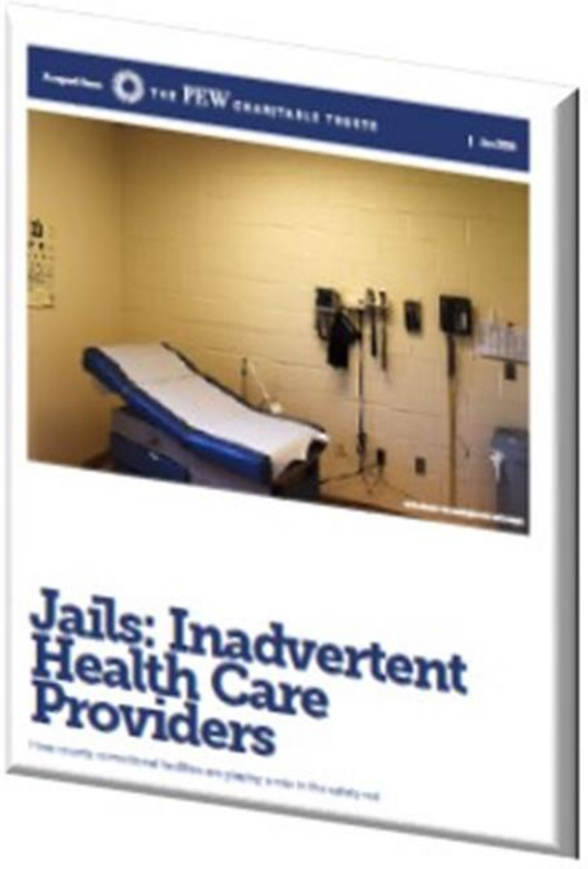
Jail Health Care Models

- Jail employs health care staff
- Jail contracts with National Correctional Health Care Vendor
- Jail contracts with local, private or public providers
- County Health Department and/or jail provides jail health care



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Reentry is a Matter of Life and Death

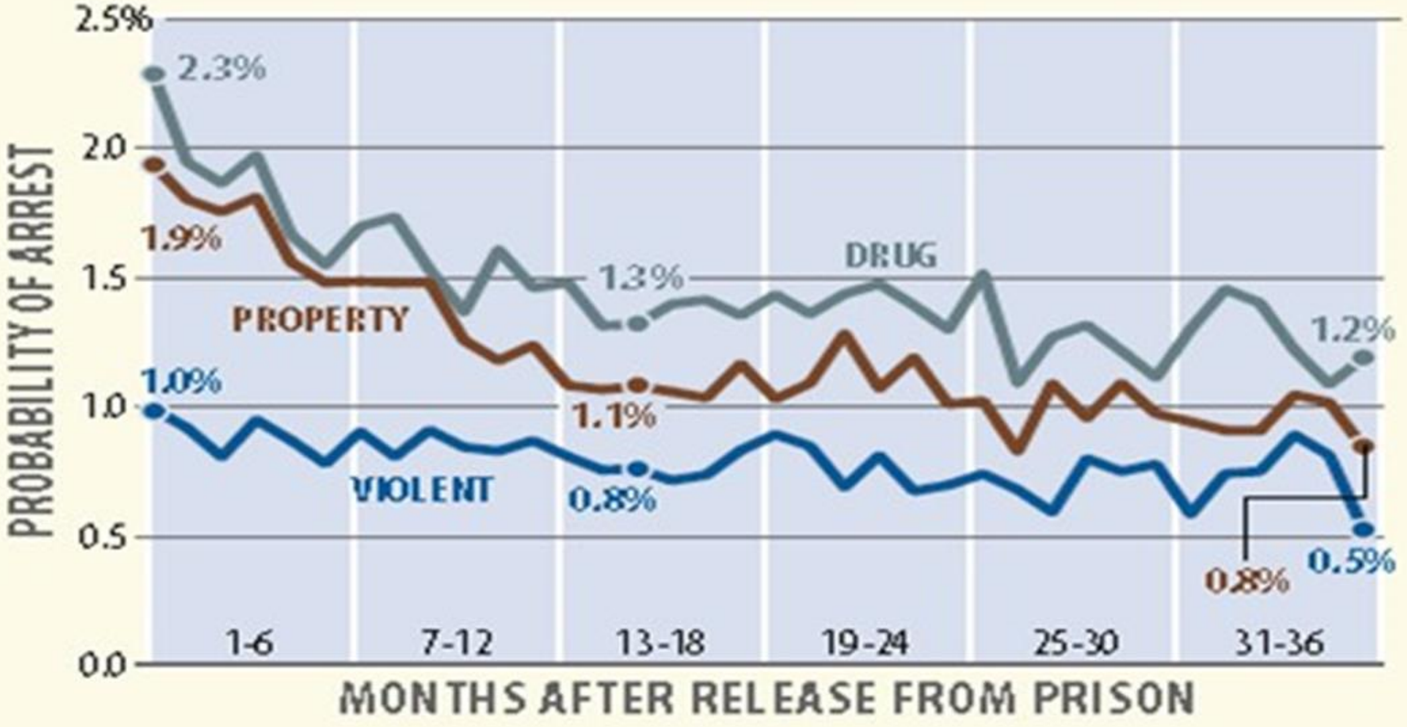
- 2007 study of 30,000 individuals released from prison in Washington State
  - 443 died during follow-up period of 1.9 years
  - Death rate 3.5 times higher than general population
  - Death rate for inmates with SMI 12.7 times higher in the 14 days following release
  - Primary causes of death
    - Drug overdose, heart disease, homicide, and suicide

