

Executive Summary

School to Prison Pipeline

- Correctional spending has far outpaced spending on education over the past 3 decades
- Increased educational attainment appears to have strong public safety benefits
 - Ex. raises opportunity costs of illegal behavior/ incarceration
- Significantly lower educational attainment among correctional population
- Dropping out of high school increases risk of entering justice system
- Low income and high minority schools more likely to have “School Resource Officers”
 - (SROs) can arrest students and refer them to law enforcement
- Schools with SROs suspend and expel students more frequently than schools without
- Students of color and students with disabilities most likely to be suspended/ expelled
- Students suspended/ expelled more likely to drop out of school
- Majority of those in prison have a child
- Students with a parent incarcerated more likely to drop out of school, face economic trouble, have mental/ physical health issues, enter justice system
- Schools less likely to refer minority students to mental health services
- African Americans more likely to experience mental health problems, homelessness, be exposed to violence

Substance Use

- Majority of Colorado’s inmates have substance abuse needs
- Nearly half of those with substance abuse needs also have mental health issues
- Psychoactive substances can have a kindling effect in triggering the onset of mental disorders or be used to self-medicate existing symptoms
- Exposure to childhood trauma and environmental stressors enhances vulnerability to mental and substance use disorders
- Those with substance use disorders have higher rates of relapse, hospitalization, violence, homelessness, recidivism
- People of color and whites are just as likely to use substances but people of color are much more likely to be arrested/ incarcerated
- Putting people in prison doesn’t necessarily reduce drug trafficking or use – street dealers are easily replaced
- Incarceration reduces earning potential and increases economic burden on family
- Mandatory minimums have few deterrent effects
- Integrated treatment (substance abuse and mental health treatment from the same team) is the most effective

Colorado Springs CARES/ CRT

- CRT helps to more effectively respond to mental health related 911 calls
- CARES connects 911/ emergency department super-utilizers with community resources and helps them navigate the healthcare system
- Substantial cost avoidance from reduced emergency room visits/ ambulance rides
- Focus on sustainable and preventative care for individuals at risk for entering justice system (low income, mental health and substance use issues)