

# Substance Abuse, Mental Health, and Criminal Justice Studies



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## CONTACT

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Traditionally, behavioral health care has been separated from general medical care. Justice programs have been separated from civil society. These divisions contribute to stigma, discrimination, and poor outcomes. NORC's Substance Abuse, Mental Health, and Criminal Justice Studies (SAMHCJ) department is dedicated to developing the science and services that bring behavioral health and physical health back together. Its surveys and research help reconnect people and programs in the justice system into communities. NORC's SAMHCJ department works to help create a healthier, safer, and more just America.

SAMHCJ is a leading research and policy resource that applies sophisticated science and practical insights to national priorities such as health care reform, changing health care financing incentives, promoting healthy workplaces and communities, preventing intimate partner violence and trauma, and reducing jail and prison recidivism. The department conducts objective research and provides technical expertise to government leaders, businesses, public health care purchasers, health plans, physicians, and other health care providers so that they can make informed choices concerning some of the most important mental health, substance use, and justice policy and practice issues facing society.

SAMHCJ applies deep technical expertise in large-scale population survey design, quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, evaluation, project technical assistance, and training systems. The team draws on subject-matter expertise and practical experience in criminal justice, psychology, wellness and health promotion, epidemiology, statistics, law, information systems, and political science.

Every SAMHCJ project embodies NORC's core mission: to conduct high-quality social science research in the public interest. The SAMHCJ team is dedicated to nurturing long-term collegial partnerships that reflect its commitment to improving health and justice outcomes through good science and effective policy.

### Areas of Expertise:

Large-scale surveys of law enforcement and justice programs

Violence against women, bullying, and intimate partner violence

Effectiveness of substance abuse and mental health treatment and prevention programs

Operation and management of criminal justice agencies

Dynamics and characteristics of illicit drug markets and their relationship to public health and public safety

Community health programs that integrate primary health and behavioral health services for adults with serious mental illnesses, addictions, and other chronic illnesses

Employee Assistance Programs and workplace wellness

Behavioral health performance metrics in hospitals, health plans, and community health centers

Gambling policy and behavior

Public attitudes about crime, substance use, and mental health disorders



## Sample Projects

**Evaluation of the Dating Matters Initiative.** On September 13, 2011, Vice President Biden announced that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) awarded major grants to four communities for its new teen dating violence prevention initiative, Dating Matters™: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Relationships. The CDC awarded NORC a contract to evaluate this prevention initiative using a randomized controlled trial design. The project includes the collection of four years of longitudinal student surveys, school administrative data, parent/caregiver surveys, educator and interventionist surveys, program fidelity data, cost data, and community indicator data.

**National Survey of Indigent Defense Systems.** For the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), NORC gathers data about the manner by which legal defense services are provided to indigent people accused of crimes. The project draws on NORC's expertise gained administering a number of surveys and censuses of justice systems, including data collection from public defender offices, law enforcement agencies, and prosecutors. This is the third time that BJS has contracted with NORC to survey indigent defense systems.

**Conversion of Criminal History Records into Research Databases.** For years, BJS recidivism research has used data reported manually by individual state criminal history repositories. This project aims to convert the information recorded on national criminal history records (i.e., "rap sheets" derived from information housed in individual state repositories) into a database to support ongoing recidivism research.

**Evaluation of BJA Second Chance Act Adult Demonstration Projects and Reentry Courts.** NORC is the lead partner in evaluating and conducting evaluability assessments of Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Second Chance Act programs. These projects are part of SAMHCA's portfolio of work in prisoner reentry programs and evaluation research.

**Compliance with the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008.** The Department of Health and Human Services awarded NORC the contract to assess compliance with the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008, among both large group health plans and employer-sponsored health plans.

**Assessment of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) Integrated Behavioral Health Services.** NORC assists community health centers and community behavioral health care providers in integrating primary health and behavioral health.

**Medicaid Emergency Psychiatric Demonstration.** NORC provides technical and analytic assistance to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services for the design, implementation, and monitoring of the three-year Medicaid Emergency Psychiatric Demonstration, which provides federal matching funds to participating states for emergency psychiatric care in private psychiatric hospitals with 17 or more beds.

**Chronic Care Initiative in Mental Health.** Adults with serious mental illness have higher rates of chronic disease and die significantly sooner than the general population. In the District of Columbia and Montgomery County, MD, NORC designs, implements, and evaluates integrated behavioral health/primary care projects.



## Other Projects

The Reintegration of Ex-Offenders  
Random Assignment Evaluation

Methodological Research to  
Support Redesign of the National  
Crime Victimization Survey

National Survey of Prosecutors

Developing a Brief Community  
Policing Self-Assessment Tool

Dynamics of Methamphetamine  
Markets

HIV Rapid Testing in the Dental Care  
Setting

Problem Solving Courts

Employee Assistance Alcohol  
Screening and Treatment

Hospital Alcohol Screening and  
Treatment

Social Ecology of Maternal  
Substance Use

National Former Prisoner Survey

NIJ Dating Violence Experiment in  
NYC

Transition to Nicotine Dependence  
in Early Adulthood

## SENIOR STAFF

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Mental health and substance use, policy research, behavioral health measurement, translational research in integrated care

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