



SURVEY OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN LARGE JAILS AND JAIL SYSTEMS

May 1995

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Prepared for the U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections
by LIS, Inc.,
NIC Information Center Contractor
Longmont, Colorado

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Project Scope and Method

Recognizing a need for basic information on jail-based mental health staffing and services, NIC initiated a study in March 1995 to explore the issue among the nation's largest jails. The results presented in this report provide an initial overview of data nationally and in contributing jurisdictions.

Project staff distributed a survey instrument to member agencies in NIC's Large Jail Network, a working group of approximately eighty-five jurisdictions with total jail populations approaching or in excess of 1,000 inmates. The survey instrument is attached as Appendix A. Fifty-six agencies responded to the survey. Staff compiled and analyzed the data, presented in Table 1, pp. 2 through 9. Because the project was viewed as introductory in nature and was conducted within a tight timeframe, staff made only a minimal effort to work with agencies to clarify the data.

Observations on the Data

Response data indicate that some of the survey questions were interpreted differently by respondents in the various jurisdictions. Examples of these issues include:

- **Definition of the term 'forensic hospital unit beds.'** The survey language included this terminology, which prompted many respondents to call for clarification. The intent of the project was to cover any jail beds set aside for

mental health populations. Agencies that reported their allocated bedspace as zero may have interpreted the question as referring to beds for persons committed by the courts.

- **Data on length of stay for the overall jail population.** In requesting this data, the survey did not specify sentenced vs. non-sentenced inmates. Some agencies provided both figures, and others provided the figure for either sentenced or unsentenced inmates, or an average for the entire jail population.
- **Staffing data.** Data on the number of FTE positions for mental health care are not comparable across all responding agencies. Though the survey was intended to obtain data on mental health services staff of the jail, some jurisdictions included data for security positions as well as treatment staff, and others provided a combined figure for jail, other public agency, and/or contract staff.

Other data inconsistencies were observed, and project staff made adjustments to some agencies' responses where safely possible. However, other data are reported as given, and the reader therefore may notice some data that appear unlikely. Despite these shortcomings, the data usefully demonstrate the diversity among jails in the ways they provide services for persons with mental illness.

Findings

Major findings from the survey project include the following.

- Larger jails were not always those with the most beds set aside for inmates with mental illness. Jails in some jurisdictions have very few beds for mentally ill persons, who are instead housed by another state or local agency.
- Forty of the fifty-six responding agencies use a central site for intake, a critical point in identifying mentally ill arrestees.
- Only fifteen of the responding jail systems provide entirely in-house mental health services. Twenty-four jurisdictions rely on contractors to provide mental health services, and ten agencies work with other state or local agencies. Eight jail systems reported a combination of in-house and contract services.
- Agency-reported dedicated beds for mental health services ranged from zero beds to 202. Beds for persons pending competency hearings ranged from one bed to thirty-five. Only fourteen agencies provided data on beds for persons detained on a mental health hold with no charges, reporting a range from one bed to thirty-one beds.

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- In thirty-two agencies, the waiting period for entry into mental health beds was none to less than one day. Reported waiting periods ranged from one to two days to sixteen days.
- Percent occupancy of designated mental health beds ranged from 0 to 100 percent; twenty-five agencies reported occupancy levels from 80 to 100 percent.
- The reported average length of stay in mental health units ranged from two days to three months. The distribution was fairly even, with thirteen agencies reporting average stays of a week or less, nine agencies reporting an average stay of between one week and one month, eight agencies reporting average stays of around one month, and ten agencies reporting average stays of more than one month.
- Six jurisdictions reported that they charge jail inmates for at least some mental health services, and a seventh agency was considering doing so.

Table 1. Mental Health Services In Large Jails and Jail Systems

	JAIL SUMMARY DATA					DATA ON FORENSIC SERVICES										
	ADP	Average Number of Daily Admissions	How are admissions processed?		Average Length of Stay in Jail System	Bedspace for Inmates with Mental Health Care Needs			Bedspace Occupancy in Mental Health Unit	Typical Wait to Enter Mental Health Unit	Average Length of Stay on Mental Health Unit	Staffing for Mental Health Care		Does Agency Charge a Fee for Mental Health Services?	Who Provides Mental Health Services?	
			Central site	Multiple sites		Dedicated beds, mental health unit(s)	Beds for competency cases	Beds for persons held without charge				Total FTEs	FTE positions		Jail staff	Contract staff
Maricopa Co., Arizona	5,636	300	✓		17.5 days ^{1a}	10 ^{1b}	10-12	0	95%	< 1 day	25-30 days	59.3	36 detention officers 2 MDs 10 RNs 3 MSWs 1.3 PhDs 7 other ^{1c}	No	✓	
Pima Co., Arizona	1,070	—	✓		5 days	48	8-10	0	—	1-2 days	—	6	1 MD 2 RN 3 counselors	No	✓	
Alameda Co., California	3,264	158		✓	24 days	20	—	—	70-80%	None	14 days	0	1 MD 3 RN 1 LCSW LVNs OTR 1 director	No		✓
Contra Costa Co., California	1,477	79		✓	3 months, sentenced; 8 days, un-sentenced	4	—	—	75%	None	1 week	0	—	No	Mental health beds and services are provided through Alameda County, which contracts with a private provider.	

