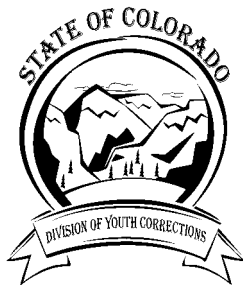


# Recidivism Evaluation of Committed Youth Discharged in Fiscal Year 1999-00



Colorado Department of Human Services  
Division of Youth Corrections

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*Working with Colorado Communities to Achieve Justice*

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## Executive Summary

The Division of Youth Corrections (DYC) submits annual reports of recidivism outcomes of youth committed to its custody. The current report is submitted in response to Footnote #117 of the fiscal year 2001-02 Long Bill.

Recidivism studies on committed youth are prepared in two phases. Phase I evaluates new misdemeanor and felony offenses occurring during the period of commitment, including parole, resulting in a court filing tracked in the Colorado Judicial Department's ICON data system. The sample for Phase I of this report includes all youth committed between July and October 1999, and followed throughout their commitment. Phase II evaluates new misdemeanor and felony offenses occurring within one year of discharge from DYC resulting in a court filing tracked in the ICON data system. The sample for Phase II includes all youth discharged from DYC in fiscal year 1999-00.

The measure of recidivism utilized in these studies had been revised since December 1999 in accordance with recommendations resulting from a legislative audit of the juvenile justice system. DYC reports prepared prior to December 1999 defined recidivism as a filing within one year of discharge from DYC for a new felony or misdemeanor offense resulting in an adjudication or conviction. Beginning with the 1999 report, DYC incorporated the definition developed by a committee of representatives from the Judicial Branch and the Departments of Human Services, Public Safety and Corrections. A two-tiered approach was recommended to capture pre-release information on offense behaviors prior to release or discharge from a program, and new offenses resulting in court filings within one year following release or discharge from the program. The move from reporting only filings resulting in a guilty disposition to all filings naturally increased the rate of recidivism as a function of the changed measure. While efforts to create standard definitions of recidivism across correctional agencies should produce more consistency in data collection and reporting, some differences will still exist across agencies due to differences in programs and levels of security imposed (e.g., residential versus non-residential).

The definitions used for the current study and included in this report are as follows:

**Pre-release recidivism:**

**A filing for a new felony or misdemeanor offense that occurred prior to discharge from DYC.**

**Post-release recidivism:**

**A filing for a new felony or misdemeanor offense that occurred within one year following discharge from DYC.**

The report is divided into two sections to report Phase I and Phase II findings.

## SECTION I: Phase I Findings – Pre-release Recidivism

The sample for Section I consists of 270 youth committed between July 1, 1999 and October 31, 1999. Offense and filing data were evaluated on all of these youth for offenses occurring throughout their period of commitment. As of December 1, 2002, 49 (18.2%) of the youth committed between July and October 1999 had not yet been discharged. Changes in the amount of time that youth spend with DYCS, and the corresponding change in the length of time that new offense during commitment are recorded negatively affect the ability to compare samples or to monitor trends over time. Longer observation times (created by increases in youth's length of stay) generally result in higher rates of re-offending, simply as a function of longer data collection periods. The total commitment follow-up time for the current sample (29.1 months based on LOS between commitment date and discharge, or commitment date and December 1, 2002 for youth not yet discharged) is nearly one month longer than the LOS for last year's sample, and nearly three months longer than for the 1997 sample (26.3 months). The increase in LOS for the 1999 sample combined with the implementation of a mandatory period of parole for many youth who would have otherwise spent their full commitment sentence in a residential setting produces a very different commitment experience for youth committed in this year's and last year's samples, compared with youth in prior studies. Therefore, the information presented in this section is useful in looking at population characteristics as they relate to offenses during commitment, but not for monitoring trends over periods of time. As in the more recent recidivism studies, the 49 youth who had not yet been discharged are included in the analyses of new offense filed during commitment. The rate of new filings is particularly high for this group of youths (approximately 57%), likely due in large part to the long LOS for these youth. Excluding this group would greatly underestimate the rate of filings during commitment.

The following is a summary of the pre-discharge recidivism results from the 1999 commitment sample:

- 1) Of the 270 youth committed during the first four months of FY1999-00, 94 (34.8%) had a new misdemeanor or felony offense filed prior to discharge. This figure is significantly lower than last year's pre-release recidivism rate of 45.8%.
- 2) The rate of pre-discharge recidivism for the 1999 new commitment sample is 36.2% for males and 25.7% for females. In the past, males have evidenced consistently higher recidivism rates than females. However, the magnitude of this difference has diminished steadily. While there did exist a difference this year, the gender difference in rates of recidivism was not statistically significant.
- 3) There were also no statistically significant differences in recidivism rates by ethnicity, with all groups recidivating at similar rates. Rates for Anglo youth were 31.1%, while the rates for African American and Hispanic youth were 36.8% and 40.4%, respectively. While this does represent some slight differences, the results were not statistically significant. This marks a change from past reports where

African American youth had significantly higher recidivism rates than did Anglo or Hispanic youth.