Binswanger, I. A., Stern, M. F., Deyo, R. A., Heagerty, P. J., Cheadle, A., Elmore, J. G., & Koepsell, T. D. (2007). Release from Prison — A High Risk of Death for Former Inmates. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, *356*(2), 157–165.

Transition Services Critical

RISK OF ARREST HIGHEST IN FIRST MONTHS AFTER PRISON

Between months 1 and 15 after release from prison, the chance of arrest drops by 40 percent.



NOTE: Probabilities adjusted for time off the street

SOURCE: Analysis by Richard Rosenfeld and Robert Fornango, originally presented in *Parole, Desistance from Crime, and Community Integration*, National Research Council, 2007

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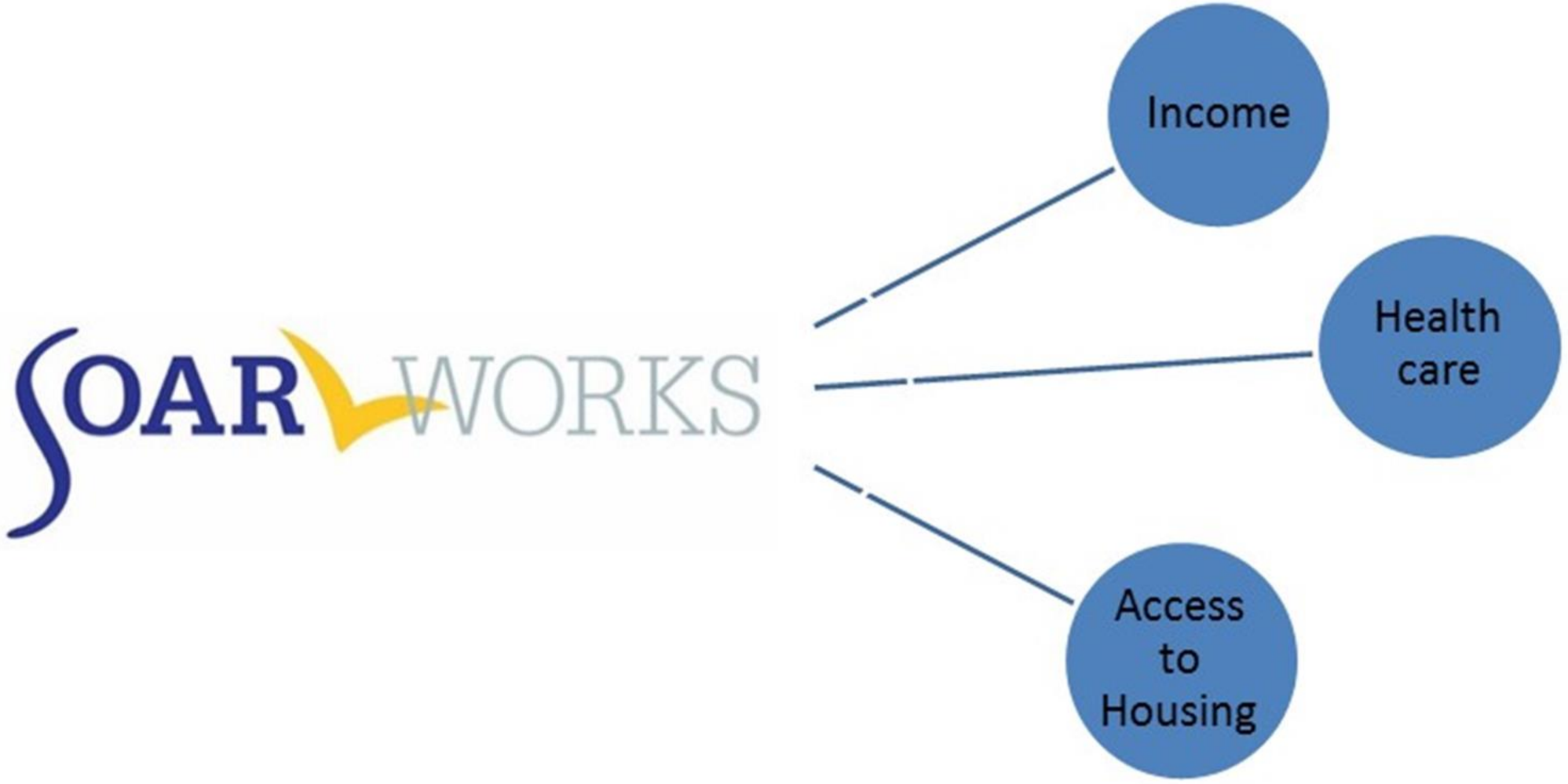
SOAR Driven Reentry



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Challenges to SOAR implementation in CJ Settings

- Leadership
- Collaboration
- Resources
- Competing Initiatives
- Training

SOAR and Jail Implementation: Nashville Example

Paul J. Mulloy, Director of Programs
Nashville Sheriff's Office, Nashville, Tennessee

Lolita Johnson, LEAD SOAR Counselor
Davidson County Sheriff Office, Nashville, Tennessee

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SOAR and Criminal Justice Collaboration

- SOAR DCSO (Sheriff's Office)
- Collaboration through the Mayor's Office of Innovation, Sheriff's Office, Metro Social Services, etc.
- Initiative within the Jail was established July 2014
- Sole mission of SOAR at DCSO:
  - Assist incarcerated individuals with a severe and persistent mental illness who are without income and/or experiencing homelessness to re-enter into society

DCSO SOAR Eligibility Criteria

- Individuals are not currently in application process or pending application with the Social Security Administration (SSA)
- Pre-Release Agreement: Must be within 120 days of being released from jail
- Have experienced homelessness or will experience homelessness upon their release
- Diagnosed with a Severe and Persistent Mental Illness, i.e., Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder, etc.
- Currently being treated by a Psychiatrist in the Jail and taking medications for mental health condition
- Not currently working or lost job due to mental health/medical conditions
- Exhibits severe functional limitations due to mental health/medical symptoms that impact their ability to complete daily activities or sustain work at substantial and gainful levels

Technology

ERMA (Electronic Records Management Assessment)

