FACT SHEET

THE TASK FORCE FOR CONTINUING CONSIDERATION OF PERSONS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

PROBLEM STATEMENTS

- Since 1990, the percentage of persons with mental illness in the Colorado prison population has increased from 4% to 16% and continues to increase.
- The problem is now so serious that mental illness presents an immense challenge for the entire criminal justice system.
- It is far more cost effective to treat persons with mental illness prior to involvement with the criminal justice system.
- Criminal justice practitioners know that, in fact, a large number of individuals with mental illness in state prisons, and particularly those in county jails, are there because they displayed in public the symptoms of untreated mental illness.

IN COLORADO:

- 66,000 Coloradans with serious mental illness are not getting any help.
- New treatment and medications are highly effective.
- Although there are community mental health centers across the state, limited state monies support indigents with serious mental illness.
- Most people with mental illness live crime-free lives.

IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM:

- Most mentally ill offenders, if properly stabilized stop committing crimes and become productive citizens
- 24% of juveniles in the Division of Youth Corrections have a serious emotional disorder.
- 16% of adults in the Department of Corrections have a serious mental illness.

Cost Benefit Analysis/Cost Avoidance

	Daily Cost	Annual Cost
San Carlos/DOC	$163.76	$59,722
Probation with Mental Health Treatment	$18.98	$6,928
Cost Savings	$144.78	**$52,844**

Studies show that for offenders on community supervision, treatment decreases repeat arrests by 44%.

Since 1999, the legislative oversight committee/task force has initiated a number of legislative solutions which have been enacted.

<u>Proposed CO Solutions/Recommendations</u>

- Community-Based, decision-making (e.g. pilot programs) is critical.
- Ability of those on probation to access treatment is also critical.
- Task Force and Oversight Committee should be continued

December, 2002