

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKGROUP

Participating organizations:

American Psychiatric Association	National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
American Psychological Association	National Council for Behavioral Health
Campaign for Youth Justice	National Criminal Justice Association
National Alliance on Mental Illness	Police Foundation
National Association of Counties	Treatment Advocacy Center
National Association of Social Workers	Vera Institute

Who we are:

The Consensus Workgroup on Behavioral Health Issues in the Criminal Justice System includes national organizations representing individuals with behavioral health needs and their families, providers, correctional systems and administrators, criminal justice reformers, state and local governments, state and local program directors, and researchers. Participating organizations recognize that the intersection of behavioral health issues and criminal justice necessitates coordinated, collaborative, and sustained efforts, so we formed a workgroup to find consensus.

What is this document:

Increasingly, U.S. criminal justice systems have become the first responders to individuals with mental illness and substance use disorders (SUD). More than ever, jails and prisons are expected to provide appropriate services and treatment to the growing populations they serve.

Together, we call on the Administration and the 116th Congress to comprehensively address issues at the intersection of behavioral health and criminal justice. In the consensus document we acknowledge the progress made in recent years to address the behavioral health needs in the criminal justice system. We also outline recommendations for achieving continued progress on issues such as diversion tactics, effective practices during incarceration, workforce development, federal research and coordination, juvenile justice reform, and much more.

What is it based off?

Groups engaged in extensive policy conversations surrounding best practices and implications of certain language and messaging, and amenable reached consensus on the included policy recommendations, reflecting a coming together of law enforcement and mental health organizations. Throughout the process, the report from the Interdepartmental Serious Mental Illness Coordinating Committee (ISMICC) was considered in developing the recommendations.*

**The non-federal members of the ISMICC created a set of recommendations aimed at coordinating the efforts of federal departments to develop a comprehensive continuum of care focused on improving outcomes for people of all ages with SMI and SED, and promoting evidence-based practices and a strong community-based system of care. One of the five main areas of focus was on mental health and criminal justice.*

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