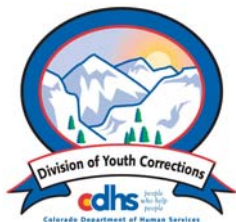


Recidivism Evaluation of Committed Youth Discharged in Fiscal Year 2007-08



Colorado Department of Human Services
Office of Children, Youth and Family Services
Division of Youth Corrections

Working with Colorado Communities to Achieve Justice

January 1, 2010

Any questions concerning the data presented in this report may be directed to the

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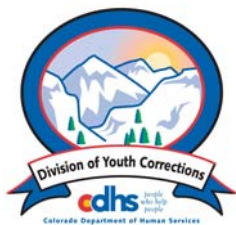
**Colorado Department of Human Services
Division of Youth Corrections**



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<http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/dyc>

Recidivism Evaluation of Committed Youth Discharged in Fiscal Year 2007-08



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Division of Youth Corrections (DYC) submits annual reports of recidivism outcomes on committed youth. The current report is submitted in response to three separate Legislative mandates:

- 1) Legislative Request for Information (RFI) 40
- 2) Section 19-2-411.5, C.R.S., the legislation authorizing the construction and operation of the Ridge View Youth Services Center
- 3) Legislative Request for Information (RFI) 41

The response to these separate Legislative mandates is submitted in this one report because of the similar nature of the requested information.

The Recidivism Measure Utilized by DYC

Recidivism is a measure that is often used in determining the level of effectiveness for both adult and juvenile justice agencies. Recidivism rates can also communicate the expected level of public safety as offenders are released back into the community. A common goal across justice agencies is to reduce recidivism, so the measure is tracked closely and regularly. Generally speaking, the term “recidivism” refers to the re-occurrence of delinquent or criminal behavior. However, the more specific definition of recidivism utilized by each agency can vary greatly among states and even among justice agencies within a single state. Prior to 1999, the state of Colorado did not have a standardized definition of recidivism used across justice agencies; then, in response to recommendations resulting from a Legislative audit of the criminal justice system, common definitions were established in FY 1999-00. The definitions that were adopted and utilized by DYC for all reports subsequent to the Legislative audit are as follows:

Pre-Discharge Recidivism: A filing for a new felony or misdemeanor offense that occurred prior to discharge (while the youth is under DYC supervision) from the Division of Youth Corrections.

Post-Discharge Recidivism: A filing for a new felony or misdemeanor offense that occurred within one year following discharge from the Division of Youth Corrections.

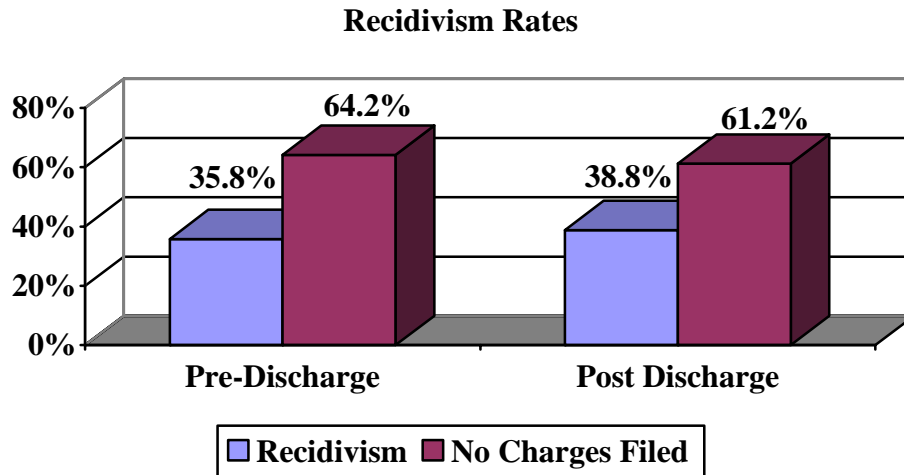
The findings contained in this report are based on an evaluation of nine hundred fifty youth (950) discharged during FY 2007-08. The term “pre-discharge” is used to identify new offenses filed during the period of time a youth is supervised by DYC in residential commitment or on parole. “Post-discharge” recidivism refers to filings for new felony or misdemeanor offenses that occurred up to one year following discharge from DYC supervision.

Like all recidivism studies, DYC’s is lagged, or retrospective, in nature. Therefore, each year the recidivism study examines and reports on the recidivism rates of youth who discharged from DYC in the fiscal year two years prior. For the current study, the census includes all youth that discharged in FY 2007-08. Because several youth discharged on the last day of the fiscal year (June 30, 2008), DYC had to wait until June 30, 2009 to collect recidivism data. This allows each discharged youth a one-year follow-up period.

The census for this year’s report includes 950 youth discharged from DYC between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008. The current report analyzes pre-discharge and post-discharge recidivism rates using a number of demographic and risk factors that can predict the likelihood of re-offending. The results are sectioned in the following manner: Section One results address the entire census of youth; Section Two is also dedicated to the entire census of youth, and examines Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment (CJRA) results with regard to recidivism outcomes; Section Three results pertain to a sub-group of youth who were placed at the Ridge View Youth Services Center during their commitment stay (n=356); and finally, Section Four analyzes recidivism results for a sub-group of youth who received substance abuse treatment in a State-operated secure facility (n=229).

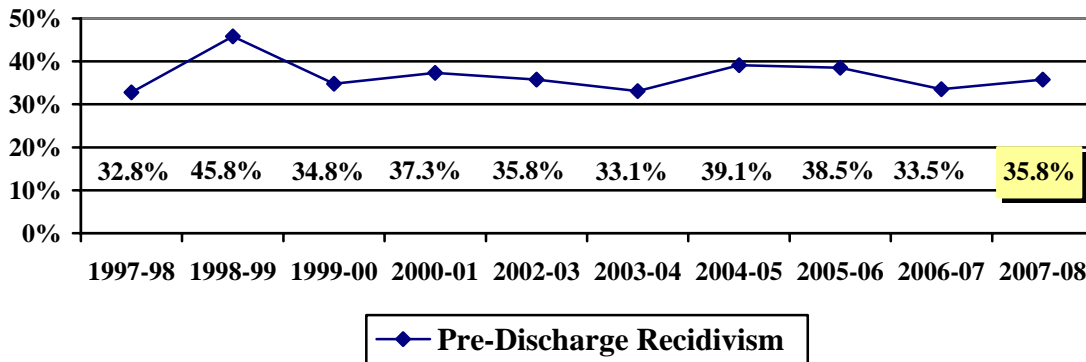
DYC Recidivism Results

- ◆ Thirty-six percent (35.8%) of youth discharged in FY 2007-08 received a new felony or misdemeanor filing prior to discharge (pre-discharge recidivism).
- ◆ Thirty-nine percent (38.8%) of youth discharged in FY 2007-08 received a new felony or misdemeanor filing within one year following discharge from the Division (post-discharge recidivism).



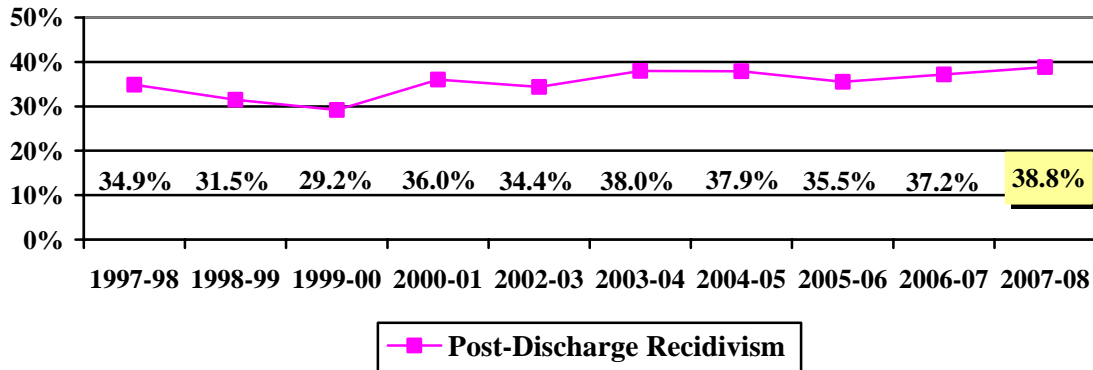
- ◆ Over the past ten years pre-discharge recidivism rates have ranged from 32.8% (FY 1997-98) to 39.1% (FY 2004-05). This year’s pre-discharge recidivism rate is in the mid-range of percentages reported in recent years.

Pre-Discharge Recidivism Rates FY 1997-98 through FY 2007-08



- ◆ Post-discharge recidivism rates have been relatively stable for the last five discharge cohorts. Although these raw figures show slight rate increases, these changes are not statistically significant.

Post-Discharge Recidivism Rates FY 1997-98 through FY 2007-08



- ◆ Over two-thirds (67.1%) of pre-discharge recidivists received at least one criminal (adult) filing during their commitment, and 32.9% received only delinquency (juvenile) filings. Youth receiving a delinquency filing may be re-committed to the Division of Youth Corrections. Therefore, most pre-discharge recidivists would receive an adult sentence (probation or DOC) if found guilty of their criminal filing(s).
- ◆ Eighty-four percent (84.3%) of post-discharge recidivism filings were for criminal (adult) offenses; adult offenders, if found guilty, would likely receive an adult probation or Department of Corrections sentence.
- ◆ Males had significantly higher post-discharge filing rates (41.5%) than females (22.3%). There was no difference in pre-discharge recidivism rates by gender.
- ◆ Pre-discharge and post-discharge recidivism rates were higher for youth with more complex histories with the juvenile justice system. Measures of prior system involvement analyzed include the number of prior-out-of-home placements, number of prior detention admissions, and number of prior adjudications.

- ◆ Youth who received a new filing within one year of discharge were younger at the time of their first adjudication than youth who did not re-offend following discharge.
- ◆ Having more than one new commitment to the Division of Youth Corrections was predictive of a youth receiving a new filing for a felony or misdemeanor charge within one year following discharge from the Division.
- ◆ Youth with a higher risk for re-offending at the time of discharge as measured by the Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment (CJRA) instrument received more new post-discharge filings than youth with lower risk levels. Youth who scored “Low” on the CJRA re-offended 17% of the time, compared with youth who had a “Moderate” (38.3%) or “High” (41.4%) risk of recidivism.
- ◆ Youth who were assessed as needing substance abuse treatment had higher rates of post-discharge filings new offenses (42.4%) than youth assessed at the *intervention* level (36.5%) or *prevention* level (30.1%).
- ◆ The majority of the pre-discharge recidivist acts were committed while youth were on parole status (63.5%). Comparatively, 52.6% of youth who received a new filing prior to discharge committed at least one of their offenses while in residential placement¹.
- ◆ Youth in the FY 2007-08 discharge cohort who received a new filing during their commitment also recidivated more often following discharge. Forty-four percent (44.1%) of pre-discharge recidivates received a post-discharge filing, compared with 35.9% of youth who did not recidivate prior to discharge.
- ◆ An analysis of time to first post-discharge offense found that youth recidivated at a higher rate for the first seven months (average of 41 new recidivists each month) than in months eight through twelve following discharge (17 new recidivists per month).

¹ These categories are not mutually exclusive. Many youth who receive filings do so for multiple offenses, and a single youth could have received a filing for an offense during residential commitment as well as during parole supervision.

The Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment (CJRA) and Recidivism

Over the last five years the Division has undertaken a system-wide improvement initiative. The Continuum of Care (CoC) Initiative began in FY 2005-06 and is based on using effective juvenile justice strategies and principles founded on empirical research studies. As a part of this initiative the Division introduced the Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment (CJRA) instrument, a fourth-generation risk instrument that was developed by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP). This instrument measures criminogenic risk, needs, and protective factors both from a static and dynamic perspective. The CJRA replaced the Colorado Young Offender - Level of Service Inventory (CYO-LSI) that DYC used for over a decade. Unlike the CYO-LSI, the CJRA also incorporates protective factor scales that are valuable when developing case-plans and referring youth to specific residential treatment placements.

- ◆ Seventy-eight percent of youth in the current discharge cohort (FY 2007-08, n=950) were committed prior to the introduction of the CJRA instrument (77.8%). Therefore, the Division did not complete a CJRA at the time of commitment (n=157) or prior to the first parole date (n=511) for all youth in the discharge cohort.
- ◆ At the time of discharge, youth who scored “Low” on the CJRA re-offended 17% of the time, compared with youth who had a “Moderate” (38.3%) or “High” (41.4%) risk of recidivism according to the CJRA.
- ◆ In addition, five individual CJRA domain risk scores were correlated with post-discharge recidivism. Higher risk scores in the Criminal History (static), Relationships (dynamic), Family (both static and dynamic risk scores), Alcohol and Drug (dynamic), and Aggression (dynamic) scales indicated higher rates of post-discharge filings.
- ◆ Although a large percentage of youth saw a reduction in risk and an increase in protective factor scores from commitment through discharge, analysis of the change in raw scores did not indicate any

statistical difference in post-discharge recidivism rates for the smaller sample of 157 youth².

Ridge View Youth Services Center Recidivism Results

This year's Ridge View sample consisted of a subset of 356 males from the larger cohort (n=950) discharged from the Division of Youth Corrections in FY 2007-08 who spent at least 90 days at the Ridge View Youth Services Center (RVYSC) during their residential commitment. Ridge View recidivism rates were compared with the recidivism rates of all other males (n=464) discharged from DYC who were not placed at the RVYSC facility. There were some notable differences in the characteristics of males placed at Ridge View and those in the comparison group.

- ◆ More Ridge View youth were committed for property offenses (50.0%) than other DYC males (37.5%). Juvenile justice research has shown that property offenders recidivate at higher rates than youth who commit person offenses.
- ◆ The Ridge View group also had significantly more prior adjudications and detention admissions than youth in the comparison group, which indicates an increased amount of prior system involvement for RVYSC youth.
- ◆ The above factors suggest that youth in the Ridge View discharge sample should be at a higher risk for recidivism than youth in the comparison group, however there were no statistically significant differences in either pre-discharge or post-discharge recidivism rates between the two groups.
- ◆ The pre-discharge recidivism rate for Ridge View youth was 34.0% (compared with 37.5% for other DYC males).
- ◆ The post-discharge recidivism rate for Ridge View youth was 44.7% (compared with 39.0% for other DYC males).

² Only 157 youth in the cohort had a CJRA at the time of commitment and again at the time of discharge.

- ◆ Prior system involvement and complex case histories for the Ridge View youth was correlated with post-discharge recidivism. These youth had more prior out-of-home placements, more previous detention admissions, more prior adjudications, and had been previously committed.
- ◆ Youth who received a new filing prior to their discharge from the Division of Youth Corrections had lower completion rates (28.8%) in the Ridge View Program than youth who did not re-offend (72.1%).

Substance Abuse Treatment and Recidivism Results

In responding to Request for Information (RFI) 41, the Division had to rely on the substance abuse treatment information that was collected and made readily available through the CDHS TRAILS data system. For purposes of analysis, this restricted the sample exclusively to those youth who received substance abuse services in the eleven State-operated secure facilities.

This year's Substance Abuse Treatment sample consisted of 229 youth discharged from the Division of Youth Corrections in FY 2007-08. Overall, these 229 youth met the sample criteria of being assessed with *Treatment* or *Intervention* level substance abuse needs at the time of commitment, had at least one six month or longer placement in a State-operated secure residential facility, and received clinical substance abuse treatment while at that facility.

A youth is never referred to a State-operated secure facility simply because of their substance abuse needs. The Division traditionally refers youth with substance abuse needs that do not have other safety or security considerations to a community-based placement. Given the Division's rationale for placement, and the composition of youth who are in a State-operated secure facility, it would be erroneous to necessarily associate a recidivist act to unmet substance abuse treatment needs. Youth from State-operated secure facilities will likely have higher rates of recidivism because youth in these facilities present a higher risk of re-offending.

- ◆ Twenty-one percent (21.0%) of the cohort received at least 10 hours of substance abuse treatment each month while residing in a State-operated facility. Eighty-five percent (85.4%) of the youth receiving “high” levels of service intensity were *Treatment* level youth.
- ◆ Numerous studies have evidenced a significant correlation between early onset and chronic substance abuse with an increased probability for engaging in socially deviant activities and associating with delinquent peers³. Post-discharge recidivism rates were higher for youth who received substance abuse treatment in State-operated facilities (46.7%) compared to those who received other services while residing in DYC State-operated facilities (23.8%). However, only 11 of the recidivists re-offended with a drug charge (10.3%).
- ◆ Youth in the overall discharge cohort (n=950) who were assessed as needing substance abuse treatment were more likely to receive a post-discharge filing for a new offense (42.4%) than youth assessed at the *intervention* level (36.5%) or *prevention* level (30.1%). Keep in mind that these youth have numerous other confounding treatment issues to address, in addition to substance abuse.

³ Howell, James C. 2003, *Preventing & Reducing Juvenile Delinquency: A Comprehensive Framework*. p.124.

