



All the Way Home: Re-entry and Housing

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Prison and Jail Re-entry Overview

- Approx. 2 million individuals are incarcerated in State and Federal prisons in the U.S.
- Another 605,000 are incarcerated or detained each day in local and county jails.
- Approximately 625,000 individuals are released from State and Federal prisons each year, and another 10 million releases are made annually from local and county jails.

Health and Behavioral Health Disorders Among Inmates

- **Mental Illness**
 - Approx. 700,000 adults with SMI enter jails each year
 - 16% of state inmates reports mental illness. (Twice as high as in the overall U.S. population)
- **Health and Infectious Disease**
 - 2.2% of state prison inmates have HIV-infection; 0.55% have AIDS diagnosis
 - Hepatitis C rates of state prisoners est. at 18%
 - 1-22% of state/federal inmates have TB infection; about 700 reported to have active TB cases

Homelessness among people leaving correctional institutions

- Nationally, among people who are homeless (in shelters)
 - 49% report previous time in jail
 - 18% report previous time in prison
- In CA, 10% of state's parolees are homeless
 - In SF and LA, 30-50% of parolees are homeless
- In NYS, 11.4% of state prisoners released to NYC entered the shelter system.
 - Persons serving index time for parole violation entered shelters at higher rates of 13.5%
 - Persons with mental illness entered shelters at even higher rates of 18.1%

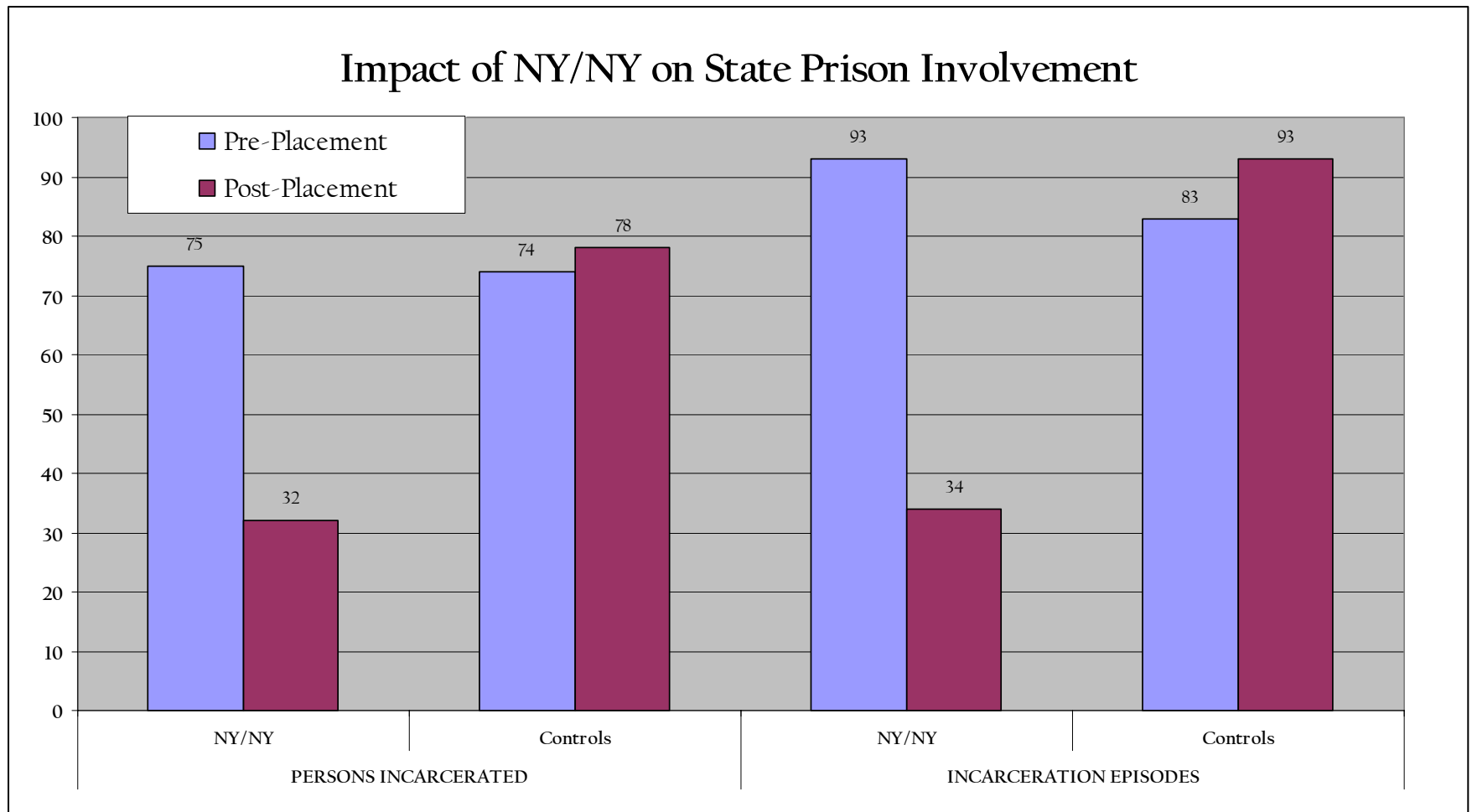
Homelessness increases risk of recidivism