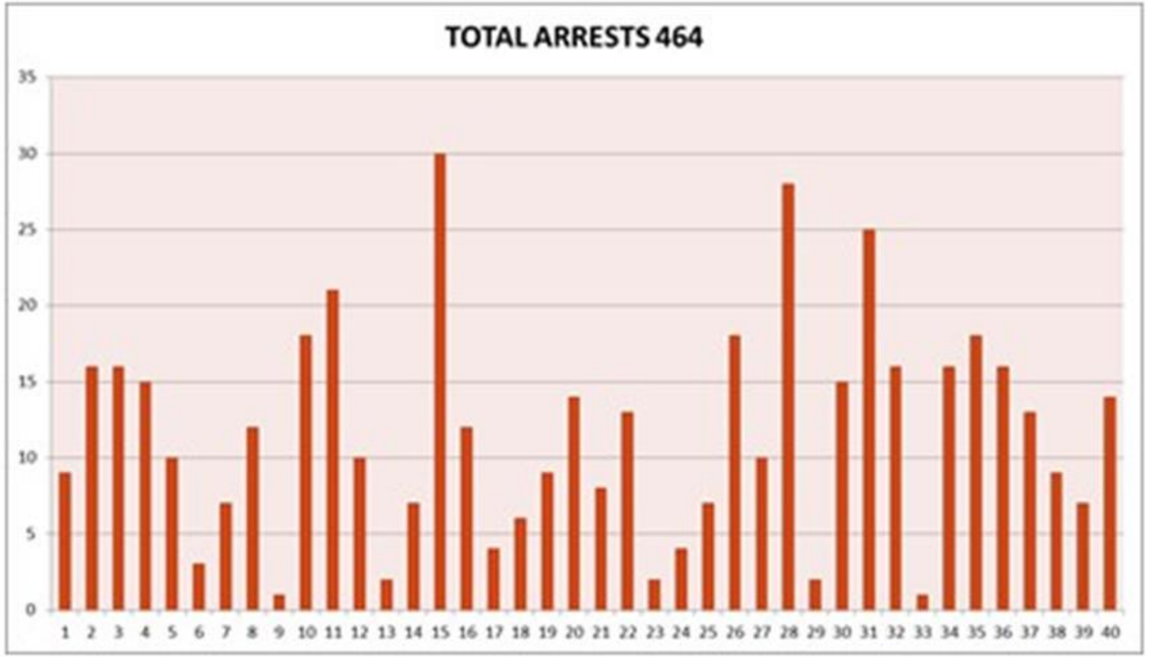
- Keep up with assessment done on the individual as well as all records collected
- Contains all progress notes from the jail doctors, as well as psychiatrists

JMS (Jail Management System)