1.a. The average length of stay in Maricopa County, Arizona, is 37.5 days for persons held longer than 24 hours. 1.b. In addition to the 10 reported in-jail beds, 86 psychiatric hospital beds are available to the agency. 1.c. Other staff positions for mental health services include counselors and "mid-level staff."

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			Central site	Multiple sites		Dedicated beds, mental health unit(s)	Beds for competency cases	Beds for persons held without charge				Total FTEs	FTE positions		Jail staff	Contract staff
Fresno Co., California	2,104	95	✓		22 days	Beds reported as "none," but "90% of the psychiatric housing unit is used for inmates under the forensic mentalhealth program."			—	—	—	15.2	02 MD 1 RN 1 MSW 1 PhD 2 LVN 1 supervisor 2 office assistants 1 community health 6 psychologists	No	✓	
Kern Co., California	2,025	125	✓		20 days	32	5	0	10%	None	30 days	6	4 PhD (contract) 3 MD 2 RN	No	✓	
Los Angeles Co., California	19,289	564		✓	34 days	Male bedspace: 30 dedicated beds; 15-35 acutely mentally ill in general medical unit; 80 acutely mentally ill in jail beds; 320 less-acute in jail beds; a variable number of beds in pill module. 150 beds available for female mentally ill inmates.			100%	12 hours	30 days	32	2 MD 22 RN 3 MSW 1 PhD 2 clerical 1 recreational therapist 1 medical case worker	No	Services are provided by agreement between the Sheriff's Department and the county Department of Mental Health.	
Orange Co., California	5,004	201		✓	76 days (pretrial)	42	4-6	0	90-95%	None	3-4 days	7.75	1.25 MDs 5 RNs 1.5 mental health nurse case manager	No	✓	
Sacramento Co., California	3,550	177		✓	120 days	14	N/A	N/A	85%	None	8.5 days	13.5	1 MD 6.5 RNs 1 MSW 5 LVN/LPT	No		✓

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			Central site	Multiple sites		Dedicated beds, mental health unit(s)	Beds for competency cases	Beds for persons held without charge				Total FTEs	FTE positions		Jail staff	Contract staff
San Diego Co., California	5,242	336 ²		✓	18 days	24	4	1	90%	None	2.5 weeks	22	1.5 MDs 15 RNs 1 MSW 0.5 PhD 1 recreational therapist 1 program manager 2 clerks	Yes	Services are provided by the county department of health services.	
San Joaquin Co., California	703	69	✓		9 days	0	10	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	25 MD 6 psych. tech.	No	✓	
San Mateo Co., California	1,266	53	✓		—	10	3-5	10	80%	None	30 days	7	1 RN 1 PhD 5 LPTs	No	✓	
San Francisco, California	2,100	140	✓		9 days	10	0	0	98%	12 hours	6 days	14	2 MDs 9 RNs 1 MSW 2 psych. tech.	No	Provided by the public health department.	
Arapahoe Co., Colorado	850	42		✓	80 days	8	1	1	25%	None	—	6	6 COs ³	No		✓
City/County of Denver, Colorado	1,715	402	✓		18 months	16	4	0	60%	3 days	5 days	13	1 MD 12 RNs	No	✓	
Broward Co., Florida	3,330	175	✓		23 days	202	10	—	85%	None	5 weeks	13.7	2 MD 4.2 RN 1 MSW 0.8 PhD 4.2 LPN 1 clerk 0.5 administration	No		✓

2. Admissions data for San Diego County, California, include rebookings.

3. Arapahoe County, Colorado overall health services staff includes 15 FTE RNs and 5 MSWs who provide services to mentally ill inmates.