- 4) NYC has a regionally based management structure, operating from five management regions throughout the state. The Western region experienced the lowest rates of new offenses filed during commitment at 18.6%, followed by the Central region (30.8%), the Southern region (39.3%), the Northeast region (40.0%), and the Denver region (40.6%).
- 5) Youth committed on person offenses were significantly less likely to have another filing prior to discharge from NYC than youth whose original offense was a property or other offense.
- 6) Seventy-four percent of youth committed in the first four months of FY1999-00 had one or more prior adjudications. The rate of new offenses filed was not significantly different for youth with no prior adjudications than for youth with one or more prior adjudications, representing an important departure from previous studies. In fact, nearly all of the recent decreases in pre-release recidivism rates have been in the higher-risk group of youth with one or more prior adjudications.
- 7) Overall, 65.2 % of all youth committed during the first four months of FY 1999-00 had no new charges resulting in filing during their commitment. Of the 94 youth with new offenses filed, 27 (28.7%) were charged with property felony offenses as the most serious offense filed. Twelve youth (12.8%) were charged with person felony charges. When the entire sample of 270 youth is considered, the percent of youth with new property and person felony offenses during commitment resulting in filing is 10.0% and 4.4%, meaning most new filings were for misdemeanor charges.

## SECTION II: Phase II Findings – Post-release Recidivism

In FY1999-00, 601 committed youth were discharged from NYC. Approximately 6% of these youth were under adult court authority at the time of discharge. An additional 6 (1%) youth received another commitment to NYC shortly after discharge for an offense that occurred during the original commitment. Filings that result in such discharges are reflected in ‘pre-discharge’ filings outcomes (analyzed in Section I) since the offense leading to these filings occurred prior to the youth’s discharge from NYC. Therefore, these youth are excluded from further follow-up. The sample for Section II consists of the remaining 561 (93.3%) youth discharged in FY1999-00.

The following is a summary of the post-discharge recidivism results for the FY 1999-00 follow-up sample.

- 1) Of the 561 youth included in the study, 164 (29.2%) had a new misdemeanor or felony offense within one year of discharge resulting in a filing. Even when youth

who were discharged to adult court authority are included in the above figures, the rate of recidivism for youth discharged in FY 1999-00 is lower than that of youth discharged since 1992-93.

- 2) The rate of recidivism was 20% for females and 30.7% for males. The rate for females is considerably higher than that observed in recent years. Further, as recidivism rates for males have declined while female rates have increased, these groups have grown more similar, so that differences between them are not statistically significant.
- 3) The recidivism rate for Anglo youth (29.6%) discharged in FY1999-00 did not differ significantly from rates for African-American (34.8%) and Hispanic (23.8%) youth.
- 4) The Denver region had the lowest rates of post-release recidivism (22.6%), followed by the Central region (23.3%), the Southern (28.6%), the Western (29.1%), and the Northeast (41.4%) regions. Youth in the Northeast region were significantly more likely to recidivate than youth in other regions.
- 5) As found in prior studies, there were no statistically significant differences in recidivism rates for youth committed to DYC on felony versus misdemeanor offenses.
- 6) Youth who were either employed or enrolled in school at the time of discharge had a significantly lower recidivism rate (26.2%) than youth who were unemployed and not enrolled in school (35.4%).
- 7) Of the 164 youth who recidivated during the year following discharge, 122 (74.4%) of the offenses filed were felony offenses. This figure translates to approximately 21.8% of the 561 youth in the FY 1999-00 follow-up sample.

Youth discharged in FY 1999-00 continued the downward trend in recidivism rates seen since the FY1996-97 discharge cohort, with the most prominent reductions occurring in the highest-risk youth. Over 90% of the youth in this sample should have been subjected to mandatory parole based on their dates of commitment. This is the first sample of youth receiving services under mandatory parole provisions for whom recidivism rates have been calculated. While this study does not provide conclusive evidence of the impact of mandatory parole the drop in recidivism rates is a positive indicator of the effectiveness of parole program services. This decline was not statistically significant, however continued monitoring of this trend should provide some information regarding the effectiveness of mandatory parole.

## INTRODUCTION

The Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Youth Corrections, prepares annual recidivism reports of youth committed to its custody. The current report is submitted in partial response to Footnote 117 of the fiscal year 2001-02 Colorado Long Bill, along with the Division's annual Management Reference Manual:

The Division should continue its efforts to provide outcome data on the effectiveness of its programs. The Division is requested to provide to the Joint Budget Committee by January 1 of each year an evaluation of Division placements, community placements, and nonresidential placements, which shall include, but not be limited to, the number of juveniles served, length of stay, and recidivism data per placement.

This report is divided into two sections: Section I contains information on new misdemeanor and felony offenses occurring during the period of commitment and resulting in a court filing for 270 youth committed to DYC between July 1, 1999 and October 31, 1999. Section II contains information on misdemeanor and felony offenses committed within one year following discharge resulting in a court filing for 561 youth discharged in fiscal year 1999-00. Only those filings entered into the Colorado Judicial Department's Integrated Colorado Online Network (ICON) data system are included in these recidivism measures. Traffic, municipal, status, and petty offenses are not included in this measure of recidivism.