QUICK REFERENCE TABLES

Pre-Discharge Cohort Comparison

	Pre-Discharge Recidivism FY 2006-07 Discharges	Pre-Discharge Recidivism FY 2007-08 Discharges	Direction
Overall Recidivism Rate (Figure 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 33.5% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35.8% 	+2.3
Most Serious Felony Filing Type (Table 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person: 17.1% Property: 19.9% Drug: 6.6% Weapon: 0.9% Escape: 19.0% Identity: 3.2% Sex Registration: 0.9% Other: 1.6% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person: 16.8% Property: 17.1% Drug: 6.5% Weapon: 0.3% Escape: 18.5% Identity: 2.6% Sex Registration: 1.8% Other: 2.1% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -0.3 -2.8 -0.1 -0.6 -0.5 -0.6 +0.9 +0.5
Most Serious Misdemeanor Filing Type (Table 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person: 13.9% Property: 4.4% Drug: 0.0% Weapon: 0.6% Escape: 4.1% Identity: 1.6% Sex Registration: 0.3% DWI/DUI: 1.6% Obstruction: N/A Protection Order: N/A Other: 4.1% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person: 12.6% Property: 5.9% Drug: 0.9% Weapon: 2.1% Escape: 1.8% Identity: 0.9% Sex Registration: 0.6% DWI/DUI: 3.2% Obstruction: 2.1% Protection Order: 0.6% Other: 3.8% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -1.3 +1.5 +0.9 +1.5 -2.3 -0.7 +0.3 +1.6 N/A N/A -0.3
Type of Filing (All Charges) (Table 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminal: N/A Delinquency: N/A Both: N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminal: 49.7% Delinquency: 32.9% Both: 17.4% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A N/A N/A
Finding For Most Serious Felony or Misdemeanor Filing (Table 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guilty: 54.7% Deferred: 3.2% No Finding of Guilt: 40.5% Other: 1.6% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guilty: 49.4% Deferred: 3.2% No Finding of Guilt: 46.2% Other: 1.2% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -5.3 0.0 +5.7 -0.4
Finding For Any Felony or Misdemeanor Filing (Table 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guilty: 87.7% Deferred: 3.2% No Finding of Guilt: 8.5% Other: 0.6% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guilty: 84.1% Deferred: 5.0% No Finding of Guilt: 9.7% Other: 1.2% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -3.6 +1.8 +1.2 +0.6
Gender (Table 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Male: 33.6% Female: 32.6% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Male: 36.0% Female: 34.6% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +2.4 +2.0
Ethnicity (Table 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> African-American: 35.4% Hispanic: 33.1% White: 33.0% Other: 34.8% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> African-American: 37.2% Hispanic: 35.1% White: 35.2% Other: 43.3% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +1.8 +2.0 +2.2 +8.5
DYC Management Region (Table 7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central: 32.0% Northeast: 30.4% Southern: 43.8% Western: 30.2% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central: 34.8% Northeast: 36.8% Southern: 37.0% Western: 35.2% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +2.8 +6.4 -6.8 +5.0

Yellow highlight and/or star indicates group differences are statistically significant for that particular study

Pre-Discharge Cohort Comparison (continued)

	Pre-Discharge Recidivism FY 2006-07 Discharges	Pre-Discharge Recidivism FY 2007-08 Discharges	Direction
Prior Out-of-Home Placements (Table 8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None: 32.0% • One or more: 31.9% * • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None: 28.2% • One: 36.4% * • Two or more: 41.1% 	-3.8 N/A N/A
Number of Detention Admissions (Table 9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero to Two: 24.6% • Three or More: 36.5% * 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero to Two: 29.4% • Three or More: 38.2% * 	+4.8 +1.7
Number of Prior Adjudications (Table 10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None: 27.9% • One: 30.8% * • Two or more: 39.6% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None: 32.0% • One: 31.9% * • Two or more: 41.3% 	+4.1 +1.1 +1.7
Number of Prior Commitments (Table 11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero: 32.6% • One or More: 57.1% * 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero: 35.5% • One or More: 42.9% 	+2.9 -14.2
Age at First Adjudication (Figure 8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14.0 years * 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14.3 years 	+0.3
DYC Escape (Table 15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes: N/A • No: N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes: 50.7% * • No: 22.6% 	N/A N/A
Number of Re-commitments (Table 16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None: 22.1% • One: 65.7% * • Two or More: 93.6% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None: 27.2% • One: 59.4% * • Two or More: 89.6% 	+5.1 -6.3 -4.0
Where the Pre-Discharge Act Occurred (Table 17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential Commitment Only: 45.3% • On Parole Only: 43.0% • Residential Commitment & On Parole: 11.7% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential Commitment Only: 36.5% • On Parole Only: 47.3% • Residential Commitment & On Parole: 16.2% 	-8.8 +4.3 +4.5

Yellow highlight and/or star indicates group differences are statistically significant for that particular study

Post-Discharge Cohort Comparison

	Post-Discharge Recidivism FY 2006-07 Discharges	Post-Discharge Recidivism FY 2007-08 Discharges	Direction
Overall Recidivism Rate (Figure 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 37.2% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 38.8% 	+1.6
Most Serious Felony Filing Type (Table 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person: 19.4% Property: 26.2% Drug: 7.4% Weapon: 2.6% Escape: 2.0% Identity: 4.0% Sex Registration: 2.3% Other: 2.0% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person: 23.3% Property: 24.1% Drug: 6.5% Weapon: 2.7% Escape: 0.8% Identity: 4.6% Sex Registration: 1.9% Other: 4.3% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +3.9 -2.1 -0.9 +0.1 -1.2 +0.6 -0.4 +2.3
Most Serious Misdemeanor Filing Type (Table 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person: 7.4% Property: 9.1% Drug: 0.3% Weapon: 1.7% Escape: 0.0% Identity: 1.1% Sex Registration: 2.6% DWI/DUI: 3.1% Obstruction: N/A Protection Order: N/A Other: 8.8% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person: 10.6% Property: 5.7% Drug: 1.4% Weapon: 1.4% Escape: 0.0% Identity: 0.5% Sex Registration: 1.4% DWI/DUI: 1.9% Obstruction: 0.8% Protection Order: 1.9% Other: 6.2% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +3.2 -3.4 +1.1 -0.3 0.0 -0.6 -1.2 -1.2 N/A N/A -2.6
Type of Filing (All Charges) (Table 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminal: N/A Delinquency: N/A Both: N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminal: 79.9% Delinquency: 15.7% Both: 4.3% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A N/A N/A
Finding For Most Serious Felony or Misdemeanor Filing (Table 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guilty: 42.7% Deferred: 6.8% No Finding of Guilt: 44.4% Other: 6.0% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guilty: 37.9% Deferred: 5.4% No Finding of Guilt: 50.1% Other: 6.5% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -4.8 -1.4 +5.7 +0.5
Finding For Any Felony or Misdemeanor Filing (Table 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guilty: 78.3% Deferred: 7.1% No Finding of Guilt: 11.1% Other: 3.4% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guilty: 75.1% Deferred: 6.8% No Finding of Guilt: 11.6% Other: 6.5% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -3.2 -0.3 +0.5 +3.1
Gender (Table 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Male: 40.7% * Female: 17.0% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Male: 41.5% * Female: 22.3% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +0.8 +5.3
Ethnicity (Table 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> African-American: 40.8% Hispanic: 39.4% White: 34.9% Other: 26.1% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> African-American: 35.5% Hispanic: 44.2% White: 36.2% Other: 33.3% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -5.3 +4.8 +1.3 +7.2
DYC Management Region (Table 7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central: 31.1% Northeast: 45.1% Southern: 34.9% * Western: 45.3% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central: 36.5% Northeast: 40.7% Southern: 40.8% Western: 39.8% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +5.4 -4.4 +5.9 -5.5
Prior Out-of-Home Placements (Table 8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None: 33.0% One or more: 38.9% N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None: 35.4 % One: 35.1% * Two or more: 43.5% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +2.4 N/A N/A

Yellow highlight and/or star indicates group differences are statistically significant for that particular study

Post-Discharge Cohort Comparison (continued)

	Post-Discharge Recidivism FY 2006-07 Discharges	Post-Discharge Recidivism FY 2007-08 Discharges	Direction
Number of Detention Admissions (Table 9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zero to Two: 28.8% Three or More: 40.1% * 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zero to Two: 30.9% Three or More: 41.9% * 	+2.1 +1.8
Number of Prior Adjudications (Table 10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None: 31.2% One: 31.1% * Two or more: 46.3% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None: 29.5% One: 36.1% * Two or more: 47.5% 	-1.7 +5.0 +1.2
Number of Prior Commitments (Table 11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None: 36.6% One: 51.4% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None: 38.0% One: 57.1% * 	+1.4 +5.7
Age at First Adjudication (Figure 8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14.0 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14.1 years * 	+0.1
CJRA Risk of Re-Offense (Table 13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low: N/A Moderate: N/A High: N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low: 17.0% Moderate: 38.3% * High: 41.4% 	N/A N/A N/A
Substance Abuse Treatment Level (PIT) (Table 14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevention: N/A Intervention: N/A Treatment: N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevention: 30.1% Intervention: 36.5% * Treatment: 42.4% 	N/A N/A N/A
Any DYC Escape (Table 15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes: N/A No: N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes: 45.5% * No: 32.9% 	N/A N/A
Number of Re-commitments (Table 16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None: 34.9% One: 44.4% * Two or More: 46.8% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None: 36.7% One: 47.5% * Two or More: 43.8% 	+1.8 +3.1 -3.0
Parole Adjustment at Discharge (Table 19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful: 35.9% Unsuccessful: 39.9% No Parole: 44.4% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful: 37.0% Unsuccessful: 44.1% No Parole: 31.9% 	+1.1 +4.2 -12.5
Job/School Status at Discharge (Table 20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not Employed or Attending School: 44.4% * Employed or in School at Time of Discharge: 35.3% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not Employed or Attending School: 42.9% Employed or in School at Time of Discharge: 37.4% 	-1.5 +2.1

Yellow highlight and/or star indicates group differences are statistically significant for that particular study

Ridge View Section Results

	Ridge View	Other NYC Males
Pre-Discharge Recidivism (Table 34)	• 34.0%	• 37.5%
Post-Discharge Recidivism (Table 34)	• 44.7%	• 39.0%
Ethnicity (Table 32)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African-American: 21.9% • Hispanic: 44.7% • White: 31.5% • Other: 2.0% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African-American: 15.1% • Hispanic: 30.6% • White: 50.4% • Other: 3.9%
Age at Commitment (Page 64)	• 16.5 years	• 16.4 years
Commitment Offense (Figure 18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person: 31% • Property: 50% • Other: 19% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person: 49% • Property: 38% • Other: 13%
Number of Prior Adjudications (Figure 19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None: 20% • One: 30% • Two or more: 50% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None: 31% • One: 30% • Two or more: 39%
Number of Detention Admissions (Figure 20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero to Two: 24% • Three or More: 76% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero to Two: 33% • Three or More: 67%
	Ridge View Pre-Discharge Recidivism	Ridge View Post-Discharge Recidivism
DYC Management Region (Table 35)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central: 28.8% • Northeast: 39.8% • Southern: 31.7% • Western: 50.0% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central: 40.0% • Northeast: 48.4% • Southern: 42.9% • Western: 63.3%
Any NYC Escape (Table 36)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes: 51.9% • No: 19.7% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes: 52.5% • No: 38.4%
Re-commitments (Table 37)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None: 26.4% • One: 51.6% • Two or more: 84.2% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None: 43.2% • One: 53.1% • Two or more: 36.8%
Prior Out-of-Home Placements (Table 38)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None: 29.9% • One: 32.0% • Two or More: 40.2% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None: 40.3% • One: 38.0% • Two or More: 54.9%
Number of Prior Adjudications (Table 39)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None: 28.2% • One: 31.5% • Two or more: 37.9% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None: 29.6% • One: 43.5% • Two or more: 51.4%
Number of Prior Detention Admissions (Table 40)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero to Two: 26.2% • Three or More: 36.4% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero to Two: 27.4% • Three or More: 50.0%
Number of Prior Commitments (Table 41)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None: 33.7% • One: 38.1% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None: 43.0% • One: 71.4%
Graduation Status (Table 42)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduated: 28.8% • Did not Graduate: 72.1% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduated: 44.7% • Did not Graduate: 44.2%

Yellow highlight and/or star indicates group differences are statistically significant for that particular study

INTRODUCTION

The Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Youth Corrections (DYC) prepares an annual recidivism report on committed youth. The current report is submitted in response to three separate Legislative mandates:

- 1) Legislative Request for Information (RFI) 40
- 2) Section 19-2-411.5, C.R.S., the legislation authorizing the construction and operation of the Ridge View Youth Services Center
- 3) Legislative Request for Information (RFI) 41

Section One of this report, “DYC Recidivism Rates for Youth Discharged”, is submitted in partial response to RFI 40⁴. This first section provides recidivism outcomes based on new filings for felony or misdemeanor offenses that occurred prior to discharge from DYC (pre-discharge recidivism) as well as recidivism results based on new filings for felony or misdemeanor offenses that occurred within one year following discharge from a DYC commitment sentence (post-discharge recidivism). The text of this Legislative Request for information reads:

The Division is requested to 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. The evaluation should include, but not be limited to, the number of juveniles served, length of service, and recidivism data per placement.

Section Two of this report, “The Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment (CJRA) and Recidivism”, is comprised of new material and new analyses that examine client CJRA results in relation to recidivism rates. Most importantly, this section evaluates whether the newly implemented assessment tool is predictive of subsequent re-offending.

⁴ The Division’s annual Management Reference Manual includes data on the number of juveniles served and length of service data, while this report focuses on recidivism data.

Section Three, “Ridge View Recidivism”, is intended to serve as NYC’s annual response to the legislation authorizing the construction and operation of the Ridge View Youth Services Center (RVYSC) facility⁵. This legislation specifies that:

Beginning twelve months after the juvenile facility constructed pursuant to this section begins operations, and annually thereafter, the Division of Youth Corrections shall calculate the recidivism rate for juveniles who complete the program offered by the juvenile facility. In calculating the recidivism rate, the Division shall include any juvenile who commits a criminal offense, either as a juvenile or as an adult, within three years after leaving the facility. The Division shall report the recidivism rate to the General Assembly.

This third section that starts on page 59, examines pre-discharge and post-discharge recidivism rates for youth in the census who were eligible for, and placed at, Ridge View Youth Services Center during their commitment. To ensure consistency in how the Division reports recidivism data, this section of the report is prepared using the same standardized definitions of recidivism as used in Sections One and Two.

With the exception of Ridge View, the Division does not typically report recidivism rates by placement, as youth committed to NYC experience multiple residential placements throughout their commitment that may influence future behavior. The Ridge View Youth Services Center (RVYSC) is an exception because it is a unique treatment option for eligible youth and is intended as the primary placement option for many youth. In addition, youth placed in RVYSC tend to have longer lengths of service in their initial placement and are often paroled directly from Ridge View to the community⁶. Since the youth that are placed in the RVYSC facility tend to have fewer subsequent placements that could influence re-offending behaviors, it is appropriate to report outcome measures

⁵ Section 19-2-411.5, C.R.S.

⁶ Youth in the Ridge View sample (n=356) spent on average almost 15 months (14.8) at Ridge View YSC. Total residential length of service for this cohort was 19.1 months.

for this facility that may not be as meaningful if the analyses were conducted for other NYC treatment programs or facilities⁷.

Section Four of this report, “Substance Abuse Treatment and Recidivism” (pg. 79) is intended to serve as NYC’s response to RFI 41:

The Department is requested to provide a report to the Joint Budget Committee on January 1, 2010 that tracks and compares recidivism rates between those juveniles receiving drug and alcohol treatment and those not receiving treatment, while sentenced to commitment.

Given the similarity of the information requested in these three separate Legislative mandates, the Division is submitting this single report in response to all three directives.

The Recidivism Measure Utilized by NYC

Recidivism is used as an overall outcome measure for NYC commitment programs. This report is intended to evaluate recidivism results for all youth discharged from NYC during FY 2007-08. Like all recidivism studies, NYC’s evaluation of recidivism rates is retrospective in nature. Therefore, each year the recidivism study examines and reports on the re-offending behaviors of youth who discharged from NYC in the State fiscal year two years before the report date. For the current study, the sample includes all 950 youth who discharged from the Division in FY 2007-08. Several youth discharged near the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2008), therefore NYC needed to wait until June 30, 2009 to collect recidivism data for the post-discharge evaluation. This allows each discharged youth a complete one-year follow-up period. This report is the eleventh to apply the following definitions of recidivism to committed youth served by the Division of Youth Corrections.

⁷ Evaluation of the effectiveness of individual programs requires experimental research designs that incorporate control or comparison groups matched on critical characteristics, and strict procedures to measure program fidelity. These efforts are time and staff intensive endeavors, which are beyond the current resource capacity of the Division.

The definitions used in this report are as follows:

Pre-Discharge Recidivism: A filing for a new felony or misdemeanor offense that occurred prior to discharge (while the youth is under DYC supervision) from the Division of Youth Corrections.

Post-Discharge Recidivism: A filing for a new felony or misdemeanor offense that occurred within one year following discharge from the Division of Youth Corrections.

Comparison of Recidivism Rates

Recidivism is an amorphous concept. In the absence of a standardized definition for recidivism both in Colorado and nation-wide, meaningful comparison across states and agencies is simply not possible. Recidivism outcomes cannot be compared in a meaningful way unless the outcome measures are equivalent. The same is true for analyzing historical recidivism trends within an agency or system—without definitional consistency across time, there is no mechanism for meaningful analyses. While the recidivism definitions previously outlined may be somewhat standardized for the State of Colorado, Colorado is currently one of two states in the U.S. that uses District Attorney filings as a measure of juvenile recidivism⁸.

