

Ensuring Access to Medicaid for Individuals with Mental Illnesses Reentering Their Communities from Prison

A Program Model from Oklahoma

Council of State Governments Justice Center Webinar
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Presenters

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Overview of Presentation

1) Bob Mann

- Oklahoma's dramatic increase in offenders with mental illnesses
- A program implemented in 2006 to enhance discharge planning for inmates with mental illness

2) Henry Ireys

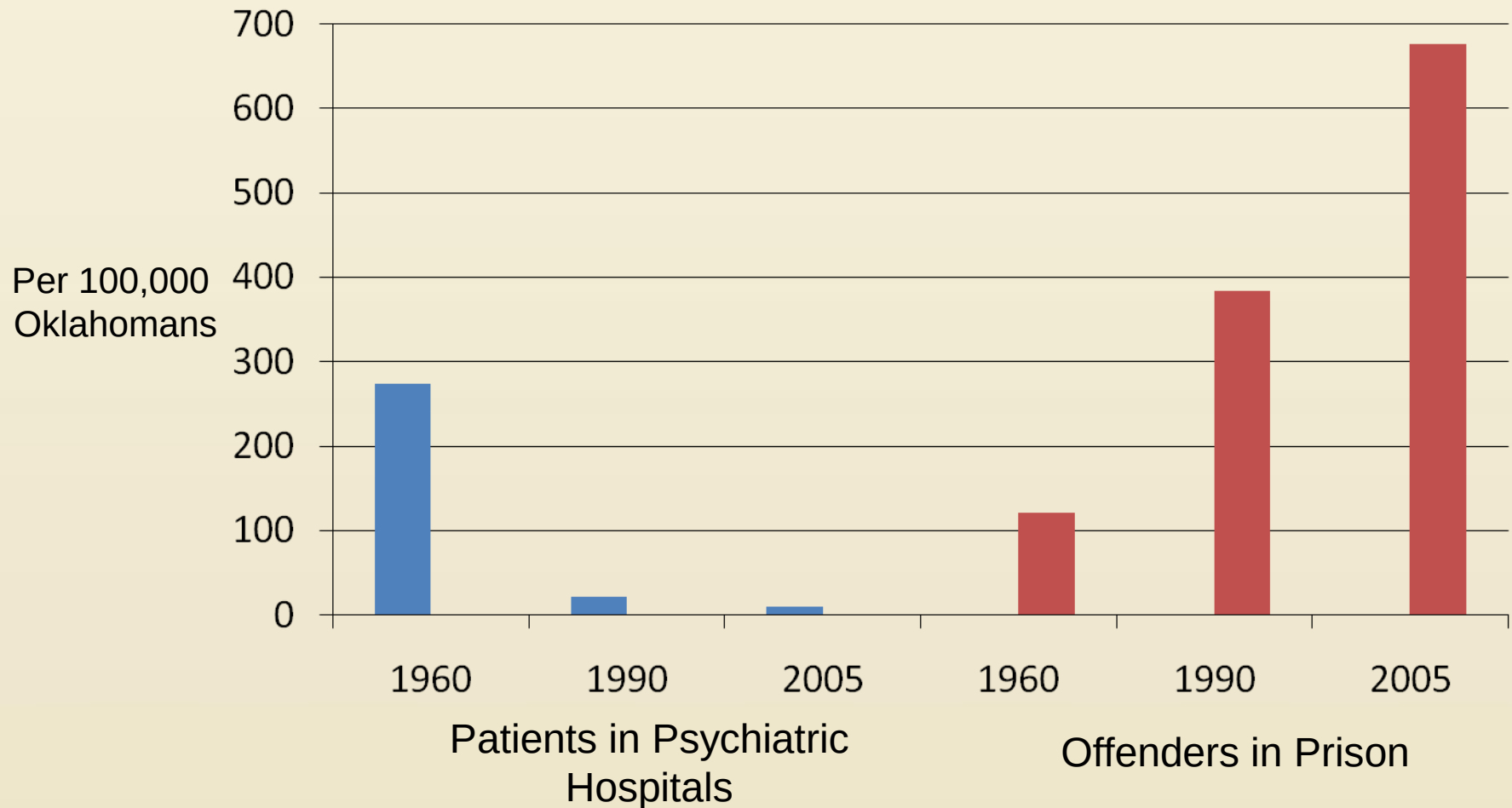
- Evaluation of the program
- Implications of the findings

