



A New Jail is Not the Answer to our Mental Health Crisis

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Roughly **40%** of San Francisco's approx. 1,300 in-custody jail population has some degree of mental illness.

In 2015, **80%** of all police calls involve mental-health issues

All Signs Point to Continued Reduction in our In-Custody Population

50% of jail cells in San Francisco are vacant, and all signs point to continued reductions in our in-custody population. Our office released a study, in collaboration with researcher James Austin of the JFA Institute detailing exactly this. The report, entitled "Eliminating Mass Incarceration: How San Francisco Did It," found the following about San Francisco jail and prison populations:

- ◇ The City has reduced its jail and prison populations at a rate that far exceeds state and national rates.
- ◇ Its current jail and prison rate of incarceration is 279 per 100,000 population – less than half the rate for California and a third the national rate.
- ◇ If the rest of the country matched San Francisco's rates, the number of individuals under correctional supervision would plummet from 7 million to 2 million.

Funds Should be Directed to Boost Mental Health Treatment Services

San Francisco has a mental health treatment problem, not a jail capacity problem. Since 2009, the percentage of inmates requiring psychiatric medication has increased 30 percent, and the number of contacts between inmates and Jail Behavioral Services has increased 24 percent. Moreover, roughly 40 percent of San Francisco's approximately 1,300 in-custody jail population has some degree of mental illness. Eighty percent of all police calls involve mental-health issues. And yet, we continue to run a 120-day average wait time for mental health beds through our Behavioral Health Court. Simply put, while our needs for community-based mental health treatment continue to soar, our in-custody services are increasingly insufficient.

Letter to Mayor Ed Lee

Our letter to Mayor Ed Lee made clear that although we have experienced an excess of jail beds, we have accrued unconscionably long waiting lists for residential mental health treatment beds.

Our office stands by its belief that, rather than warehousing individuals with mental illness in jail, where their needs are unmet and their risk to the community may increase, San Francisco should lead the state and the country in pursuing innovative alternatives to incarceration through improved access to mental health treatment.

Board of Supervisors Rejected Plans for New Jail

In December 2015, the Board of Supervisors rejected plans to spend nearly a quarter of a billion in taxpayer dollars to build a new jail.