

Linking Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health Records for Service System Enhancement, Program Development and Policy Making

Project Aim

To create a sustainable process to link criminal justice (arrests, probation, parole and incarceration) records with behavioral health (substance abuse and mental health services) records for the purpose of creating a deidentified analytic data set. This data set will be the primary source for conducting studies of interest as directed by the Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission (CJPAC) and its Research Workgroup and other state decision-making bodies.

Steering Committee Charge

1. Determining the scope of data sharing (i.e., which data elements to be included, frequency of updates, etc.).
2. Overseeing the creation of data dictionaries and other essential documentation.
3. Recommending a linking method that meets state and federal confidentiality laws and regulations.
4. Suggesting standard reports and developing criteria for ad hoc or special reports.
5. Assisting in the interpretation of findings.
6. Developing and facilitating the execution of confidentiality agreements and approvals across all participating parties.

Activities and Progress to Date

Two meetings have been held of the Steering Committee with representation from the Judicial Branch (CSSD), Department of Correction, Department of Public Safety, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Board of Pardons and Paroles and Office of Policy and Management. As there was interest in including University of Connecticut Health Center's Correctional Managed Health Care data as part of this initiative, Dr. Trestman attended December's meeting.

The Steering Committee has begun the process of determining the scope of data and the method by which criminal justice and behavioral health records will be shared and linked. As this initiative is meant to support the work of the CJPAC and the Alcohol and Drug Policy Council (ADPC) in their deliberations, the Committee is exploring the most expedient manner to accomplish this task. The current plan is for each party to contribute five years of data (e.g., SFY 2005 – SFY 2010) which will be linked and de-identified. Interest was expressed for including other data sets such as wage data from the Department of Labor. Any inclusion of other data sources should be based upon the analytic priorities of the CJPAC and the ADPC.

While the Committee explored more dynamic methods of linking data such as an integrated database (South Carolina's Interagency Data Repository) or a distributed network (e.g., Connecticut Health Information Network-CHIN), it was decided that would require more resources and time, delaying implementation of this initiative. The Committee will revisit these approaches at a later date but sees its first priority as creating an analytic data set at the earliest possible date.

In the coming month, the Committee will focus its attention on the Memorandum of Understanding including the data sharing protocol, confidentiality and governance, and documentation of data sets (e.g. data dictionaries).