3) Seth Prins

- Presentation of Justice Center federal benefits tools

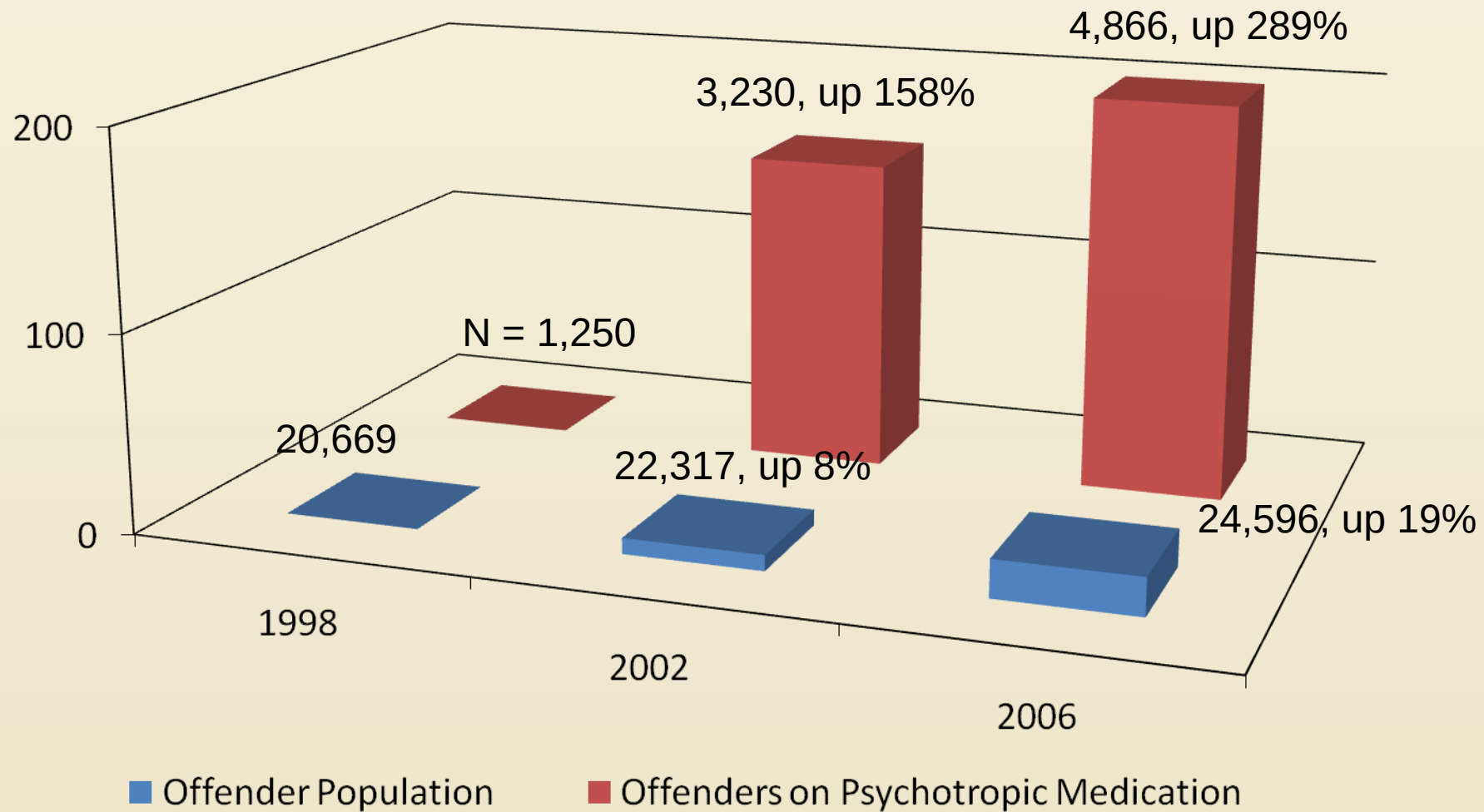
4) Question & Answer

Psychiatric Hospital Commitments and Offenders in Prison, Oklahoma, 1960-2005



Source: Oklahoma DOC administrative records

Percentage Increases in Numbers of Offender Population and Offenders on Psychotropic Medication, Oklahoma, 1998-2006



DOC Discharges, 2008

- Approximately 8,500 offenders discharged to:
 - Probation/parole supervision or
 - Directly to street without supervision
- About 1,000 had current symptoms and in need of treatment for serious mental illness

Offenders in Oklahoma with Mental Illness, Feb 2009

- About 50% (12,600) incarcerated offenders had history of/exhibited, some form of mental illness
 - Female offenders: 68% (1835)
 - Male offenders: 46% (10,350)
- About 23% (5,175) either received treatment for serious mental illness, or needed and refused it
- About 19% (4,700) take psychotropic medications

How to Respond?

- Collaborative effort to implement better discharge planning for offenders with serious mental illness
- Intermittent interagency discussions, 2002-2003
- Efforts accelerated by
 - Mathematica's evaluation project (2004-2009)
 - Appropriations from state legislature (2006)
 - Regular interagency meetings, new MOUs (2004-2008)

Key Stakeholders in Oklahoma

- Department of Corrections
- Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
- Oklahoma Health Care Authority (Medicaid agency)
- Department of Human Services (determines Medicaid eligibility)
- Social Security Administration, State Office
- Division of Disability Determination in Department of Rehabilitation Services

Facilities with A Discharge Manager



Oklahoma State Penitentiary- McAlester



Mabel Bassett CC- McLoud



Joseph Harp CC- Lexington

Oklahoma's Integrated Services Discharge Managers: Critical Staff For Reentry Support

- Discharge managers are boundary spanners
 - Central office employees of ODMHSAS, based in correctional facilities
 - Have credibility with DOC *and* community mental health staff
- Discharge managers have resources
 - Receive all training required by departments of corrections *and* mental health
 - Receive SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach and Recovery) training