In fiscal year 1990-91, a Legislative Audit Committee conducted an audit of the Colorado juvenile justice system. In response to a recommendation generated from this audit, four Colorado agencies including DYC, the Judicial Department, the Division of Criminal Justice and the Division of Child Welfare developed a common definition of recidivism. A more recent legislative audit of the juvenile probation system recommended that the Judicial Branch consult with the Departments of Human Services, Public Safety and Corrections to consider a less restrictive definition, and one that covers both juvenile and

adult offenders. Based on this recommendation, a committee was again formed consisting of representatives from each of these departments. A report submitted by the committee in June 1999 describes the activities of the committee and issues inherent in attempts to develop common definitions of recidivism. Limitations at various points in the justice system affect the definition of recidivism adopted: either the definition is extremely narrow, potentially under-counting recidivism, or extremely broad, potentially over-counting recidivism. These limitations are directly associated with the available sources of recidivism data. Documented data obtained from various agencies involved in the apprehension and disposition of cases are subject to the ability of these agencies to carry out these functions. After considerable discussion of these and other issues related to developing a common definition of recidivism, the agencies proposed a two-tiered definition. The two tiers are intended to capture pre-release information on offense behaviors prior to release or discharge from a program, and information on new offenses committed within one year following release or discharge from the program. While efforts to define standard definitions of recidivism across correctional agencies should produce more consistency in data collection and reporting, some differences will still exist across agencies due to differences in programs, levels of security imposed (e.g., residential versus non-residential) and procedures used to regress or sanction youth.

The definitions used for the current study and included in this report are as follows:

**Pre-release recidivism:**

**A filing for a new felony or misdemeanor offense that occurred prior to discharge from NYC.**

**Post-release recidivism:**

**A filing for a new felony or misdemeanor offense that occurred within one year following discharge from NYC.**

The present report is the fourth to incorporate the above definition of recidivism of committed youth served in NYC. The definition of recidivism utilized in this report was applied to previous discharge cohorts to obtain trends over time.

## **Data Collection**

Data files were obtained from the Judicial Department and matched with DYC data files. The process for matching files involves a high level match of youths' last name, first initial, and two of the three birth date elements. These matches are further examined for evidence of accurate matches (review of the full name listed by both agencies, further checks against the ICON system for nicknames, etc.). Any method to match files is limited by data entry errors, spelling differences, and aliases. Efforts were made to minimize errors through spot-checking and manual reviews of randomly selected cases in the ICON system. It is anticipated that the new Colorado Integrated Criminal Justice Information System (CICJIS) will help to minimize problems in matching across agencies when it is fully operational.

The Colorado Judicial Department prepared a data file containing filing information that was subsequently matched with a DYC data file on committed youth served in fiscal year 1999-00. The matched file was used to evaluate new offenses occurring during commitment (including parole) for youth committed during the first four months of FY 1999-00 (Section I), and to evaluate offenses that were filed within one year following discharge on youth discharged in FY 1999-00 (Section II). Manual data collection using both the Judicial ICON data system and the DYC Client Data System was done to follow-up on committed youth who had not yet been discharged at the time the Judicial file was prepared.



## SECTION I

Section I reports pre-discharge recidivism information. Early recidivism reports (prepared prior to FY 1999-00) provided information on recommitments of youth prior to discharge, but did not discriminate between recommitments resulting from offenses that preceded the original commitment and those resulting from new offenses that occurred during the commitment. Information on offense and filing dates are now available through the Judicial Department's automated data system (ICON), allowing more accurate reporting of offense dates and more meaningful analyses of filings for offenses that occur during commitment or following discharge.

The three most recent recidivism reports on committed youth (prepared in December 1999, 2000, and 2001) incorporated data on offense dates as a more accurate assessment of pre-discharge recidivism. Similar measures are also used for the current report. The current report is based on an evaluation of youth committed in the first four months of the target fiscal year (FY 1999-00). Reports prior to 2001 were based on the first six months of the fiscal year. The change in sample selection was because of the increasing length of stay (LOS) for youth committed in fiscal years 1998-99 and 1999-00 compared with prior years. With the implementation of the new mandatory parole provision (House Bill 96-1005), all youth who are committed to DYC for an offense that occurred on or after January 1, 1997 are required to serve a mandatory one-year parole in addition to the period of commitment. Total commitment LOS had been increasing even prior to this new legislation as evidenced by the proportion of youth in the 1997 sample (17.8%) that had not yet been discharged by the end of November, 2000 when the data collection was completed. This percent would have been even larger for the current study if a full six-month sample of new commitments in FY 1998-99 has been followed throughout their commitment as in previous studies. Average length of stay (LOS) for the current sample was 29 months, or about 3 months longer than the LOS of the youth committed only two years earlier. The sample selected for the current study was restricted to youth committed in the first four months of the fiscal year in order to minimize the proportion of youth who had still not been discharged from DYC at the time data collection was finalized for this report.

## **Sample**

The sample for Section I consists of 270 youth committed between July 1, 1999 and October 31, 1999. Offense and filing data were evaluated on all of these youth throughout their commitment. As of December 1, 2002, 49 (18.2%) of the youth committed to NYC between July 1 and October 31, 1999 had not yet been discharged. Changes in the amount of time that youth spend with NYC (and the corresponding change in the duration of time that new offenses during commitment are recorded) negatively affect the ability to compare samples or to monitor trends over time. Longer observation times generally result in higher rates of re-offending, simply as a function of longer data collection periods. The total commitment follow-up time for the current sample (29.1 months based on LOS between commitment date and discharge, or between commitment date and December 1, 2002 for youth not yet discharged) is nearly three months longer than for the commitment follow-up time in the 1997 sample (26.3 months) and one month longer than the youth in the 1998 sample (28.4 months). The increased LOS of the 1999 sample combined with the implementation of a mandatory period of parole for many youth who would otherwise have spent their full commitment sentence in a residential setting produces a very different commitment experience for youth committed in this sample compared with youth in prior studies. Therefore, the information presented in this section is useful in looking at population characteristics as they relate to re-offenses during commitment, but not for monitoring trends over time.