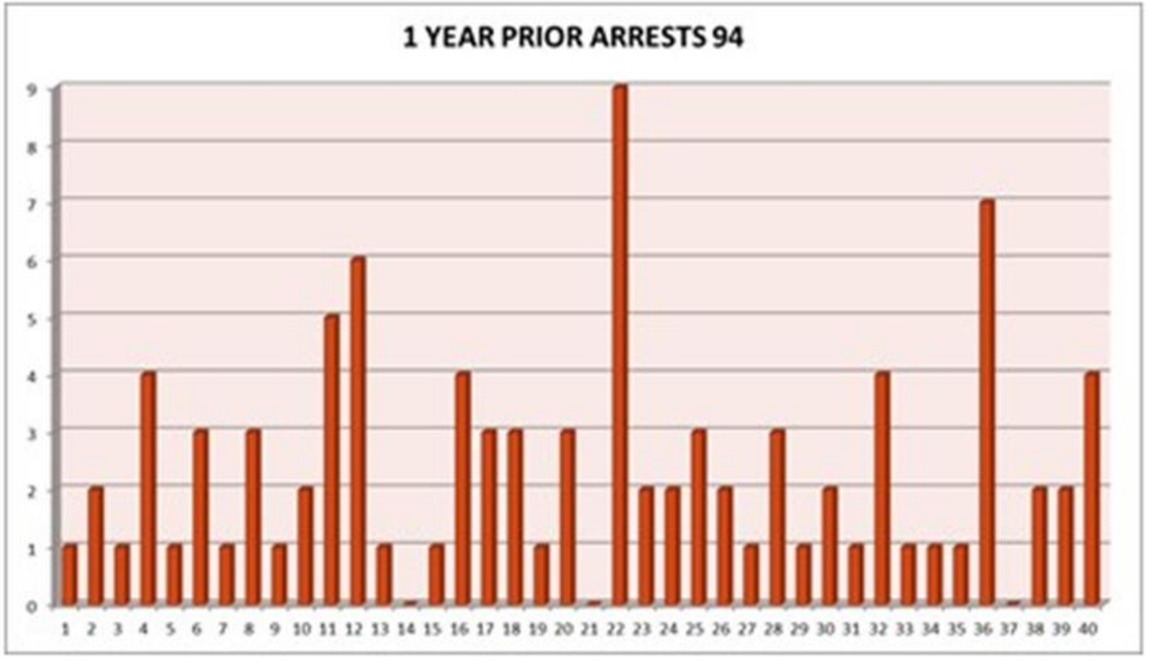
- Referrals will be made and keeping up with the individuals movements and out dates
- Time line to show how long it took from starting SOAR process to approval and release

