Crime and Public Safety: Working Toward a More Accurate Assessment of Criminal Incidents

Jeffrey Sedgwick, Ph.D., Executive Director, Justice Research and Statistics Association

We as a nation are in a period of considerable intellectual ferment and creative thinking at the grassroots level when it comes to public safety. In our nation’s capital alone, three significant groups are working on parallel tracks.

The White House’s Taskforce on 21st Century Policing aims at enhancing trust between law enforcement agencies and the people they protect and serve since this is deemed essential to the stability of our communities, the integrity of the criminal justice system, and the safe and effective delivery of policing services. A principal way of enhancing trust is increasing transparency and promoting shared understanding of crime, policing, and public safety.

Meanwhile, the Crime Indicators Working Group, sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and hosted by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), is working to create more detailed, accurate, and actionable measures of crime, criminality, and justice system performance. The group is charged with providing guidance in the development of crime indicators using police administrative record information and other data sources to supply a better picture of the crime problem in local jurisdictions and throughout the nation.

Finally, across town at the National Academy of Sciences, the National Research Council’s Panel on Modernizing the Nation’s Crime Statistics is charged with assessing and making recommendations for the development of a modern set of crime measures in the United States and the best means for obtaining them. For example, better information is needed on certain crime types, such as crimes against businesses or organizations as well as personal identity theft; also needed is a greater ability to associate attributes such as firearms or drug involvement with crime types, and more complete adoption of electronic reporting, data capture, and system interoperability.

Emerging from these discussions is a consensus view that the nation needs more than simple annual summary counts of offenses in order to think more strategically about crime, to enhance trust between communities and their law enforcement agencies, and to promote a sense of community wellness and safety. In short, attention is shifting from the FBI’s traditional Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) of Crime in the United States to more detailed collections of crime incidents and their characteristics. The National Incident-Based Reporting System, or NIBRS, is such a collection.

Monitoring Prescription Drug Abuse in the States

Stan Orchowsky, Ph.D., Research Director, Justice Research and Statistics Association

Prescription drug abuse is a growing national problem. Drug-related poisonings are now the leading cause of death due to unintentional injury in the United States; the number of unintentional overdose deaths per year involving opioid pain relievers nearly quadrupled from 1999 to 2007, while overdose deaths due to these drugs in 2007 were nearly twice those due to cocaine, and over five times those due to heroin (PMDP Center of Excellence at Brandeis). According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), of the 3.1 million individuals 12 or older estimated to have used an illicit drug for the first time in 2009, 28.6% initiated use with prescription drugs, second only to those initiating with marijuana (59.1%). The same survey found that 20.6% reported non-medical use of prescription drugs in their lifetime. According to the Centers for Disease Control’s Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, in 2013 almost 18% of high school students reported having taken prescription drugs without a doctor’s prescription one or more times during their life.

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each of the victims and the offenders; other details of the incident, including victim injury, type of weapon involved, alcohol or drug involvement, property loss, and drugs seized; clearance information, including both arrest and clearances by exceptional means; and date of arrest and arrestee demographics.4

Thirty years after its introduction, about a third of the nation’s law enforcement agencies reported their UCR crime statistics via NIBRS. In 2012, NIBRS-contributing agencies served approximately 30% of the U.S. population and accounted for 28% of all crime reported to the UCR Program. Since many of the police departments representing large metropolitan areas throughout the nation do not yet contribute data to the system, incident-based law enforcement data are still unable to address the current information needs of policy makers, researchers, the media, and the public.

The intriguing question is why adoption of NIBRS is proceeding at a slow pace when the need for transparency and better data is so widely acknowledged. Some insight into this question can be gained by examining a recent Inspector General (IG) report5 of a federal incident-based reporting system that does not share its data with the FBI and thus goes unreported to the public: the Defense Incident-Based Reporting System (DIBRS). The DoD’s experience with its own incident-based crime reporting system illuminates a number of the pitfalls and challenges law enforcement agencies face as they transition from summary reporting to incident-based reporting.

In its investigation, the IG found that “DoD is not reporting criminal incident data to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for inclusion in the annual Uniform Crime Reports to the President, the Congress, State governments, and officials of localities and institutions participating in the Uniform Crime Report Program, as required by Federal law.”6 The relevant Federal law is the Uniform Federal Crime Reporting Act of 1988 (28 U.S.C 534 note), supplemented by additional data collection and reporting requirements contained in the Victims’ Rights and Restitution Act of 1990 (49 U.S.C. 10601 note) and the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act (18 U.S.C. 921 note).

At the root of this failure to report incident-based criminal data to the FBI is the fact that the DIBRS system has never been certified by the FBI. As the IG noted, “For an agency to submit criminal incident data to NIBRS for inclusion in the annual uniform crime reports, the FBI’s Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) Division, Crime Statistics Management Unit, Uniform Crime Reporting Office, must first certify the agency’s data system.”7 System certification, in turn, depends on three criteria: the agency’s reporting system must be compatible with the FBI’s UCR system; the agency must demonstrate its ability to update submissions, meet deadlines, respond to FBI queries and requests, and correct errors received from the FBI UCR Program in a timely manner; and the agency must achieve a sustained error rate of 4% or less for three separate data submissions.

The challenges that the DoD’s incident-based reporting system faces in terms of certification begin with its inability to consistently report data within 15 days of the end of each month as called for in the DoD’s own guidelines for the operation of DIBRS. Indeed, the IG noted that the “Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) was not reporting DIBRS

4 See “Data Collection: National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS).”


6 Ibid., p. i.

7 Ibid., p. 4.
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The rise in the misuse and abuse of prescription drugs has been attributed to their increased availability over the last decade, a result of increased prescribing. Increased prescribing in turn has been driven by more aggressive treatment of pain in response to patient advocacy groups, the development of new drugs, particularly opiates, to meet this demand, and more aggressive marketing by pharmaceutical companies.