 - Have funds available to assist with offender needs

Integrated Services Discharge Managers: Specific Activities

- Participate as member of facility's interdisciplinary team
- Interview clients to explore strengths, needs, resources for consumer-directed, person-centered transition planning
- Coordinate discharge planning, referrals to community services
- Collaborate with community agencies to arrange appropriate outpatient services
- Work with Re-entry Intensive Care Coordination Teams (RICCTs) to provide post-discharge, follow-up support and services
- Help eligible inmates enroll in Medicaid at discharge (see appendix)

Is the New Program Working?

- Primary evaluation question:
 - Will Oklahoma's program of enhanced discharge planning improve enrollment into Medicaid for eligible inmates with serious mental illness?
- Other questions:
 - Does it enhance service use?
 - Does the program reduce re-incarceration?

Policy Background

- Working-age adults with mental illness and little income leaving correctional facilities need access to care:
 - Medicaid coverage as their only option
 - Usually have to obtain federal disability benefits first to become eligible for Medicaid
 - Significant application barriers, delays in coverage

No Medicaid Coverage in Prisons

- States cannot obtain federal financial participation (FFP) for Medicaid services provided to individuals in correctional facilities
- Most states
 - Consider these adults as ineligible for Medicaid
 - Will not accept Medicaid applications until after discharge

Disability Determinations

- Federal disability benefits: Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- Average time to decision: 3-5 months (excluding consultative exam)
 - Anecdotal reports: Adults with MI take longer
- For SSI/SSDI applicants
 - Consent forms
 - Gathering of information re medical, functional status
 - Consultative exam if needed

Evaluation Design

- Examine outcomes for program participants relative to:
 - *Pre-intervention comparison group*: Similar inmates at same institutions 2 years prior to new program
 - *Contemporaneous comparison group*: Similar inmates at other institutions discharged during the same period
- Study period: July 2007 – March 2008

How Did the Intervention Group Compare with Other Groups?

