



HEALTHY MINDS  
POLICY INITIATIVE

## MENTAL HEALTH IS PUBLIC SAFETY

*Decades of criminalizing Oklahomans with mental illness and substance use disorder have put an incredible strain on the public safety system — and it hasn't made us safer.*  
***There is a better way.***

### WHAT WE'RE DOING ISN'T WORKING.

82%



Of Oklahomans who enter prison with non-violent offenses have mental health or substance abuse needs.



Since 2014, 76 people have died in county or city jails in Oklahoma by suicide or drug use.



In 2012, there were 10 times as many Oklahomans with serious mental illness behind bars as there were in hospitals.

**Currently, fewer than 1 in 3 Oklahomans leaving prison have received the mental health treatment they need.**

### INVESTING IN TREATMENT WILL MAKE ALL US SAFER.



Expanding health care to more people has reduced violent crime by 5.8% and property crime by 3% in recent expansion states -- largely due to better mental health care.

- Easy to access and comprehensive inpatient and outpatient mental health and substance use treatment reduces negative consequences that often lead to engagement with law enforcement.
- Access to health services following jail or prison release lowers recidivism by as much as two-thirds, according to some studies.
- In one example, Washington state reduced arrests by as much as 33% in a pilot group by investing in substance use treatment. It saved as much as \$18,000 per person.

**REMINDER: A person experiencing mental illness is more likely to be the victim of a violent crime than the perpetrator.**

# TREATMENT IS SAFTER, CHEAPER AND MORE EFFECTIVE THAN INCARCERATION.

*Not only are diversion and intervention good for individuals experiencing mental health and substance issues, but the entire community benefits.*



**\$4.2  
MILLION  
SAVED  
PER COUNTY**

**MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT ARE COST EFFECTIVE WAYS TO REDUCE CRIME.**

Each additional treatment facility reduces the social cost of crime in a county by \$4.2 million.

## REVENUE VS. EXPENSE

4,076 Oklahoma drug court graduates earned \$204 million dollars in wages and were expected to contribute \$6.1 million in tax revenue. Had these graduates been incarcerated, it would have cost the state an additional \$191.6 million! (FY10-FY12)

**These graduates are now employed and less likely to recidivate than someone who was released at the same time.**

## WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

### OPTION A

**\$23,000**

The annual cost to incarcerate an individual with mental health needs.

### OPTION B

**\$5,400**

The average cost for someone to access mental health court as an alternative to prison.

### OPTION B SAVES TAXPAYERS

**\$17,600 PER YEAR PER PARTICIPANT.**

## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

**Check out these treatment and diversion programs:**

}	Crisis Intervention Teams	Offender Screening	Family Treatment Courts	}
	Day Reporting	Crisis Care Centers	Veteran's Court	
	Juvenile Diversion	Anna McBride Courts	Drug Courts	
	Crisis Line	Reentry Services	Juvenile Drug Court	

*Data from NAMI, Urban Institute, Oklahoma Department of Corrections, Bureau of Justice Statistics, and, news reports.*

*Find citations for this document at [healthymindspolicy.org/resources](http://healthymindspolicy.org/resources)*



## HEALTHY MINDS POLICY INITIATIVE

Building community capacity in Tulsa to address treatable mental illness through local systems change and statewide policy work. **LEARN MORE: [HEALTHYMINDSPOLICY.ORG](http://HEALTHYMINDSPOLICY.ORG).**