

# Framework for Identifying HCV-Infected Persons in Jail and Linking to Care on Community Re-Entry in Los Angeles County

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# Disclaimer

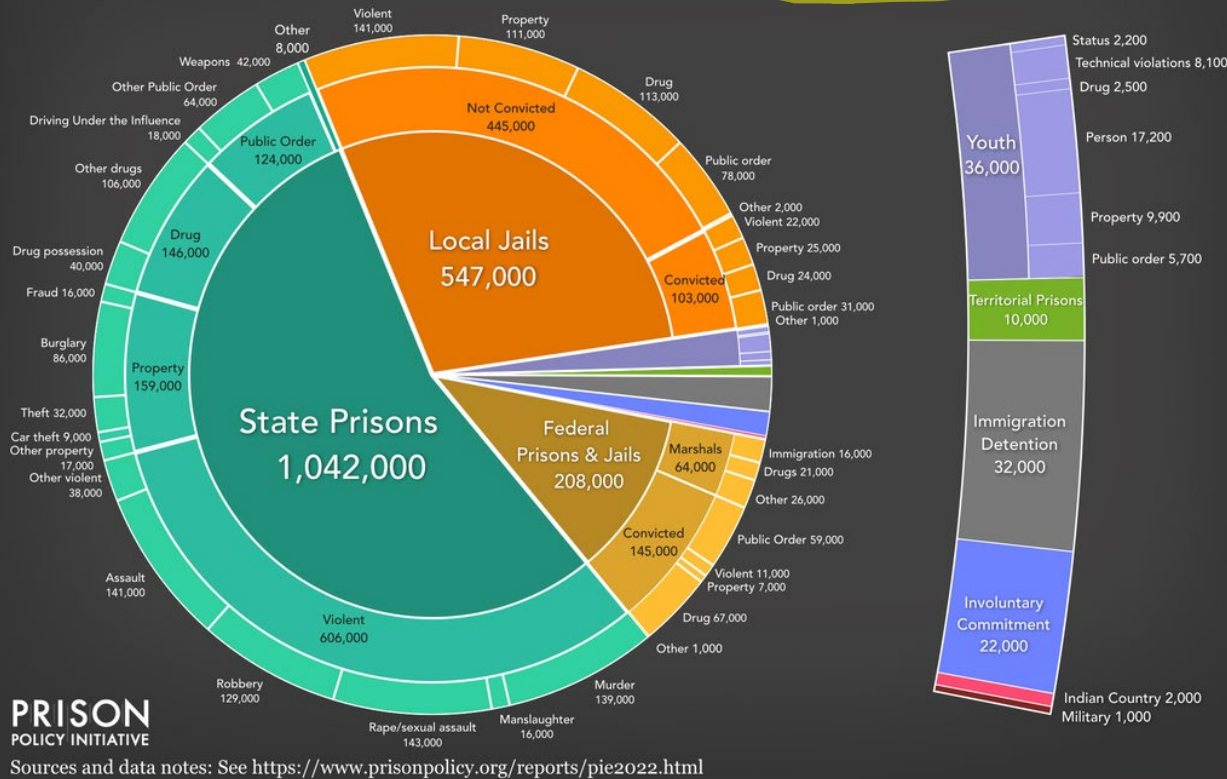
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# Why focus incarcerated people?