	Group		
	Intervention	Pre-Intervention	Contemporaneous
Number	77	195	130
% Enrolled in Medicaid			
At Discharge	24.7	8.2	3.1
Within 30 Days	28.6	14.4	6.2
Within 90 Days	37.7	16.9	9.2
% Using Services			
Within 90 Days	62.3	46.7	35.4

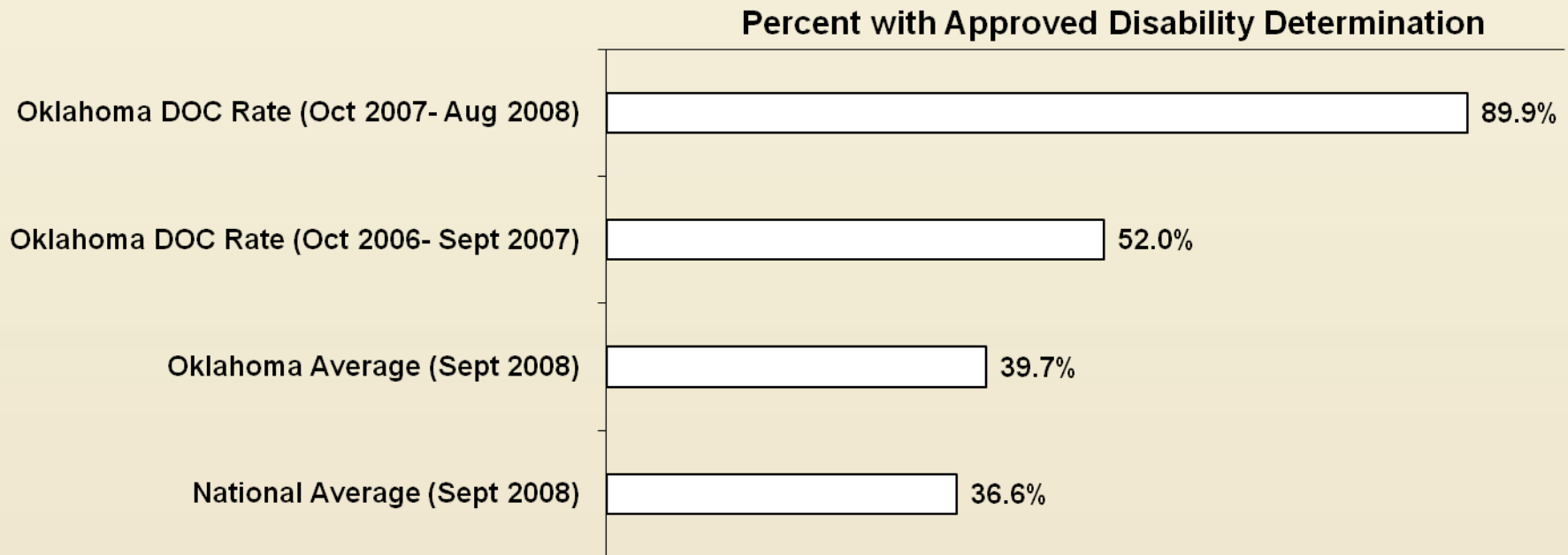
Source: MPR analyses of project database compiled from ODMHSAS, DOC, OSBI, and OESC administrative records

What Specific Changes Accounted for Positive Outcomes?