Beginning in FY 2002, Congress appropriated funds to the U.S. Department of Justice to support the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP). Prescription monitoring programs help prevent and detect the diversion and abuse of pharmaceutical controlled substances, particularly at the retail level where no other automated information collection system exists. Prescription data are provided in automated form by pharmacists and/or practitioners, allowing states to collect and analyze prescription data efficiently.

Currently, 49 states, plus the District of Columbia and Guam, have created PDMP legislation and have operational PDMPs. The majority of state PDMPs monitor Schedule II-V drugs, as classified by the Federal Controlled Substances Act. These include commonly prescribed drugs with the potential for abuse, such as oxycodone (OxyContin), Adderall, Vicodin, anabolic steroids, Xanax, and Valium.

A variety of state agencies administer PDMPs, but state Boards of Pharmacy are the most common program administrators (see table below).

In most states, pharmacists and physicians (and other practitioners) can access PDMP information. States may also allow access to: law enforcement for drug investigations; licensing and regulatory boards for investigations into prescription violations by health care professionals; state Medicaid programs; and medical examiners or coroners investigating cause of death. In 28 states,

State Agencies Administering PDMPs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boards of Pharmacy</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Departments of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Licensing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consumer Protection</td>
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<td>2.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>2.0%</td>
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Source. Prescription Drug Monitoring Training and Technical Assistance Center (www.pdmpassist.org)

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information during the period of August 2012 through January 2013. The DIBRS reporting lapse was due to the AFOSI DIBRS program administrators departing before replacements were trained on their responsibilities. In addition, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS) does not report any incident data to DIBRS because “DCIS could fund only its primary mission requirements and could not meet unfunded mandates such as DIBRS reporting.” So lack of funding and lack of training are hampering DoD’s ability to abide by federal legal requirements to report incident-based data.

Another problem with implementing incident-based reporting is the lack of a consistent method of correcting identified errors in data submitted to DIBRS. For example, the Army’s Criminal Investigation Command (CID) does not correct identified errors in incident records; rather, it simply deletes the incorrect information and submits a null entry for the data element in question. According to Army spokespersons, “stripping the errors” was a more efficient way to manage the timeliness of DIBRS submissions because CID does not have a process to obtain corrected data from the originating investigative field unit. The Navy’s Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) reported that it submits only error-free incident records to DIBRS since “NCIS does not have the time, money, or resources to correct the errors.” To get an idea of the magnitude of the resulting loss of information about criminal incidents in the Navy, consider the following: In February 2013, NCIS had a total of 2,097 incidents that qualified for DIBRS submission. Of these, 121 incident records were error free and submitted to DIBRS; hence, NCIS is reporting 5.8% of the criminal incidents it investigates. And, of course, since DIBRS is not FBI certified, this error-free incident information never reaches the NIBRS database for inclusion in the FBI’s Uniform Crime Report.

The DoD’s experience with operating an incident-based reporting system for criminal offenses is instructive as the nation transitions from a summary count system of recording crime to an incident-based reporting system with much richer content and potential to inform policy makers, the public, and public safety officials. To be successful, this transition must forthrightly address technology issues in terms of system interoperability; temporal issues in terms of timely submission of initial data as well as error corrections and record updates; issues related to training of system operators; and data quality issues, including consistent methods of error correction (instead of data or record deletion). The benefits of an incident-based reporting system are manifest; the path to their realization deserves to be carefully charted.

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8 Ibid., p. 6.
9 Ibid., p. 7.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid., p. 8.
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Researchers are authorized by statute to request PDMP data for study (see table below).

States that Authorize Research Use of PDMP Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>SACs and PDMP Data</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
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States that Authorize Research Use of PDMP Data

The SACs and PDMP Data Twenty-six Statistical Analysis Centers (SACs) responded to a recent survey about whether they are working with their state’s PDMP. Most said they have no involvement with their state’s program or its data. Responses from those involved in work in this area are provided below.

Arizona

The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC), which houses the Arizona SAC, was awarded a $374,408 grant by the Bureau of Justice Assistance under the Harold Rogers Prescription Drug Monitoring Program: Data-Driven Multi-Disciplinary Approaches to Reducing Rx Abuse. ACJC staff, including staff from the SAC, will use the grant funds in Maricopa County to build on the successful work that the Arizona Prescription Drug Misuse and Abuse Initiative has already accomplished in four pilot counties. ACJC will be working with Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care and the Maricopa County Department of Public Health to support community-based substance abuse coalitions in their implementation of the Rx Initiative. Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care, which is the Regional Behavioral Health Authority for Maricopa County, will oversee the work of the community-based substance abuse coalitions and the Maricopa County Department of Public Health will facilitate access to county-level data to inform implementation of the Arizona model.

Georgia

In Georgia, the PDMP data are extremely restricted and all identifying information is “deleted or destroyed” after a year. The SAC obtained about six months’ worth of information from the agency that manages the database, but no additional data have been acquired.

Ohio

The Ohio SAC has been working closely with several agencies, including the Department of Health, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and with individual coroners to look at this issue from the perspective of overdoses. The SAC does not currently work with the PDMP, but hopes to meet with PDMP staff to find out what data they have available, and then incorporate the PDMP data with other datasets. Several state agencies are already working together on projects, so it may be possible to collaborate on a larger project that would utilize the data each agency houses.

South Dakota

The South Dakota SAC is minimally involved with the PDMP. Staff compile statistics yearly to compare data relating to types and amounts of drugs prescribed from year to year.