## How many people are locked up in the United States?

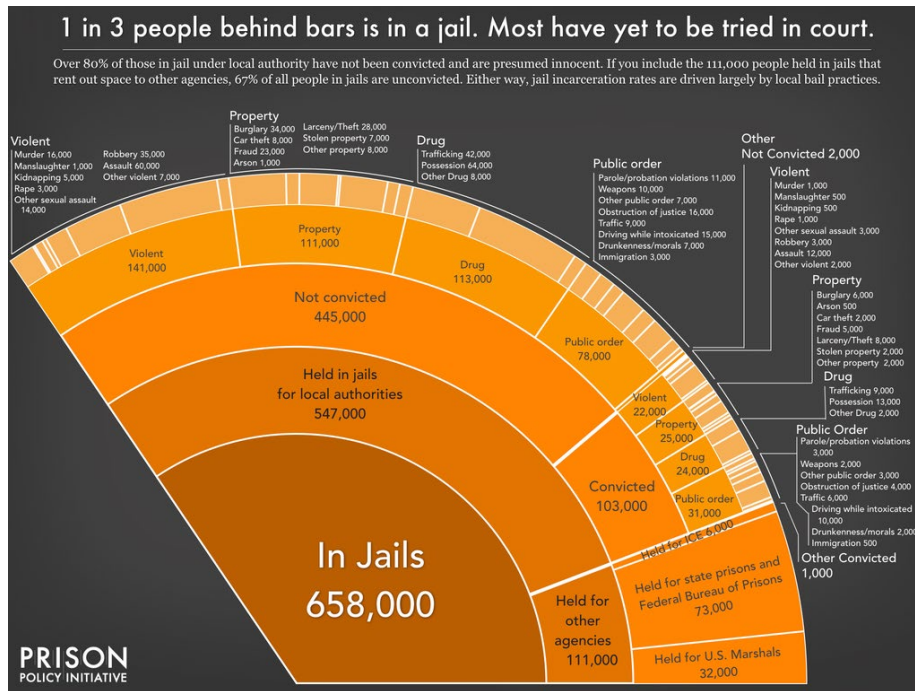
The U.S. locks up more people per capita than any other nation, at the staggering rate of 573 per 100,000 residents. But to end mass incarceration, we must first consider *where* and *why* **1.9 million people are confined nationwide.**



- ~2 million confined
  - Represents 15% decline from pre-pandemic
- 30% HCV-infected people pass through correctional system annually



# Why focus on jails?



- One-third of confined people in jails
- 29,000 people admitted to jails daily
  - Ave length of stay: 25 days
- **~11 million jail admissions/year**
  - 1 in 4 people arrested again in same year



# How many people in LA County jails?

- ~300 new admissions/day
- ~17,000 people in jail daily
- 110,829 bookings (Oct 2017 – Sep 2018)

Source: [http://lasd.org/public\\_data\\_sharing.html](http://lasd.org/public_data_sharing.html)



# What is known about the burden of HCV in LA County jails?

- Positive HCV test results are reportable
- LA County Public Health receives HCV test results from jails via electronic laboratory reporting
- Risk factor based HCV testing in jail
  - Reflex confirmatory PCR testing for positive antibody tests
  - PCR testing for known history of HCV



# HCV Surveillance Data from LA County Jails, 2018-2021

	2018 (N=1,902)		2019 (N=2,362)		2020 (1,449)		2021 (1,508)	
	Type of test		Type of test		Type of test		Type of test	
	+PCR	+Ab	+PCR	+Ab	+PCR	+Ab	+PCR	+Ab
<b>Total (n)</b>	1,616	286	1,989	373	1,315	134	1,491	17
<b>% male</b>	88%	81%	89%	79%	91%	86%	94%	88%
<b>Median age (years)</b>	37	38	37	37	35	38	33	33
<b>% aged 18-44 years</b>	68%	68%	68%	68%	75%	66%	80%	88%
<b>% known to Public Health from prior testing</b>	45%	23%	48%	24%	53%	29%	53%	6%

Abbreviations: PCR+, positive HCV polymerase chain reaction or genotype test; +Ab, positive

Note: All HCV Ab+ tests are reflexed to PCR testing; Ab+ results with a corresponding PCR result are presumed to have negative PCR



# Key Takeaways from Jail HCV Surveillance Data

- Estimate 1-2% of ~111,000 bookings screened pre-pandemic
  - Screening for HCV can be improved in jails
- Half of HCV-infected persons potentially known to Public Health
  - Represents ~16,000 of 33,000 HCV-infected people passing through jails annually