- Dedicated, trained staff
- New, revised MOUs between
 - Correctional facilities and local SSA offices
 - State corrections and mental health departments
- Dropped requirement for in-person interviews
Medicaid
- New procedures for flagging SSI/SSDI applications
within local DD offices

SSI/SSDI Application Results

Disability Determination Allowance Rate Comparison



Source: Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitative Services, Disabilities Determination Division

Summary

- Oklahoma designed, implemented a comprehensive mental health reentry program
- Focused discharge planning for selected, high-risk offenders
 - Strengthened on-going efforts via interagency collaboration
- Analyses suggest:
 - The intervention significantly increased Medicaid enrollment , service use
 - Collaboration and administrative changes at local, state levels contributed to program success

Full Report Available Soon

Establishing and Maintaining Medicaid Eligibility Upon Release From Public Institutions: Findings From an Evaluation of a Model Program in Oklahoma

- Check SAMHSA website: www.samhsa.gov
- Many thanks to:
 - SAMHSA (Jeff Buck, Judy Teich)
 - Members of Oklahoma, Mathematica teams
 - Steering committee

Questions or Comments?

Contact:

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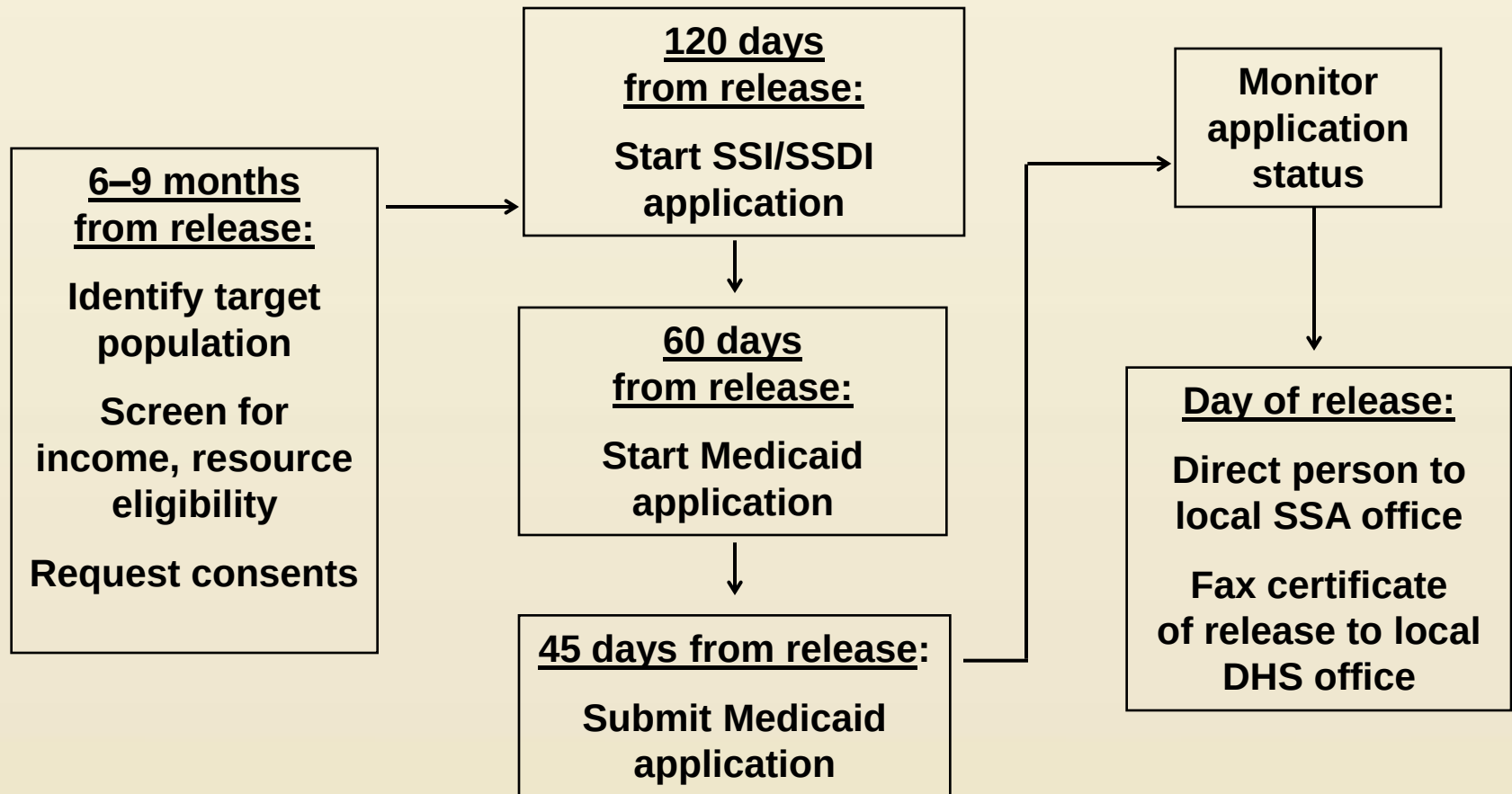
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Appendix: Operational Specifications for Helping Eligible Inmates Enroll in Medicaid at Discharge