Utah

The Utah SAC is indirectly involved with the PDMP through its parent agency, the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ, the State Administering Agency), and through the Utah Substance Abuse Advisory Council (USAAV), which is staffed by the CCJJ. The USAAV periodically requests data from PDMP (which is housed in the Department of Commerce, Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing), most often related to the prescription opiate problem and prescription practices by providers. The information is used for provider education and training, as well as for making policy recommendations to the legislature. While the SAC has not conducted research using PDMP data, they would be available if a project were developed that involved this type of analysis.

Vermont

The Crime Research Group, the contractor for the Vermont SAC, is not currently involved with the PDMP effort. The group, however, recently released the Vermont Prescription Monitoring System 2013 Annual Report, which summarizes VPMS surveillance data for all Schedule II – IV prescriptions that were dispensed from Vermont-licensed pharmacies from 01/01/2010 through 12/31/2013. Aggregate totals of all controlled substance prescriptions and recipients are presented in the report, and trend data are also broken out by drug type, recipient age, recipient sex, as well as recipient county.

Virginia

The Virginia SAC was given access to de-identified Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) data in November 2014. These data include over 65 million records of prescriptions since January 2010. The SAC is in the early stages of gaining familiarity with the data. Staff are looking at various trends in the data, and then using what is found to ask new questions. Examples of this work include:

• Comparing trends in opioid prescriptions across the state with trends in seizures of prescription opioids in arrests (using data from the Virginia Department of Forensic Science).

• Identifying the number of opioid prescriptions that were written by out-of-state doctors and then filled in Virginia.

• Finding ways in which the Director of the Virginia PMP can use the data to better inform policy makers.

In addition, a researcher from the SAC has been included on the Data and Monitoring Workgroup, attached to the Governor’s Task Force on Prescription Drug and Heroin Abuse. Part of this effort involves working with the PMP data and finding new ways the PMP can be used to reduce prescription drug abuse. Although this effort is still in the early stages, the SAC’s own work with
Modernizing the Nation’s Crime Statistics: An Update on the National Academy of Sciences Panel

Daniel Bibel, former Program Manager, Massachusetts State Police Crime Reporting Unit. Mr. Bibel recently retired after 29 years with the MSP.

With the encouragement of the federal Office of Management and Budget, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) are jointly funding a multiyear, comprehensive study of the way crime statistics are generated in America. A panel convened by the National Academy of Sciences, Modernizing the Nation’s Crime Statistics, is tasked with examining the current tools and methods used to generate information about crime in America, and also assessing the gaps and limitations in our knowledge about the extent of criminal behavior. The panel has three main charges:

- Substantive – to develop a framework to identify the types of crimes that should be included in a modern system of classification;
- Methodology – to assess the optimal methods for collecting the data to complete the crime classification framework developed in the review; and
- Implementation – to determine ways to maximize the use of locally collected and existing data as well as information technology assets.

The panel is composed of 17 members, including a number of well-known academic researchers, federal employees who are involved in other major data collection efforts (census, health), a few representatives of police agencies, and one SAC director. As a result, a wide variety of expertise and views are represented in discussions about the issues raised. These differing viewpoints are necessary, as “crime” is a somewhat slippery concept, and defining and measuring it is difficult.

Much of what we characterize as crime is based on criminal law definitions. These are used, for example, in both the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) system (and in the National Incident Based Reporting System – “NIBRS”) as well as in BJS’s National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). In many cases, the categories and definitions of crime have not changed substantially over the last 50 years. However, what is considered necessary, as “crime” is a somewhat slippery concept, and defining and measuring it is difficult.

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Nancy Rodriguez Becomes New NIJ Director

Nancy Rodriguez was sworn in as Director of the National Institute of Justice on February 9, 2015. Dr. Rodriguez’s research expertise covers a wide range of criminal justice issues, including the collateral consequences of imprisonment; the intersection of race, ethnicity, crime, and justice; and evaluations of drug courts and restorative justice programs. Her most recent work includes a longitudinal study of families affected by maternal and paternal incarceration.

From 1998–2012, Dr. Rodriguez was a professor in Arizona State University’s (ASU) School of Criminology and Criminal Justice. She was named Associate Dean for Student Engagement in ASU’s College of Public Programs in 2012.

Dr. Rodriguez’s work has appeared in numerous peer-reviewed journals, including Criminology, Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, Criminal Justice and Behavior, Violence Against Women, Justice Quarterly, Crime & Delinquency, and Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. She has co-authored two books: Just Cause or Just Because? Prosecution and Plea-Bargaining Resulting in Prison Sentences of Low-Level Drug Charges in California and Arizona and, most recently, Immigration Enforcement, Youth and Families: Policy in the Absence of Comprehensive Immigration Reform. She was co-editor of the 2006 book Images of Color, Images of Crime: Readings. Dr. Rodriguez’s work has been recognized by some of the nation’s top criminal justice professional organizations. In 2011, the Division on People of Color and Crime of the American Society of Criminology gave her the Coramae Richey Mann Award, and ASU’s College of Public Programs gave her the Anne Larason Schneider Faculty Endowment for Community Research Award. She received the W.E.B. DuBois Award from the Western Society of Criminology in 2010. In 2009, she was named Alumni of the Year by the College of Criminal Justice at Sam Houston State University, and in 2015 she received the Outstanding Alumni Award from the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology, Washington State University.

A native of El Paso, Texas, Dr. Rodriguez earned a Bachelor of Science in criminal justice from Sam Houston State University. She received her doctorate from Washington State University in Pullman, Washington, where she concentrated in administration, justice, and applied-policy studies.
BJS Welcomes New Staff

The Bureau of Justice Statistics has recently added several statisticians and unit heads to its staff, as well as a policy analyst and a policy advisor. Learn more about these new staff members below.

