MENTAL HEALTH IN PRISON FACT SHEET

360,000
Estimated number of incarcerated men and women with a serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depression.

By the 1990s, several states had a deinstitutionalization rate of over 95 percent, meaning that for every hundred patients who had been residents in state hospitals before deinstitutionalization programs, fewer than five were residents when the study was conducted in the 1990s. In 1955, there was one psychiatric bed for every three hundred Americans; fifty years later, it was one bed for every three thousand.
-Bryan Stevenson, Just Mercy, p. 187

34%
The percentage of deaths in prison due to suicide. Suicide has been the leading cause of death in prison since 2000.
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, “Mortality in Local Jails and State Prisons,” August 2015

$4.35 billion
The total amount of state budget cuts to public mental health care from 2009-2012.
Source: Mother Jones, “Which States have Cut Mental health Treatment the Most?” 2013

0.3
Inmates punished with solitary confinement are 3.2 times more likely to commit an act of self-harm than their peers who were never punished with solitary confinement.

1/6
Number of jail inmates with mental health needs who receive treatment.
Source: The Atlantic, “Most Prisoners are Mentally Ill,” 2015

25-40%
Number of people with mental illnesses who will be incarcerated at some point in their lives.
Source: The Atlantic, “America’s Largest Mental Hospital is a Jail,” 2014

Today, over 50 percent of prison and jail inmates in the United States have a diagnosed mental illness, a rate nearly five times greater than that of the general adult population. Nearly one in five prison and jail inmates individuals in jail or prison than in hospitals; in some states that number is ten times.
-Bryan Stevenson, Just Mercy, p. 188