Federal Benefits Web Tools

1) Keys to Federal Benefits Access

- http://tools.reentrypolicy.org/benefits_keys
- Supported by the CMHS, SAMHSA
- Oklahoma interagency work group, including Bob Mann and Henry Ireys

2) Federal Benefits Chart

- http://tools.reentrypolicy.org/benefits_chart
- Supported by CMHS, SAMHSA

Keys to Federal Benefits Access

- Designed for corrections directors, human services and social security officials
- Provides recommendations on Medicaid/SSI/SSDI eligibility, documentation, applications, and continuity of care
- Focuses on people with mental illnesses returning to the community

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Keys to Federal Benefits Access

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Overview

This tool identifies four key issue areas for policymakers seeking to ensure that people who are eligible for SSI/SSDI and Medicaid are enrolled immediately upon release. Click on each key to review recommendations and examples in each issue area. [Click here](#) to learn more about this tool.

Resources: Highlights

- [Strategies employed in one state to realize the policy goals below](#)
- [Overview of the Medicaid and SSI/SSDI programs](#)
- [Recommended reading and links for additional background information on Medicaid and SSI/SSDI](#)

Key 1: Eligibility

Identify individuals who may be eligible for SSI/SSDI and Medicaid early in the incarceration process.

[View full text and recommendations](#) 

Key 2: Documentation

Coordinate collection of documentation needed for applications to SSI/SSDI and Medicaid during incarceration.

[View full text and recommendations](#) 

Key 3: Application

Create efficient processes for preparing, finalizing, and submitting SSI/SSDI and Medicaid applications prior to release.

[View full text and recommendations](#) 

Key 4: Continuity of Care

Transfer information about benefit applications to relevant community agencies and ensure that individuals can access services after release if benefit decisions are pending.

[View full text and recommendations](#) 

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Key 1 Eligibility

Identify individuals who may be eligible for SSI/SSDI and Medicaid early in the incarceration process.

Overview

Identifying eligible applicants to the SSI/SSDI and Medicaid programs and current and former beneficiaries early in the incarceration process better enables case managers and other discharge planners to ensure that such individuals are promptly connected to benefits upon release. The following recommendations indicate types of policies jail or prison officials could implement, in partnership with other key leaders, to improve prompt identification of eligible applicants to the SSI/SSDI and Medicaid programs.

Click on each recommendation to view related examples that illustrate the implementation of the recommendation as well as background information on terms and concepts highlighted in the recommendation.

Recommendations

A

[Screen for SSI/SSDI and Medicaid eligibility during intake or early in the incarceration process and note potential eligibility in an inmate's record.](#)

B

[Engage individuals with expertise in SSI/SSDI or Medicaid \(ideally individuals who work in the agencies administering these programs\) to train corrections staff to screen for benefit eligibility.](#)

C

[Develop agreements with agencies overseeing benefits to notify corrections staff about applicants who previously received SSI/SSDI or Medicaid.](#)

D

[Ensure timely access to Medicaid after release for eligible individuals by suspending, instead of terminating, Medicaid benefits during incarceration.](#)



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Key 1 Eligibility

Identify individuals who may be eligible for SSI/SSDI and Medicaid early in the incarceration process.