**Ron Planty** joined BJS in early November as the newest member of the Criminal Justice Data Improvement Program Unit, serving as a Justice Statistics Policy Analyst. He will oversee state awards under the State Justice Statistics Program, the National Criminal History Improvement Program, and the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Act Record Improvement Program. Previously Mr. Planty worked as a securities investigator/examiner for the last 14 years in the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority’s Enforcement and Member Regulation offices in Washington, DC and New York City. He has a degree in communications from SUNY Plattsburgh and a master’s degree in criminal justice policy from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

**Jennifer Bronson** joined BJS as a Statistician in the Correction Statistics Program in October. Dr. Bronson holds a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in sociology from the Virginia Commonwealth University. She earned a Ph.D. in 2013, also in sociology, from Howard University. Since 2012, she has been a project coordinator at Howard University for a National Institute of Health-funded grant on “exposure to violence, immune function and HIV/AIDS risks in African American young adults.” For the past two years she has been an adjunct instructor for the Department of Sociology and Criminology at George Washington University and, prior to 2007, was a researcher and program evaluator for several agencies in Richmond, VA. Dr. Bronson will be working on inmate surveys and on projects that focus on health and healthcare in corrections.

**Anastasios “Tom” Tsoutis** is the new Chief of the Recidivism, Reentry, and Special Projects Unit at BJS. Mr. Tsoutis is a retired Marine Corps officer who served in both Iraq and Afghanistan. He has experience conducting and leading analytical efforts ranging from topics on logistics to Counter-Imprompted Explosive Devices and population dynamics. Most recently, Mr. Tsoutis worked for NASA as an Operations Research Analyst, where he was a member of the Strategic Investment Division’s Crosscutting Team and was also assigned as an analyst to the Aeronautics Research and Space Technology Mission Directorates’ portfolios. Mr. Tsoutis received his B.S. in mathematics from the University of Florida in 2000 and his M.S. in operations research from the Naval Postgraduate School in 2006.

**Joshua Markman** joined BJS as a Statistician in its Recidivism, Reentry, and Special Projects Unit. Prior to joining BJS, Mr. Markman was a Manager with Grant Thornton LLP, where he provided risk management support to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Agency. Previously, Mr. Markman served as a Research Associate in the Urban Institute’s Justice Policy Center, where his portfolio included forensic science applications in the criminal justice system, problem-solving courts, and the use of public surveillance cameras by law enforcement. Mr. Markman is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, where he received a B.A. in sociology and an M.S. in criminology in 2008.

**Suzanne Strong** recently joined BJS as a Statistician in its Prosecution and Adjudication Unit. Prior to joining BJS, she worked as a Supervisor of Courtroom Clerks in the Circuit Court in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. Among her duties was the collection and dissemination of digital information within and outside the court system. Dr. Strong taught courses at SUNY – Albany and at Towson State University on the theories of crime, race and crime, interpersonal violence, social research, sociology of deviance, and criminology. She received her Ph.D. in criminology from SUNY-Albany in 2014, where her dissertation focused on assaults motivated by racial bias. In the Prosecution and Adjudication Unit, Dr. Strong will work initially on the National Survey of Indigent Defense Systems, the National Judicial Reporting Program, and the Census of Problem Solving Courts.

**Andrew Tiedt** recently joined BJS as a Statistician in the Recidivism, Reentry, and Special Projects Unit. He came to BJS in late 2013 after completing a post-doctoral research fellowship sponsored by the National Institute of Health at the Center on the Demography and Economics of Aging at the University of Chicago and NORC at the University of Chicago. Dr. Tiedt received a Ph.D. in sociology with a concentration in social demography from Fordham University. He has published on issues ranging from intimate partner violence to population aging, depression, pain measurement, marital conflict, and intergenerational support. In addition to recidivism projects, Dr. Tiedt is working on law enforcement and tribal justice issues.

**Allina Lee** assumed the role of BJS Statistical Policy Advisor in January 2015. In this capacity, she will be involved in a range of policy-related and analytic activities, including reviewing proposed statistical regulatory directives, conducting research and analysis of proposed legislation and regulations, conducting operational studies of BJS’s statistical business processes, and reviewing and advising on data confidentiality and quality, human subject protection, and privacy issues. Prior to this, Ms. Lee worked as a BJS Justice Statistics Policy Advisor and was a program manager for four of BJS’s major grant programs: the State Justice Statistics Program; National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP); National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Act Record Improvement Program; and the Firearm Inquiry Statistics Program. Ms. Lee is currently on detail at the Office of Management and Budget’s Statistical and Science Policy Branch, located within the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, where she is located within the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs.
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the PMP has informed the workgroup’s initial recommendations to the Task Force. The workgroup will continue meeting, and the SAC will continue to provide analyses of PMP and other data. As the SAC moves forward and expands its understanding of these data, it hopes to connect patterns in the PMP data with data on seizures, emergency room visits, and fatal drug overdoses.

Wyoming

In 2009–2010, the Wyoming SAC (WYSAC) used State Justice Statistics funding to conduct a study of the Wyoming PDMP housed in the State Board of Pharmacy. The study details statewide prescribing patterns of Schedule II and above drugs as recorded through PDMP. Scheduled drugs, such as opioids, sedative/hypnotics, anxiety-reducing drugs, and stimulants, among others, have high potential for abuse.

The Wyoming PDMP data included nearly 4 million prescriptions filled for 477,515 unique Wyoming persons during the period 2004–2009. Almost one third of the total Wyoming population in each year of the study filled at least one prescription for a scheduled drug. By a broad margin, the most prescribed scheduled drugs were opioid analgesics; opioids alone accounted for over half of all prescriptions in the PDMP each year. Substantial differences were found in per capita prescriptions at the county level, with one Wyoming county in 2009 filling more than 3.5 times the number of prescriptions for opioid analgesics (per 1,000 population) than the county with the lowest rate.