- Of the 5,520 state inmates released to New York City shelters, 32.8% were re-incarcerated in two years
 - Parole violators had re-incarceration rates of 39.8%
 - Persons with mental illness had re-incarceration rates of 53%
- Parolees released to NYC are 7x more likely to be rearrested in the first month out than those who had housing.

Supportive housing is a flexible and cost-effective model

- Combines affordable (subsidized) permanent housing with flexible on- or off-site supports to end and prevent homelessness
- Cost-effective:
 - 57% decrease in emergency room visits;
 - 58% drop in the number of inpatient days
 - 100% drop in the usage of public residential mental-health program facilities

And has been proven to reduce involvement in prisons



Housing barriers faced by people leaving prison/jail

Economic

- Income vs. cost of housing
- Competition for priority for assistance with “deserving poor” or other populations

Regulatory/Statutory

- Persons with certain felony convictions are barred from Public housing and Section 8 rental assistance
- Most persons leaving criminal justice custody not considered officially homeless and therefore are ineligible for federal homeless assistance funding (McKinney)

Policy

- No specific housing policy focus on people leaving justice system

Current strategies for preventing post-incarceration homelessness

- Improve discharge planning with special focus on housing search and placement and family reunification
- Increase targeting of affordable and supportive housing units to people leaving prison/jail
- Specialized “re-entry” housing projects
- Diversion and alternatives-to-incarceration

The New York City Discharge Planning Effort

**An ongoing effort by the City Departments
of Correction and Homeless Services
and their community-based partners to
reduce recidivism and homelessness
among people released from jail**

Unique challenges of a city jail context

- New York City has the second largest jail in the country
- Every year, the New York City DOC releases between 80-90,000 individuals from custody
- Both sentenced inmates and detainees
- Most inmates have short-term stays with rapid turnaround:
 - 53% of all released inmates stay only 14 days
 - 25% stay 3 days or less

