

# Criminal Justice Reform



*Working together to develop and deliver  
mental health resources  
for Colorado communities.*

## Overview of the Problem

- As of September 2010, there were 22,000 adult inmates in Colorado and close to 300 children residing in the Youthful Offender System.
  - *It costs \$25,000 - \$70,000 a year to incarcerate an individual in Colorado.*
  - *It costs approximately \$6,000 to \$8,000 a year to treat an individual with mental illness in the community.*
- Approximately 20% of the offender population is serving a sentence for a drug offense but between 60 - 80% have substance use disorders.
- In FY07-08, 22% of the youth committed to the Division of Youth Corrections had moderate to severe mental health needs.
  - *Every \$1 spent on community-based treatment provides a taxpayer return of \$7, compared to a return of 40 cents for every \$1 spent on incarcerating an individual with a substance use disorder.*
- The number of prison beds in Colorado has quadrupled in the last 15 years while, at the same time, the capacities of most human services programs have remained static or decreased.
- The percentage of people with serious mental illnesses has more than doubled between 1990 and 2008 and has continued to grow to approximately 19% of the total prison population.

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**Colorado's Community Behavioral Health System provides jail diversion programs, resources, support, and alternatives to incarceration.**

**Community based mental health services are much less expensive than providing services in emergency rooms, incarcerating individuals, or providing services in other institutions.**

**CBHC supports more efforts to ensure that those with behavioral health issues are provided appropriate treatment options & resources to remain in our community.**