Zolpidem (a sleep aid drug sold under the trade name Ambien and others) and alprazolam (Xanax and others) were second and third in percentage of all prescriptions filled behind opioid analgesics. The average per prescription tablet quantity for zolpidem increased by 48% from 2004 to 2009, as did the average per prescription days of supply. Overall, during the period from 2005 to 2009, opioid analgesic prescriptions per 1,000 population statewide were up 21%, sedative/hypnotics up 37%, and anxiolytic drugs were up 33%. The PDMP analysis is ongoing.

PDMP Resources

Under the guidance of the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative partners and subject matter experts from across the country developed a new resource: Call to Action and Issue Brief: Justice System Use of Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs—Addressing the Nation’s Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse Epidemic. Focusing on states’ prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs), this resource offers justice practitioners and policy makers valuable, practical, hands-on sections such as the PDMP best-practices checklist, a compendium of resources and references (including BJA’s Law Enforcement Naloxone Toolkit and website), and next steps to help them address this critical public safety and public health challenge.

Other useful resources include:

- Bureau of Justice Assistance Prescription Drug Monitoring Program
- Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Center of Excellence at Brandeis. Briefing on PDMP Effectiveness (April 2013)
- Prescription Drug Monitoring Training and Technical Assistance Center – State PDMP Websites
- National Association of State Controlled Substances Authorities – Prescription Monitoring

The SAC is a member of the Wyoming Prescription Drug Abuse Stakeholders Group, which meets monthly. The group is made up of representatives of the healthcare community, law enforcement, government, and community members, and works to prevent the increasing abuse of prescription medications while ensuring that they remain available for patients in need. The group seeks to help doctors, nurses, pharmacists, other healthcare professionals, law enforcement, and the general public become more aware of both the use and abuse of prescription medication.

BJS New Staff from page 6

involved in a wide array of projects, including reviewing information collection requests under the Paperwork Reduction Act; implementing and developing statistical standards, statistical directives, and information quality standards; and supporting government-wide methodological committees such as the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology. Ms. Lee holds an M.S. in criminology and an M.P.A. from the University of Pennsylvania, and a B.A. in sociology-human services from Susquehanna University.

Timothy Kearley assumed the position of chief of BJS’s Technology and Data Management Unit in February 2015. He has been with BJS since 2001 as Lead Technology Specialist. In his new position, Mr. Kearley will have supervisory responsibilities for federal and contractor staff, and oversee the design, development, implementation, and maintenance of technical solutions that optimize BJS operations across all phases of the data lifecycle from collection to archiving. Mr. Kearley represents BJS at national and international conferences related to the management and dissemination of statistical information and is an active member of many federal data-related working groups. Prior to BJS employment, he was a programmer and application architect for a company that provided IT consulting to government agencies. Mr. Kearley received a B.S. in environmental engineering from the University of Florida.
JRSA Executive Committee Undergoes Changes as Mark Myrent Leaves the Illinois SAC and the Board

JRSA has a new Vice President on the Executive Committee. In February, Lisa Shoaf (OH), who had been serving as Secretary/Treasurer, became Vice President when long-time Illinois SAC Director Mark Myrent left his job due to the change in administration in Illinois. Danette Buskovick (MN) assumed the role of JRSA Secretary/Treasurer, and Jim McDonough, Virginia SAC Director, was appointed to take her place as Delegate. Dr. McDonough joins Delegates Thea Mounts (WA) and George Shaler (ME), Roger Przybylski remains Appointed Delegate, and Stephen Haas (WV) remains President.

Mr. Myrent, who served last year as a Delegate on the Executive Committee, was the Associate Director for the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, where he managed the Research and Analysis Unit. He is the author of numerous publications on criminal justice strategic planning, juvenile justice trends, disproportionate minority contact, computerized access to criminal history records, victim assistance programs, and jail crowding. Mr. Myrent has participated in several JRSA webinars and postconference seminars, especially in the area of criminal history records and administrative data. Under his direction, the Illinois SAC was awarded several national awards, including the Phillip Hoke National Publication Award (2010, 2011), Technical Innovation Awards (2013, 2014), and the JRSA Website Award (2010).

Dr. McDonough has been with the Virginia SAC/Criminal Justice Research Center since 1991. In 1996 he became Director of the Research Center, and in January 2000 became the SAC director. Prior to working at the Department of Criminal Justice Services, which houses the SAC, Dr. McDonough worked for six years in Washington DC, managing a program with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to research causes of motor vehicle accidents by analyzing data from national police traffic accident data files. Dr. McDonough received his Ph.D. in experimental psychology from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1984, and since then has periodically served as adjunct faculty at the University.

In addition to producing and reporting crime statistics, recent SAC projects include extensive survey research on school and college campus crime, efforts to improve school/campus safety, and school/campus threat assessment teams; research on crimes involving firearms; and research on the extent of prescription drug abuse in Virginia.

Save the Date!

2015 National Forum on Criminal Justice

The 2015 National Forum on Criminal Justice will take place August 2-5 at the InterContinental Buckhead in Atlanta, Georgia. Building on last year’s momentum, this year’s conference will continue to focus on the integration of policy, research, and technology to improve public safety.

