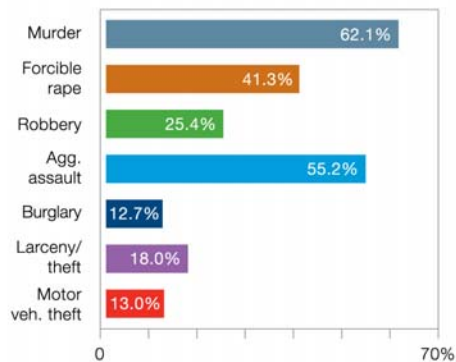


## Talking Points

### Integrating the information/learnings from past meetings

- **First meeting in January:**
  - Other efforts are underway nationally, and many have been underway for many years
  - Statistically-produced risk assessment tools are one way to target the use of prisons for the most serious and violent offenders
  - The Governor said he wanted to preserve public safety while making efficient use of taxpayer dollars, and he asked for the group to work together
- **February meeting: “Introduction to the adult system”**
  - Many ways to measure crime, but by all measures the national crime rate is down, and in Colorado it has been at a historic low since about 1999-2000
  - By far, the most common crimes reported to law enforcement are aggravated assault and larceny.
  - But, most crimes are not reported to the police (half of violent crimes and 40% of property crimes are reported), and very few of the major crimes are cleared by arrest (see graph).



**Note:** In its calculations, the FBI's Uniform Crime Report counts the number of offenses that are cleared, not the number of arrestees.

**Source:** *Crime in the United States 2005*. Department of Justice – Federal Bureau of Investigation, September 2006.

- Fewer still are prosecuted and of those prosecuted, about 70% are convicted.
- Of those convicted, about
  - 60% go to probation,
  - 5% go to community corrections
  - 9% go to jail
  - 25% go to prison
- The annual costs of these placements vary considerably, from
  - \$1-5,000 per year for probation supervision

- \$12,400 per year for community corrections/halfway houses
  - \$22,000 for a county jail bed
  - \$20,000-65,000 for a DOC bed
- About 40,000 adults enter the system each year, and sentences can range from 6 months to life.

### **March meeting:**

- Speaker of the House said the state does not have the money to continue to build prisons to meet the forecasted size of the inmate population
- DCJ's Linda Harrison forecasted a significant increase in
  - court filings
  - new commitments to prison
- CO Prison population expected to increase 32%, from 23,000 to well over 29,000 inmates
- Also saw a slide of the KS prison forecast that looked just Colorado's, going straight up, and another slide that shows the forecast after implementing programs.
- In March you heard about what works and what doesn't to reduce recidivism and prevent crime.
  - Incarceration works as punishment, but its affect on the overall crime rate is mixed, and very complex.
    - It's been found to more likely prevent violent crimes,
    - but it has little impact on drug crimes because other offenders quickly replace incarcerated drug offenders.
    - Some of the drop in crime in the past 20 years can be attributed to incarceration, but studies show that other factors played a larger role.
    - Rigorous studies have shown that incarceration is associated with higher rates of recidivism compared to community sanctions.
  - Employment, aging and marriage contribute to terminating criminal activity.
  - Research shows that community supervision that is service-oriented rather than surveillance-oriented, can reduce recidivism
  - Educational, vocational, substance abuse treatment programming, drug courts, mental health programs, and cognitive-behavioral programs reduce recidivism and are cost effective.
  - Many programs reduce recidivism among juvenile offenders
  - Risk-focused prevention programs can prevent crime.
- Programs need to be delivered according to what research has found to be EVIDENCE-BASED CORRECTIONAL PRACTICE.
  - You have a description of this in Section 9 of your Commission Binder:

- Assess risk/needs of the offender (The presentation by probation staff addressed this)
  - Enhance offender motivation
  - Target interventions to NEED
  - Ensure adequate program dose and duration
  - Train staff and monitor their delivery of services
  - Increase positive reinforcement
  - Engage pro-social support for offenders
  - Measure the effort
  - Provide measurement feedback
- Probation gave examples of many efforts underway to change the CULTURE of probation, including having brown bag lunches to discuss EBP, and in some jurisdictions the chief is evaluating staff performance differently, in order to promote EBP.
  - DOC provided information about the availability of programming across 28 prisons. DOC has gained a national reputation for its programming for the mentally ill, its sex offender treatment program, and it offers GED programs and substance abuse programming in all the facilities.
  - Overall, few resources have been devoted to evaluating programs in Colorado, so we do not have good feedback on the effectiveness of current programming, in prison and in the community.

#### TODAY:

- DOC explained that they do needs assessments of inmates at intake
- Providing programming is complicated and interrupted by the #1 priority of secure inmate management
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# GRAND SUMMARY

## *1. Are there offenders sentenced to prison who could be sentenced to a less expensive placement?*

- Of the nonviolent group sentenced to DOC in 2006, 65% had a prior violent crime arrest or conviction as an adult or juvenile
- The remaining 35% had HIGH service needs scores and an average of 4.7 prior arrests

## *2. What happens to offenders who violate probation? Do they all go to prison?*

- In 2006, about 29% of those with probation revocations **IN YEAR ONE** went to prison

## *3. What kind of needs for services and programming do the DOC offenders have?*

- Most need services
- 80% have substantial drug problems

Colorado Division of Criminal  
Justice April 2008

## IN SUM

- Governor Ritter wants this commission to fulfill its mandate.
- Progressive efforts are underway in other states; some efforts are underway in Colorado but these could be expanded
- There is a lot of crime, and the criminal justice system only addresses a small part of it
- The part we address can be made more effective
- There is a lot of information available—we don't have to work in the dark or reinvent the wheel, but we do need to build an excellent wheel for Colorado.
- Offenders have significant substance abuse, employment, mental health and housing needs that we need to address to reduce recidivism.