SOAR Program: Arrests Impact

SOAR Program: Total Arrests



SOAR Program: 1 Year Prior Arrests



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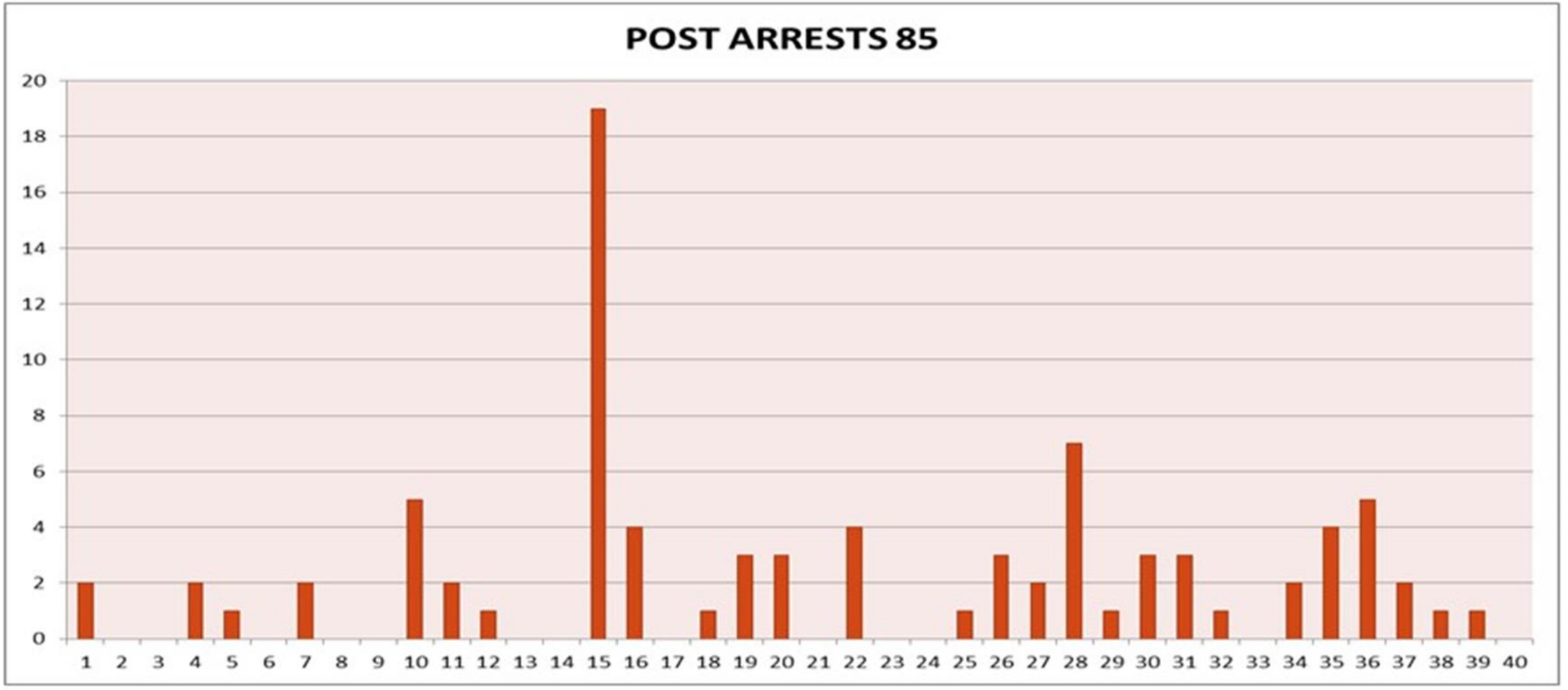
Post Arrests January 2015 - February 2017