Workshop sessions will feature speakers from each discipline to showcase innovative programs and highlight how research and technology help drive good policy. Topics of workshops organized by JRSA include:

- What Makes a Juvenile Justice Program Evidence-Based?
- The Justice Reinvestment Initiative: Research Guiding Policy
- FY2015 VOCA Increase: Innovative Approaches to Providing Direct Victim Services Within Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement Agencies
- New Approaches to Drug Enforcement
- Georgia Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force Process and Outcome Evaluation
- Assessing the Impact of Marijuana Legalization on Public Safety and Public Health in Colorado
- The Future of Policing

For more information, visit the National Forum website. Mark your calendar and plan to join your colleagues for this exciting and unique conference!
**SAC NEWS**

**JRSA Welcomes New SAC Directors and SAC Contacts**

Three new Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) Directors (Idaho, Missouri, and Vermont) and three new SAC contacts (Arizona, Illinois, and Montana) were recently appointed.

**Arizona**
Shana Malone, Senior Research Analyst, is the new SAC Contact in Arizona. Former SAC Director Phil Stevenson moved to Pew Charitable Trusts, where he is Research Manager on Pew’s Public Safety Performance Project.

**Idaho**
Misty M. Kifer is the new Director of the Idaho Statistical Analysis Center (ISAC), which is housed within the Idaho State Police. Ms. Kifer started working at ISAC as a Senior Research Analyst in 2003, and in 2004 earned a master’s degree in criminal justice administration from Boise State University. In January 2014, she was put in charge of the three-year STOP Formula Program implementation plan that integrated the new requirements of the 2013 VAWA Reauthorization Act, and in May she was made the STOP Administrator for the state. In October, Ms. Kifer was named the Principal Research Analyst at ISAC and appointed Director. She has authored/co-authored four peer-reviewed journal articles and produced 23 research reports published by ISAC. In addition to providing research, program evaluation, and technical assistance to state and local government agencies and community-based organizations, she has been involved in four statewide crime victimization surveys. The major emphasis of Ms. Kifer’s research has been on domestic violence, drug trends, juvenile justice, ethics, Tribal justice, and finding innovative ways to analyze National Incident-Based Reporting System data.

**Illinois**
Christine Devitt Westley, Manager of the Criminal Justice Clearinghouse, is the new SAC Contact in Illinois. Former SAC Director Mark Myrent left his position in February following a change in state administration.

**Missouri**
Mark Ritchey was appointed by the Missouri State Highway Patrol to be the Director of the Missouri SAC in December 2014. Prior to joining the SAC, Mr. Ritchey was a research assistant and graduate instructor for the University of Missouri as well as an adjunct faculty member for Columbia College. He specializes in statistical research as it pertains to public policy, crime, and traffic safety. Two of his studies have been published in the prestigious *Policy Studies Journal*. Mr. Ritchey is working towards a Ph.D. in political science with special emphasis in public policy, and expects to receive his degree in December 2016.

**Montana**
Don Merritt, the Performance/Compliance Bureau Chief of the Montana Board of Crime Control, has been named the new SAC Contact in Montana. Former SAC Director Tyson McLean accepted a position in February with the Oregon Office of Public Defender Services.

**Vermont SAC Moves to New Agency; Welcomes New Directors**

In November 2014, an Executive Order was signed moving the Vermont Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) to the Vermont Department of Public Safety (DPS). While DPS will administer the SAC grant, the agency is contracting with the Crime Research Group (CRG), a newly formed nonprofit criminal and juvenile justice research center, which will serve as the research partner for DPS. CRG is staffed by researchers from Vermont’s previous SAC, and continues to work on several of the same projects.

The official SAC Director is Francis (Paco) X. Aumand III, the DPS Deputy Commissioner. As Deputy Commissioner, he serves as Chief Information Officer and has operational responsibilities for the Vermont Forensic Laboratory, the Vermont Criminal Information Center, Radio Technology Services, and the Office of Technology Management. He also provides policy guidance for the entire department in the areas of science, technology, and information. Prior to working for the Department of Public Safety, Mr. Aumand was employed as Executive Director of the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council, and served with the Bellows Falls Vermont Police Department for 14 years, the last seven as Chief of Police. Mr. Aumand serves on several national committees and organizations that focus on developing justice information systems and improving the quality of individual identifying records. These committees focus heavily on privacy rights and confidentiality of personal identifying information contained in databases. He holds a Master of Science in administration from St. Michael’s College in Colchester, VT.

Karen Gennette, Executive Director of the Crime Research Group, will serve as the main point of contact for the SAC. She has spent the last 20 years working to improve community safety outcomes at the local and state levels. Ms. Gennette convenes the Tri-Branch Task Force, a high-level group of policy executives working to create an evidence-based criminal justice system. She is also a member of the Governor’s Cabinet on Substance Abuse and Criminal Justice. For the last 10 years, she worked for the Vermont Judiciary developing alternatives to the traditional criminal justice system and providing information and training opportunities on evidence-based sentencing, program development, and evaluation, as well as collaborating with other justice partners and obtaining funding for evidence-based programs.
The Illinois SAC has begun an evaluation of state-funded bullying prevention programs. The program will be administered in more than 20 Illinois schools and will serve more than 5,600 students aged 8 to 15 years. The program and the evaluation will include students, their parents, and all school staff.

The schools use one of two evidence-based programs—the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) or Steps to Respect (STR). OBPP is designed to reduce and prevent school bullying in elementary and middle schools. Secondary goals include increased awareness and knowledge about bullying, involvement of teachers and parents in bullying prevention, development of clear rules against bullying, and providing support and protection to victims. STR is designed to decrease school bullying problems by increasing staff awareness and responsiveness, fostering socially responsible beliefs, and teaching social-emotional skills to counter bullying and promote healthy relationships. Upon completion of skill lessons, teachers implement a grade-appropriate literature unit based on existing children’s books.