Colorado's unique definition of recidivism (new court filing) is shared by only one other state in the United States of America. Maryland's Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) uses re-referral to define recidivism, according to their most recent 2008 Statistical Report, which is technically the same as a court filing. Therefore, it is not possible to directly compare recidivism rates from DYC to most other states' juvenile justice agencies. Even within the State of Colorado it is important, when making comparisons, to ensure that the recidivism measures being compared are similarly defined before drawing conclusions. The efforts taken to establish a common definition of recidivism in Colorado are outlined in Appendix A of this report, where definitional and methodological issues are both addressed in more detail.

⁸ Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, Annual Statistical Report (Fiscal Year 2008).

Study Methodology

Understanding the study methodology and data sources is critical for accurate analysis of recidivism rates. Since recidivism is defined for both the pre-discharge and post-discharge groups as “a filing for a new felony or misdemeanor offense,” the Division relied upon the Judicial Branch’s Management Information System⁹ for determining whether a recidivist act had occurred. Only those filings (felony and misdemeanor) entered into the Judicial data system are included in these recidivism measures¹⁰. Traffic, municipal, status, and petty offenses are excluded from this recidivism evaluation.

At DYC’s request the Colorado Judicial Department prepared a data file containing all filings that occurred between July 1, 2002 and June 30, 2009, for all persons under 25 years of age. Filing data is requested as early as July 1, 2002 (five years prior to the first possible discharges) to allow for the detection of each youth’s commitment charge. By capturing the committing offense, DYC was able to better ensure that an appropriate match was being made between the DYC commitment records and the Judicial Department’s filing records.

The data received from Judicial was matched to DYC records using a high-level match of youths’ last names, first initial, and two of three birth date elements. These matches were further examined for evidence of accuracy by a manual review of the full name and birth date listed by both agencies, plus further checks against the Lexis-Nexis Courtlink¹¹ system for aliases, etc. Any method to match files is limited by data entry errors, spelling differences, and multiple aliases. Efforts were made to minimize errors through meticulous spot-checking and manual reviews of cases. In the past, because of the highly technical matching process and the complicated algorithm used, DYC relied on computer

⁹ The filing data received from the Judicial Branch comes from the Integrated Colorado Online Network (ICON) database.

¹⁰ The Denver County Court System is the only county court system in the State whose data is not captured by the Judicial Department’s data system. Therefore, adult misdemeanor filings processed by Denver County Court are not included in total in this study. Denver County felony filings are captured, because the Denver District Court processes them, which is a part of the Judicial on-line data system. Denver District Court also processes 100% of Denver County juvenile misdemeanor and felony filings.

¹¹ This is the fourth year that Lexis-Nexis Courtlink has been used in the data verification and matching process. Because Lexis-Nexis is a highly comprehensive database, DYC is confident that the accuracy of data used within this report has increased as a result.

programmers to match youth in the NYC data with youth in the Judicial filing data. However for the past five years, NYC has performed the match in-house, which the Division believes has increased the probability of accurate matches.

The matched file was used to evaluate pre-discharge and post-discharge recidivism rates on the same cohort of discharged youth, all 950 youth discharged from NYC in FY 2007-08. This is the sixth report to include both pre-discharge and post-discharge recidivism rates from the same client census¹².

¹² Five years ago, the Division modified the sampling methodology for this annual recidivism report. Previously, youth for the pre-discharge group were selected independently from the post-discharge group. The methodology change was intended to provide timelier reporting of recidivism data, and to eventually allow for a more accurate evaluation of recidivism trend data.

SECTION ONE: DYC Recidivism Rates for Youth Discharged

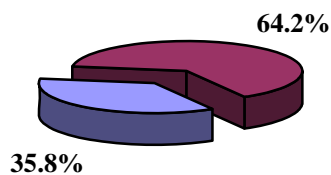
The findings contained in this report are based on an evaluation of nine hundred fifty (950) youth discharged from the Division of Youth Corrections (DYC) between July 1, 2007 and July 30, 2008. Two types of recidivism are reported in these analyses, pre-discharge recidivism and post-discharge recidivism. The term “pre-discharge” is used to identify new filings for felony or misdemeanor offenses filed during the period of time a youth is supervised by DYC in residential commitment or on parole. “Post-discharge” recidivism refers to filings for new offenses that occurred up to one year following discharge from DYC supervision.

Pre-Discharge Recidivism: A filing for a new felony or misdemeanor offense that occurred prior to discharge (while the youth is under DYC supervision) from the Division of Youth Corrections.

Post-Discharge Recidivism: A filing for a new felony or misdemeanor offense that occurred within one year following discharge from the Division of Youth Corrections.

Overall Recidivism Rates for Youth Discharged in FY 2007-2008

Figure 1: Pre-Discharge Recidivism

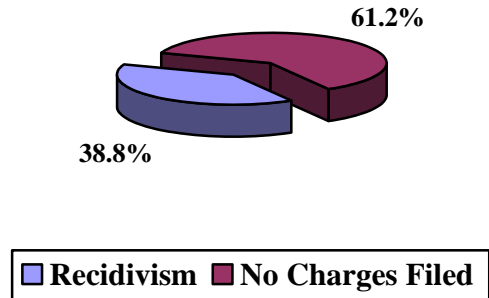


■ Recidivism ■ No Charges Filed

As indicated in Figure 1, of the 950 youth discharged during the fiscal year, 340 (35.8%) had a new felony or misdemeanor offense filed prior to leaving DYC’s supervision. Sixty-four percent of the discharge cohort did not receive any new filings prior to discharge.

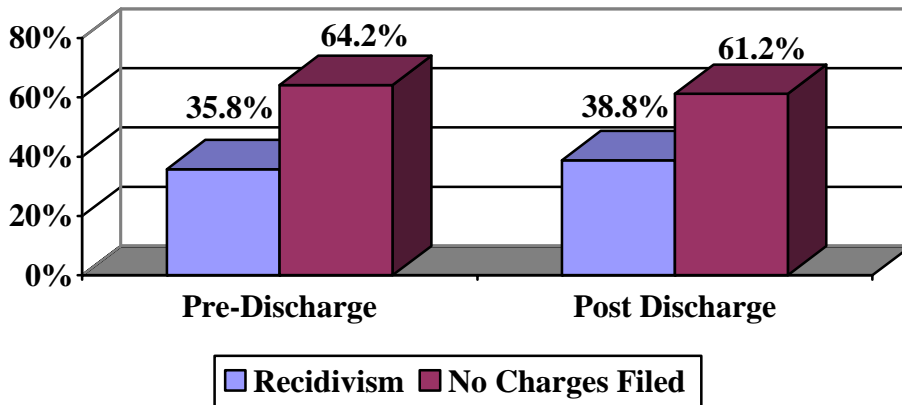
Follow-up information on new felony or misdemeanor offenses committed within one year of discharge from the Division resulting in a court filing was also collected on all 950 youth. Figure 2 shows the post-discharge recidivism rate. Thirty-nine percent of the youth discharged in FY 2007-08 (n=369) received a new filing for an offense committed within one year following discharge.

Figure 2: Post-Discharge Recidivism



Recidivism results for this cohort show higher post-discharge recidivism rates than pre-discharge recidivism rates (see Figure 3). It is possible for youth to be represented in each category, meaning that the same youth could have committed an offense before being discharged from NYC as well as after their discharge date (see Table 21, pg. 41)¹³.

Figure 3: Recidivism Rates

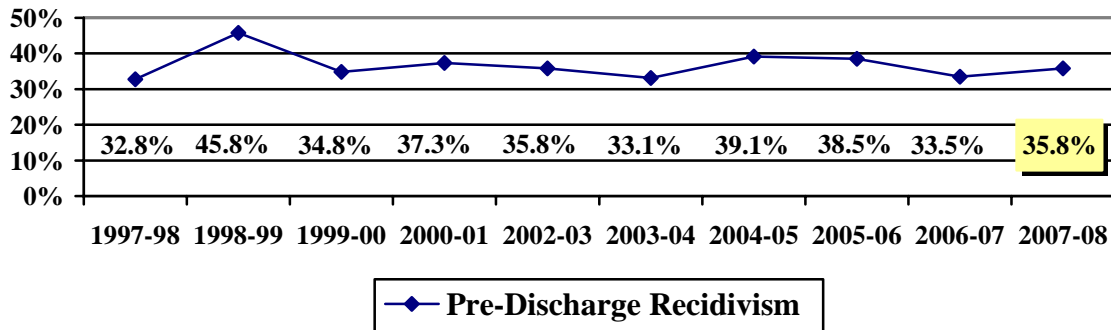


¹³ Forty-four percent of youth discharged in FY 2007-08 who received a pre-discharge filing also received a new filing within one year following discharge compared with only 36% of youth that did not re-offend during their commitment. (Chi-Square=6.204, p<0.05.)

Trends in Recidivism

The following charts outline trends in recidivism rates for the past ten DYC recidivism studies¹⁴. The pre-discharge recidivism rate (35.8%) increased slightly over the previous discharge cohort (FY 2006-07), however this rate of re-offending is still lower than two of the past three years. Figure 4 shows the pre-discharge recidivism rates since FY 1997-1998.

**Figure 4:
Pre-Discharge Recidivism Rates FY 1997-98 through FY 2007-08**



**Figure 5:
Post-Discharge Recidivism Rates FY 1997-98 through FY 2007-08**

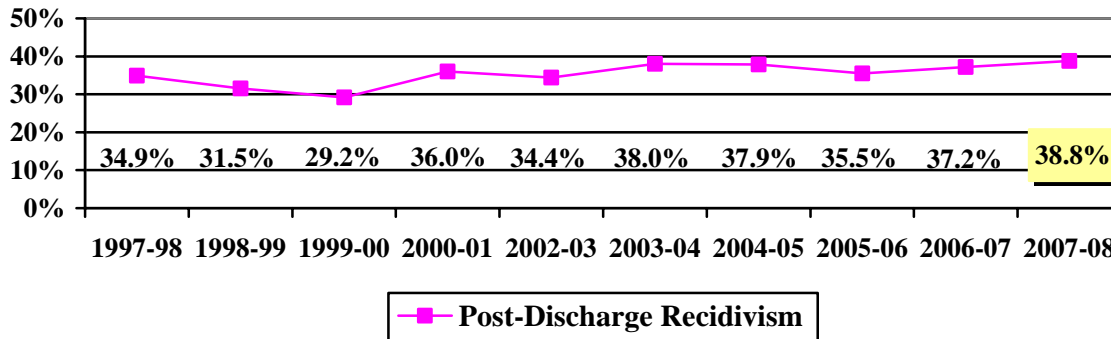


Figure 5 illustrates post-discharge recidivism trends. Post-discharge recidivism rates have been relatively stable for the last five discharge cohorts and any differences found were

¹⁴ There was no FY 2001-02 discharge cohort evaluation because of a shift in study methodology to examine pre-discharge and post-discharge recidivism rates from the same discharge sample and increase focus on more current recidivism data.

not statistically significant. At just under 39% this year’s recidivism rate is the highest reported in the past 10 years.

Trend data should be cautiously interpreted. It is important to remember that changes have been made with regard to study methodology, including group selection, data collection, and data verification techniques. Additionally, changes to State and Federal statutes and changes in NYC and State juvenile justice policy, practice, and funding make it difficult to attribute change in recidivism rates to any specific cause. See Appendix A for further discussion of this topic.

Recidivism Charges Filed

The “types” of charges for which youth receive new filings are presented in this section. Table 1 shows the breakdown of filings received prior to discharge and within one year following discharge from the Division of Youth Corrections. Youth are likely to receive multiple charges (even for one incident) when filed upon. The data presented in Table 1 identifies the *most serious* offense each youth was charged with.

Table 1: Most Serious Filing (Felony Offense Type)

Offense	Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism	
	Number	Percent of Total Filings	Number	Percent of Total Filings
Person Felony	57	16.8%	86	23.3%
Property Felony	58	17.1%	89	24.1%
Drug Felony	22	6.5%	24	6.5%
Weapon Felony	1	0.3%	10	2.7%
Escape Felony	63	18.5%	3	0.8%
Identity Felony	9	2.6%	17	4.6%
Sex Registration Felony	6	1.8%	7	1.9%
Other ¹⁵ Felony	7	2.1%	16	4.3%
Total Felony Filings	223	65.6%	252	68.3%

¹⁵ Other offenses include misdemeanor traffic offenses, and other miscellaneous offenses.

Table 1(continued): *Most Serious Filing* (Misdemeanor Offense Type)

Offense	Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism	
	Number	Percent of Total Filings	Number	Percent of Total Filings
Person Misdemeanor	43	12.6%	39	10.6%
Property Misdemeanor	20	5.9%	21	5.7%
Drug Misdemeanor	3	0.9%	5	1.4%
Weapon Misdemeanor	7	2.1%	5	1.4%
Escape Misdemeanor	6	1.8%	0	0.0%
Identity Misdemeanor	3	0.9%	2	0.5%
Sex Registration Misdemeanor	2	0.6%	5	1.4%
DWI/DUI Misdemeanor	11	3.2%	7	1.9%
Obstruction Misdemeanor	7	2.1%	3	0.8%
Protection Order Misdemeanor	2	0.6%	7	1.9%
Other ¹⁵ Misdemeanor	13	3.8%	23	6.2%
Total Misdemeanor Filings	117	34.4%	117	31.7%
Total Filings	340	100%	369	100%

Prior reports have looked at charge types in five main offense categories: *Person*, *Property*, *Drug*, *Weapon*, and *Other*. Over the past few years there has been a noticeable increase in the percentage of youth filed on for offenses that are considered to be “other” offenses. This may be a result of new laws, changes in the justice system, and potentially stricter enforcement of certain offenses. For example, the legislation requiring the registration of sex-offenders was amended a few years ago¹⁶. Further investigation revealed increases in specific offenses or offense types, thereby identifying new categories that could be broken out for offenses that have traditionally fallen into the “Other” category. To better illustrate the types of offenses for which youth are receiving new charges, new categories were introduced in the two most recent recidivism studies released by DYC. These include escape charges, filings for identity theft or fraud, DWI, obstruction of justice, resisting arrest, and violations of protection orders issued by the court. Increased filings for offenses other than the four main categories reported in the past may result in both an increase in recidivism, as well as increases in the number of miscellaneous other offenses.

¹⁶ Section 18-3-412.5, Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.)

The majority of pre-discharge (65.6%) and post-discharge filings (68.3%) were for felony offenses. This is not surprising, given that all of the youth in this sample have already penetrated far enough into the Colorado juvenile justice system to be committed to the Division of Youth Corrections for a juvenile offense (see Figure 6, pg. 15). District Attorneys possess significant discretion in determining whether to file a felony or misdemeanor charge. Research has indicated that persons *with* previous criminal histories are more likely to receive a felony versus a misdemeanor filing for similar crimes committed by persons *without* previous criminal histories¹⁷.

Table 2 shows the breakdown of pre-discharge and post-discharge recidivism filings by adult criminal charges filed versus juvenile delinquency charges filed. Delinquency charges are filings for offenses committed by youth under the age of 18, while criminal charges are charges committed by persons over the age of 18, or more serious offenses where a juvenile could be filed upon as an adult. All charges filed were included in this analysis.

Table 2: Type of Filing (Any Charge Filed)

Type of Filing	Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Criminal (Adult)	169	49.7%	295	79.9%
Delinquency (Juvenile)	112	32.9%	58	15.7%
Both Adult and Juvenile Filings ¹⁸	59	17.4%	16	4.3%
Total	340	100.0%	369	100.0%

Over two-thirds (67.1%) of pre-discharge recidivists received at least one adult filing during their commitment (combining the first and third categories in Table 2). An even greater percentage of post discharge filings (84.2%) were adult criminal charges. This is not surprising considering that the decision to file on an offender as an adult or juvenile is

¹⁷ Gottfredson, Michael R., & Gottfredson, Don M., 1987. *Decision Making in Criminal Justice: Toward the Rational Exercise of Discretion*. Law, Society, and Policy, Volume 3.

¹⁸ If a youth received multiple new filings either during commitment or during the follow-up time period after discharge, a youth could receive both a new delinquency filing and a new adult filing depending upon the youth's age at the time the offense occurred.

primarily dependent on the age of the offender. However, it is important to note that the majority of youth in this cohort who re-offended, either during their commitment or within one year of discharge from NYC, would be sentenced as adults (therefore ineligible to be re-committed to NYC) and given adult probation or Department of Corrections sentences if they were found guilty.

Filing v. Finding

It is important to realize that not all charges that a youth receives result in a guilty finding. Table 3 illustrates this concept, and provides the disposition of the *most serious* charges for which a youth received a filing.

**If the NYC definition of recidivism only included guilty findings, the recidivism rates for both pre-discharge and post-discharge would be lower than reported:
 31.9% - pre-discharge
 31.8% - post-discharge**

Table 3: Disposition on Most Serious Charge Filed

Finding	Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Guilty ¹⁹	168	49.4%	140	37.9%
Deferred	11	3.2%	20	5.4%
No Finding of Guilt ²⁰	157	46.2%	185	50.1%
Unknown ²¹	4	1.2%	24	6.5%
Total	340	100.0%	369	100.0%

Fifty-three percent (52.6%) of the youth in the study were found guilty of, or received a deferred sentence for, the most serious offense they were charged with prior to discharge from the Division of Youth Corrections. In comparison, 43.3% of youth who received charges within one year following discharge were found guilty of, or received a deferred sentence, for their most serious offense.

