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Programs are ongoing to reduce those with behavioral health disorders behind bars but they need more participation

This is one of the findings in a new report, By the Numbers 4

CLEVELAND, OH – There are multiple programs currently underway to try to reduce the number of people with a behavioral health disorders behind bars, but more participation is needed.

There are several critical moments when someone with a behavioral health disorder can be identified and prevented from going further into the criminal justice system, according to a new report by The Center for Community Solutions and the Mental Health & Addiction Advocacy Coalition.

The fourth installment of By the Numbers 4 takes a look at this framework, called the Sequential Intercept Model, and another national program called the Stepping Up Initiative.

“These potential intercept points include when someone with a behavioral health disorder has an interaction with law enforcement and emergency services or jails and courts,” said Tara Britton, the Director of Public Policy and Advocacy for The Center for Community Solutions. Across Ohio, 19 counties have completed assessment workshops using the Sequential Intercept Model, and several more are currently participating in these assessments.

“The police are often first responders for those experiencing a mental health crisis, about 10 percent of calls to police involve individuals with mental illness which makes law enforcement a crucial interception point and opportunity for diversion,” said Joan Englund, the Executive Director of the Mental Health & Addiction Advocacy Coalition.

The Sequential Intercept Model came about through a partnership with the Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

“If the right interventions are put into place the public is actually more safe, everybody is more safe,” said Ruth Simera, the Director of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence. “If a person with mental

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illness keeps repeating the same behavior and landing in jail, even if it's not a violent behavior, and most of them are not, if their behavior improves that's better for everybody so it's a win-win all the way around."

This installment of By the Numbers 4 also takes a look at the Stepping Up initiative, a national program designed to help counties reduce people with mental illness or substance use disorders who are behind bars. Forty-one counties in Ohio have passed resolutions to join the initiative, which has clear goals of reducing the numbers of people with behavioral health disorders behind bars, reducing the length of time people with those disorders spend behind bars, increasing the services and supports available to those people and reducing the number of people behavioral health disorders who end up back in jail.

Community Solutions and the Mental Health & Addiction Advocacy Coalition have examined the current state of behavioral health services for adults involved with the criminal justice system, this is the fourth of five installments of By the Numbers 4.

To speak with anyone involved with the report please contact Dani Carlson at dcarlson@communitysolutions.com or Karen Kearney at KKearney@mhaadvocacy.org.

To read the full report please click [here](#).

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