The project’s research goals are to: 1) learn about the extent and nature of bullying in the schools, 2) learn how the programs were implemented and operated, 3) compare and contrast the two bullying program types, and 4) suggest programmatic enhancements for the programs for future use and sustainability in participating schools. There are eight data sources to inform the program evaluation and answer the research questions—administrative data, official school records, and six surveys/tools for students, staff, and parents. Two reports will be published from the study—one for the first academic year 2014-15 and one for the second academic year 2015-16 (contingent on renewed state funding).

**Evaluation of Juvenile Detention Center Mental Health Program**

The Detention to Probation Continuum of Care (DPCC) program was developed by Illinois juvenile detention and mental health professionals to identify detained youth mental health needs, enhance compliance with conditions of probation, and reduce subsequent justice system involvement. Administered by the River Valley Detention Center (RVDC), which serves youth in Kankakee and Will counties in Illinois, the evidence-based program identified the mental health needs of detainees upon detention center admission and provided appropriate referrals to community-based treatment services upon release.

The DPCC program aimed to reduce youth offending and justice-system costs by targeting high-risk youth, structuring supervision, and offering an array of treatment. Identifying justice system-involved youth’s risk and mental health needs allows judicial orders to be tailored, resulting in increased compliance with sentencing conditions, reduced subsequent arrests, and ultimately lower justice system costs. SAC staff examined administrative data for years 2003 through 2009 to assess the extent to which youth received DPCC services and to track their compliance with sentencing conditions, subsequent detention admissions, and arrests. In a sample of 211 youth arrested and processed at RVDC, 40% received a court-ordered forensic evaluation. Of those youth, 60% completed community-based treatment services while under probation supervision compared to 42% of those who had a mental health screen and 31% among those released prior to meeting with mental health staff.

The study found youth ordered for forensic evaluation received the most treatment services. Youth screened for mental health issues received fewer services. Sampled youth who did not participate in DPCC (no mental health screening or forensic evaluation) and youth who only received mental health screening had less successful probation outcomes.

Community-based treatment services included psychiatric treatment, substance abuse treatment, anger management, and counseling. In a follow-up period that averaged five-and-a-half years, sampled youth from the forensic evaluation group had a statistically significant reduction in arrests when compared to the non-participant and mental health-screened groups. The report is available on the Illinois Criminal Justice Authority’s website.

**Evaluation of the 2013 Community Violence Prevention Program’s Reentry Program**

In 2013, the Reentry Program, one of three components of the state of Illinois’ Community Violence Prevention Program (CVPP), provided services to youth and young adults on parole in 12 Chicago communities. Youth and young adults who committed nonviolent offenses were eligible for participation in the program, which was voluntary. Clients and case managers worked together to identify the services needed to aid clients in a successful transition back to their communities and develop a case plan. Services offered included mentoring, family support, mental health services, substance abuse treatment, job/vocational training and development, educational supports, and social/life skills development. The goals of the program were to reduce recidivism, increase public safety, and increase prosocial engagement for the participants.

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) researchers conducted an exploratory study though interviews with 15 of the Reentry Program’s case managers to learn how the program operated and make recommendations to change and enhance the program. The evaluation provided the following recommendations to the program: enhance training of case managers; improve data collection; use a standard screening and assessment tool; meet with clients pre-release; and maintain a professional relationship with clients.

The report is available on the ICJIA website.
Ohio SAC Collects Data for State Task Force on Community-Police Relations

On December 12, 2014, Ohio Governor John Kasich signed Executive Order 2014-06K announcing the creation of the Ohio Task Force on Community-Police Relations. The charge of the Task Force is threefold: 1) to explore the cause of fractured relationships between communities and law enforcement; 2) to examine strategies to strengthen trust between the community and law enforcement in order to resolve the underlying causes of friction; and 3) to provide the Governor with recommendations about best practices available to communities. The Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS), which is the parent agency of the Statistical Analysis Center (SAC), is responsible for implementing activities associated with the Task Force. The SAC has been centrally involved in all aspects of this initiative, and is responsible for collecting data to understand the current conditions and perceptions underlying community-police relations in Ohio.

A major component of the Task Force’s responsibilities is to seek input and comment from Ohioans on the issue of community-police relations through a series of four public forums. The SAC is collecting qualitative data to report on themes identified across the forums. Additionally, to allow the SAC to capture the perceptions of a broader cross-section of Ohioans, the SAC developed a statewide survey to learn about citizens’ attitudes toward law enforcement. This survey, which is being administered through the Kent State University Survey Research Lab, focuses on attitudes about police-community relations, police legitimacy, procedural justice, and body camera usage. Finally, the SAC is developing a survey for law enforcement officers to gather their attitudes about these same issues. A portion of the questions asked in the citizen attitude survey are replicated in the law enforcement survey to allow for a comparison of responses.

The final report, due April 30, will include a summary of the findings of the public forums as well as the two surveys. A more comprehensive report on the survey findings will follow.

Nevada SAC Launches New Website

The Nevada SAC launched a new website that provides links to staff members, publications, and various projects affiliated with the SAC. Among the publications is the SAC’s Research in Brief series—short research summaries that focus on criminal justice topics relevant to Nevada. Recent briefs discuss a school violence initiative in Clark County (a project funded by a recent State Justice Statistics grant) and public attitudes toward surveillance using aerial drones. Links to these and other Research in Briefs can be found under “Publications” on the website’s home page.

The new website also highlights the SAC’s connections to the Center for Crime and Justice Policy (CCJP) and the Crowd Management Research Council (CMRC). CCJP is a research center at the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) that works closely with criminal justice agencies and community groups to inform criminal justice practice. CMRC is one of the few research entities in the United States that works to improve crowd management techniques and strategies. The Nevada SAC, CCJP, and CMRC are all located within the Department of Criminal Justice at UNLV.

