



Introduction

The President's New Freedom Commission called for a transformation of the existing mental health care system to develop a consumer-centered system focused on recovery that delivers excellent mental health care. In 2005, Washington State was one of seven states (now expanded to nine) to receive a five-year Mental Health Transformation-State Incentive Grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to transform services towards that goal.

States throughout the country are focusing attention on the rapid growth and accelerating costs of managing the release of persons with mental illness and alcohol or drug (AOD) disorders from jails or prisons and other institutional settings such as psychiatric hospitals. Washington State has responded with HB1290, which authorized expedited restoration of Medicaid for incarcerated and hospitalized individuals. This FACT SHEET presents preliminary findings about the impact of HB1290 for persons released from local jails, psychiatric hospitals or Department of Corrections (DOC) facilities.¹ Policy implications for mental health transformation in Washington State are highlighted.

Findings

In 2006 and 2007, 3743 referrals were made by jails, psychiatric hospitals and DOC facilities and 2721 were approved for expedited Medicaid benefit restoration. The demographic characteristics of these persons are shown in Table 1 below.

¹ Details and references available in Morrissey JP, & Cuddeback GS (2008). Using DSHS's Integrated Database to Examine Criminal Justice – Mental Health Issues, Chapel Hill, NC, Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

To better understand the impact of expedited Medicaid restoration, the mental health and AOD services and jail utilization patterns were examined for persons who had their Medicaid restored (n=1759) and those who did not (n=717) upon release from jails, hospitals or DOC facilities.

Having Medicaid was associated with an increased probability of receiving outpatient mental health and AOD services (see **Figure 1**) and a decreased probability of being admitted to a inpatient psychiatric or AOD facility over a 90-day post-release period (see **Figure 2**). Also, compared to those without restored benefits, those with Medicaid were less likely to be detained in jail over a three-month post-release period (see **Figure 3**).

Recommendations

Persons with mental illness and/or AOD disorders who are institutionalized in local jails, state prisons or psychiatric hospitals need assistance if they are to be successfully reintegrated to their communities upon release.

Policies such as those created by Washington State's HB1290 legislation are innovative and important steps in facilitating the community reentry of persons with mental illness and AOD disorders. Expediting the restoration of Medicaid benefits is associated with a number of advantages for those who are released from institutional settings.

However, expedited Medicaid restoration is a necessary but not a sufficient part of the solution towards successful reintegration of persons who are released from institutional settings. Expediting access to quality health, mental health and AOD services, housing, supported employment, and social supports will further facilitate community reintegration for persons with mental illness and AOD disorders.

Table 1: HB1290 Referral Characteristics

Indicator	Department of Corrections	Psychiatric Hospitals	City or County Jails
# of Referrals (n = 3743)	796	1038	1906
Successful Referrals (n = 2721)	80.53% (641)	86.03% (893)	62.17% (1185)
Demographic Information			
White	70.51% (557)	80.93% (836)	71.83% (1367)
Black	23.54% (186)	9.49% (98)	18.29% (348)
Male	82.66% (658)	62.52% (649)	71.83% (1369)
Age (M(SD))	37.24 (10.35)	36.83 (12.32)	34.45 (10.10)
MH + SA	44.47% (354)	49.61% (515)	40.24% (767)
MH Only	4.02% (32)	35.26% (366)	4.04% (77)
SA Only	42.46% (338)	6.55% (68)	48.85% (931)
DSHS Eligibility			
Disabled/Blind	66.71% (531)	72.74% (755)	43.49% (829)
General Assistance	22.24% (177)	4.72% (49)	24.92% (475)
ADATSA	4.27% (34)	3.18% (33)	24.19% (461)
Other	6.78% (34)	19.36% (201)	7.40% (141)

Figure 1: Percent Subsequent Service by Medicaid Restoration Status

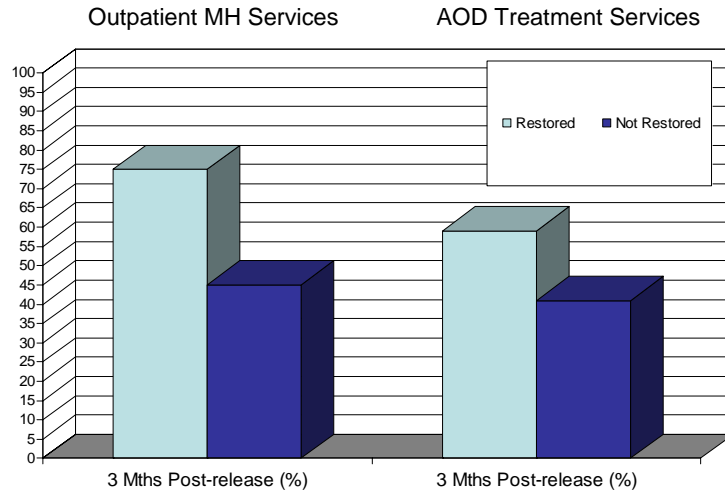


Figure 2: Percent w/ Inpatient Treatment by Medicaid Restoration Status

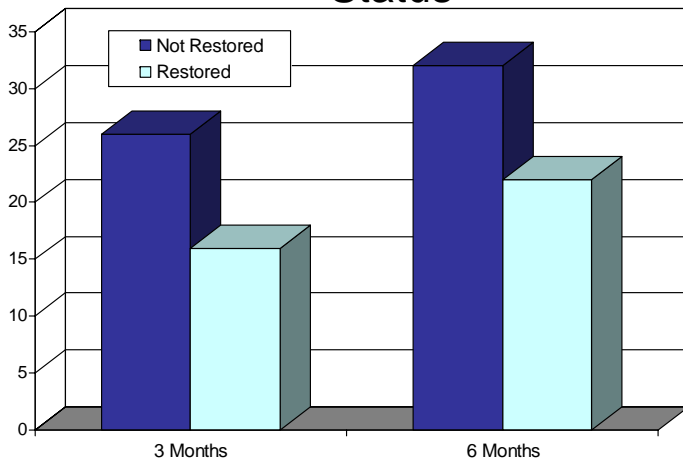


Figure 3: Percent w/ Jail Recidivism by Medicaid Restoration Status