As in the 1997 study, the 49 youth who had not yet been discharged are included in the analyses of new offenses filed during commitment. The rate of new filings is particularly high for this group of youths (approximately 57%), probably in large part due to the long LOS for these youth, and excluding this group would underestimate the rate of filings during commitment. Most of the youth who had not had a new filing by the time the data collection for this study was completed are nearing the end of their sentence, and will likely be discharged without having received an additional filing during commitment.

The term 'pre-discharge' is used in this report to identify offenses filed during commitment, since the period of commitment includes both residential out-of-home

placement and non-residential parole. Of the 270 youth committed during the first four months of 1999, 94 (34.8%) had a new misdemeanor or felony offense filed prior to discharge. The following subsections provide demographic and offense information by pre-discharge recidivism outcomes.

**I.A. Gender**

Table 1 shows a breakdown of pre-discharge recidivism results by gender.

**TABLE 1  
NEW OFFENSES FILED DURING COMMITMENT BY GENDER  
JUVENILES COMMITTED BETWEEN 7/1/99 AND 10/31/99**

Gender	No Pre-discharge Offense Filed		Pre-discharge Offense Filed		TOTALS	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Males	150	63.8%	85	36.2%	235	87.0%
Females	26	74.3%	9	25.7%	35	13.0%
<b>TOTALS</b>	176	65.2%	94	34.8%	270	100.0%

Eighty-seven percent of the pre-discharge sample was male, exactly the same as the proportion of all youth committed in FY 1999-00. Males consistently demonstrate a higher recidivism rate than females, although the difference in these rates has decreased over recent years. The rate of pre-discharge recidivism for the 1999 new commitment sample is 36.2% for males compared with 25.7% for females.

### **I.B. Ethnicity**

Table 2 provides a breakdown of offenses filed during commitment by ethnicity.

**TABLE 2**  
**NEW OFFENSES FILED DURING COMMITMENT BY ETHNICITY**  
**JUVENILES COMMITTED BETWEEN 7/1/99 AND 10/31/99**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>No Pre-discharge Offense Filed</b>		<b>Pre-discharge Offense Filed</b>		<b>TOTALS</b>	
	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Anglo	84	68.9%	38	31.1%	122	45.2%
African American	24	63.2%	14	36.8%	38	14.1%
Hispanic/Latino	59	59.6%	40	40.4%	99	36.7%
Native American	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	2	0.7%
Asian	4	100.0%	0	0.0%	4	1.5%
Other	4	75.0%	1	25.0%	5	1.9%
<b>TOTALS</b>	176	65.2%	94	34.8%	270	100.0%

Recidivism rates did not differ significantly by ethnic group. Table 2 illustrates that youth in the three largest ethnic groups (Anglo, African American, and Hispanic) recidivated at similar rates. While differences in Table 2 are apparent, they are not statistically significant. This is a departure from findings in previous years, where African American youth had significantly higher recidivism rates than Hispanic or Anglo youth.

### **I.C. DYC Management Region**

DYC has a regionally based management structure, operating from five management regions in the state. The Southern region consists of seven judicial districts and includes the major counties of El Paso and Pueblo, as well as the San Luis Valley. The Western region consists of six judicial districts on the western slope. The Denver region is the City and County of Denver. The Central Region consists of four judicial districts and includes the major counties of Jefferson, Arapaho, and Douglas. The Northeast region consists of five judicial districts and includes the major counties of Adams, Boulder, Larimer and Weld. Table 3 shows a breakdown of new offenses during commitment by DYC management region.

**TABLE 3**  
**NEW OFFENSES FILED DURING COMMITMENT BY DYC MANAGEMENT REGION**  
**JUVENILES COMMITTED BETWEEN 7/1/99 AND 10/31/99**

Region	No Pre-discharge Offense Filed		Pre-discharge Offense Filed		TOTALS	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Southern	37	60.7%	24	39.3%	61	22.6%
Western	35	81.4%	8	18.6%	43	15.9%
Denver	38	59.4%	26	40.6%	64	23.7%
Central	36	69.2%	16	30.8%	52	19.2%
Northeast	30	60.0%	20	40.0%	50	18.5%
<b>TOTALS</b>	176	65.2%	94	34.8%	270	100.0%

The Western region experienced the lowest rate of new offenses filed during commitment for the 1999 sample studied. As shown above, these rates ranged from 18.6% in the Western region to 40.6% in the Denver region. These differences were not statistically significant.

**I.D. Original Commitment Offense Type**

The most serious offense for which youth are committed is tracked in the DYC Client Data System based on information obtained on the mittimus. These offenses have been grouped into ‘types’ of commitment offenses for purposes of analyses. Table 4 presents a breakdown of original commitment offense type by pre-discharge recidivism.

