

CA Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards and Commissions

November 2019 www.calbhbc.com

ISSUE BRIEF: Criminal Justice: Advising to reduce incarceration and recidivism.

Social and financial costs are high when a person with serious mental illness (SMI) is incarcerated if they otherwise could be in the community, have treatment, have access to medication, and still be accountable.

Statistically High Incarceration: 17% of those incarcerated in local jails have SMI (over three times the rate of the general population.)¹

10% of people with mental illness commit crimes as a direct consequence of mental illness symptoms. Interaction with the criminal justice system is usually due to other factors, such as substance use, poverty and homelessness.²

Reducing Incarceration: Tools/Best Practices

1. SMI Prevention & Early Intervention
2. [Triage Programs](#): Mental Health support services in:
 - a. Shelters
 - b. Hospitals & Clinics
 - c. Schools
 - d. Crisis Stabilization Units
 - e. Mobile Crisis Units
 - f. Peer Respite Services
3. [Crisis Intervention Training](#) is required for law enforcement personnel.
4. [Mental Health Court](#)
5. [Laura's Law](#)/Assisted Outpatient Therapy

More info: calbhbc.com/jails--prisons.html

Advice for Reviewing Jails

Speakers: Invite speakers to address:

- Mental Health services/programs
- "Warm Hand-Offs" - Access to MH/BH services and social supports (eg. vocational, housing) in preparation and upon release.
- "Sequential Intercept Model" (next page)

Recommended speakers: Jail Warden/staff, BH Director/staff, related Contractors/staff, Probation Director/staff.

Patients Rights Advocates

(PRAs): Federal disability rights laws mandate equal access to programs, services and activities for all people with disabilities in custody. PRAs are authorized to review the mental health programs in jails. Invite PRAs to participate at monthly meetings.

Site Visits (access varies by jurisdiction).

Board Liaison: Ask one of your local board/commission members to attend the local Community Corrections Partnership (AB 109) Committee meetings and report back to your local board/commission.

Grand Jury Annual Reports: One of the civil grand juries' duties is to look into the quality and management of the county's jails and prisons. [Links to reports.](#)

The Sequential Intercept Model

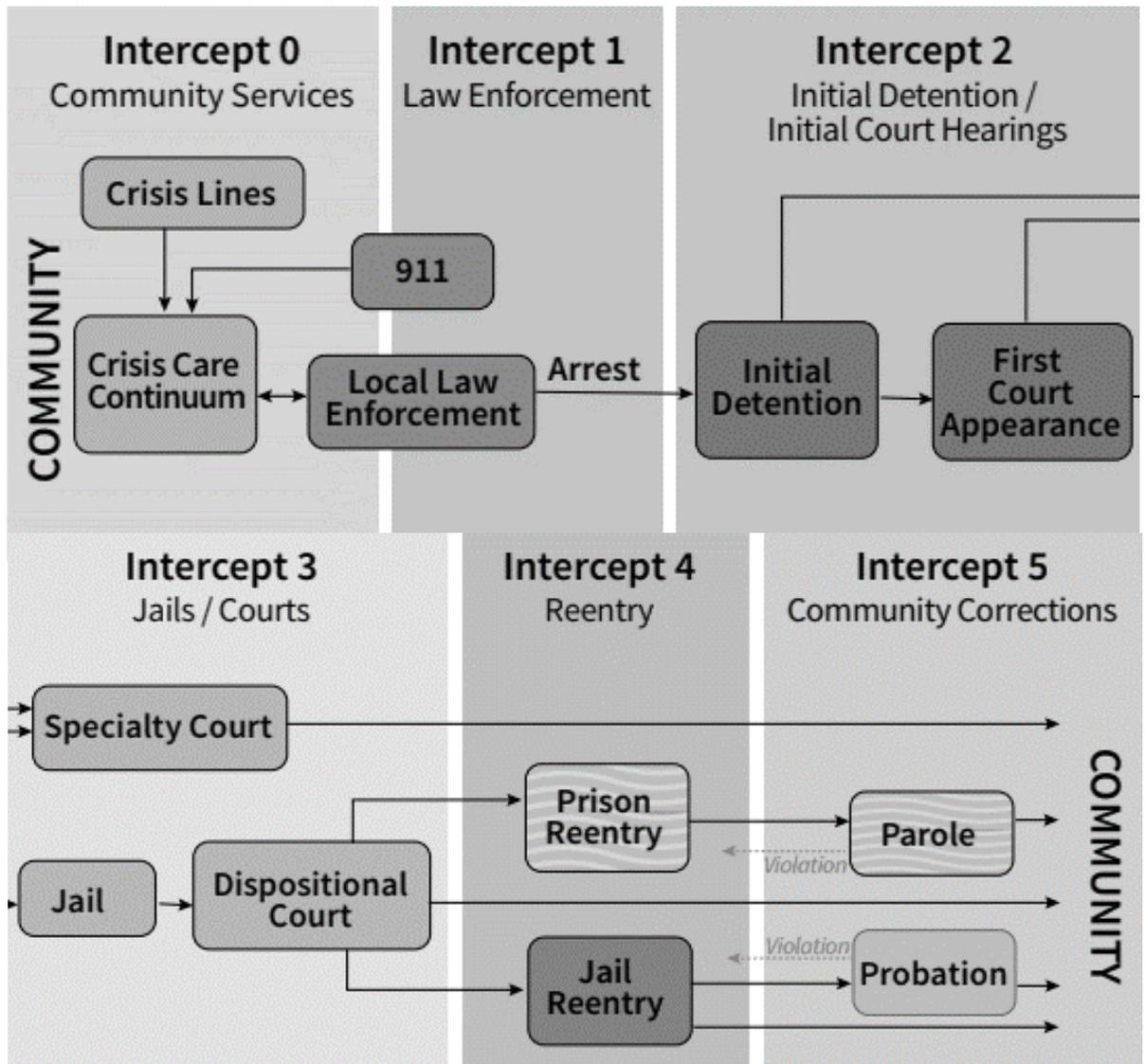
The Sequential Intercept Model is a tool to help counties identify programs and resources and how best to coordinate them. This model was developed in the 1990s in response to the high prevalence of mental illness in people involved in the criminal justice system.³

More info at:

“Together We Can: Reducing Criminal Justice Involvement for People with Mental Illness”

MH Services Oversight & Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) 2017

Page 29: “Planning for Prevention and Diversion”.



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1 Steadman, H. J., Osher, F. C., Clark Robbins, P., Case, B., & Samuels, S. (2009). Prevalence of SMI among jail inmates. *Psychiatric Services*, 60(6), 761-765

2 Skeem, J., Manchak, S., Peterson, J.K. (2011). Correctional policy for offenders with mental illness: creating a new paradigm for recidivism reduction. *Law & Human Behavior*, 35, 110-126.

3 Munetz, M. R., & Griffin, P. A. (2006). Use of the sequential intercept model as an approach to decriminalization of people with SMI. *Psychiatric Services*, 57(4), 544-549.