¹⁹ Guilty includes guilty and guilty of a lesser charge.

²⁰ No finding of guilt includes acquitted, charges dismissed, a plea of Nolo contendere, or a not guilty finding.

²¹ Unknown includes those cases that are still open at the time of this printing.

The majority of recidivating youth in this sample received filings on multiple charges. Although many recidivists were not found guilty of their most serious charge, Table 4 shows that 89% of youth were either found guilty of, or received a deferred sentence, for at least one charge prior to discharge. Similarly, eighty-two percent (81.9%) of the post-discharge cohort were found guilty of or received a deferred sentence for at least one offense.

Table 4: Disposition on Any Charge Filed

Finding	Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Guilty ²²	286	84.1%	277	75.1%
Deferred	17	5.0%	25	6.8%
No Finding of Guilt ²³	33	9.7%	43	11.6%
Unknown ²⁴	4	1.2%	24	6.5%
Total	340	100.0%	369	100.0%

If the DYJ definition of recidivism were made more consistent with other states' juvenile justice agencies definitions, to only include guilty findings²⁵, the recidivism rates for both pre-discharge and post-discharge would be lower than reported (*31.9% for pre-discharge, and 31.8% for post-discharge recidivism*). This, once again, illustrates the need to use common definitions of recidivism when comparing Colorado recidivism rates to other states, or even across Colorado State agencies.

Figure 6 helps to illustrate why recidivism rates vary based on the definition of recidivism and why differing rates cannot be easily compared. The figure depicts Colorado's juvenile justice filtering process that takes place when a youth's delinquent or criminal behavior is brought to the attention of the justice system. Those states or agencies that use re-arrest to represent recidivism will have higher recidivism rates than

²² Guilty includes guilty and guilty of a lesser charge.

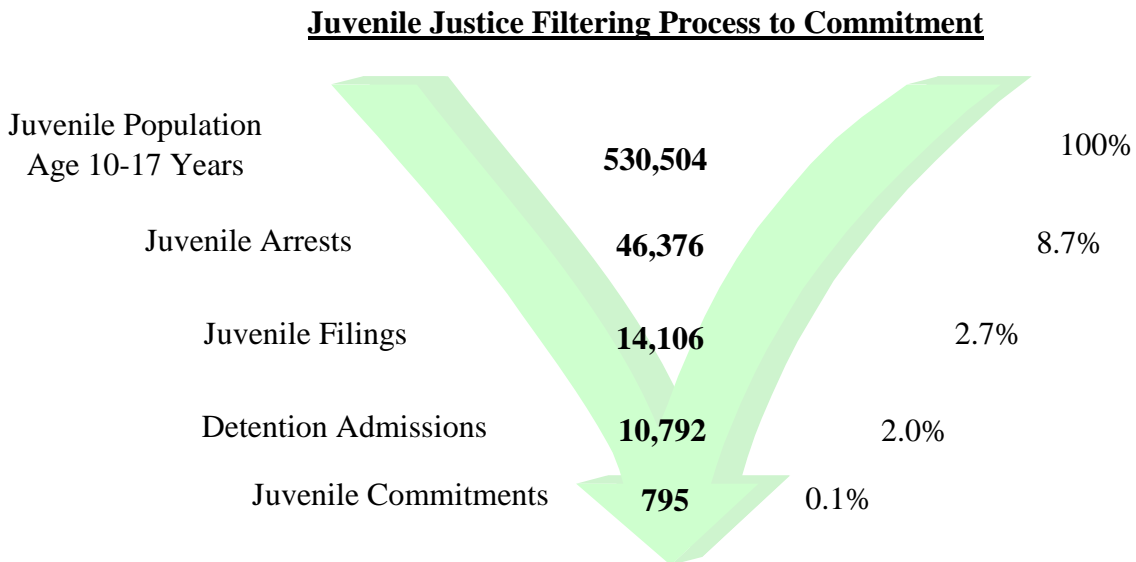
²³ No finding of guilt includes acquitted, charges dismissed, a plea of Nolo contendere, or a not guilty finding.

²⁴ Unknown includes those cases that are still open at the time of this printing.

²⁵ Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, DJJ Research Quarterly, Volume III, April 2005.

Colorado, which used new filings to represent recidivism. Each stage of the justice system filters out more and more youth, therefore agencies that use reconviction, re-incarceration, or re-commitment will have lower recidivism rates than agencies that utilize re-arrest, or new filing. For these reasons, it is imperative that system penetration be investigated when recidivism rates are compared.

**Figure 6:
Fiscal Year 2007-08**



Demographics

The following demographic data is presented to illustrate differences in recidivism rates by gender, ethnicity, and DYC management region. Recidivism results in this section are presented

Males discharged in FY 2007-08 had a 42% rate of post-discharge recidivism, compared with only 22% for females.

with pre-discharge recidivism results in the top half of each table, and post-discharge recidivism results in the bottom half. Throughout this report a finding followed by “***” indicates a statistically significant difference between groups.

Gender

Historically, males discharged from the Division of Youth Corrections have been more likely than females to receive a new filing for an offense. Table 5 shows a breakdown of recidivism results by gender.

Table 5: Recidivism Rates by Gender

Gender	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Male	525	64.0%	295	36.0%	820	86.3%
Female	85	65.4%	45	34.6%	130	13.7%
Total	610	64.2%	340	35.8%	950	100%
Gender**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Male	480	58.5%	340	41.5%	820	86.3%
Female	101	77.7%	29	22.3%	130	13.7%
Total	581	61.2%	369	38.8%	950	100%

**Chi-Square²⁶=17.333, p<0.01.

Eighty-six percent of the FY 2007-08 discharge cohort was male and 14% was female. Males (41.5%) had significantly higher rates of new filings for felony or misdemeanor offenses within one year following discharge than females (22.3%). Surprisingly, pre-discharge recidivism rates were not statistically different by gender.

Gender is a commonly known risk factor for delinquency, where males are more likely than females to be involved in delinquent activities²⁷. As part of the Division's Continuum of Care initiative, a new risk assessment instrument, the Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment (CJRA), was introduced that allows for the detection of protective factors in addition to the traditional risk factors detected by other risk assessment instruments. Protective factors are theoretically described as skills that youth can develop

²⁶ See Appendix B for an explanation of statistical measures used in this report.

²⁷ Liu, X. & H.B. Kaplan (1999). *Explaining the Gender Differences in Adolescent Delinquent Behavior: A Longitudinal Test of Mediating Mechanisms*. *Criminology* 37:195-215.

to mitigate the influence of risk factors, including static risk factors, such as gender. With this knowledge, it is not surprising that males especially would benefit from the provision of services that bolster protective factors. As treatment is guided through the use of the CJRA’s risk and protective factor scales, perhaps in future discharge cohorts, the Division may begin to experience declines in the elevated recidivism rates predicted by many static risk factors.

Primary Ethnicity

Table 6 shows differences in recidivism rates by primary ethnicity. The “other” category includes Native-American and Asian-American youth, as well as those officially identified as “unable to be determined.” These categories are not combined because of commonalities among them, but because the numbers of youth in each category are too small when taken independently to make valid statistical comparisons²⁸.

Table 6: Recidivism Rates by Primary Ethnicity

Ethnicity	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
African-American	108	62.8%	64	37.2%	172	18.1%
Hispanic	222	64.9%	120	35.1%	342	36.0%
White	263	64.8%	143	35.2%	406	42.7%
Other	17	56.7%	13	43.3%	30	3.2%
Total	610	64.2%	340	35.8%	950	100%

Ethnicity	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
African-American	111	64.5%	61	35.5%	172	18.1%
Hispanic	191	55.8%	151	44.2%	342	36.0%
White	259	63.8%	147	36.2%	406	42.7%
Other	20	66.7%	10	33.3%	30	3.2%
Total	581	61.2%	369	38.8%	950	100%

There were no statistically significant differences by ethnicity. While some small differences are noted in the raw percentages, these results were not statistically

²⁸ Statistical significance between groups is a calculation that is based on the number of cases in each group as well as the differences between groups; therefore it takes a larger relative difference to be a significant finding (not because of chance) when group sizes are small.

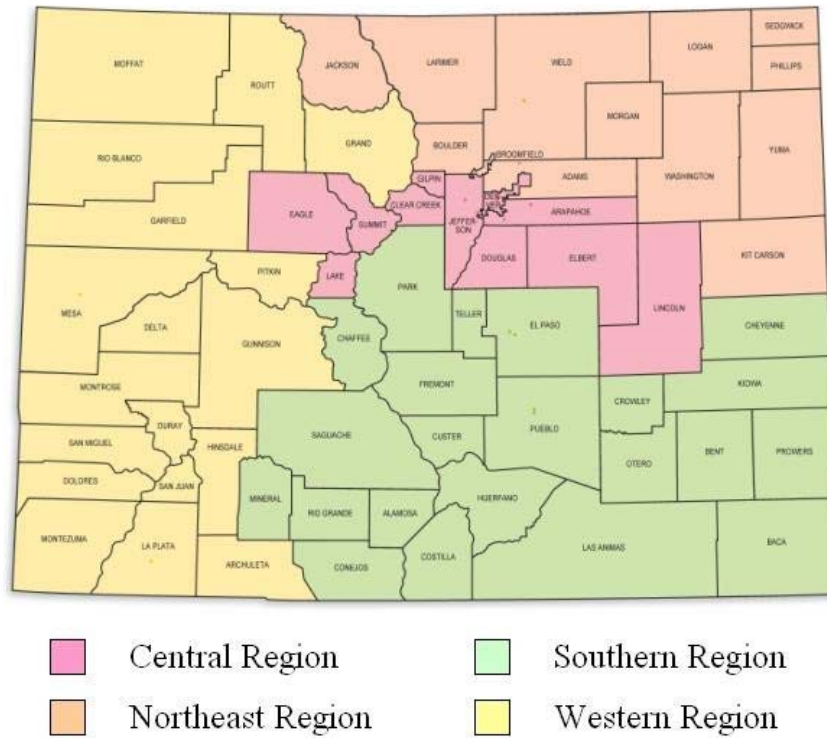
significant. Results for the youth in the “other” category should be interpreted cautiously because of the small census size (n=30).

When constricting the comparison of recidivism rates to ethnic minorities versus white youth in the sample, there again were no significant differences found in either pre-discharge or post-discharge recidivism rates. The juvenile justice system has been working on addressing the issue of minority over-representation (MOR), also referred to as disproportionate minority confinement (DMC). The small percentage differences (although non-significant) in the recidivism results presented here are likely an artifact of local demographic differences in combination with local policy and practice, not actual differences in rates of re-offense. The lack of statistical differences for recidivism rates among ethnic groups may reflect the Division’s commitment to address some of the underlying issues of MOR/DMC (staffing, training, placement decision making, etc.).

DYC Management Region

The Division of Youth Corrections has a regionally based management structure, operating from four management regions in the State, as depicted in Figure 7. The Central Region consists of four judicial districts and includes the major counties of Denver, Jefferson, Arapahoe, and Douglas. The Northeast Region consists of five judicial districts and includes the major counties of Adams, Boulder, Larimer, and Weld. The Southern Region consists of seven judicial districts and includes the major counties of El Paso and Pueblo. The Western Region consists of the six judicial districts on the western slope including the county of Mesa. Table 7 shows a breakdown of new offenses filed by DYC management region.

Figure 7: DYC Region Structure



There were no statistically meaningful differences noted in recidivism rates by DYC Management Region. In fact, there was very little variance in pre-discharge recidivism rates with the lowest reported rate seen in the Central Region (34.8%) and the highest rate in the Southern Region (37.0%). The Central Region also reports the lowest rate of post-discharge recidivism for this FY 2007-08 discharge cohort (36.5%). All other regions reported post-discharge recidivism rates around 40%.

Table 7: Recidivism Rates by DYC Management Region

Region	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Central	261	65.3%	139	34.8%	400	42.1%
Northeast	163	63.2%	95	36.8%	258	27.2%
Southern	116	63.0%	68	37.0%	184	19.4%
Western	70	64.8%	38	35.2%	108	11.4%
Total	610	64.2%	340	35.8%	950	100%

Region	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Central	254	63.5%	146	36.5%	400	42.1%
Northeast	153	59.3%	105	40.7%	258	27.2%
Southern	109	59.2%	75	40.8%	184	19.4%
Western	65	60.2%	43	39.8%	108	11.4%
Total	581	61.2%	369	38.8%	950	100%

Risk of Re-Offending

During the first thirty days of commitment to DYC, youth undergo a battery of assessments to determine placement needs, treatment needs, and to evaluate the risk the youth poses to himself or herself (i.e. suicide risk) and the community (i.e. public safety). This recidivism study examined a number of factors that have traditionally been shown to increase the risk of re-offending, most of which are indicators of previous system involvement. Also examined were risk scores for re-offending, as indicated by the Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment (CJRA).

Prior “System” Involvement

Several different measures can be a proxy for “prior system involvement.” Those indicators analyzed for this study include: number of prior out-of-home placements, number of prior detention admissions, number of prior adjudications, age at first

Higher levels of prior system involvement including prior out-of-home placements, prior detention admissions, and prior adjudications were all predictive of increased pre-discharge and post-discharge rates of re-offending for the FY 2007-08 discharge cohort.

adjudication, and number of prior commitments. It is anticipated that youth with more prior system involvement will have higher rates of re-offending. Juvenile justice research supports this hypothesis, stating that youth with a history of delinquent activity show an elevated risk of future offending (Andrews and Bonta, p. 165)²⁹.

Prior Out-of-Home Placements can include inpatient mental health or substance abuse treatment facilities, Child Welfare placements, as well as any prior DYC placements. In prior recidivism studies, youth with more prior out-of-home placements were found to have higher rates of recidivism prior to discharge as well as within one year of discharge.

Table 8: Recidivism Rates by Number of Prior Out-of-Home Placements

Number of Prior Out-Of-Home Placements**	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
None	221	71.8%	87	28.2%	308	32.4%
One	145	63.6%	83	36.4%	228	24.0%
Two or More	244	58.9%	170	41.1%	414	43.6%
Total	610	64.2%	340	35.8%	950	100%

**Chi-Square=12.672, p<0.01

Number of Prior Out-Of-Home Placements**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
None	199	64.6%	109	35.4%	308	32.4%
One	148	64.9%	80	35.1%	228	24.0%
Two or More	234	56.5%	180	43.5%	414	43.6%
Total	581	61.2%	369	38.8%	950	100%

**Chi-Square=6.644, p<0.05

A categorical breakdown of recidivism rates by the number of prior out-of-home placements (see Table 8) shows that youth with two or more prior out-of-home placements shows a higher incidence of recidivism prior to discharge (41.1%) for youth in this census as well as within one year following discharge (43.5%). Youth with no prior placements had a significantly lower incidence of pre-discharge parole (28.2%) than

²⁹ Andrews, D.A., and Bonta, J. (1994). *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*. Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing.

youth with one or more prior placements. Youth with zero or one prior out-of-home placement re-offended at similar rates following discharge (35%), while youth with more than one prior placement re-offended more often.

Prior Detention Admissions for this discharge cohort ranged from zero up to twenty-four. On average, all committed youth discharged in FY 2007-08 had 4.3 detention admissions prior to their commitment. Breaking the data down into categories of youth with a relatively low (zero to two prior detention admissions) and high (three or more prior detention admissions) levels of prior involvement with the Division of Youth Corrections, the results did show significant differences in recidivism rates for both pre- and post-discharge measures (see Table 9).

Youth with three or more detention admissions received more filings for felony or misdemeanor offenses prior to discharge (38.2%) and within one year following discharge (41.9%), when compared to youth with less than three prior detention admissions (29.4% pre-discharge, and 30.9% post-discharge).

Table 9: Recidivism Rates by Prior Detention Admissions

Number of Prior Detention Admissions**	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Zero to Two	185	70.6%	77	29.4%	262	27.6%
Three or More	425	61.8%	263	38.2%	688	72.4%
Total	610	64.2%	340	35.8%	950	100%
**Chi-Square=6.448, p<0.05						
Number of Prior Detention Admissions**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Zero to Two	181	69.1%	81	30.9%	262	27.6%
Three or More	400	58.1%	288	41.9%	688	72.4%
Total	581	61.2%	369	38.8%	950	100%

**Chi-Square=9.567, p<0.01

Prior Adjudications is also a measure of prior involvement in the juvenile justice system, and as such, it is assumed that youth with more prior adjudications would have higher recidivism rates. An examination of both pre-discharge and post-discharge recidivism rates found that youth who received a new filing, on average, had more prior adjudications than youth who did not recidivate³⁰.

Table 10 shows pre-discharge and post-discharge recidivism rates by the number of prior adjudications for youth discharged in FY 2007-08. Forty-one percent of the youth in this study had two or more delinquency adjudications prior to their commitment to the Division of Youth Corrections. Youth with two or more prior adjudications had significantly higher rates of recidivism (41.3% pre-discharge, and 47.5% post-discharge) than youth with zero or one prior adjudication.