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SOAR and Prison Implementation: Oklahoma Example

Donna Bond, Coordinator of Mental Health Reentry,
Oklahoma Department of Corrections
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Marcus Ayers, Manager of Prison Based Reentry Services,
Oklahoma Department of Mental Health Services,
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

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SOAR and Prison Collaboration: The Beginning

- 2006: Initial planning started
- 2007: Services and public benefit enrollments pre-approval started
- Initially started with 3 Integrated Services Discharge Managers in the prison mental health units

SOAR and Prison Collaboration: Growth Years

Since 2007…

- Increased number of staff trained assist with accessing public benefits, e.g.) SSI/SSDI
- Built and nurtured relationships with various state and federal partners
  - Held regular meetings with all stakeholders
- Collaboration on 4 federal re-entry grants
  - These grants target people with co-occurring disorders
  - Also includes applying for public benefits when applicable

SOAR Process In Action: Timing is Critical!

- The goal: Approval before release!
- Applications submitted over 120 days remaining for the inmate to serve, it is not a valid application and a new one must be done
- Having too little time to complete the entire process can create many post release obstacles

SOAR Process: Quality Counts!

- Establish a SOAR Process
  - Once the online application is done with accurate, clear information, records are faxed to the local office closest to the prison facilities
- Functional information is key
  - Medical Summary Report!
- Celebrate process fidelity
  - ODOC Psychologists receive accolades in our annual multi-agency meeting with the Disability Determination Division Examiners and local SSA Managers on the quality of the psychological documentation

SOAR Process: A Win-Win!

- Following the SOAR model
- Allowing time to complete and submit the applications within the correct time frame
- Ensuring quality applications complete with the Medical Summary Report
- We've had approvals as quickly as 7 days from submission to approval!

Yields Success!

