

THE REVOLVING DOOR

People with mental illness or “co-occurring disorders” exact a high toll on the justice system. Revenues spent on their care while incarcerated pulls scarce resources away from the justice system’s primary function—prosecution of criminals. Besides:

- Individuals with mental illness stay in jail longer
- They are more expensive to maintain
- Without proper treatment, they pose a high risk of re-offending
- And they are at high risk for suicide while incarcerated

Oregon Partners in Crisis (OrPIC) was formed in 2004 by county commissioners, sheriffs, district attorneys, judges, mental health professions, defense attorneys, and family members.

Our goal is to ensure access to quality treatment, prevention and support services for children and adults who are affected by mental illness or co-occurring disorders and who impact the criminal justice system.



5. ASSISTING SUCCESSFUL REENTRY

Adequate transition planning and development of intensive community treatment programs are essential to help individuals successfully reenter the community and reduce recidivism:

- Ensure that inmates are provided at least a week’s supply of psychotropic medications and refillable prescriptions
- Work with the state Medicaid agency to ensure that inmates eligible for public benefits receive them upon release.
- Develop an array of housing options suitable for ex-offenders.

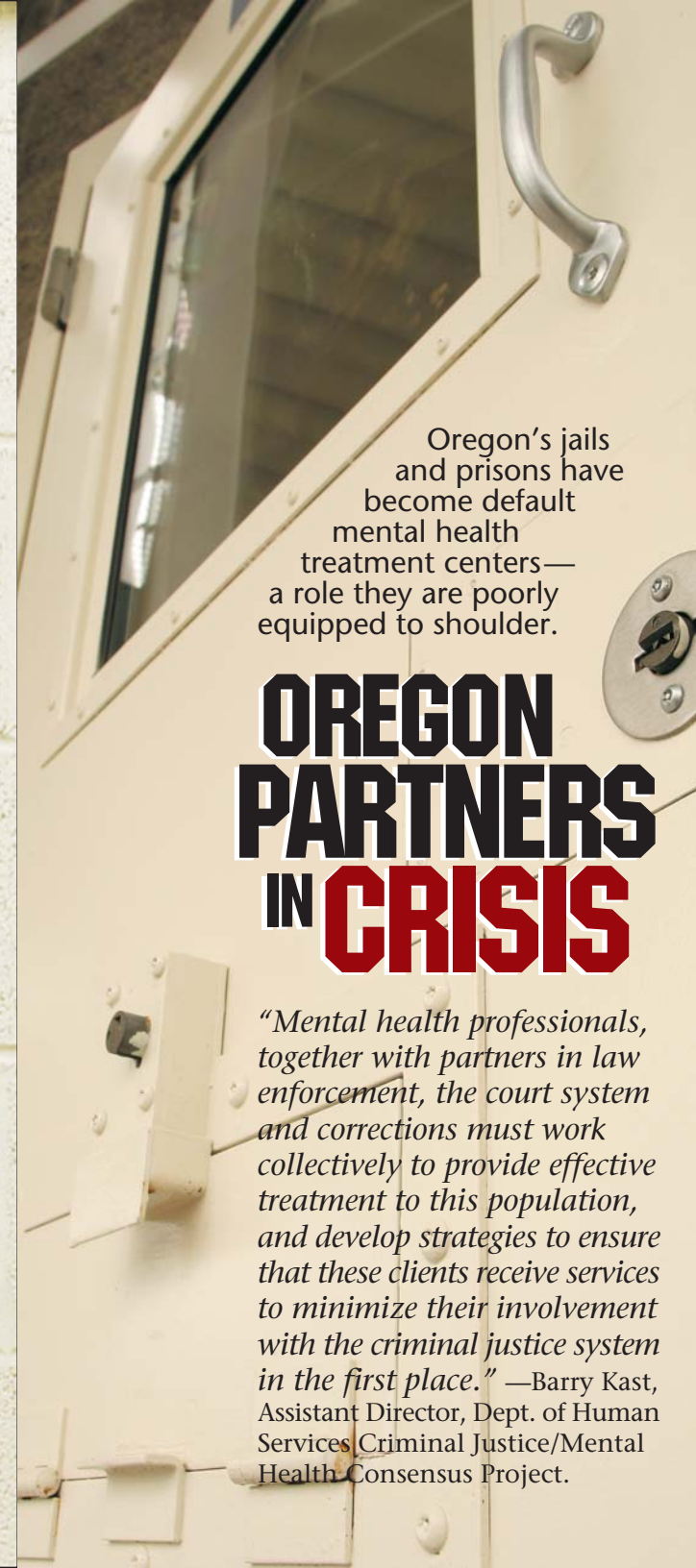
6. MEASURING OUTCOMES

Thoughtful evaluation of programs—by all stakeholders—is critical to understanding and interpreting gathered data. OrPIC recommends:

- Develop better data-sharing system on individuals with mental illness who impact the criminal justice system
- Help policy makers and the public to assess the value and efficacy of these initiatives

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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**OREGON
PARTNERS
IN CRISIS**



Oregon’s jails and prisons have become default mental health treatment centers—a role they are poorly equipped to shoulder.

**OREGON
PARTNERS
IN CRISIS**

“Mental health professionals, together with partners in law enforcement, the court system and corrections must work collectively to provide effective treatment to this population, and develop strategies to ensure that these clients receive services to minimize their involvement with the criminal justice system in the first place.” —Barry Kast, Assistant Director, Dept. of Human Services Criminal Justice/Mental Health Consensus Project.



OREGON PARTNERS IN CRISIS (OrPIC)

OrPIC encourages system changes designed to promote recovery for individuals with mental illness. We promote them having control over their life: the ability to live, work, learn, and participate fully in their community.

SYSTEM CHANGES WE'D RECOMMEND

Effective options are in evidence nationwide. OrPIC suggests that "pilot projects" are not the way to go. Instead, we believe Oregon will be best served by a planned statewide "roll-out" of key initiatives and system improvements in the following areas:

1. BETTER, MORE THOROUGH COLLABORATION BETWEEN PARTNERS

To adequately address the criminalization of the mentally ill, our criminal justice and mental health systems and other key stakeholders must begin to form lasting, effective partnerships. This could include legislation or executive order to require stakeholder agencies and groups to plan and execute new strategies.

Our Primary Objectives for those with mental illness:

1. Prevent their becoming swept up in the criminal justice system
2. Reduce the recurrence of offenses by this population
3. Improve their quality of care while in the justice system



2. DIVERSION FROM THE SYSTEM BEFORE BOOKING

Ways to avoid having this population's being incarcerated:

- Provide crisis intervention training for select enforcement staff
- Provide judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys the options and means to address the issues faced by this client population
- Use crisis resolution centers for uninsured or underinsured individuals to receive short-term stabilization in the community
- Develop community teams to facilitate support services in the community for this population: housing, transportation, life skill training, supported employment, medication management, etc.

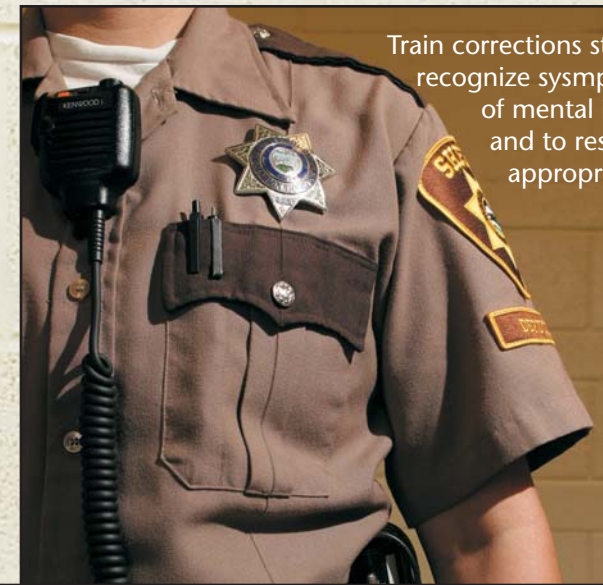
3. PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION, ADJUDICATION AND SENTENCING OPTIONS

Involvement of those with mental illness in the criminal justice system could be reduced by:

- Creating court liaisons to facilitate client treatment
- Maximize other mechanisms such as treatment courts and mental health courts
- New policies and procedures to prevent rejection of those who enter on Medicaid
- Facilitate collaboration at all levels to effect the seamless transition of this population back into the community
- Intensive community treatment and supports are an integral part of this approach

4. ASSURING THE CARE OF INMATES IN CUSTODY

OrPIC supports increasing the quality of care and safety for mentally ill individuals while in custody, while increasing the staff skills to successfully work with them. What's needed at a minimum: a combination of increased case management, counseling intervention and corrections staff training.



Train corrections staff to recognize symptoms of mental illness and to respond appropriately.