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			Central site	Multiple sites		Dedicated beds, mental health unit(s)	Beds for competency cases	Beds for persons held without charge				Total FTEs	FTE positions		Jail staff	Contract staff
Escambia Co., Florida	1,181	57	✓		180 days	19	12	0	100%	< 1 day	10 days	2.5	0.15 MD ^{4a} 1 RN/LPN 1 PhD 3 other	Yes ^{4b}	✓	✓ ^{4c}
Hillsborough Co., Florida	2,562	134	✓		19 days	60	4	0	95%	< 1 day	7 days	9.1	1 MD 2.4 RNs 2 ARNPs Other ⁵	No		✓
Jacksonville Co., Florida	2,648	121	✓		73 days	38	2	4	80%	1 day	21 days	6	1 MD 1 RN 1MSW 2 counselors 1 community services worker	No	✓	
Orange Co., Florida	3,438	155	✓		25 days	150	40	0	100%	None	45 days	10	4 MSW 1 PhD 4 counselors ⁶	No	✓	✓
Palm Beach Co., Florida	1,981	122		✓	4.53 days	96	5	3	65%	None	41 days	50	2 MDs 25 RNs 1 MSW 1 BSW 3 PhDs 8 mental health technicians	No	✓	✓

- 4.a. Staffing in Escambia Co., Florida includes a psychiatrist at 4 hours per week and a medical doctor at 2 hours per week. plus approx. 1/3 RN and 2/3 LPN. Other staff include. 2 masters-level counselors and 1 secretary. 4.b. Fees are charged for medications and non-acute first visits; other mental health services are provided without charge. 4.c. Nurses and MDs are agency staff, other staff are provided by contract
5. Mental health staffing in Hillsborough Co., Florida includes 0.5 clerical FTE and Ph.D. staff as needed.
6. Counselors in Orange County, Florida, include 2 master's-level and 2 bachelor's-level positions. The agency contracts through local mental health agencies for psychiatric consultation.

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			Central site	Multiple sites		Dedicated beds, mental health unit(s)	Beds for competency cases	Beds for persons held without charge				Total FTEs	FTE positions		Jail staff	Contract staff
Pinellas Co., Florida	1,520	132	✓		12 days	—	Up to 25 per month	0	—	—	—	5.5	0.5 MD 1 RN 3 MSW 1 PhD	No		✓
Volusia Co., Florida	1,168	60	✓		35 days ⁷	6	0	26 (1 unit)	0-15%	None	1 week	12	1 MD 4 RNs 4 MSWs 3 security	Not at present, but being considered		✓
Cobb Co., Georgia	1,000	82	✓		100-120 days	0	0	0	—	None	0	0	0.5 PhD 0.5 counselor	Yes		✓
Fulton Co., Georgia	2,317	76	✓		17 days	18	30	0	110%	None	9 days	2	2 security 1.5 MD 1 RN 2 MSW 2.4 mental health associates 3.4 LPN	No		✓
Hawaii DOC (unified system)	664	15	✓		55 days	35	8-10	0	100%	3-5 days	5 days ⁸	3.5	0.5 MD 1 RN 1 MSW 1 PhD	No	✓	
Cook Co., Illinois	9,100	250	✓		46 days	46	0	0	90%	None	6 days	84	5 MDs 12 RNs 2 MSWs 7 PhDs ⁹ 45 other ⁹	No	✓	✓

7. Volusia County, Florida, reports an average length of stay for unsentenced persons at 20 days; sentenced offenders, 51 days. Forty percent of those admitted are released within 24 hours of admission.

8. Many 48-hour commitments in Hawaii are chronically mentally ill, which drives down the average length of stay.

9. Other Cook County positions include mental health specialists, an activity therapist, ward clerks, and administrative assistants. The jail system provides nursing staff and mental health specialists; a contract provider provides psychiatrist/psychologist staff.