The context for the collaboration

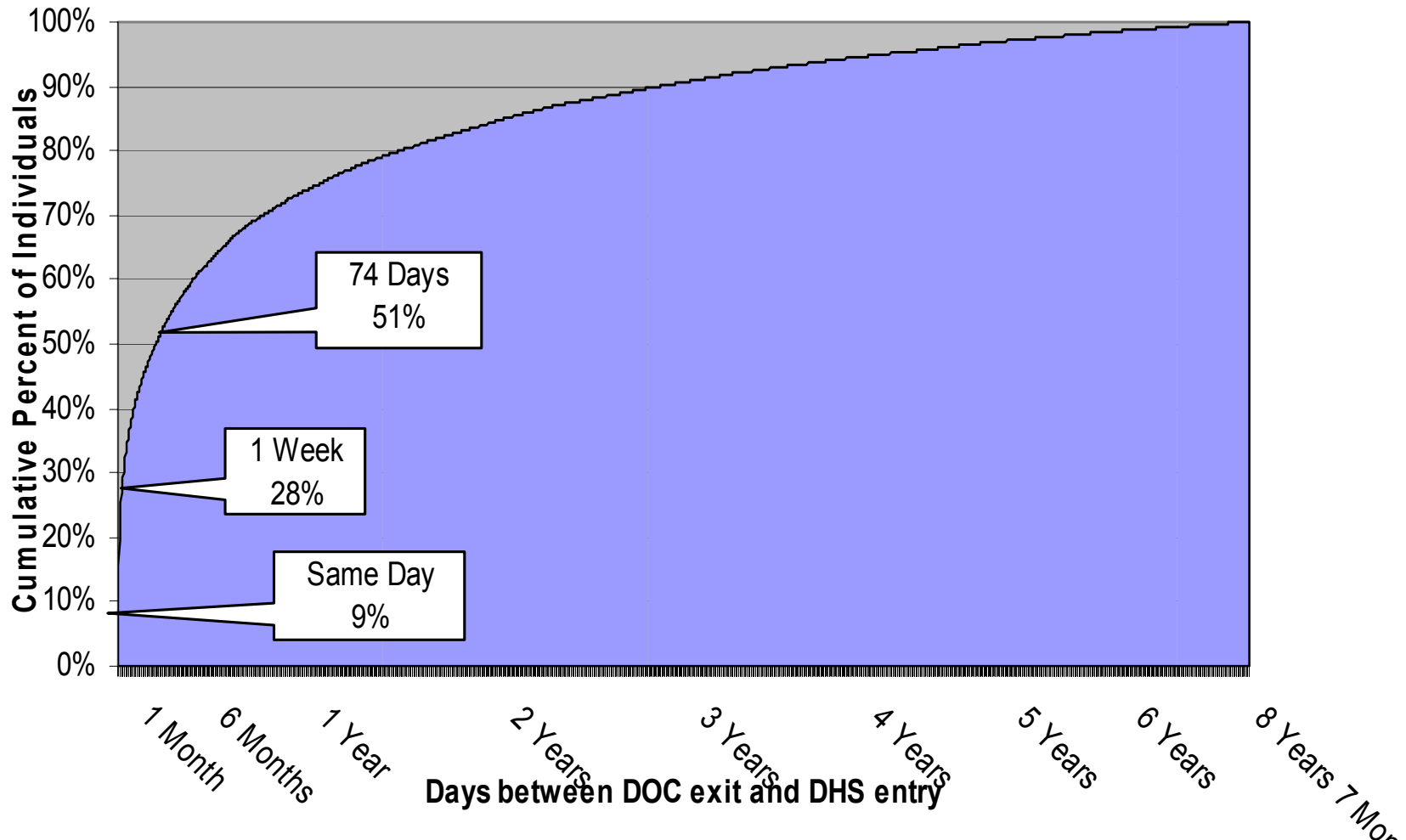
- Not driven by funding/grant
- *Political/governance* – “Business-minded” mayor set tone of finding efficiencies in government
- *Litigious* – New York City has long history of lawsuits, with most recent requiring City to provide discharge planning to jail inmates with mental illness (*Brad H. v City of New York*)
- *Relational* – Commissioners of DOC and Dept. of Homeless Services were collegial and were located in same office building

DOC/DHS Data Match

- A data match between NYC DHS and DOC revealed of all single adults who had a stay in a DHS facility from 1999-2002, 30% (20,712) had at least one jail admission from 1994 to 2003.
- These individuals had a mean of 4 admissions per person.

