



# DATA SHORTS

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## Legal System Involvement of Individuals In Maryland's Public Mental Health System 2010 to 2012

There has been a growing interest in the relationship of mental health issues to violence in the aftermath of recent tragedies that resulted from major violent incidents. There are currently very few, if any, resources that can directly measure such associations. However, legal system involvement of individuals served in Maryland's Public Mental Health System (PMHS) is one of a variety of life domains for which information can be obtained from the Mental Hygiene Administration's Outcomes Measurement System (OMS).

The OMS collects information from the majority of individuals, ages 6-64, receiving outpatient mental health treatment services in the PMHS. OMS interviews are conducted by the clinician with the individual or caregiver at the beginning of treatment and approximately every six months during the course of treatment. OMS data are displayed in the OMS Datamart at [http://maryland.valueoptions.com/services/OMS\\_Welcome.html](http://maryland.valueoptions.com/services/OMS_Welcome.html), and either Statewide or local jurisdiction information can be selected. Trends over time can also be determined by selecting the available calendar and fiscal year time periods.

The three graphs in the adjacent column display the OMS results (2010-2012) of the three measures collected that are related to legal system involvement. The top graph displays the percentage of adults and adolescents ages 13-17 who reported not being arrested in the past six months. The middle graph is based upon the item: "Some people have had a negative encounter with the police, such as being arrested or hassled by police. In the past six months, would you say you have had no negative encounters with police, increased negative encounters, the same amount of negative encounters, or decreased negative encounters?" The graph displays the percentage of adults and adolescents who report having no negative encounters with the police in the past six months. The bottom graph shows the percentage of individuals who report not being in jail or in prison in the past six months (this item is asked only of adults).

In 2012, 92% of adults and 89% of adolescents report no legal system involvement. Additionally, for both age groups, all trends are positive, with a smaller percentage of individuals reporting arrests, incarceration, and negative encounters with the police each year. While these results are limited to those individuals involved in outpatient treatment in the PMHS, they show an encouraging trend of decreasing legal issues.