**TABLE 4**  
**NEW OFFENSES FILED DURING COMMITMENT BY ORIGINAL COMMITMENT OFFENSE TYPE**  
**JUVENILES COMMITTED BETWEEN 7/1/99 AND 10/31/99**

Type of Original Commitment Offense	No Pre-discharge Offense Filed		Pre-discharge Offense Filed		TOTALS	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Person Felony	48	81.4%	11	18.6%	59	21.9%
Person Misdemeanor	32	69.6%	14	30.4%	46	17.0%
Property Felony	55	59.8%	37	40.2%	92	34.1%
Property Misdemeanor	12	50.0%	12	50.0%	24	9.0%
Drug Felony	9	52.9%	8	47.1%	17	6.3%
Drug Misdemeanor	0	0.0%	2	100.0%	2	0.7%
Weapons Felony	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.7%
Weapons Misdemeanor	5	55.6%	4	44.4%	9	3.3%
Other Felony	4	66.7%	2	33.3%	6	2.2%
Other Misdemeanor	7	63.6%	4	36.4%	11	4.1%
Other Offenses	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.7%
<b>TOTALS</b>	176	65.2%	94	34.8%	270	100.0%

When offenses were further grouped into categories of person (25.8% pre-release recidivism), property (40.2%), and other (45.3%) offenses the differences in pre-release recidivism rates were significant (chi-square=8.6; p<0.05). Youth whose original commitment charge was for a person offense were less likely to have another filing prior to discharge from NYC.

## I.E. Number of Prior Adjudications

**TABLE 5**  
**NEW OFFENSES FILED DURING COMMITMENT BY PRIOR ADJUDICATIONS**  
**JUVENILES COMMITTED BETWEEN 7/1/99 AND 10/31/99**

Number of Prior Adjudications	No Pre-discharge Offense Filed		Pre-discharge Offense Filed		TOTALS	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
None	45	64.3%	25	35.7%	70	25.9%
One	53	63.9%	30	36.1%	83	30.7%
Two	40	66.7%	20	33.3%	60	22.2%
Three	24	80.0%	6	20.0%	30	11.1%
Four or More	14	51.9%	13	48.1%	27	10.0%
<b>TOTALS</b>	176	65.2%	94	34.8%	270	100.0%

Seventy-four percent of youth committed in the first four months of 1999 had one or more prior adjudications. In prior year's pre-release recidivism rates have significantly differed based on the number of prior adjudications. There were no such differences evident in this year's sample. While the recidivism rate of youth with no prior adjudications has remained constant (35.5% in the 1998 sample verses 35.7% in the current sample), the rate of new filings for youth with one or more prior adjudications has drastically decreased from last year's study. In last year's sample 48.9% of youth with one or more prior adjudications recidivated compared with 34.5% in the current sample.

## I.F. Assessed Drug/Alcohol Use

Youth undergo a battery of assessments at the time of commitment to assist in developing placement and treatment plans. Substance abuse is a common problem experienced by youth committed to DYC. Table 6 shows the breakdown of pre-discharge recidivism by assessed level of drug/alcohol use at the time of commitment.

**TABLE 6**  
**NEW OFFENSES FILED DURING COMMITMENT BY DRUG/ALCOHOL USE**  
**JUVENILES COMMITTED BETWEEN 7/1/99 AND 10/31/99**

Assessed D/A Level	No Pre-discharge Offense Filed		Pre-discharge Offense Filed		TOTALS	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
None/Low	30	68.2%	14	31.8%	44	16.3%
Moderate/Severe	145	64.4%	80	35.6%	225	83.3%
<b>TOTALS</b>	175	65.2%	94	34.8%	269	100.0%

Approximately 16% of the youth committed in the first four months of FY 1999-00 were assessed at the prevention, or low, level of substance use. The recidivism rates were not significantly different for youth in the none/low group (31.8%) versus those in the moderate/severe group (35.6%).



### I.G. Charges Filed During Commitment

Table 7 provides a breakdown of pre-discharge recidivism by the most serious type of charge filed.

**TABLE 7**  
**FREQUENCY OF MOST SERIOUS NEW CHARGES FILED DURING COMMITMENT**  
**JUVENILES COMMITTED BETWEEN 7/1/99 AND 10/31/99**

Type of Commitment Offense	TOTALS	
	n	%
Person Felony	12	12.8%
Person Misdemeanor	14	14.9%
Property Felony	27	28.7%
Property Misdemeanor	3	3.2%
Weapons Felony	1	1.1%
Weapons Misdemeanor	2	2.1%
Controlled Substance Felony	6	6.4%
Escape Felony	7	7.4%
Other Felony	4	4.3%
Other Misdemeanor	17	18.1%
Other Offenses	1	1.1%
<b>TOTALS</b>	94	100.0%

Overall, 65.2% of all youth committed during the first four months of FY 1999-00 had no new charges resulting in filing during their commitment. Of the 94 youth with new offenses filed, 27 (28.7%) were charged with property felony offenses as the most serious offense filed. Twelve youth (12.8%) were charged with person felony charges. It is important to remember that when the total sample of 270 youth are considered, the percent of youth with new property and person felony offenses during commitment resulting in filing is 10.0% and 4.4% respectively.