Virginia SAC Partners with University of Virginia to Examine School Threat Assessments

The Virginia SAC and the University of Virginia’s Curry School of Education are partnering on a four-year, $2.5 million grant from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) to examine how school threat assessments are conducted statewide in Virginia. The grant, one of 24 awarded by NIJ in 2014 under the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative, is part of a large-scale, integrated research effort to build knowledge about what works to increase the safety of schools nationwide.

Threat assessment is a structured process used to determine the credibility and seriousness of a threat and the likelihood that it will be carried out. In 2013, Virginia became the first state to mandate that threat assessment teams be established in all K-12 public schools, and that the schools conduct formal threat assessments on students who may pose a safety threat to the school. The primary goal of the
Virginia study is to examine how these threat assessments are being conducted, characteristics of the various threat assessment models that schools are using, and how various measures of school safety and climate are related to the use of threat assessments.

The primary role of the SAC will be to incorporate data collection for the study into its annual School Safety Audit survey of the nearly 2,000 K-12 public schools in Virginia. The SAC developed and implemented the online survey in 2005 to assist the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety with its mandate to conduct annual school safety audits and provide reports on the results of these audits. The University of Virginia (UVA), which has developed and disseminated one of the threat assessment models now being used, will conduct the majority of the design and analytic work on the grant project. SAC staff are working with UVA staff to develop the study questions, incorporate them into the annual survey, and communicate with the schools about the study.

Teacher and student surveys will also be used to measure school climate by assessing perceived fairness of school discipline, the supportive quality of teacher-student relations, and student engagement. Levels of violence and bullying and school suspension rates (especially for disproportionately suspended minority students) will be measured using annual School Discipline, Crime and Violence reports data collected by the Virginia Department of Education.

Another component of the study will examine the effects of providing randomly selected schools with technical assistance for improving the fidelity of threat assessment model implementation and reducing school suspension among minority students.

This four-year project will produce instruments, procedures, standards, archived data, and training materials that can be used to establish a national model of threat assessment as an effective school discipline and safety practice.

crime” has changed based on social changes or technology. For example, the UCR system is not fully capable of dealing with homosexual spouses as victims of same-sex rape; and domestic violence, cybercrime, and theft of intellectual property are only now being tentatively addressed by the FBI.

The FBI’s UCR system collects data from the nation’s 18,000 police agencies, which are charged with enforcing state laws—and these data may not translate accurately to the FBI’s definitions. The quality and completeness of these data are issues that the panel will be considering.

Victimization data, as collected in the NCVS, contain information on crime that may not be reported to the police. These data are based on a sample of the population and only include responses from persons 12 years of age and older. Due to the limitation of its sample size, the NCVS is not able to provide state-level estimates of victimization.

Another area of concern for the panel is the near total lack of comprehensive data on regulatory violations. These include many areas covered by federal agencies such as the Security and Exchange Commission, the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Agriculture, and other agencies. (Many states have similar agencies.) The “violations” that these agencies uncover may have a much greater financial impact on the nation than other “crimes” such as bank robbery. However, no current system collects and publishes these data.

Finally, there is the issue of unreported crimes that victimize corporate America. The panel heard from one major retailer who reported hundreds of millions of dollars of “inventory shrinkage” over the course of a year. None of these cases are reported to the local police but instead are handled internally.

As part of its efforts to examine the current system of crime classification, the panel has considered international systems as well. The United Nations is currently developing an attribute-based system that may provide useful insights into alternative methods of crime classification. The panel has also heard presentations from subject matter experts and held day-long sessions with representatives of local, state, and national “parties of interest” (agencies that collect, analyze, or use crime and violation data).

An interim report is expected to be released later this year. For more information on the panel, visit the National Academies website.

Save the Date!

2015 National Forum on Criminal Justice

See page 8
NCJA Seeking Nominations for Outstanding Criminal Justice Programs Awards

The National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA) is seeking nominations for its annual NCJA Outstanding Criminal Justice Programs Awards. These awards honor successful criminal justice programs that use promising practices to address important crime and justice issues in communities. Programs are evaluated using the following criteria:

- Does the program address an important criminal justice issue?
- Does the program demonstrate collaboration among criminal justice and allied agencies or disciplines?
- Can the program provide quantitative evidence of its effectiveness in accomplishing program goals?
- Does the program leverage federal, state, local or other non-governmental funds and resources?
- Can the program be easily replicated in other jurisdictions?

Winning programs will be honored during an Awards Luncheon at the 2015 National Forum on Criminal Justice in Atlanta, Georgia.

Nominations for outstanding programs must be submitted no later than 5 p.m. ET on Friday, April 17, 2015. For more information about the awards or to nominate a program, visit the awards page on the NCJA website.

NCJA Announces Grants Management Training Program

The National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA) provides training and assistance in all areas of grants management, including pre-award and post-award processes, principles, and functions. Guidance on federal regulations and compliance and on how to apply concepts and requirements for a jurisdiction or agency is also provided. The objective is to enhance the knowledge and skills for administrators and agencies with responsibility for managing federal funding. Training is delivered through site-specific meetings and assistance (average 2-4 days) and grants management workshops (average 1-3 days).

Some specific topics include:
- New Uniform Guidance-2 CFR Part 200
- Management and Administrative Costs Monitoring—tools, techniques and training
- Progress and Financial Reporting
- Procurement
- Staff Responsibilities & Professional Development
- Indirect Costs & 10 percent de Minimis Rate
- Property Control, Inventory and Disposition
- Fraud, Waste and Abuse Prevention & Response
- Conflicts of Interest (New Requirements)

For More Information

For more information about this program, including specific topics and fees, please contact Lisa Nine Accordini by email at laccordini@ncja.org, by phone at (202) 421-7693, or by voice mail only at (202) 448-1712. Information is also available on the NCJA website.