SOAR: Oklahoma Department of Corrections

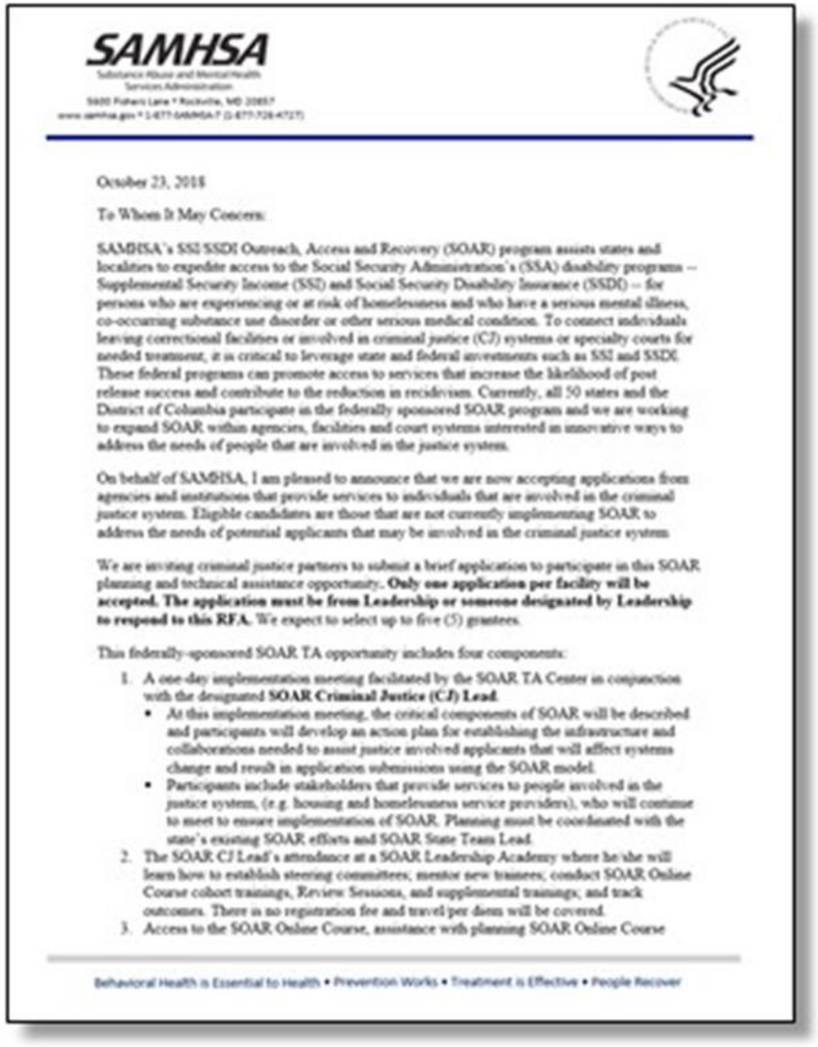
- Over the past 11 years, the approval rate has been above 80%.
- Currently, 80% approval rate!!

How did we get here?

- SOAR trained reentry staff
- Mentoring
- On-site supplemental training
- Process consistency
- Continued staff support to promote confidence with this process before they do them on their own

SOAR CJ Technical Assistance Opportunity

- Planning and technical assistance opportunity
  - Implementation meeting
  - Leadership Academy participation
  - SOAR Online Course and OAT
- 3-5 page application
- Kick off call for application questions: November 14
- Applications due: December 21



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5600 Fishers Lane * Rockville, MD 20857
www.samhsa.gov * 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)

October 23, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

SAMHSA's SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) program assists states and localities to expedite access to the Social Security Administration's (SSA) disability programs -- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) -- for persons who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and who have a serious mental illness, co-occurring substance use disorder or other serious medical condition. To connect individuals leaving correctional facilities or involved in criminal justice (CJ) systems or specialty courts for needed treatment, it is critical to leverage state and federal investments such as SSI and SSDI. These federal programs can promote access to services that increase the likelihood of post release success and contribute to the reduction in recidivism. Currently, all 50 states and the District of Columbia participate in the federally sponsored SOAR program and we are working to expand SOAR within agencies, facilities and court systems interested in innovative ways to address the needs of people that are involved in the justice system.

On behalf of SAMHSA, I am pleased to announce that we are now accepting applications from agencies and institutions that provide services to individuals that are involved in the criminal justice system. Eligible candidates are those that are not currently implementing SOAR to address the needs of potential applicants that may be involved in the criminal justice system.

We are inviting criminal justice partners to submit a brief application to participate in this SOAR planning and technical assistance opportunity. **Only one application per facility will be accepted. The application must be from Leadership or someone designated by Leadership to respond to this RFA.** We expect to select up to five (5) grantees.