# Challenges with HCV Screening in Jail

- Phlebotomy for all incoming persons is not feasible
  - Large volume of daily bookings
  - Personnel conducting intake medical screening do not have time to perform phlebotomy
  - Dedicated phlebotomist for routine HCV screening unavailable
- Risk-factor based screening
  - Dependent on individual providers
  - Not uniformly applied



# Challenges to HCV Treatment in Jail

- Short length of stay (Median ~29 days)
  - Pre-treatment evaluation ~4 weeks
  - Typical treatment length 8-12 weeks
- Lack of funding for HCV medications
  - Mavyret AWP = \$7,000/4 weeks
  - Incarcerated people not eligible for MediCal
  - Correctional facilities not eligible for 340b pricing – requires treatment evaluation/prescription at LAC-USC specialty clinic
- Providers capable of treating HCV present in 1 of 4 jail facilities



# LA County Strategy

- Focus on identifying persons with HCV in jail and link to care on community re-entry
- Cross-reference booking information with LA County HCV surveillance registry
  - Can identify many previously identified HCV-infected persons without any additional testing



# HCV Identification and Link to Care Pilot

- California Department of Public Health HCV grant
  - Hired medical case worker (MCW)
  - Dedicated to HCV patient navigation in jail
- Partnered with correctional health
  - Whole Person Care (WPC) – MediCal funded program in jail to support people with chronic medical conditions
  - Public Health funded MCW embedded in WPC
  - WPC clients sign consent that allows for information exchange with Public Health



# Protocol for Jail HCV Link to Care Pilot

- Sources of referrals for MCW: 1) cross-reference with surveillance data, 2) correctional health clinical providers, 3) other WPC MCWs
- WPC POC sends list to Public Health of persons new to jail for surveillance cross-reference
- Public Health returns persons with
  - Positive HCV RNA PCR → attempt to link to care
  - Positive HCV antibody → attempt to link to confirmation
- MCW makes clinic appoint and connects client with CHW on community re-entry



# Timeline

- Jul- Sep 2021
  - Establish relationship with WPC
  - Developed project protocols
  - Hired MCW
  - Developing tracking tools
- Oct 2021 – Project launch
  - Met weekly to review data to troubleshoot process
- May 2022 – Funding ended for project
- WPC continues to support project



# Care Cascade Results (Oct 2021-Oct 2022)

- 129 HCV+ clients referred to MCW by jail providers
- 4,627 WPC clients sent to Public Health
  - 505 (11%) matches with HCV registry
    - 436 HCV RNA PCR+ and 69 anti-HCV+ only
- Outcomes of 634 HCV cases referred to WPC MCW
  - 21 (3%) still in custody
  - 466 (74%) released/transferred before assessment
  - 147 (23%) released from jail and assessed for interest in linkage to HCV care
    - 11 had an appointment
      - **2 attended clinic appointment**



# Challenges with Linkage to HCV Care in Community (Anecdotal)

- Short/unpredictable release dates
- >90% unreachable after release (attempt to call 3x)
  - No cell phone
  - Not answering calls
- Among those who are successfully contacted
  - Clients have other priorities (e.g., getting ID, finding housing)
  - Decline services after release
- Re-arrested





# Next Steps to Improve Linkage to Care Rate

- Speak with other programs that have tried to link clients to care on community re-entry
- Organize a design thinking session to brainstorm ideas



# Expand Surveillance Cross-Reference to Include All Persons Entering Jail

- Started receiving weekly booking information from Sheriff 4/4/22.
- Through 9/26/22:
  - Received information on 20,326 bookings
  - 1,276 (6.3%) matched by name/dob with a positive HCV test and no subsequent negative HCV PCR.
- Exception in Health and Safety code allows for redisclosing information to correctional health
  - On hold pending availability of additional resources to navigate >50 new HCV referrals per week



**QUESTIONS?**