While the definition of recidivism is based on new filings, many charges are dismissed or reduced prior to case disposition. In the current study, new charges filed during

commitment were also tracked according to the most serious disposition. That is, a separate offense variable was tracked to reflect the most serious charge with a guilty disposition. Based on this variable, 13.7% of youth committed during the first four months of FY 1999-00 were found guilty for a felony offense filed prior to discharge, compared with the 21.1% who received filings for felony offenses reflected in Table 6 above. Of the 84 filings for which dispositions were available (dispositions were missing in ten cases), 53 (63.1%) resulted in guilty dispositions, 28 (33.3%) were dismissed, two (2.4%) were acquitted, and one (1.2%) was deferred.

### **Section I Discussion**

Youth committed to NYC experience multiple placements, both residential and non-residential, throughout their sentence. Therefore, collection of recidivism outcomes, while useful for understanding the rate of re-offending during the commitment period and monitoring re-offending behaviors by specific sub-populations, is not useful in measuring performance of individual programs. Evaluation of the effectiveness of individual programs requires experimental research designs that incorporate control or comparison groups matched on critical characteristics, and incorporating strict procedures for measuring process and outcomes based on the theoretical approach adopted by each program to produce identifiable outcomes. In FY 1999-00 the Division operated seven state facilities for committed youth, and administered contracts with private vendors for services in approximately 50 secure residential and minimum secure community residential programs. Evaluation of individual programs is time and staff intensive, and is beyond the scope of this project.

Regression analyses were done to investigate the predictive ability of some of the intake information collected on youth at the time of commitment. Data incorporated into the regression analyses included number of prior adjudications, number of prior out-of-home placements, age at first adjudication and commitment, assessed drug/alcohol level, and score on the risk component of the Commitment Classification Instrument. These variables alone or in combination only minimally improve prediction of pre-discharge recidivism beyond that expected by chance.

Since FY 1999-00, the Division has initiated some significant programmatic changes. In addition to enhanced assessment of youth with the CYO-LSI and with the Colorado Client Assessment Record (CCAR), a mental health assessment used by the state's Mental Health Services, the Division has implemented new client programs for committed youth. Among these is a 40 bed secure girl's facility on the Mount View campus. This facility is the first in the nation to be designed, built and operated specifically to meet the unique needs of committed girls. Girls View at the Betty K. Marler Youth Services Center began serving young women in July of 2002. Growth also continues at the Ridge View Youth Services Center designed to serve 500 committed youth once it reaches full capacity. Ridge View is a performance-based, state-owned, privately operated facility that emphasizes academic, vocational and athletic achievement. DYC has also expanded mental health services at Lookout Mountain Youth Services center, and is currently working to meet newly mandated standards for the assessment, supervision and treatment of juvenile sex offenders. Recidivism studies provide one mechanism for monitoring impacts of these kinds of system change on outcomes of youth served.

## SECTION II

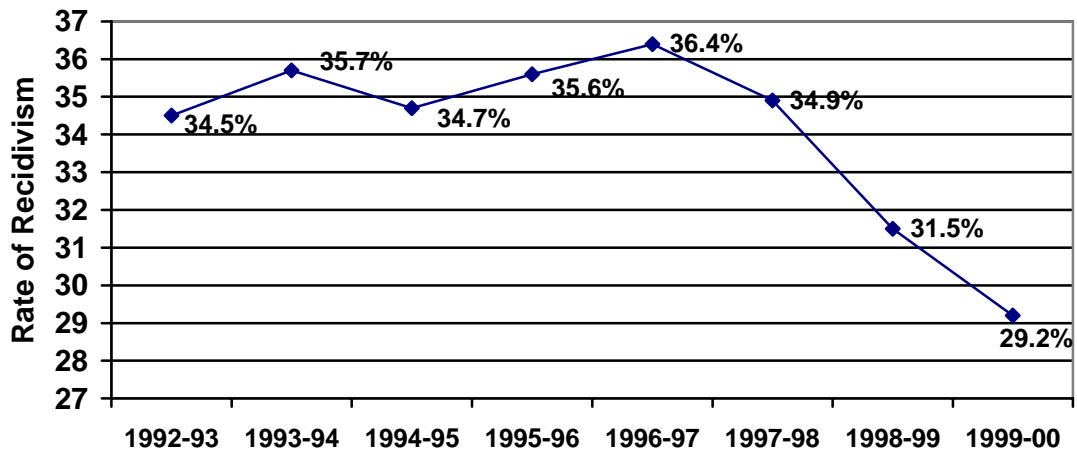
### Sample

Follow-up information on new misdemeanor or felony offenses committed within one year following discharge from NYC resulting in a court filing and entered into the Judicial Department's ICON data system was collected on all youth discharged in fiscal year 1999-00. Of the 601 youth discharged in FY 1999-00, 34 (5.7%) were under adult court authority at the time of discharge. Filings that result in such discharges are reflected in 'pre-discharge' filing outcomes (analyzed in the prior section) since the offenses leading to these filings occur prior to youth's discharge from NYC. The following table shows trends in the proportion of youth discharged to adult court authority.