Recommendation

A

Screen for SSI/SSDI and Medicaid eligibility during intake or early in the incarceration process and note potential eligibility in an inmate's record.

[proceed to next recommendation ▶▶](#)

Related Examples

The following examples illustrate how some jurisdictions have implemented this recommendation. By highlighting certain examples in this chart, however, the Justice Center is not promoting them as "best practices." They are simply efforts that involve partnerships, creative use of resources, or even longtime practices for other communities to consider

TCOOMI Screening (Tex.)

Upon entry into prison each inmate is assessed to establish the presence of a mental illness. Inmates who have a history of receiving or a need for mental health services, are identified with an "alert code" in the offender database. The code allows the Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Mental Impairments (TCOOMI) to quickly identify offenders who may need release planning services, including applications for benefits and/or entitlements.

Source: Justice Center, Reentry Policy Council, "Case Study: Texas," available at: http://www.reentrypolicy.org/fedbens_pubs_tools.

Related Background Information

The information highlighted here provides background information on terms, processes, and other items mentioned in the recommendation.

Eligibility Criteria for Benefit Programs

Medicaid

The Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services (CMS) outline certain "mandatory eligibility groups" to whom state agencies overseeing Medicaid must provide coverage to receive federal matching funds to operate the Medicaid program. [Click here](#) to view a list of mandatory eligibility groups, which includes disabled individuals. However, states may exercise some discretion in determining both documentation required to substantiate mandatory eligibility and income thresholds for receiving benefits.

Disability Eligibility and State Definitions

The policies and practices recommended in this tool are generally focused on individuals applying for coverage based on a disability due to serious mental illness. Disability under Medicaid, except in a handful of states, is defined according to

Federal Benefits Chart

- Designed for jail and prison case managers
- Provides an introduction to various federal benefits programs for which individuals returning to the community may be eligible
- Not an exhaustive list of benefits programs
- Does not focus exclusively on people with mental illnesses

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Federal Benefits Chart

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Overview

When eligible individuals access federal benefits promptly upon release from jail or prison, it can greatly increase the likelihood of their safe and successful reentry. Use this chart to compare key features of several benefit programs, grouped by focus area, and click "more detail" under each benefit for additional information and to write and save notes.

[Click here](#) to learn more about this chart and related Justice Center publications. To recommend additional material for this chart or provide other comments, e-mail editors@reentrypolicy.org.

Additional Features

- [Find the definitions of terms used in this tool with which you may not be familiar](#)
- [View additional resources on federal benefits programs included in the chart](#)
- [Read program examples cited throughout the chart](#)

Cash Assistance

Families

Employment

Health

Housing

The following benefit programs provide assistance to beneficiaries through direct or indirect cash payments. This chart provides information on the federal agencies that fund these benefit programs, eligibility criteria, and examples of initiatives or programs designed to connect individuals returning from jail or prison to these benefits.

Benefit Type	Federal Funding Agency (Offsite Link)	Eligibility Requirements	Examples
Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance more detail	Social Security Administration	\$ Income 📷 Health 🔍 Other	• Multnomah County Joint Access to Benefits Program (Oreg.)
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families more detail	Office of Family Assistance, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	\$ Income 🔍 Other	• Welfare to Work Transition Project (N.Y.) • Project RIO (Tex.)
Veterans Compensation and Pensions more detail	Veterans Benefits Administration	📷 Health 🔍 Other	• Incarcerated Veteran Outreach Initiative (N.Y.)
Food Stamps more detail	Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of	\$ Income	• Project RIO (Tex.)

SSI/SSDI Overview

The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) programs, administered by the Social Security Administration, provide cash assistance to individuals who have a disability, are over 65, or are blind, and meet other medical, age, and income criteria.