Time Between Jail Exit and Shelter Entry

Time Between DOC Exit and DHS Entry for Matched Individuals Discharged to the Community



The collaboration

- Public and non-profit partnerships
 - Six city agencies (correction, probation, homeless services, health/mental health, social services, employment)
 - Services/housing providers, advocates, legal experts, intermediaries and technical assistance providers
- Framework for process
 - Commitment to ongoing high-level participation
 - Participation entails accountability for deliverables
 - Committee structure punctuated by quarterly strategy and planning “retreats”

The process

1. Understand/disaggregate the problem(s) and population(s)
2. Design/create appropriate responses to address each problem/population
 1. Assume no new funding available (i.e. exercise discipline in designing solutions)
3. Assign working groups to tackle each issue area with short, intermediate, and long-term deliverables
4. Evaluate results

Priority populations

- Sentenced inmates – can receive traditional discharge planning services and aftercare
- Short-stayers – discharge planning is impossible for individuals released within 3 days of admission
- Frequent flyers – some individuals cycle repeatedly between shelters and jails and represent the highest cost/highest need shared population

Other barriers and problems

- Engagement and capacity – How can we reach more inmates given that participation in jail-based discharge planning services is voluntary?
- Benefits continuity - SSI, Medicaid, and public assistance benefits are terminated when people enter jails and reinstatement after release is challenging
- Housing resources – Lack of affordable housing and legal/regulatory barriers to housing
- Lack of post-jail employment opportunities

Tasks and activities

- Improve traditional discharge planning capacity, scope, and engagement
- Divert short stayers from jail altogether
- Break cycle of jail and shelter among frequent flyers
- Increase access to benefits, employment and affordable/supportive housing
- Data and evaluation

Improve traditional discharge planning capacity

- Contracts with five providers to perform discharge planning for city sentenced inmates
- Increase provider access to inmates through streamlined processing, reduced red tape, and video conferencing
- Increase inmate participation through improved “marketing” of services
- Trainings around housing assessment, search and placement

Divert short stayers

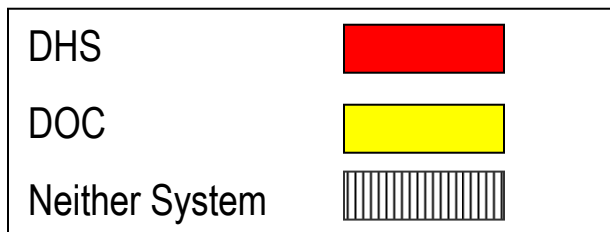
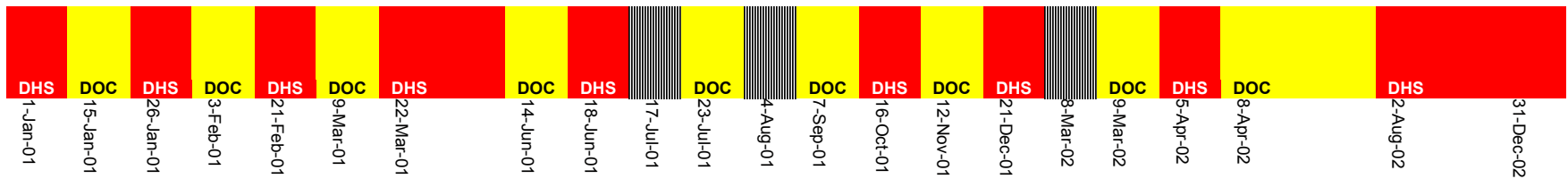
- Develop a comprehensive strategy to identify alternatives to short-term incarceration
- Explore with judges increased use of probation as an alternative-to-incarceration
- Evaluate bail practices
- Evaluate arrest practices
- Deliver rapid discharge planning in detention centers

NYC's "frequent flyers" of jail and shelter

A growing number of individuals cycle regularly between jails and homelessness:

- Data match between DHS and DOC found 1,725 individuals that had at least 4 jail stays and 4 shelter stays over a 9 year period
- When ordered by the number of days spent in both, the top 25% of users spent, on average, 102 jail days and 104 shelter days a year
- Average of 14 substance abuse tx (detox) episodes over past 28 years

Two Year Jail-Shelter Utilization



Frequent flyer supportive housing initiative

- Perform in-reach in jails and shelters to recruit