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OKC-County Health Seeks to Put Nonviolent Offenders Back on Track

Oklahoma City, Okla. – [Oklahoma City-County Health Department](#) (OCCHD) and partners are devising ways to help nonviolent offenders get back into the mainstream. An estimated 77 percent of the inmates in the county’s overcrowded jail are nonviolent offenders whose crimes might be better addressed through mental health and community service opportunities.

The City of Oklahoma City has been working with OCCHD on a comprehensive program to reduce recidivism for nonviolent offenders by integrating crime, health, and social service data to specifically help each person in the criminal justice system.

Oklahoma City Mayor David Holt said, “Being among the Champion Cities in the Bloomberg Mayors Challenge is exciting and we’re pleased to have the

opportunity to test and refine our unique approach to apply a data-driven, holistic health systems to our city's criminal justice reform efforts. We recognize that this effort, along with other reforms, has a real chance to change lives."

The idea revolves around utilizing data to understand what is going on with a person and case managing them into appropriate resources.

Gary Cox, Executive Director of OKC-County Health said, "We were making great strides on health except for two areas and one of those areas revolves around unintentional deaths. Upon closer examination, we found out that it was drug overdoses."

In talking with many people who are in the country jail about what led to incarceration, one person replied, "I had to do what I had to do to feed my kids, you know? I was running around the neighborhood selling drugs to buy food for my children."

A bold reminder on why this problem needs to be addressed is that children with incarcerated parents are 70% more likely to become incarcerated themselves.

Our goal in our Bloomberg proposal is to divert low risk/high need offenders from incarceration into community success through a data drive, community care model that will strengthen the future of Oklahoma City.

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