



**The Quality of Life of People with Mental Illness
and The Consequences of Mental Health Court**

Research on Pre-Arrest and Post-Arrest
Diversion Programs
Akron, Ohio

funded by

The Ohio Department of Mental Health
and Ohio Criminal Justice Services

Background

Movement of people with serious mental illness from hospitals to the community has resulted in an increase in interactions between people with mental illness and the criminal justice system, including police officers and the courts. This research examines the effect of implementing two new programs in Summit County: a Crisis Intervention Team Program (CIT), to enhance safe and effective interactions between people with mental illness who are in crisis and the Police Department of Akron, Ohio and a Mental Health Court program. These programs are implemented jointly between the Akron Municipal Court and Community Support Services (CSS).

The research program involves three different, though related, studies to assess different aspects of these pre- and post- arrest diversion programs:

1. To study the effects of diversion programs on a) the perception of stigma by consumers, b) receipt of psychiatric services, c) quality of life, and d) well-being.
2. To study the effects of CIT training and experience on police officers' attitudes and beliefs.
3. To study a) the handling and dispositions of mental disturbance calls by CIT trained and non-trained officers and b) characteristics of consumers in crisis that influence the disposition of mental disturbance calls.

In order to accomplish the research program, we have three major data concentrations:

1. Identify, schedule, and interview mental health consumers using a structured interview instrument
2. Dispense a self-administered interview instrument to police officers.
3. Identify, acquire, and examine disparate data sources from the police, the court, the service providers, and the ADM Board.

This theoretically grounded research provides a unique opportunity to understand the consequences of diversion programs and their effects on consumers, police, and community support services. The results of this research will also provide needed information that will be used to plan for the effective introduction of similar programs in the State of Ohio, and across the country.

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Quality of Life of People with Mental Illness

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Sponsoring Agencies

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Cooperating Organizations

Akron Police Department, Michael T. Matulavich, Chief of Police; Lt. Michael Woody (Ret); Lt. Michael Yohe; Lt. Michael Prebonik; Michael Carillon
Summit County Municipal Court, Elinore Stormer, Judge Akron Municipal Court
Probation Department, Anthony C. Ingram, Chief Probation Officer
Summit County Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services Board, William R. Zumbar, Executive Director; Rebecca Brittain, Forensic Monitor
Community Support Services, Arthur G. Wickersham, Chief Executive Officer; Terrence B. Dalton, Chief Operating Officer; Penny Moore and Sonja Beatty, Mental Health Court community living specialists
Portage Path Behavior Health, Jerome T. Kraker, President