Table 10: Recidivism Rates by Number of Prior Adjudications

Number of Prior Adjudications**	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
None	187	68.0%	88	32.0%	275	28.9%
One	196	68.1%	92	31.9%	288	30.3%
Two or More	227	58.7%	160	41.3%	387	40.7%
Total	610	64.2%	340	35.8%	950	100%

**Chi-Square=8.766, p<0.05

Number of Prior Adjudications**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
None	194	70.5%	81	29.5%	275	28.9%
One	184	63.9%	104	36.1%	288	30.3%
Two or More	203	52.5%	184	47.5%	387	40.7%
Total	581	61.2%	369	38.8%	950	100%

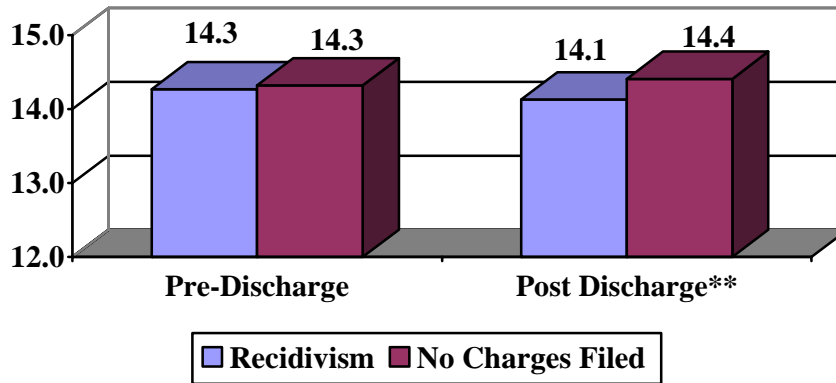
**Chi-Square=23.446, p<0.01

Associated with number of prior adjudications is another primary risk factor for recidivism - *Age at First Adjudication*. Juvenile justice research has shown that youth who become involved with the criminal justice system at younger ages are more likely to

³⁰ Pre-Discharge: F=4.803, p<0.05; Post-Discharge: F=17.059, p<0.01.

recidivate than youth who are older at the time of their first contact with the system³¹. The average client age at first adjudication coupled with recidivism outcomes are shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Age at First Adjudication



**Post-Discharge; $F=7.312$, $p<0.01$ ($n=947$, missing=3)

Surprisingly there was no difference in age at first adjudication for youth who received a new pre-discharge filing. Although the age differences for youth who received a new post-discharge filing and those who did not were small, they were statistically significant.

Prior Commitments, one last indicator of prior juvenile justice involvement, was also analyzed for this recidivism evaluation. A commitment to DYC represents the furthest potential penetration into the juvenile justice system that youth in this study might have encountered prior to their current commitment. Table 11 shows the breakdown of pre-discharge and post-discharge recidivism rates by youth who have previously been committed to the Division.

The data in Table 11 show that very few ($n=42$) of the youth in this discharge cohort were committed to the Division of Youth Corrections prior to the commitment examined

³¹ Andrews, D.A., and Bonta, J. (1994). *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*. Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing.

for this study. Even with the small numbers³², youth who were committed to NYC previously had higher rates of post-discharge recidivism (57.1%) when compared with those youth who were not committed previously (38.0%). Although the difference in pre-discharge recidivism rates seems rather large, those results were not statistically significant, because of the small number of youth in the “One” group.

Table 11: Recidivism Rates by Prior Commitments

Number of Prior Commitments	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
None	586	64.5%	322	35.5%	908	95.6%
One	24	57.1%	18	42.9%	42	4.4%
Total	610	64.2%	340	35.8%	950	100%

Number of Prior Commitments**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
None	563	62.0%	345	38.0%	908	95.6%
One	18	42.9%	24	57.1%	42	4.4%
Total	581	61.2%	369	38.8%	950	100%

**Chi-Square=6.195, p<0.05

As seen in the preceding analyses, indicators of prior system involvement are significant predictors of increased rates of re-offending. From a treatment perspective, however, these are static indicators of risk that will not change in a beneficial way to impact risk reduction. Risk factors based on criminal history can only get worse. Therefore it is imperative that the Division continues to move in the direction of targeting dynamic, or variable factors of risk when making treatment decisions for youth. Additionally, protective factors may be targeted through treatment in an attempt to mitigate the risk of static factors such as indicators of prior system involvement. The Division’s Continuum of Care initiative helps focus treatment, specifically transitional services, towards these particular goals. This approach, if effective, may begin to positively impact recidivism rates for future discharge cohorts.

³² Statistical significance between groups is a calculation that is based on the number of cases in each group as well as the differences between groups; therefore it takes a larger relative difference to be a significant finding (not due to chance) when group sizes are small.

Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment

Aside from prior system involvement and its ability to predict future offending, organizations often depend on risk assessment instruments to appropriately assess the likelihood of recidivism and to aid in the case planning process. The Division of Youth Corrections recently embarked

Post-discharge recidivism rates were significantly higher for youth who scored high for overall risk of recidivism on the CJRA (41.4%) when compared with youth with a moderate (38.3%) or low (17.0%) risk of re-offense.

upon an initiative to redesign its assessment and classification services, with the goal of developing a comprehensive, state-of-the art assessment, diagnostic and classification system that is founded in evidence-based theory and principles.

Part of this initiative included implementing the Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment Instrument (CJRA), a fourth-generation risk instrument that was developed by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) and assesses actuarial risk of re-offending. Effective June 2006, every youth committed to the Division of Youth Corrections was assessed for criminogenic risk, needs, and protective factors both from a static³³ and dynamic³⁴ perspective. The CJRA replaced the Colorado Young Offender - Level of Service Inventory (CYO-LSI) that DYC had used for over a decade. Unlike the CYO-LSI, the CJRA incorporates protective factor scales that are valuable when developing case-plans and referring youth to specific residential treatment placements.

Unlike previous assessment instruments used by the Division, the CJRA is used to periodically reassess risk of recidivism at specified points in time during commitment. Re-assessment of risk and protective factors at critical junctures during a youth's commitment sentence allows client managers to accurately assess risk of recidivism and base treatment decisions on the youth's current criminogenic needs instead of static historical factors. Since most youth in this discharge cohort were committed prior to the implementation of the CJRA (77.8%) there is only a small cohort of youth that have an

³³ Static risk is based on historical data and cannot be improved with treatment.

³⁴ Dynamic risk is based on a youth's current living and social arrangements and can be targeted by treatment goals during commitment.

initial CJRA completed for this commitment. Therefore this report will not analyze pre-discharge recidivism rates for the entire FY 2007-08 discharge cohort. On the other hand, almost all of the youth discharged in FY 2007-08 received at least one re-assessment prior to discharge (95.6%). Therefore, post-discharge recidivism results by the overall risk of recidivism as calculated by the last CJRA competed on a youth prior to discharge are included in this recidivism study. Risk of re-offense is calculated using two subscales of items from the full CJRA assessment (see Table 12).

Table 12: CJRA Risk of Recidivism Scoring Algorithm

Criminal History Score	Social History Risk Score		
	0 to 5	6 to 9	10 to 18
0 to 2	Low	Low	Moderate
3 to 7	Low	Moderate	High
8 to 31	Moderate	High	High

The Criminal History Score is calculated using historical data on a youth's prior delinquent or criminal history. The Social History Score is primarily based on a youth's current living arrangements and social factors including school attendance and behavior, family and friends, and current abuse of alcohol or drugs. Some historical data is also included around the youth's prior living arrangements and history of abuse and neglect. Please see Section Two (pg. 45) of this report for a more in-depth look at recidivism and the CJRA.

Table 13: Post-Discharge Recidivism by CJRA Risk of Re-Offense

Risk of Re-Offense**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Low	44	83.0%	9	17.0%	53	5.8%
Moderate	169	61.7%	105	38.3%	274	30.2%
High	310	58.6%	219	41.4%	529	58.3%
Incomplete CJRA	30	57.7%	22	42.3%	52	5.7%
Total	553	60.9%	355	39.1%	908	100%

**Chi-Square=12.358, p<0.01 (n=908, missing=42)

At the time of discharge, more than half of the DYC FY 2007-08 discharge cohort (58.3%) was at a high risk for re-offending. As anticipated, youth with the highest risk of re-offense had significantly higher rates of post-discharge recidivism (41.4%) than youth with a moderate (38.3%) or low (17.0%) relative risk of re-offense.

If the Division is able to accurately identify and target specific dynamic risk factors on the Social History Scale (see Table 12) treatment can impact overall risk scores. If risk continues to be a significant predictor for post-discharge recidivism as observed in this analysis, efforts to reduce risk through these methods could reduce recidivism rates for future cohorts.

Special Populations

The Division is responsible for treating a number of youth with special needs. Included in these special needs groups are youth receiving treatment for sex offense-specific issues, substance abuse issues, and mental health issues. Although recidivism analyses on each of these sub-populations

Youth assessed as needing Treatment level Substance Abuse Services received more new post-discharge filings (42.4%) than youth who were assessed at the Intervention (36.5%) or Prevention (30.1%) levels.

was conducted, the only special population which exhibited statistically significant differences in recidivism rates were youth who required substance abuse treatment services, as indicated by clinical and actuarial assessment.

Need for Substance Abuse Treatment

The following table illustrates recidivism rates by the three levels of substance abuse treatment assessed for at the time of commitment: “Prevention”, “Intervention”, and “Treatment”.

Table 14: Recidivism by Substance Abuse Level

Need For Treatment	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Prevention	104	68.0%	49	32.0%	153	16.1%
Intervention	163	65.5%	86	34.5%	249	26.2%
Treatment	342	62.5%	205	37.5%	547	57.6%
Total	609	64.2%	340	35.8%	949	100.0%

Need For Treatment**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Prevention	107	69.9%	46	30.1%	153	16.1%
Intervention	158	63.5%	91	36.5%	249	26.2%
Treatment	315	57.6%	232	42.4%	547	57.6%
Total	580	61.1%	369	38.9%	949	100.0%

**Chi-Square=8.446, p<0.05, (n=949, missing=1)

Although pre-discharge recidivism rate differences were in the anticipated direction the results were not statistically significant. Post-discharge recidivism rates were, however, statistically meaningful. Youth who were assessed at the lowest level of substance abuse need, (*Prevention*), were less-likely to re-offend within one year following discharge (30.1%). Comparatively, youth assessed as needing the mid-level of substance abuse treatment, (*Intervention*), recidivated at 36.5%. Finally, those youth assessed as needing the highest level of services, (*Treatment*), had a 42.4% rate of post-discharge recidivism. Please refer to Section Four “Substance Abuse Treatment and Recidivism” (pg. 79) for more information on this special population.

Commitment

Commitment data presented in this section highlight differences in recidivism rates by various indicators of successful treatment during a youth’s commitment sentence.

Escapes from placement, re-commitments, and longer residential length of service were all correlated with pre-discharge and post-discharge recidivism rates.

Number of Escapes

Escape:

A juvenile who has left a facility's custody without proper authorization; or

A juvenile who has not returned to a facility within 4 hours of the prescribed time from any authorized leave.

The CDHS TRAILS database tracks the number of times a youth escapes from residential placement. The term "escape," however, rarely means an escape from a secure placement. In fact, DYC policy defines an escape as a juvenile who has left a facility's custody without authorization, *or*

a juvenile who has not returned to a facility within four hours of the prescribed time from any *authorized leave* (i.e., work passes, court appointments, home visits, etc.).

Youth with more escapes received more new filings for a felony or misdemeanor offenses, both prior to discharge from DYC³⁵ and within one year following discharge from the Division³⁶.

Table 15: Recidivism Rates by DYC Escape

Any DYC Escape**	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
No	390	77.4%	114	22.6%	504	53.1%
Yes	220	49.3%	226	50.7%	446	46.9%
Total	610	64.2%	340	35.8%	950	100%

**Chi-Square=81.032, p<0.01

Any DYC Escape**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
No	338	67.1%	166	32.9%	504	53.1%
Yes	243	54.5%	203	45.5%	446	46.9%
Total	581	61.2%	369	38.8%	950	100%

**Chi-Square=15.761, p<0.01

Table 15 shows recidivism rates for youth who have any escape as defined by DYC policy compared with those youth who have no escapes entered in the TRAILS data

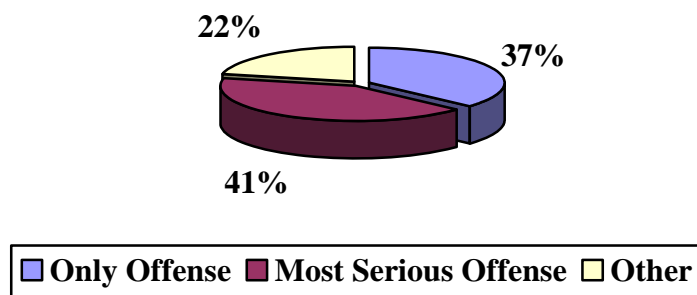
³⁵ Pre-discharge (F=102.268, p<0.01)

³⁶ Post-discharge (F=16.289, p<0.01)

system. Forty-seven percent of all youth in this discharge cohort have at least one escape from a NYC placement, as defined in NYC policy. Those youth re-offended more often prior to discharge as well as within one year following discharge than youth with no escapes.

Pre-discharge recidivism rates were investigated further because youth who escape from placement are often charged with an “escape” offense that may be their only pre-discharge filing; this simply means that many youth were potentially deemed pre-discharge recidivists *because* they escaped, not because a previous escape made them *more likely* to commit another offense pre-discharge. The results show that of the 226 pre-discharge recidivists having escaped one or more times, 35% (n=79) had pre-discharge filings for an escape. Of those seventy-nine youth with escape filings, 78% (n=62) received their *only* or their *most-serious* pre-discharge filing for their escape offense (n=29 and n=33, respectively). In other words, youth who escaped and were filed upon for an escape were likely to have had that escape charge be either their only or their most serious pre-discharge offense (See Figure 9).

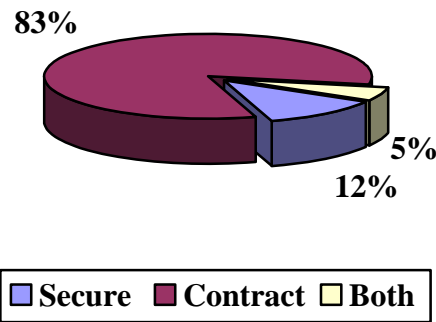
Figure 9: Pre-Discharge Escape Filings
(n=79)



It is important to note that not all youth who are reported per NYC policy as escapees are filed upon, and there are several explanations as to why this is the case. First, many escapes are simply youth who returned to the treatment program on their own, yet still long enough after their prescribed return time to count as an escape under NYC policy.

Second, many youth on deferred sentences are filed on for the deferred offense, not the most recent escape. Third, there may be other charge types or codes used by the Judicial Department in lieu of technical “escape” charges. Additionally, local district attorneys likely have some discretion in regards to filings charges against youth in their jurisdiction. The majority of youth who did have escape charges filed during their commitment received their filings for escaping from a DYC contract, or non-secure, facility (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Pre-Discharge Escape Filings
(n=76, missing=3)



Number of Re-Commitments

The CDHS TRAILS data system also tracks the number of times a committed youth receives an additional commitment sentence while still fulfilling a current sentence to DYC. Since all re-commitments are the product of another charge being filed against the youth, either before³⁷ or during their commitment, it is anticipated that re-committed youth will have higher rates of pre-discharge recidivism than youth that have no re-commitments.

³⁷ A youth could receive a re-commitment for an offense that occurred prior to their current commitment date. A re-commitment occurs whenever a youth currently serving a commitment sentence is committed to DYC for another offense, regardless of the date of the offense.

Table 16: Recidivism Rates by Number of Re-commitments

Number of Re-commitments**	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
None	540	72.8%	202	27.2%	742	78.1%
One	65	40.6%	95	59.4%	160	16.8%
Two or More	5	10.4%	43	89.6%	48	5.1%
Total	610	64.2%	340	35.8%	950	100%

**Chi-Square=122.864, p<0.01

Number of Re-commitments**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
None	470	63.3%	272	36.7%	742	78.1%
One	84	52.5%	76	47.5%	160	16.8%
Two or More	27	56.3%	21	43.8%	48	5.1%
Total	581	61.2%	369	38.8%	950	100%

**Chi-Square=7.026, p<0.05

Table 16 displays the rate of recidivism by the number of re-commitments. The majority of youth in the FY 2007-08 discharge cohort did not receive a re-commitment sentence (78.1%). Nonetheless, the pre-discharge recidivism rates, as expected, are much higher for re-committed youth than the rate for youth that do not have any re-commitments. Most youth who receive a re-commitment do so because of charges filed against them for an offense that occurred during commitment. This explains the extremely high percentage of recidivism among these youth. As shown in the table above, almost all of the youth with two or more re-commitments (89.6%) have charges filed against them for a felony or misdemeanor offense prior to their discharge date. The reason why this percentage is not 100% is due to the fact that a youth could receive re-commitments for offenses that occurred *prior* to their current commitment date; therefore, it would not count as a pre-discharge recidivist act.