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			Central site	Multiple sites		Dedicated beds, mental health unit(s)	Beds for competency cases	Beds for persons held without charge				Total FTEs	FTE positions		Jail staff	Contract staff
Jefferson Co., Kentucky	1,459	123	✓		15.4 days	40	7	2	16%	2 days	45 days	5	0.2 MD 1 RN 3 MSW	No		✓
City of Baltimore, Maryland	3,399	89		✓	38 days	32	As needed	0	90%	None	7 days	3	1 MD 2.4 RNs 1 PhD	No	✓	
Prince George's Co., Maryland	1,250	40-80	✓		7 to 180 days	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	—	No		✓
Hampden Co., Massachusetts	1,444	19	✓		37 days, pretrial; 419 days, sentenced	13	0	0	35%	None	4-5 days	10	0.75 MD 2 RN 5.5 MSW 5 LPN 1 program director	No		✓
Macomb Co., Michigan	1,232	68	✓		N/A	32	24	0	95%	—	90 days	3	1 senior therapist 2 mental health therapists 0.25 psychiatrist 1 MSW 2 BSW 0.5 clinical nursing specialist	Yes ¹⁰		✓
Oakland Co., Michigan	1,650	82		✓	14 days	0	10	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	—	—	N/A	Services provided by state department of mental health.	
Wayne Co., Michigan	2,600	110		✓	110 days	15	0	0	100%	None	—	—	—	N/A	Services provided by state department of mental health.	
Hennepin Co., Minnesota	503	123	✓		4.15 days	0	5	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.5	0.5 MD	N/A		✓

10. Macomb County, Michigan, charges a \$3.00 monthly fee for medications.

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			Central site	Multiple sites		Dedicated beds, mental health unit(s)	Beds for competency cases	Beds for persons held without charge				Total FTEs	FTE positions		Jail staff	Contract staff
Jackson Co., Missouri	624	23	✓		33 days	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	—	—	—		✓
Clark Co., Nevada	1,642	125	✓		7-14 days	Two units totalling 34 beds			98%	3-5 days	2-3 weeks	1.5	1 MSW 1 assoc. social worker	No		✓
Essex Co., New Jersey	1,850	45		✓	—	0	2	6	N/A	1 week ¹¹	30 days	2	1 psychiatrist 1 psychologist	No	✓	
Middlesex Co., New Jersey	968	31	✓		31.5 days	20	6	2-3	80%	None	7 weeks	10	3 MD 1 RN 1 PhD 2 MA	No	✓	✓
Bernalillo Co., New Mexico	1,028	607	✓		10.1 days	26	5	31	100%	None	8 weeks	6	4 MSWs 1 PhD (contract) 2 mental health counselors		✓	
Nassau Co., New York	1,600	40	✓		N/A	200 beds in mental observation housing. ¹²			—	None	—	—	MSWs psychiatrists	(No answer)	✓	✓
Westchester Co., New York	1,470	23	✓		N/A	15	18	0	90%	None	18 days	22.75	1.5 MD 10 RN 1 LPN 1.25 MSW 1 PhD ¹³ 8 other ¹³	No		✓
Cuyahoga Co., Ohio	1,600	70		✓	30 days	33	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6.5	0.5 MD 6 LPN	No		✓
Marion Co., Oregon	1,275	146		✓	15 days	0 ¹⁴	0	0	—	—	—	—	—	—		✓

11. Essex County, New Jersey, reported this waiting period for forensic beds located in Trenton, New Jersey.

12. Nassau County is constructing a "prison ward" in the county medical center, which will have 5 dedicated beds for mentally ill Persons.

13. Additional staff in Westchester County, New York include 1 recreational therapist, 6 SPA, and 1 clerk.

14. The Marion County, Oregon, facility does not have dedicated bedspace for sentenced mentally incompetent offenders. Mental health services for pretrial offenders are provided by contract

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			Central site	Multiple sites		Dedicated beds, mental health unit(s)	Beds for competency cases	Beds for persons held without charge				Total FTEs	FTE positions		Jail staff	Contract staff
Multnomah Co., Oregon	1,370	100	✓		17 days	10	3	1	100%	1-2 days (est.)	30 days (est.)	7	2 psychiatric RNs 5 security	No	County health department provides psychiatric and health services	
Allegheny Co., Pennsylvania	1,277	54	✓		24 days	58	—	N/A	100%	7 days	3 months	0	2 MDs 4 RNs 2 MSWs 9 mental health specialists	No	Staff positions are from the state hospital's forensic unit.	
Rhode Island DOC	3,028	25	✓		19 days	0	4	4	50%	None	3 days	10.5	1 MD 8 RN/LPN 1.5 PhD	No		✓
Davidson Co., Tennessee	1,184	66	✓		60 days	88	88	10	90%	None	30 days	6	1 MD 3 RN 1 PhD 1 master's	Yes	✓	✓
Shelby Co., Tennessee	2,600	35	✓		180 days	80 ¹⁵	0	0	95%	2 days	3 months	22.9	0.1 MD 19.8 counselors 1 clinical supervisor 1 administrative 1 clerical	No	✓	✓
El Paso Co., Texas	1,463	108	✓		86 days	0	16 beds available for either category		—	—	N/A	0	2 RNs <1 MSW 1 PhD (contract)	No		✓
Harris Co., Texas	9,711	253		✓	Unknown	120	5	0	80%	0	60 days	82	2.25 MD 4 RN 1 MSW 1 PhD 6 LVN 6 caseworkers	No		✓

15. The response data for Shelby County, Tennessee, are from a post-sentence facility housing felons and misdemeanants with sentences of up to six years. Forensic services for pretrial inmates are provided by contract.

