

## Reducing the Criminal Justice Population with Serious Mental Illnesses by Connecting Them To Treatment and Housing Immediately upon Release

### Untreated Mental Illness: Preventable Incarceration

- ❖ Untreated serious mental illnesses too often lead to preventable hospitalizations, disability, homelessness and justice involvement. ***This cycle is preventable when treatment is accessible.***
- ❖ **20% of Illinois' correctional population has a mental health condition. Often, they are incarcerated for low-level crimes of survival.**
  - An estimated 6,000 inmates with mental illness are released every year, but recidivism rates are high due to a lack of community-based treatment and affordable housing.
  - Reducing the prison population by 25% by 2025 means an additional 7,000 in the “release population” will have mental health needs.<sup>i</sup>
  - Recidivism rates will remain high unless this population has access to treatment and housing immediately upon release.

### Strengthening Diversion and Re-Entry, Reducing Recidivism

- ✓ **Continuity of Care.** Medicaid coverage of “targeted case management” 30 days prior to release to connect those with mental illness to treatment and housing post-release to maintain continuity of care.
- ✓ **An Income Source to Enable Housing.** Pre-release application for supplemental security income (SSI) for those who are disabled by their serious mental illness to pay for housing upon release.
- ✓ **Mental Health Parole.** Parole officers trained in mental health and strongly connected to treatment and housing resources. Modeled after mental health probation being implemented in many counties.

Investing in Mental Health Treatment Makes Fiscal Sense	
Average annual cost of prison per person	\$ 37,102
Cost of full year of community mental health treatment	\$ 10,000

<sup>i</sup> Illinois State Commission on Criminal Justice and Sentencing Reform, Initial Report, July 1, 2015.