A re-commitment also predicted that a youth would receive a filing for a new offense within one year following discharge. Thirty-seven percent of youth who did not have any re-commitments received a filing for a new offense within one year of discharge compared with 47.5% of youth with one re-commitment and 43.8% of youth with more than one re-commitment. Although these differences are not as pronounced as the pre-

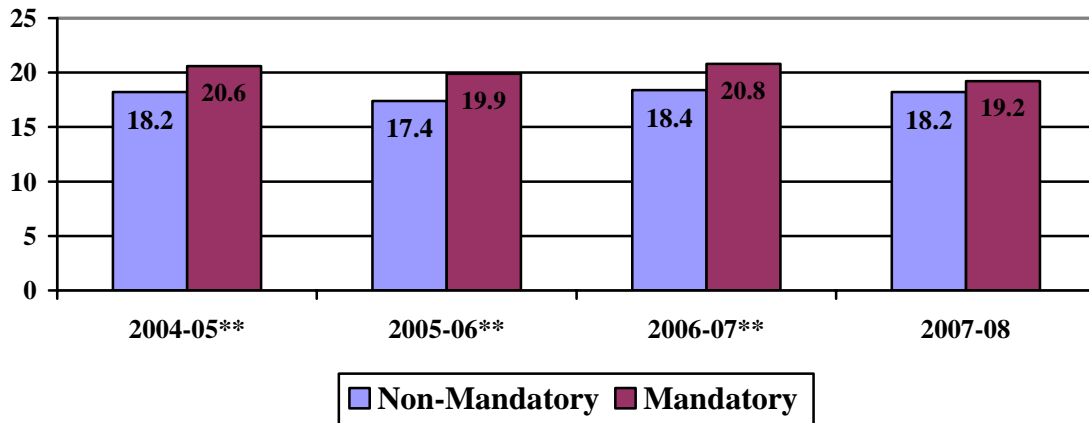
discharge recidivism rates, they are not surprising, since re-commitment indicates that most of these youth have continued to commit criminal or delinquent activities even during their commitment to the Division of Youth Corrections.

Length of Service (LOS)

Most youth sentenced to DYC commitment receive a non-mandatory sentence length that varies from zero to twenty-four months. Youth with non-mandatory sentences may be referred for Juvenile Parole Board consideration of parole prior to serving their maximum sentence length. Seventy-three percent (73.2%) of the youth discharged in FY 2007-08 were committed under non-mandatory sentences (n=695). Conversely, there were 255 youth in this discharge cohort required to serve a minimum length of service (LOS) in residential treatment as determined by the court (i.e. mandatory sentences). In rare instances, the minimum LOS could be up to a seven-year commitment sentence for those youth adjudicated as aggravated juvenile offenders.

Traditionally, youth serving mandatory sentences have statistically significant longer total lengths of service than youth serving non-mandatory sentences; however, this is not statistically significant for the current cohort study. Youth with mandatory sentences spent an average of one additional month on residential commitment status (19.2 months) than youth who had non-mandatory sentences (18.2 months).

Figure 11: Four Year Residential LOS Trends by Sentence Type (LOS in Months)



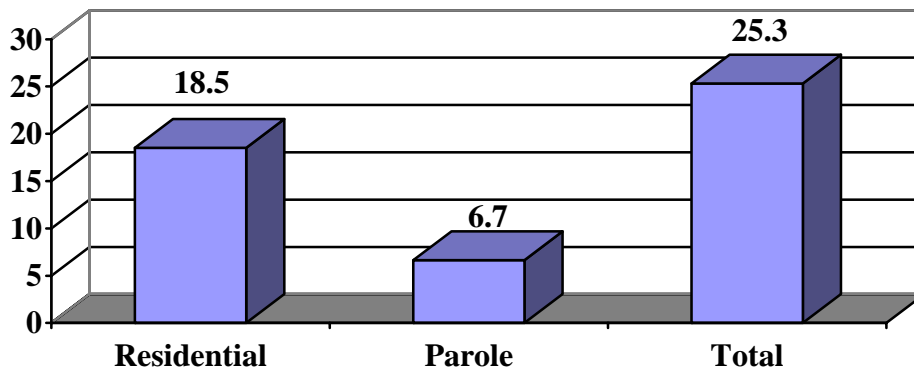
**Significantly different by sentence type (p<0.01)

As seen in Figure 11, youth with mandatory sentences imposed by the court for the past three discharge cohorts had significantly longer residential lengths of service than youth with non-mandatory sentences. Of interest is the fact that while non-mandatory sentence LOS has remained fairly stable over time, LOS for mandatory sentences is the lowest it has been in the recent past.

To further investigate this recent change in LOS results, DYC took a more critical look at the relationship between sentence type and length of service. An analysis of the discrepancies between sub-groups of the cohort found that youth who attended the Ridge View Youth Services Center (RVYSC) who had a non-mandatory sentence also had longer residential lengths of service than other DYC youth with non-mandatory sentences (2.2 months longer on average). When RVYSC clients are excluded from the analysis, the LOS results revert back to the historical outcome, where youth with mandatory sentences have longer residential LOS than youth with non-mandatory sentences³⁸.

Length of service for the entire discharge cohort, broken down by residential, parole and total, is shown in Figure 12. Total LOS has decreased for youth with mandatory sentences in this discharge cohort when compared with previous studies (see Figure 11).

Figure 12: LOS in Months

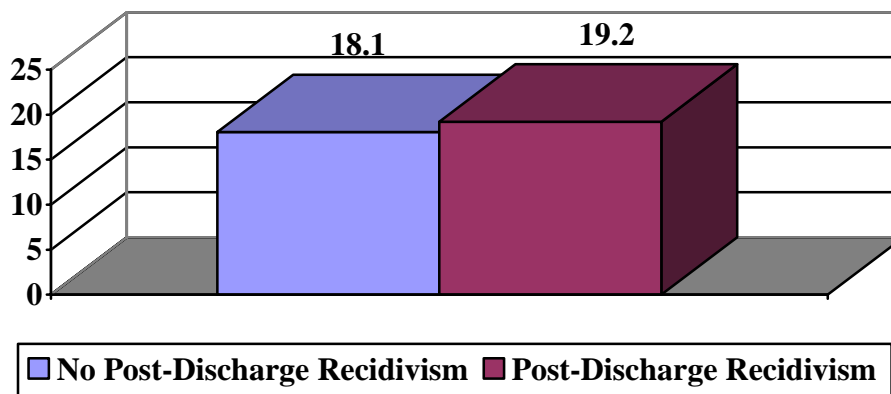


³⁸ Residential and Commitment LOS differences between mandatory and non-mandatory sentences were significant when RVYSC youth were excluded from the analysis ($p < 0.01$).

For youth discharged in FY 2007-08 pre-discharge recidivism was correlated with longer lengths of service in residential placements, and on parole status. Youth who received a new filing during their commitment (pre-discharge recidivism) had an average of almost twenty-two (21.9) months in residential placement, compared with 16.6 months for youth who did not recidivate³⁹. These youth also spent more than a half a month longer on parole status than youth that did not receive a new filing during commitment (7.1 months for pre-discharge recidivists and 6.4 months for non-recidivists)⁴⁰.

It is difficult to infer causality between pre-discharge recidivism and length of service, because a new filing on residential status or on parole could result in a youth having their parole status revoked or result in a re-commitment, either of which is likely to result in a longer residential LOS. However, post-discharge recidivism analysis on this cohort shows that youth with longer residential LOS received more new filings within one year following discharge⁴¹ than youth with shorter residential LOS. As illustrated in figure 12 the average residential LOS for this discharge cohort was 18.5 months. Youth who received a new filing following discharge from DYCS spent, on average, 19.2 months in residential placement, compared with 18.1 months for youth who did not recidivate (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Residential LOS in Months**



**F=4.174, p<0.05

³⁹ F=94.075, p<0.01

⁴⁰ F=6.797, p<0.01

⁴¹ F=4.174, p<0.05

Parole: Transitioning Back to the Community

All 950 youth in this discharge cohort were required to serve at least six months of parole under mandatory parole statutes. Prior discharge cohorts, however, were subject to longer mandatory parole periods, ranging from 9 to 12 months. The average LOS on parole for this year's discharge sample was 6.7 months.

Youth who re-offended on Parole Status committed fewer person offenses and more other types of offenses than youth who re-offended while in a Residential Placement.

Parole data presented in this section examine the recidivist acts that occur when youth are on parole status (pre-discharge recidivism). This section includes a breakdown of recidivist activities that occurred during residential placement compared with those that occurred while the youth was under parole supervision. Also included is a breakdown of the placement status of youth on parole; whether a youth was residing in a DYC facility or community treatment center (residential placement), or was on non-residential status back in their home communities (either with family or a guardian, or on their own) when the recidivist act occurred. Finally, post-discharge recidivism rates are compared using two indicators of successful parole completion.

Where did the Pre-Discharge Offense Occur?

Table 17 illustrates where the pre-discharge recidivist acts occurred. Nearly thirty-seven percent (36.5%) of youth that received a filing for an offense prior to discharge from the Division committed all of their pre-discharge offenses in a residential placement. Forty-seven percent (n=161) of pre-discharge recidivists committed all of their new offenses while on parole status, while another 16.2% (n=55) were filed upon for multiple offenses that occurred both while the youth was in residential placement and on parole. Overall, sixty-four percent (63.5%) of youth committed at least one of their offenses while on parole status (47.3% plus 16.2%)⁴².

⁴² Note that the third category (New Offenses in Residential Commitment and Parole) contains youth who committed offenses while on both residential and parole statuses.

Table 17: Where the Pre-Discharge Recidivist Act Occurred

	Number	Percent
New Offenses in Residential Commitment Only ⁴³	124	36.5%
New Offenses on Parole Only ⁴⁴	161	47.3%
New Offenses in Residential Commitment and Parole	55	16.2%
Pre-Discharge Recidivism Totals	340	100%

Prior recidivism studies found that new offenses occurred more often in residential placement rather than on parole. However, this year’s analysis shows that youth who received a pre-discharge filing were more likely to be on parole status than in residential placement.

Not only were there differences in youths’ residential status at the time of offense, but type of offense committed was significantly different for youth on parole compared with youth in residential placement⁴⁵ as well.

Table 18: Pre-Discharge Recidivism by Offense Type

Offense Type**	Residential		Parole		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Person (p<0.01)	58	58.0%	42	42.0%	100
Property (p<0.05)	35	35.4%	64	64.6%	99
Drug (p<0.05)	5	21.7%	18	78.3%	23
Weapon (p<0.01)	5	18.5%	22	81.5%	27
Other ⁴⁶ (p<0.01)	32	29.1%	78	70.9%	110
Total⁴⁷	124	43.5%	161	56.5%	285

⁴³ The residential commitment category includes 30 youth who did not parole, but were discharged directly to adult correctional facilities, turned 21, or escaped prior to being placed on parole.

⁴⁴ This category includes 10 youth who were on parole status, yet had been regressed into a residential placement at the time of their recidivist act.

⁴⁵ Youth who committed offenses on both residential and parole status were excluded from this analysis.

⁴⁶ Does not include escape offenses. For an analysis of escape offenses and pre-discharge recidivism see page 29.

⁴⁷ Categories are not mutually exclusive. A youth could have received filings on multiple charges and therefore be included in multiple categories.

Youth who re-offended in residential placement received new filings for pre-discharge person offenses (58.0%) at a higher rate than youth on parole status (42.0%). Conversely, youth on parole received filings for other types of offenses at a disproportionately higher rate than youth who re-offended in residential placement.

These analyses may indicate a reduction in offense severity. If incidents of offenses in residential placement continue to decrease it may point toward future reductions in person offenses committed by youth prior to discharge. Additionally, if staff in residential placements were able to further reduce physical altercations that might result in new charges (youth on youth assaults, for instance) some pre-discharge recidivist acts may be avoided.

Parole Adjustment (Post-Discharge Only)

When a youth is discharged from NYC they receive a parole adjustment rating. This rating is used to describe a youth’s performance while on parole, transitioning back into the community. It is used as an outcome measure for NYC that reflects the youth’s ability to adapt to life in a community setting (as opposed to a restrictive/structured residential placement). It is anticipated that youth who successfully reintegrate into community settings would be less likely to receive a new filing for a post-discharge offense than youth who were unsuccessful while under parole supervision.

Table 19: Post-Discharge Recidivism by Parole Adjustment

Parole Adjustment	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Successful	381	63.0%	224	37.0%	605	64.5%
Unsuccessful	160	55.9%	126	44.1%	286	30.5%
No Parole	32	68.1%	15	31.9%	47	5.0%
Total	573	61.1%	365	38.9%	938	100%

(n=938, missing=12)

Table 19 shows post-discharge recidivism rates⁴⁸ by parole adjustment rating at the time of discharge from the Division of Youth Corrections. Although the slight differences in recidivism rates are in the expected direction, these results were not statistically significant.

Job/School Status (Post-Discharge Only)

This study also investigated recidivism rates for youth who were gainfully employed or enrolled in school at the time of parole discharge, another measure of successful reintegration into the community. Gainful employment and school enrollment are an indication of “buying into” a pro-social lifestyle, therefore it is assumed that youth who were enrolled in school or employed at the time of discharge from NYC would have lower rates of recidivism than youth that were not enrolled in school or employed. Post-discharge recidivism rates⁴⁹ are shown in Table 20 below.

Table 20: Post-Discharge Recidivism by Job/School Status

Job/School Status	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Employed or Enrolled	431	62.6%	257	37.4%	688	72.7%
Not Employed or Enrolled	148	57.1%	111	42.9%	259	27.3%
Total	579	61.1%	368	38.9%	947	100%

(n=947, missing=3)

There was no statistically significant difference in recidivism rates for youth who were employed or enrolled in school at the time of discharge when compared with youth that were not in school or employed. Traditionally, this factor has been a strong indicator of post-discharge recidivism, however, this is the second cohort in the past three years where having a job or being enrolled in school at the time of discharge has not been a predictor of recidivist activity within the first year following discharge. A youth’s

⁴⁸ Pre-discharge recidivism rates were not analyzed for this factor because parole adjustments are not available until a youth is discharged from NYC.

⁴⁹ Pre-discharge recidivism rates were not analyzed for this factor because employment and school status at the time of discharge are not known prior to the youth being discharged from NYC.

employment or enrollment status only measures a single point in time for youth and therefore may not be the best measure of readiness to return to a pro-social lifestyle upon discharge. These measures do not guarantee continued involvement in school or employment status. The Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment (CJRA) includes risk and protective scores for both employment and school domains, which may better approximate a youth’s ability to maintain a pro-social lifestyle once discharged from DYC.

Comparison of Pre-Discharge and Post-Discharge Recidivism Rates

The sampling methodology for this report allows comparisons of post-discharge recidivism rates by pre-discharge recidivism. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 21.

Table 21: Post-Discharge Recidivism by Pre-Discharge Recidivism

	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
No Pre-Discharge Recidivism	391	64.1%	219	35.9%	610	64.2%
Pre-Discharge Recidivism	190	55.9%	150	44.1%	340	35.8%
Total	581	61.2%	369	38.8%	950	100%

**Chi-Square=6.204, p<0.05

As predicted, more youth in the FY 2007-08 discharge cohort who received a new filing during their commitment recidivated following discharge than youth who did not re-offend prior to discharge. While this is not surprising, it is interesting to note that 55.9% of the youth who received a filing for a new offense during commitment did not receive a new filing within a year following discharge. Therefore, a youth’s success post-discharge is not always negatively influenced by a pre-discharge recidivist act.

The results in Table 21 may simply reflect the increased supervision a youth receives while in residential placement and on parole. Or it could be an artifact of successful

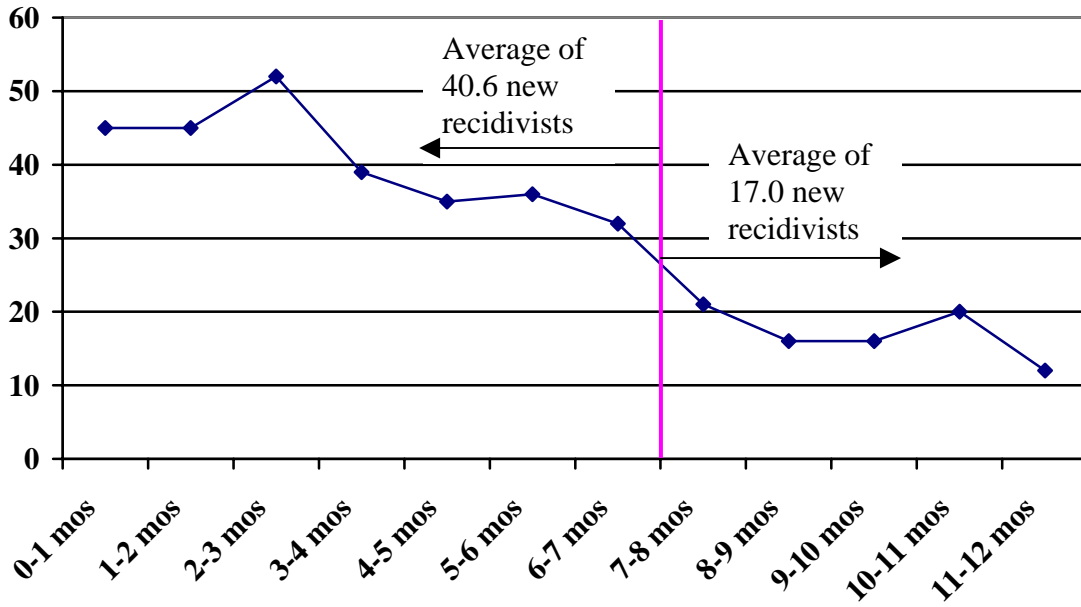
treatment and reintegration back into the community. In other words, one possible explanation for youth who re-offend while under supervision and who do not recidivate following discharge, is the influence of case planning and the provision of appropriate surveillance, treatment, and family services. To the extent that these services ameliorate risk factors and augment protective factors, the probability of re-offense will be markedly different for a youth upon discharge as compared to when that youth was originally committed.