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>92-93</b>	<b>93-94</b>	<b>94-95</b>	<b>95-96</b>	<b>96-97</b>	<b>97-98</b>	<b>98-99</b>	<b>99-00</b>
<b>% Discharged to Adult Court Authority</b>	4%	6%	8%	7%	6%	6%	7%	6%

An additional six youth (1.0%) received another commitment to NYC within 3 months after discharge in FY 1999-00 for an offense that occurred during the original commitment. These youth were also excluded from the one-year follow-up portion of this study. Of the 601 youth discharged in FY 1999-00, 40 (6.7%) were already under adult court authority at the time of discharge or received another commitment following discharge for an offense that occurred during the first commitment. The follow-up sample for Section II consisted of the remaining 561 youth (93.3%) discharged in FY 1999-00.

Of these 561 youth, 164 (29.2%) had a new misdemeanor or felony offense within one year of discharge resulting in filing. The definition of recidivism utilized in this report was applied to previous discharge cohorts to obtain trends over time. Youth who are under adult court authority at the time of discharge (percents shown in previous table) are excluded from the post-discharge follow-up analyses for each of the eight years shown in the graph below.



*Based on new definition of recidivism)*

Even when youth who were discharged to adult court authority are included in the above figures, the rate of recidivism for youth discharged in FY 1999-00 is lower than that of youth discharged since 1992-93. As indicated in the graph above, recidivism rates for discharged youth have decreased steadily since FY 1996-97 after a period of relative stability.

## II.A. Gender

Males represent a large majority of the commitment population. Nearly 87% of the study sample were male. Table 8 shows the recidivism rate by gender.

**TABLE 8  
FOLLOW-UP RECIDIVISM BY GENDER  
JUVENILES DISCHARGED IN FISCAL YEAR 1999-00**

Gender	No Follow-up Recidivism		Follow-up Recidivism		TOTALS	
	n	%	N	%	n	%
Males	337	69.3%	149	30.7%	486	86.6%
Females	60	80.0%	15	20.0%	75	13.4%
<b>TOTALS</b>	397	70.8%	164	29.2%	561	100.0%

The rate of recidivism is lower for males than in recent studies. The rate for females, however grew from 12.7% for the FY 1998-99 discharge cohort to 20% in the FY1999-00 cohort.

## II.B. Ethnicity

Recidivism breakdowns by ethnicity are shown in Table 9.

**TABLE 9  
FOLLOW-UP RECIDIVISM BY ETHNICITY  
JUVENILES DISCHARGED IN FISCAL YEAR 1999-00**

Ethnicity	No Follow-up Recidivism		Follow-up Recidivism		TOTALS	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Anglo	207	70.4%	87	29.6%	294	52.4%
African American	58	65.2%	31	34.8%	89	15.9%
Hispanic/Latino	122	76.3%	38	23.8%	160	28.5%
Native American	2	50.0%	2	50.0%	4	0.7%
Asian	4	66.7%	2	33.3%	6	1.1%
Other	4	50.0%	4	50.0%	8	1.4%
<b>TOTALS</b>	397	70.8%	164	29.2%	561	100.0%

There were no significant differences in recidivism rates based on ethnicity. Both African American and Hispanic recommitment rates declined in the current sample. African American youth discharged in FY1998-99 recidivated at a rate of 37.7% compared with 34.8% in the FY1999-00 discharge cohort. Similarly, the recidivism rate of 37.4% observed for the Hispanic youth discharged in FY1998-99 declined to 23.8% for youth in this year's study. Anglo youth discharged in FY1999-00 recidivated at slightly higher rates than in the FY1998-99 discharge sample (29.6% vs. 26.8%).

### **II.C. DYC Management Region**

Table 10 provides a breakdown of recidivism by DYC Management Region.

**TABLE 10**  
**FOLLOW-UP RECIDIVISM BY DYC MANAGEMENT REGION**  
**JUVENILES DISCHARGED IN FISCAL YEAR 1999-00**

Region	No Follow-up Recidivism		Follow-up Recidivism		TOTALS	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Southern	95	71.4%	38	28.6%	133	23.7%
Western	73	70.9%	30	29.1%	103	18.4%
Denver	72	77.4%	21	22.6%	93	16.6%
Central	89	76.7%	27	23.3%	116	20.7%
Northeast	68	58.6%	48	41.4%	116	20.7%
<b>TOTALS</b>	397	70.8%	164	29.2%	561	100.0%

*(Chi Square = 12.3; p<0.05)*

The rate of recidivism across regions for youth discharged in FY 1999-00 ranged from a low of 22.6% in the Denver region to 41.4% in the Northeast region. Youth in the Northeast region were significantly more likely to recidivate than youth in other regions (Chi Square = 12.3; p<0.05).

## II.D. Original Commitment Offense Type

Recidivism outcomes by type of original commitment offense are shown in Table 11. The commitment offense is the offense listed on the mittimus at the time of sentencing.