- [Key Decision Points](#)
- [Federal Funding Agency](#)
- [Relevant State/Local Agency, Office, and Contacts](#)
- [Features](#)
- [Eligibility](#)
- [Potential Limitations](#)
- [Examples](#)

Other Cash Assistance Benefits

- [SSI/SSDI](#)
- [TANF](#)
- [Veterans Compensation and Pensions](#)
- [Food Stamps](#)

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Key Decision Points

- After felony conviction during period of incarceration = SSDI eligibility suspended (generally not terminated during incarceration)
- 1 calendar month of incarceration = SSI benefits suspended
- 12 calendar months of incarceration = SSI eligibility terminated
- 3 months prior to release = new SSI/SSDI applications begun; states that have a prerelease agreement with the Social Security Administration may begin applications earlier or later depending on the terms of the agreement

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Federal Funding Agency

[Social Security Administration](#)[back to top](#)

Relevant State/Local Agency, Office, and Contacts

Use the space below to write notes about which state/local agency or office oversees this benefit in your area and any related contacts. You can print this page for your records or [log in](#) to save your response for future reference.

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Features

The SSI program provides monthly payments to certain low-income individuals to help meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. SSDI provides monthly payments to individuals who meet the same disability criteria as applicants to SSI but have also earned income and paid federal insurance contributions (FICA) tax on such income for a certain period of time, depending on age.

Although not required, SSA recommends that corrections facilities and jails develop a [prerelease agreement](#) with SSA to formalize the process of SSI/SSDI application processing for people approaching release.

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Eligibility



Individuals who meet certain income criteria and who are disabled, blind, or age 65 or older may be eligible to receive SSI. For SSDI, applicants will need to demonstrate that they have earned income and paid FICA tax on such income for a certain period of time; the period of time will depend on the age of applicants. SSA can advise applicants about the time period required. In addition, in some cases, individuals found disabled when they are under age 22 may be eligible for benefits on a parent's earnings history if that parent is deceased or is receiving SSDI or SSA retirement benefits.

State offices, usually called Disability Determination Services (DDS), determine whether applicants meet disability criteria for both SSI and SSDI. See the [Disability Evaluation Under Social Security](#) (also known as the "Blue Book") for further information on disability evaluation processes.

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Potential Limitations

The [Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act](#) (the 1996 "welfare law") and subsequent related regulations prohibit states from providing SSI/SSDI to anyone who is in legal violation of his or her probation or parole. In addition, individuals who have outstanding felony warrants will not be processed for eligibility unless these warrants are satisfied.

See Special Topic: ["How Incarceration Affects Medicaid and SSI/SSDI eligibility"](#) for more information on the effect of incarceration on benefit eligibility for individuals who were already enrolled in benefit programs prior to entering jail or prison.

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Examples

Multnomah County Joint Access to Benefits Program (Oreg.): The Joint Access to Benefits (JAB) program initiates the application process for Social Security disability benefits for people who will be released from prison to the county or who have been released and are homeless. JAB is a collaborative project among the county Department of Community Justice's Transition Services Unit, Sheriff's Office, and Department of Human Services; the state Department of Corrections and Department of Human Services; and the Social Security Administration district office.

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[Housing](#)

The following benefit programs are meant to enable low-income individuals to access affordable housing options. This chart provides information on the federal agencies that fund these benefit programs, eligibility criteria, and examples of initiatives or programs designed to connect individuals returning from jail or prison to these benefits. See the Justice Center's [Reentry Housing Options Comparison Chart](#) for more information on housing options for individuals returning from prison or jail.

Benefit Type	Federal Funding Agency (Offsite Link)	Eligibility Requirements	Examples
Family Unification Vouchers more detail	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	\$ Income 🔍 Other	Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (Calif.)
Housing Choice Vouchers more detail	Office of Housing Choice Vouchers, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	\$ Income 🔍 Other	The Cornerstone Program (Calif.) Rental Assistance Coupon Plus Program (Maine)
Public Housing more detail	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	\$ Income	

Federal Benefits Web Tools: URLs

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- http://tools.reentrypolicy.org/benefits_keys

2) Federal Benefits Chart

- http://tools.reentrypolicy.org/benefits_chart

Thank you

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