Over the last five years the Division has undertaken a system-wide improvement initiative, the Continuum of Care (CofC) Initiative, which began in FY 2005-06 and is based on using effective juvenile justice strategies and principles founded on empirical research studies. As a part of the CofC initiative DYC introduced the CJRA instrument and has been using the results to more effectively case plan treatment strategies for youth, emphasizing providing the “right services at the right time.” This emphasis on the “right services at the right time”, one of DYC’s Five Key Strategies, includes targeting treatment resources to those youth with the highest need for treatment. This would undoubtedly include youth who have received new charges during their commitment sentence. It is not surprising that this effort, to allocate resources towards more effective and appropriate strategies for reducing the risk youth pose to the community, may have also reduced the likelihood of post-discharge recidivism for youth who demonstrated elevated risk levels for re-offense.

Time to First Post-Discharge Offense

Figure 14 shows the actual number of youth who recidivated each month after discharge. Looking at time to first offense for the twelve months following discharge, it is clear that of those youth who were going to re-offend, most would do so within the first 7 months (77%). For the first seven months, an average of 41 youth re-offended each month, compared with an average of only 17 during the last five months of the follow-up period.

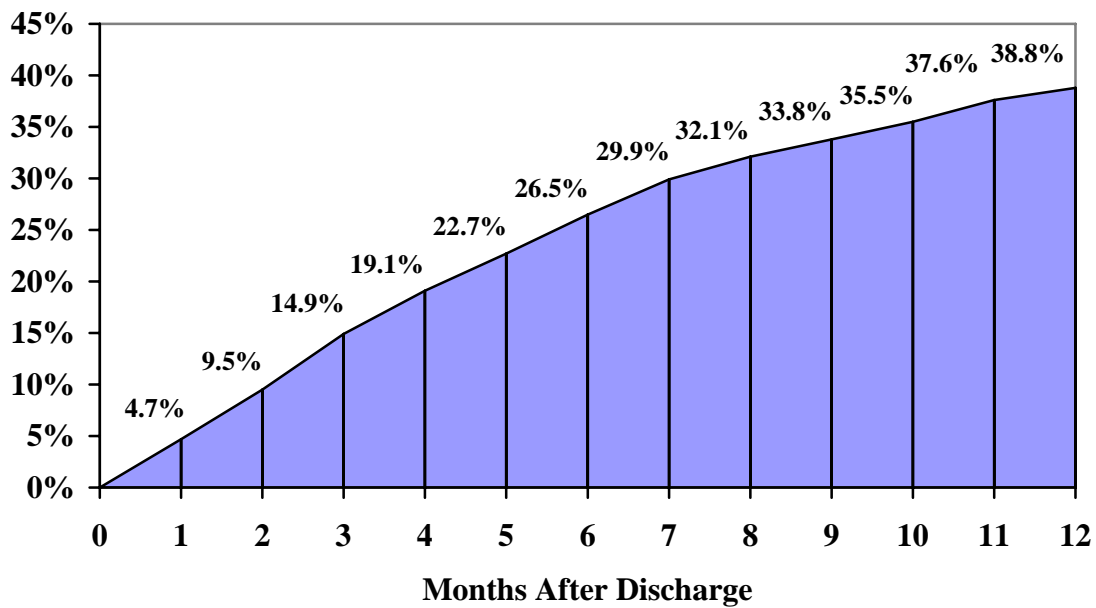
Figure 14: Number of New Recidivists by Month



The transition back into the community can be a tumultuous time for many youth. Youth are often returning to a community with little to no service availability, after spending more than two years, on average, receiving a steady dose of treatment services. If the Division is able to more effectively transition youth and refer them to providers in the community where they could access and continue receiving similar services to help reduce the likelihood of committing a new offense during those first few months after discharge, many of these youth might not ever commit another offense. The Continuum of Care Initiative has begun to target the needs of transitioning youth; however, providers are not always available in a youth's community to assist in these efforts.

Figure 15 shows the cumulative recidivism rate for each month of the post-discharge recidivism follow up period. This graph shows the post-discharge recidivism rate increasing over time as more youth receive filings each month.

Figure 15: Post-Discharge Recidivism Rate by Month



As seen above, the recidivism rate for this cohort grows to thirty percent (29.9%) by month seven (an average growth of 4.3% each month), yet only gains another 1.8% each of the last five months of the follow up period. In other words, the growth in the recidivism rate over the last five months is less than 40% of what it was in the first 7 months following discharge. Once again this points to the importance of the first several months for youth and the need to provide sustainable opportunities for youth to rely on once discharged from DYC supervision. Transition services, such as those provided by the Continuum of Care Initiative, help introduce youth to services in their home community that they are encouraged to use as a resource to sustain treatment effects after discharge.

SECTION TWO: The Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment (CJRA) and Recidivism

As a part of the Division's Continuum of Care initiative (a system-wide improvement initiative), which began in FY 2005-06, the Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment (CJRA) instrument was introduced. The CJRA is a fourth-generation risk instrument that was developed by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) and measures criminogenic risk, needs, and protective factors both from a static and dynamic perspective. The CJRA replaced the Colorado Young Offender - Level of Service Inventory (CYO-LSI) that DYC used for over a decade. Unlike the CYO-LSI, the CJRA also incorporates protective factor scales that are valuable when developing case-plans and referring youth to specific residential treatment placements.

Research has established and reaffirmed that there are a number of factors that strongly correlate to persistent and/or chronic delinquent behaviors. These criminogenic risk factors consist of a host of social, environmental, ecological, psychological and gender-based influences. The Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment is rooted in the following 12 criminogenic domains:

1. Criminal History
2. Gender
3. School
4. Use of Free Time
5. Employment
6. Relationships
7. Living Arrangements
8. Substance Abuse
9. Mental Health
10. Attitudes and Behaviors
11. Aggression
12. Skills

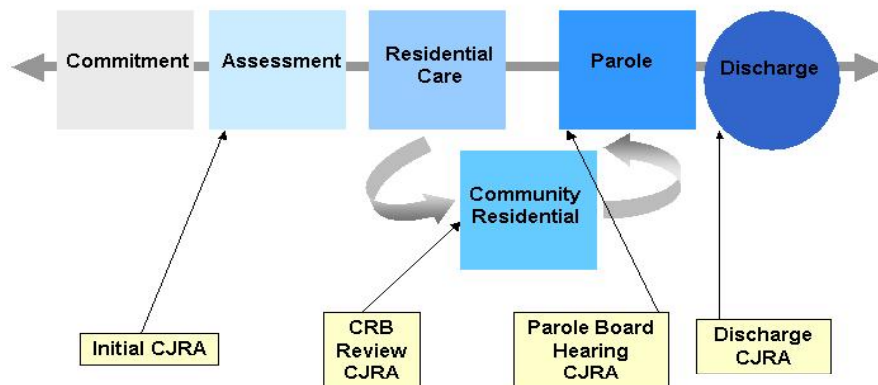
Although a number of criminogenic risk factors are static and not amendable to treatment interventions (Gender, Criminal History, etc.), the vast majority of these factors are dynamic in nature (Mental Health, Substance Abuse, etc.). These more dynamic risk

factors are relevant to prevention and rehabilitation in that they suggest promising intermediate objectives of programming, which when achieved, should be followed by a corresponding reduction in delinquent behaviors.

Along with risk factors for re-offense, the CJRA also incorporates protective factor scales intended to measure events or circumstances that reduce the likelihood of committing a new offense⁵⁰. Previous risk assessment instruments used by the Division of Youth Corrections did not incorporate protective factor scales; however, these scales have been valuable for client managers when developing case plans and referring youth to specific residential treatment placements.

Figure 16:

CJRA Assessment/Re-Assessment Points



*CJRA re-assessments are also mandated when a placement transition occurs, when LOS is reconsidered, and at staff discretion.

The following sub-sections will look at the CJRA at three points in time: initial assessment, prior to parole, and prior to discharge. Figure 16 graphically depicts some of the major re-assessment time frames required by DYC policy.

⁵⁰ Washington State Institute for Public Policy. “Juvenile Risk Assessment - Manual for the Colorado Division of Youth Corrections, Version 2.1” 2007.

Although post-discharge recidivism analyses include all youth in the FY 2007-08 discharge cohort, analyses of recidivism rates in residential placement and on parole will only include those youth who were eligible to have been assessed using the CJRA at an appropriate point in time. For initial assessment there were only 157 youth committed after the implementation of the CJRA (June 30, 2006) who have a completed CJRA within 90 days of commitment. For the analyses of recidivism rates while on parole, there were 511 youth who were initially placed on parole after June 30, 2006, and had a CJRA reassessment completed within 90 days prior to parole.

Two types of pre-discharge recidivism were identified in Section One of this report (see Table 17 pg. 38): recidivist acts that occurred while the youth was in a residential placement, and recidivist acts that occurred when a youth was on parole status. The following sections look at residential and parole recidivism separately compared to CJRA risk scores at the time of initial assessment (for residential recidivism) and at the time of parole (for recidivism on parole status). These recidivism rates are not comparable to overall pre-discharge recidivism rates⁵¹.

CJRA Risk Level (Initial CJRA) and Pre-Discharge Recidivism (Residential)

Residential recidivism is defined as a new filing for a felony or misdemeanor offense that occurred while the youth was under the supervision of a NYC residential placement. Residential placements include both State-operated secure commitment facilities and contract placements. Table 22 shows the pre-discharge recidivism rates by overall risk of recidivism as calculated using the initial CJRA in a youth's case file (within 90 days of commitment).

⁵¹ Residential and parole recidivism rates are two separate types of pre-discharge recidivism, however these rates cannot be compared with the overall pre-discharge recidivism rates reported in Section 1 of this report. These individual recidivism types only identify offenses that occur while a youth is on a specific commitment status. Additionally, because only a small sample of youth was eligible for assessment using the CJRA based upon their commitment date, these samples may have significant differences on any number of risk factors for recidivism.

Table 22: CJRA Risk (Initial CJRA) by Pre-Discharge Recidivism (Residential)

Risk of Re-Offense	No Residential Recidivism		Residential Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Low	9	100.0%	0	0.0%	9	5.8%
Moderate	36	97.3%	1	2.7%	37	23.9%
High	100	91.7%	9	8.3%	109	70.3%
Total	145	93.5%	10	6.5%	155	100%

(n=155, missing=2)

Only ten youth in the CJRA sample received a new filing for an offense that occurred in a residential placement. It is not surprising that these results are not statistically meaningful, because of the low number of youth who did commit an offense in residential placement. Statistical significance between groups is a calculation that is based on the number of cases in each group as well as the differences between groups; therefore, it takes a larger relative difference to be a significant finding (not because of chance) when group sizes are small.

CJRA Risk Level (Parole Hearing CJRA) by Recidivism on Parole

Unlike previous assessment instruments used by the Division, the CJRA is used to periodically reassess the risk of recidivism at specified points in time during commitment. Re-assessment of risk and protective factors at critical junctures during a youth's commitment sentence allows client managers to accurately assess risk of recidivism and base treatment decisions on the youth's current criminogenic needs instead of static historical factors. The parole hearing is one of those critical occasions where a client manager uses the CJRA to re-assess risk. A larger sample of this discharge cohort was re-assessed using the CJRA prior to initial parole than received an initial assessment at the time of commitment. Table 23 shows the rates of pre-discharge recidivism that occurred while a youth was on parole status for 511 youth with a completed CJRA within 90 days of their initial parole date.

Table 23: CJRA Risk Level (Parole Hearing CJRA) by Recidivism on Parole

Risk of Re-Offense	No Residential Recidivism		Residential Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Low	22	84.6%	4	15.4%	26	5.1%
Moderate	136	76.4%	42	23.6%	178	34.8%
High	237	77.2%	70	22.8%	307	60.1%
Total	395	77.3%	116	22.7%	511	100%

There were no statistically significant differences in rates of recidivism on parole by CJRA risk score. Although the raw scores indicate a lower rate of re-offense for youth assessed at the “Low” level, these results were not significant. This is most likely a factor of the small number of youth who were assessed in the “Low” risk of recidivism category (n=26) at the time of parole.

CJRA Risk Level (Most Recent CJRA) and Post-Discharge Recidivism Rates

Almost all (95.6%) of the youth in this discharge cohort had at least one CJRA prior to their discharge date. As shown in Table 24, post-discharge recidivism rates were significantly different by CJRA risk of re-offense.

Table 24: CJRA Risk Level by Post-Discharge Recidivism

Risk of Re-Offense**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Low	44	83.0%	9	17.0%	53	5.8%
Moderate	169	61.7%	105	38.3%	274	30.2%
High	310	58.6%	219	41.4%	529	58.3%
Incomplete CJRA	30	57.7%	22	42.3%	52	5.7%
Total	553	60.9%	355	39.1%	908	100%

**Chi-Square=12.358, p<0.01 (n=908, missing=42)

At the time of discharge more than half of the DYC FY 2007-08 discharge cohort (58.3%) was at a high risk for re-offending. The CJRA is based on the Washington State Juvenile Court Assessment (WSJCA) instrument. Research published in 2004 found that the “assessment produces a valid risk classification and that the risk and protective factors in the assessment have an empirically demonstrated association with

recidivism.”⁵² As anticipated, based on the research conducted on the WSJCA, youth with the highest risk of re-offense had higher rates of recidivism (41.4%) than youth with a moderate (38.3%) or low (17.0%) relative risk of re-offense.

Individual Domain Risk Scores and Post-Discharge Recidivism

Post-discharge recidivism results were also analyzed for significant differences by the risk and protective scores for each individual domain⁵³. As the preceding analysis shows, overall the CJRA is predictive of post-discharge recidivism. Youth who score higher on overall risk have higher rates of recidivism after one year following discharge. However, not all individual domains were as predictive. Table 25 highlights those individual domain risk scores that significantly impacted recidivism rates.

Table 25: CJRA Domain Risk Scores and Post-Discharge Recidivism

Criminal History Static Risk (Domain 1)**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Low	93	76.9%	28	23.1%	121	14.1%
Moderate	193	66.8%	96	33.2%	289	33.6%
High	242	53.7%	209	46.3%	451	52.4%
Total	528	61.3%	333	38.7%	861	100%
**Chi-Square=27.116, p<0.01 (n=861, missing=89)						
Relationships Dynamic Risk (Domain 6B) **	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Number	Number	Percent
Low	333	63.9%	188	36.1%	521	60.2%
Moderate	75	63.0%	44	37.0%	119	13.7%
High	122	54.0%	104	46.0%	226	26.1%
Total	530	61.2%	336	38.8%	866	100%
**Chi-Square=6.743, p<0.05 (n=866, missing=84)						

⁵² Washington State Institute for Public Policy. 2004. *Assessing Risk for Re-Offense: Validating the Washington State Court Assessment Instrument*.

⁵³ Risk and protective scores were normalized for this discharge cohort by grouping initial assessment CJRA data on the 157 youth with a commitment date after June 30, 2006 and an initial CJRA within 90 days of commitment. These scores were split into ‘Low’, ‘Moderate’, and ‘High’ levels so that approximately one third (33.3%) of initial assessments fell into each category.

Table 25 (continued): CJRA Domain Risk Scores and Post-Discharge Recidivism

Family Static Risk (Domain 7A)**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Number	Number	Percent
Low	109	70.3%	46	29.7%	155	18.8%
Moderate	114	58.2%	82	41.8%	196	23.8%
High	284	60.2%	188	39.8%	472	57.4%
Total	507	61.6%	316	38.4%	823	100%
**Chi-Square=6.373, p<0.05 (n=823, missing=127)						
Family Dynamic Risk⁵⁴ (Domain 7A)**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Number	Number	Percent
Low	211	67.4%	102	32.6%	313	46.2%
Moderate	83	61.5%	52	38.5%	135	19.9%
High	129	56.1%	101	43.9%	230	33.9%
Total	423	62.4%	255	37.6%	678	100%
**Chi-Square=7.360, p<0.05 (n=678, missing=272)						
Alcohol and Drugs Dynamic Risk (Domain 8B)**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Number	Number	Percent
Low	434	65.6%	228	34.4%	662	77.9%
Moderate	53	50.0%	53	50.0%	106	12.5%
High	31	37.8%	51	62.2%	82	9.6%
Total	518	60.9%	332	39.1%	850	100%
**Chi-Square=29.702, p<0.01 (n=850, missing=100)						
Aggression Dynamic Risk (Domain 11)**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Number	Number	Percent
Low	323	64.6%	177	35.4%	500	57.5%
Moderate	139	59.4%	95	40.6%	234	26.9%
High	71	52.2%	65	47.8%	136	15.6%
Total	533	61.3%	337	38.7%	870	100%

**Chi-Square=7.389, p<0.05 (n=870, missing=80)

⁵⁴ If a youth has not been living under adult supervision for the past 6 months this section of the CJRA is not completed. The result is more missing data for the Family Domain than some of the other CJRA domains.