This federally-sponsored SOAR TA opportunity includes four components:

1. A one-day implementation meeting facilitated by the SOAR TA Center in conjunction with the designated **SOAR Criminal Justice (CJ) Lead**.
   - At this implementation meeting, the critical components of SOAR will be described and participants will develop an action plan for establishing the infrastructure and collaborations needed to assist justice involved applicants that will affect systems change and result in application submissions using the SOAR model.
   - Participants include stakeholders that provide services to people involved in the justice system, (e.g. housing and homelessness service providers), who will continue to meet to ensure implementation of SOAR. Planning must be coordinated with the state's existing SOAR efforts and SOAR State Team Lead.
2. The SOAR CJ Lead's attendance at a SOAR Leadership Academy where he/she will learn how to establish steering committees; mentor new trainees; conduct SOAR Online Course cohort trainings, Review Sessions, and supplemental trainings; and track outcomes. There is no registration fee and travel/per diem will be covered.
3. Access to the SOAR Online Course, assistance with planning SOAR Online Course

Behavioral Health is Essential to Health • Prevention Works • Treatment is Effective • People Recover

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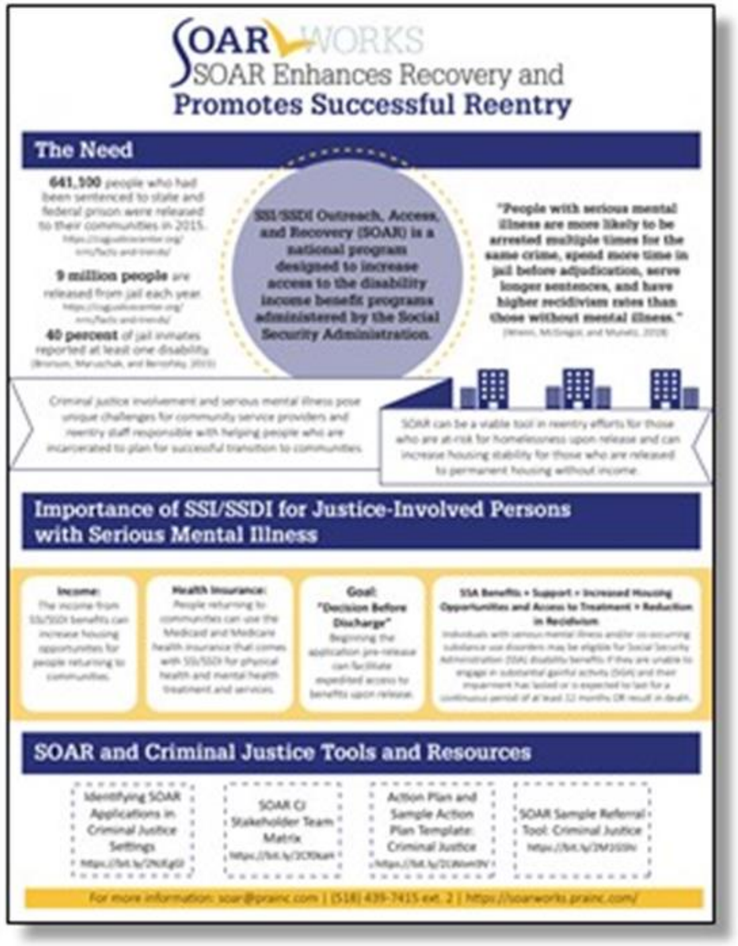
SOAR and Criminal Justice Resources

https://soarworks.prainc.com/topics/criminal-justice

- Infographic
- FAQs
- Sample tools
- Issue Brief



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Questions and Answers

Please type your questions into the Q&A box on the right of your screen.

Thank You

SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

Dazara Ware, Senior Project Associate
SAMHSA SOAR Technical Assistance Center
Subject Matter Expert on SOAR Implementation in Criminal Justice Settings
SAMHSA SOAR TA Center
dware@prainc.com

www.samhsa.gov

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