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			Central site	Multiple sites		Dedicated beds, mental health unit(s)	Beds for competency cases	Beds for persons held without charge				Total FTEs	FTE positions		Jail staff	Contract staff
Tarrant Co., Texas	4,400	103	✓		243 days	24	12	0	90%	1 day	4 days	1	1 MD 1 RN 4 caseworkers	No		✓
Arlington Co., Virginia	531	18	✓		24 days	30	1	0	90%	None	30 days	12 ¹⁶	0.2 MD 3 RNs 0.2 MSW 1.4 PhD 1.4 LPN 5 security 1 other	No		✓
Fairfax Co., Virginia	1,003	126	✓		87 days	18	As needed	0	2%	—	—	7	1 MD 5 RNs 1 MSW 7 forensics	No	✓	
Richmond Co., Virginia	1,443	35		✓	764 days	12	N/A	12	100%	1 day	2 days	0	2 MDs 1 MSW	No		
King Co., Washington	2,144	162		✓	13.3 days	There are designated cell areas for acute psychiatric patients as well as moderate and stable mentally ill inmates.			—	—	—	26.25	1 MD 14.25 RN 7 MSW 1 PhD 2 supervisors	No	Provided by local health department	
Pierce Co., Washington	1,192	76	✓		15 days	0	8	0	—	N/A	N/A	0	0.25 MD 4 master's-level counselors	For MD services only	✓	
Milwaukee Co., Wisconsin	1,200	144	✓		8.2 days	19	125	0	100%	1 day	14 days	24	1 MD 5 RNs 5 MSWs 1 PhD 12 sworn staff	No	Provided by county mental health center	

16. In Arlington County, Virginia the medical services personnel are provided by contract.

**APPENDIX A.
SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

1995 Survey: Mental Health Services in Large Jails

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Corrections
Jails Division and Information Center
March 1995

Respondent Identification

Survey respondent name _____

Agency _____

Mailing Address _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

FAX: _____

Please respond no later than
April 14, 1995

Return to:
Connie Clem, Project Coordinator
NIC Information Center
1860 Industrial Circle
Longmont, CO 80501
(800) 877-1461
FAX (303) 682-0556

PART I. Jail Summary Data

1. What is the average daily population (ADP) in your jail system?
_____ Inmates
2. What is the number of daily admissions to the jail system?
_____ Inmates
3. Are jail admissions centralized or multi-site?
_____ Centralized
_____ Multiple sites
4. What is the average length of stay in the jail system?
_____ Days

(Survey questions continue on reverse -)

Part II. Data on Forensic Services

5. What is the number of dedicated forensic acute hospital beds in your jail system? Note: Dedicated forensic hospital beds are defined as beds for detainees or short-sentenced prisoners who complete their sentences in the jail system. Please do not include beds for court cases pending competency examinations (to be reported separately in question 6) or for police cases that have not been arraigned (to be reported in question 7).
_____ Dedicated forensic acute hospital beds
6. How many jail beds are typically used for cases pending a formal examination of offender competency to stand trial?
_____ Beds for persons pending formal competency examination
7. How many jail beds are typically used for unarraigned persons on a mental health hold?
_____ Beds for unarraigned persons on mental health hold
8. What is the utilization rate of forensic acute hospital bedspace?
_____ Percent occupancy
9. What is the typical wait list period to enter the forensic acute hospital units?
_____ Days/Weeks (circle one)
10. What is the average length of stay on the forensic acute hospital units?
_____ Days/Weeks/Months (circle one)
11. What is the number of FTE (full time equivalent) positions dedicated to the forensic acute hospital units?
_____ FTEs
12. Please provide data on the number of FTE positions dedicated to forensic acute mental health services in the following categories:
_____ MDs
_____ RNs
_____ MSWs
_____ PhDs
_____ Other (specify) _____
13. Does your agency charge a co-payment for the forensic acute mental health services it provides?
_____ Yes
_____ No
14. Do agency staff provide forensic acute mental health services, or does your agency contract out for services?
_____ Services are provided by agency staff
_____ Services are provided by another provider under contract

Thank you very much for your participation.