**TABLE 11**  
**FOLLOW-UP RECIDIVISM BY ORIGINAL COMMITMENT OFFENSE**  
**JUVENILES DISCHARGED IN FISCAL YEAR 1999-00**

Type of Commitment Offense	No Follow-up Recidivism		Follow-up Recidivism		TOTALS	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Person Felony	100	78.1%	28	21.9%	128	22.9%
Person Misdemeanor	54	67.5%	26	32.5%	80	14.3%
Property Felony	154	66.4%	78	33.6%	232	41.4%
Property Misdemeanor	43	79.6%	11	20.4%	54	9.6%
Drug Felony	20	69.0%	9	31.0%	29	5.2%
Drug Misdemeanor	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.2%
Weapons Felony	6	85.7%	1	14.3%	7	1.3%
Weapons Misdemeanor	4	50.0%	4	50.0%	8	1.4%
Other Felony	7	70.0%	3	30.0%	10	1.8%
Other Misdemeanor	7	77.8%	2	22.2%	9	1.6%
Other	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	2	0.4%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>70.9%</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>29.1%</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Missing=1*

As found in prior studies, there were no statistically significant differences in recidivism rates for youth committed to NYC on felony versus misdemeanor offenses.



### **II.E. Job/School Status at Discharge**

The percent of youth in job and/or school placements at the time of discharge declined slightly from 67.3% in last year's study to 66.2% in this year's sample. Recidivism outcomes by job/school status at the time of discharge are shown in Table 12.

**TABLE 12**  
**FOLLOW-UP RECIDIVISM BY JOB/SCHOOL STATUS AT DISCHARGE**  
**JUVENILES DISCHARGED IN FISCAL YEAR 1999-00**

<b>Job/School Status At Discharge</b>	<b>No Follow-up Recidivism</b>		<b>Follow-up Recidivism</b>		<b>TOTALS</b>	
	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
None	122	64.6%	67	35.4%	189	33.8%
Job or school	273	73.8%	97	26.2%	370	66.2%
<b>TOTALS</b>	395	70.7%	164	29.3%	559	100.0%

*(Missing=2) (Chi Square = 5.15 p<0.05)*

Youth discharged in FY 1999-00 who were in a job/school placement at the time of discharge had a significantly lower recidivism rate (26.2%) than youth not working or in school at the time of discharge (35.4%). This is consistent with findings in previous studies.

## II.F. Most Serious Filing Offense

Information on the most serious filing offense committed during the year following commitment was collected. Table 13 shows a breakdown of these charges.

**TABLE 13**  
**FREQUENCY OF NEW CHARGES FILED FOLLOWING COMMITMENT**  
**JUVENILES DISCHARGED IN FISCAL YEAR 1999-00**

Type of Commitment Offense	TOTALS	
	n	%
Person Felony	40	24.4%
Person Misdemeanor	13	7.9%
Property Felony	57	34.8%
Property Misdemeanor	7	4.3%
Weapons Misdemeanor	11	6.8%
Controlled Substance Felony	20	12.2%
Controlled Substance Misdemeanor	1	0.6%
Other Felony	5	3.0%
Other Misdemeanor	9	5.5%
Other Offenses	1	0.6%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Seventy-eight percent of the offenses filed were felony offenses. As an overall rate of youth discharged in FY 1999-00, approximately 24 percent received new filings for a felony offense within one year of discharge. The 'Other' felony and misdemeanor categories included mainly public order offenses such as obstruction and disorderly conduct.

As with prediction of pre-discharge recidivism, the commitment information collected at intake, analyzed either alone or in combination utilizing regression analyses, were not highly predictive of post-discharge recidivism.

## **DISCUSSION**

In recidivism studies prepared on youth discharged in the early to mid 1990's, recidivism outcomes were broken down by the residential placement in which the youth spent more time than any other single placement during commitment. Since that time, the number and types of programs serving committed youth have increased substantially, and youth often experience multiple placements prior to discharge. While youth may spend more time in one program than in any other single program, he or she may spend more time in a combination of other programs than in any one program. In addition, increasingly more youth are placed on parole for longer periods as the mandatory parole provision is implemented. Youth on parole receive varied treatment services in addition to surveillance. For these reasons, assigning recidivism outcomes to specific placements is inappropriate and does not substitute for evaluation of individual program effectiveness.

Trends in recidivism outcomes and job/school placements at discharge provide an overall measure of system outcomes for the Division of Youth Corrections. Youth committed in the first four months of FY 1999-00 and followed throughout their commitment sentence experienced a lower rate of new charges filed prior to discharge than youth committed in the prior fiscal year. Comparisons across previous years' data are not valid for drawing trend conclusions due to the implementation of the mandatory parole provision. While a required period of parole may later prove to have positive impacts on youth discharged, moving a higher proportion of youth onto parole in non-residential placements may increase the rate of offenses committed during their commitment. Almost half of youth committed to DYC spent their entire commitment sentence in more secure residential settings prior to the implementation of mandatory parole.

Youth discharged in FY 1999-00 continued the downward trend in recidivism rates seen since the FY1996-97 discharge cohort. Among the most encouraging findings in post-release recidivism are 1) the large decrease for recidivism rates for youth typically at highest risk for re-offending (those with one or more prior adjudications) and 2) the continued demonstration of the preventative link between education/employment at the time of discharge and subsequent re-offending. Even given the slight decline

(approximately 1%) in the proportion of youth enrolled or in school at the time of discharge, the Division continues to use this vital information to bolster its efforts to improve outcomes for youth in its care.

It is important to note that this is the first report to include a vast majority of youth who were subjected to the mandatory parole provision. Future studies will determine the stability of the positive outcomes in recidivism and job/school placement rates observed for the youth discharged in FY 1999-00.

