





























































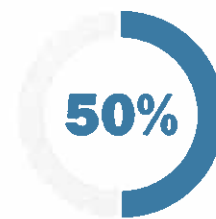




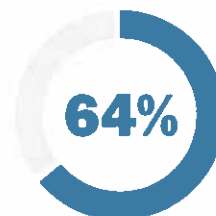


## WHY IS THIS A PROBLEM?

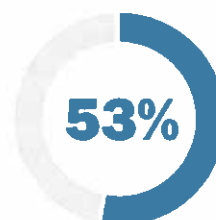
- **Across the nation, there is a growing reliance on local jails to serve as “one-stop” treatment centers** for individuals suffering from mental health, substance abuse, and other chronic illnesses.
- **County jails are now some of the largest behavioral health care providers in our communities**, funding and operating hospitals and health care treatments within the walls of local jails.
- **County governments operate 2,875 of our nation’s 3,160 local jails. Each year, local jails admit approximately 11 million individuals, with a daily population of 740,000.** The total annual jail population is 18 times the annual population of federal and state prisons.
- **Our national mental health crisis is concentrated in our local jails.** Serious mental illnesses are three to four times more common among local jail inmates than the general population. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) found that the local jail population has a higher prevalence of chronic health conditions than the general population.
- **County jails are paying to fill this gap for individuals who are awaiting trial and local taxpayers are paying for it.** The full cost is shifted to local taxpayers, rather than the traditional federal-state-local government partnership for safety-net services.
- **Individuals who can afford to “ball out” remain eligible for federal health care benefits.** As written, the law does not differentiate between inmates that are being held prior to conviction and those that have been convicted and are serving a sentence.
- **If you can afford to go home, you keep your health benefits. If not, you lose them.** This means that an innocent individual who is held in jail due to their inability to pay will likely face a gap in health care coverage upon release until they are able to reenroll in their federal health benefits.



with serious chronic health condition



with major mental health illness



with drug dependency or abuse



with co-existing mental health and substance abuse conditions

## KEY MESSAGES FOR ADVOCACY

- Having access to federal health benefits while awaiting trial and presumed innocent **aligns with an individual’s constitutional rights.**
- Having access to federal health benefits for non-convicted individuals would allow for **improved coordination of care**, while simultaneously decreasing short-term costs to local taxpayers and long-term costs to the federal government.
- Providing access to federal health benefits for those awaiting trial and verdict decisions would help counties **break the cycle of recidivism** caused or exacerbated by untreated mental illness and/or substance use disorders, thereby improving public safety.