Domain Risk scores in Table 25 are identified as being either “Static” or “Dynamic”. A static risk factor is a domain score that is based on historical data and cannot be improved with treatment. A dynamic risk factor is based on a youth’s current living and social arrangements and can be targeted by treatment goals during commitment. For this FY 2007-08 discharge cohort, five individual domain scores were correlated with higher post-discharge recidivism rates. Higher risk scores in the Criminal History (static), Relationships (dynamic), Family (both static and dynamic risk scores), Alcohol and Drug (dynamic), and Aggression (dynamic) scales were predictive of a higher incidence of post-discharge recidivism for this discharge cohort.

Individual Domain Protective Scores and Post-Discharge Recidivism

Most juvenile risk assessments include risk scales similar to the ones analyzed in Table 25; however, the concept of using protective scales to mitigate risk is a relatively new concept. Conceptually, protective factors are skills that youth can develop to help protect themselves from the influence of risk factors that would normally predict an increased likelihood of re-offending. The CJRA incorporates protective scales into risk assessment in an effort to guide treatment plans to help protect against the effect of risk, specifically static risk factors that cannot be directly influenced through treatment efforts.

Table 26 shows the two protective scales on a youth’s final commitment CJRA that were correlated with post-discharge recidivism rates. It is expected that protective scores from the CJRA be inversely correlated with recidivism; in other words, higher scores are expected to result in lower recidivism rates because of the increased protective effect against other risk factors.

Table 26: CJRA Domain Protective Scores and Post-Discharge Recidivism

Family Dynamic Protective⁵⁵ (Domain 7B)**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Low	161	57.1%	121	42.9%	282	34.3%
Moderate	124	59.3%	85	40.7%	209	25.4%
High	222	66.9%	110	33.1%	332	40.3%
Total	507	61.6%	316	38.4%	823	100%

**Chi-Square=6.772, p<0.05 (n=823, missing=127)

Alcohol and Drugs Dynamic Protective (Domain 8B) **	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Number	Number	Percent
Low	465	62.8%	276	37.2%	741	87.2%
High	53	48.6%	56	51.4%	109	12.8%
Total	518	60.9%	332	39.1%	850	100%

**Chi-Square=7.969, p<0.01 (n=850, missing=100)

As predicted, youth who have more family protective influences near the end of their commitment re-offended less often within one year following discharge (33.1%) than youth with lower family protective influences. The opposite relationship was seen with youth with high protective scores on the alcohol and drug scale. This is potentially a result of the high level of treatment and supervision given to youth in residential placement and while on parole. Dynamic scales, such as these, report current use of alcohol and drugs and the level of disruption for the youth. A youth who is on parole supervision may not currently be using any substances simply because they know they are being watched. Once discharged from DYCS, if a youth relapses into drug or alcohol abuse, the protective effect of supervision would be nullified.

Change in CJRA Scores from Initial CJRA to Last CJRA

Analysis of change in risk and protective factor scores is made possible because the CJRA instrument is used for re-assessment to assess treatment need and adjust treatment

⁵⁵ If a youth has not been living under adult supervision for the past 6 months this section of the CJRA is not completed. The result is more missing data for the Family Domain than some of the other CJRA domains.

goals at various times over the course of a youth's commitment. The following section will look at the change in domain and overall risk scores for youth who have an eligible *initial* assessment using the CJRA and a *subsequent* CJRA to compare. Since the majority of youth included in the FY 2007-08 discharge cohort were committed prior to the implementation of the CJRA (77.8%) only those youth committed after June 30, 2006 who have a completed CJRA within 90 days of commitment are included in the following analyses (N=157).

Changes in CJRA Risk Levels

Table 27 shows the percent of youth who scored at the highest level of risk⁵⁶ (the highest 33% of all risk scores) at assessment and then subsequently at their last CJRA conducted before discharging from the Division. This is shown looking at overall risk⁵⁷, and also by particular domain. Only those youth who were committed after the implementation of the CJRA (June 30, 2006), and only those domains with *dynamic* risk scores (scores that can change through treatment), are included in this analysis.

The hypothesis is that there should be a reduction in risk scores from the time a youth is committed until the time that a youth leaves the Division, therefore it was not surprising to see that a lower percentage of youth scored in the highest range for all eight dynamic risk scores analyzed as well as the overall risk of recidivism score. The results shown in table 27 should be interpreted cautiously. Youth who were eligible for this analysis had significantly shorter lengths of service, received fewer mandatory sentences, and had lower rates of pre-discharge recidivism than youth who were committed prior to the implementation of the CJRA. Therefore, although the Division anticipates similar trends in reduction of risk over time for the entire discharge sample, the results shown in Table 27 are not necessarily representative of the entire FY 2007-08 discharge cohort. See page 57 for a description of the differences between youth who were eligible for inclusion in this CJRA analysis and all other youth in the FY 2007-08 discharge cohort.

⁵⁶ Risk and protective scores were normalized for this discharge cohort by grouping initial assessment CJRA data on the 157 youth with a commitment date after June 30, 2006 and an initial CJRA within 90 days of commitment. These scores were split into 'Low', 'Moderate', and 'High' levels so that approximately one third (33.3%) of initial assessments fell into each category.

⁵⁷ See Table 12, pg. 26.

Table 27: Change in CJRA Risk Levels (Overall and by Domain)

Risk Factors by Domain⁵⁸	Percent High Risk at Assessment	Percent High Risk at Discharge	Percent Change
D3 – School	32.2%	13.9%	-56.8%
D6 – Relationships	45.9%	19.5%	-57.5%
D7 – Family	42.9%	24.4%	-43.1%
D8 – Alcohol and Drugs	34.4%	7.4%	-78.5%
D9 – Mental Health	23.6%	8.3%	-64.8%
D10 – Attitudes and Behaviors	42.7%	10.5%	-75.4%
D11 – Aggression	36.3%	9.9%	-72.7%
D12 – Skills	37.6%	5.3%	-85.9%
Overall Risk of Re-Offending	70.3%	51.0%	-27.5%

Changes in CJRA Protective Levels

Table 28 shows by domain the percent of youth who scored at the highest level of protection⁵⁹ against re-offending at assessment and then subsequently at their last CJRA conducted before discharging from the Division⁶⁰.

Similar to the results observed in the analysis on change in risk factors from assessment to discharge, these results are mostly in the anticipated direction and are probably not generalizable to the entire discharge cohort because of significant differences in the sample of youth who were eligible for inclusion in this analysis. With the exception of

⁵⁸ Only analyzes dynamic risk scores because static risk cannot be changed through treatment.

⁵⁹ Risk and protective scores were normalized for this discharge cohort by grouping initial assessment CJRA data on the 157 youth with a commitment date after June 30, 2006 and an initial CJRA within 90 days of commitment. These scores were split into ‘Low’, ‘Moderate’, and ‘High’ levels so that approximately one third (33.3%) of initial assessments fell into each category.

⁶⁰ Only those youth who were committed after the implementation of the CJRA (June 30, 2006), and only those domains with dynamic risk scores (scores that can change through treatment), are included in this analysis.

the Mental Health Domain, the percent of youth with the highest grouping of scores for the protective domains increased from commitment to discharge.

Table 28: Change in CJRA Protective Levels (By Domain Area)

Protective Factors by Domain⁶¹	Percent High Protective Score at Assessment	Percent High Protective Score at Discharge	Percent Change
D3 – School	37.6%	42.3%	12.5%
D4 – Use of Free Time	33.8%	63.8%	88.9%
D5 - Employment	52.9%	77.5%	46.5%
D6 – Relationships	31.2%	81.2%	160.3%
D7 – Family	33.8%	54.1%	60.1%
D8 – Alcohol and Drugs	6.4%	18.9%	195.3%
D9 – Mental Health	21.0%	15.2%	-27.6%
D10 – Attitudes and Behaviors	31.2%	70.6%	126.3%
D11 – Aggression	30.6%	64.2%	109.8%
D12 - Skills	35.7%	92.7%	159.7%

Although the preceding tables did show that a large number of youth did reduce risk and increase protective factors from commitment through discharge, analysis of the raw domain scores did not show any change in post-discharge recidivism rates for this sample of 157 youth who were eligible for analysis. In other words, change in risk by individual domain scores (both risk and protective scores) did not predict any change in recidivism rates. In future studies with larger sample sizes it would be anticipated that youth for whom the Division reduces risk or increases protective scores in individual domains will have lower recidivism rates than youth who stay the same or have worse scores at the time of discharge.

⁶¹ Only analyzes dynamic protective scores because static factors cannot be changed through treatment.

Comparison of CJRA Sample to the Larger Discharge Cohort

By the very nature of the selection process for the prior analysis sample, youth committed after June 30, 2006, it is expected that youth in the sample will have a shorter length of service (LOS) than youth in the overall discharge cohort. As seen in Table 29 youth in the CJRA sample have significantly shorter residential LOS (10.8 months) and also a shorter parole LOS (5.7 months) when compared with the larger discharge cohort (20.0 months residential LOS and 6.8 months on parole)⁶².

Table 29: LOS Comparison – CJRA Sample and Other Youth Discharged in FY 2007-08

Length of Service	CJRA Sample (n=157)	Other Youth (n=793)	Discharge cohort (n=950)
Residential**	10.8 months	20.0 months	18.5 months
Parole**	5.7 months	6.8 months	6.7 months

**Residential: F=181.594, p<0.01 **Parole: F=12.781, p<0.01

The difference in LOS can most likely be attributed to the fact that a lower percentage of youth in the CJRA sample were committed to NYC under a mandatory sentence (20.4%) than other youth in the FY 2007-08 discharge cohort (28.1%).

Table 30: Original Sentence Type – CJRA Sample and Other Youth Discharged in FY 2007-08

Original Commitment Type**	CJRA Sample (n=157)	Other Youth (n=793)	Discharge cohort (n=950)
Non-Mandatory	79.6%	71.9%	73.2%
Mandatory	20.4%	28.1%	26.8%

**Chi-Square=3.997, p<0.05

There was also significant difference in the percent of the CJRA sample with a pre-discharge filing compared with other youth in the overall discharge cohort.

⁶² The CJRA sample group did not have any significant differences in demographic factors such as gender, ethnicity, or original offense type when compared with other youth in the overall discharge cohort for FY 2007-08.

Table 31: Recidivism Rates CJRA Sample and Comparison Group

Pre-Discharge Recidivism**	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
CJRA Sample	122	77.7%	35	22.3%	157	16.5%
Other Youth	488	61.5%	305	38.5%	793	83.5%
Total	610	64.2%	340	35.8%	950	100%
**Chi-Square=14.908, p<0.01						
Post-Discharge Recidivism	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
CJRA Sample	99	63.1%	58	36.9%	157	16.5%
Other Youth	482	60.8%	311	39.2%	793	83.5%
Total	581	61.2%	369	38.8%	950	100%

Youth in the CJRA sample received fewer new filings for felony or misdemeanor offenses prior to discharge than youth in the comparison group (see Table 31). This finding is not surprising because often a new filing during commitment will result in a revocation or suspension of parole and in the case of a delinquent adjudication the youth is likely to be re-committed. Therefore it is expected that the longer lengths of service observed in the comparison group will be highly correlated with increased rates of pre-discharge recidivism. There were no differences in post-discharge recidivism rates.

SECTION THREE: Ridge View Recidivism

The Ridge View Sample:

This section of the report looks at recidivism rates for 356 males who were placed at the Ridge View Youth Services Center for at least a 90-day length of service and who discharged in FY 2007-08.

Ridge View Youth Services Center is a unique treatment option for eligible youth. The Ridge View program is intended as a primary placement option for certain youth, and those youth placed in Ridge View Youth Services Center (RVYSC) tend to

have longer lengths of service in their initial placement and are often paroled directly from Ridge View to the community. Aside from this exception, most youth committed to DYC experience multiple placements throughout their commitment. Therefore, collection of recidivism outcomes is not generally useful in measuring the performance of individual programs. However, since the youth that are placed at the Ridge View facility tend to have fewer placements that could influence re-offending behaviors it is appropriate to report outcome measures for this facility that may not be as meaningful if the analyses were conducted for other DYC treatment programs. The Division's annual recidivism report does not report on outcomes for any other individual programs or facilities.

This section will look at a sub-group of the total cohort of youth (n=950) who discharged from the Division in FY 2007-08. The youth evaluated in this section were placed at the Ridge View Youth Services Center (RVYSC) for at least a ninety-day length of service during their commitment. This section also provides a program description for Ridge View and compares the Ridge View group with all other males from the FY 2007-08 discharge cohort that were not placed at RVYSC. Finally, some recidivism outcome measures will be reported for the youth who were treated at the Ridge View Youth Services Center.

The Ridge View Program⁶³

The Rite of Passage (ROP) organization operates the Ridge View Youth Services Center program under the terms of a contract with the Division, and within the framework of a positive peer culture. This framework recognizes the strengths and potential of all youth in the program, and relies on the strong peer normative environment as a mechanism for control and positive influences on youth behavior. The program focuses on long-term behavior change in youth, rather than just immediate control while in the facility. It uses peer group influence, staff role modeling, and skill development as the primary mechanisms to affect positive change. To ensure compliance with State standards for correctional care, DYC staff closely monitors program operations.

The focus of the Ridge View program is skill building through academics, vocational training, and athletics, combined with positive peer and staff interactions and counseling opportunities. A unique feature of the program is that the facility holds a charter with Denver Public Schools (DPS), allowing students to graduate with a diploma from a DPS high school, rather than an alternative school. In addition, Ridge View students who have earned sufficient privileges can compete with other area high schools in various sports. Numerous athletic programs are offered including, football, soccer, baseball, wrestling, cross-country, cycling, rugby, track and field, etc. Ridge View students are referred to as "student athletes" as opposed to "clients". The focus on athletics supports the positive peer culture maintained at Ridge View while developing teamwork and camaraderie.

Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT)

In December of 2006 ROP began developing an integrated assessment and case plan process to be highly compatible with DYC's Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment (CJRA) initiative. The Positive Achievement Change Tool process was fully implemented with reassessments, final assessments, and case plans by May of 2008 and similar to the CJRA was based on the Washington State Juvenile Court Assessment (WSJCA) instrument.

⁶³ For a more historical description of the Ridge View Program, please reference Appendix C of this report.

The PACT is a validated 126-item assessment tool that measures factors highly related to criminal behavior, very similar to DYC's CJRA tool. Once a student is accepted to Ridge View, CJRA data is fed into ROP's Positive Achievement Change Tool, which results in a Measured Achievement Plan; a prioritized set of risk factors shown by research to be predictive of recidivism. This plan guides ROP case managers to specifically target the highest risk factors with ROP's evidence based programming while youth are in the Ridge View facility.

By prescriptively targeting high-risk areas through the CJRA-PACT system, with evidence based Cognitive Behavioral Training (CBT), ROP staff can hone in on individual issues more effectively. ROP provides an array of CBT curriculum including Pathways for Self Discovery, Thinking for a Change, Aggression Replacement Training, Restorative Solutions and Active Parenting to optimize individual counseling in order to lower associated risks. Since the PACT instrument was implemented so late in FY 2007-08, none of the youth in this discharge cohort would have received any case planning assistance from the PACT. However, it is anticipated that outcome measures for future cohorts of youth will be influenced by these system improvements.

Family Integration

There is also a main focus on family integration on the Ridge View campus. Approved family members are encouraged to participate in scheduled family visits. Family visits occur every three weeks on a rotating schedule. Students are allowed to make a brief phone call to approved family members once a week. The amount of phone minutes is based on the student's status in the program. In addition, family members are encouraged to attend monthly staffing reviews on their son's progress with the DYC Client Manager and Ridge View staff present. Ridge View also offers the Family After-Care Support and Transition (FAST) group to involved family members. The FAST group meets two times per month, and focuses on youth and their families.

The VALIDATE Model

Another core component of individual youth case plans is the VALIDATE model, with each letter representing an area every student must work on. This model is depicted in Figure 17.

Figure 17: Ridge View Validate Model

V	- Vocational Training
A	- Athletics
L	- Life Skills
I	- Individual Graduation Plan
D	- Demonstrated Behavioral Changes
A	- Aftercare
T	- Treatment
E	- Education

In order to officially “validate,” or graduate, from the Ridge View program, each of the above VALIDATE components must be completed. The youth’s peer group and staff must affirm that the youth has fulfilled each requirement. Once these areas have been completed, and the youth has maintained a RAMS (Respect, Attitude, Motivation and Spirit) status for four consecutive months, he is eligible to officially graduate from the program. Most case plans are designed so that a youth’s graduation date closely coincides with his parole date. However, youth do not always go onto parole after graduation. Some move to step-down community placements, while others remain at Ridge View until parole, or until another placement is made.

Mount Evans Qualifying House (Q-House)

In August 2006 Rite of Passage (ROP) opened a 15-bed group home in Idaho Springs licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services as a Residential Child Care Facility (RCCF). The students selected to step-down to ROP’s Q-House are considered part of Ridge View’s “transition” program and are comprised of highly screened graduates of Ridge View Youth Services Center. In addition to Ridge View’s own

requirements to be a Qualifying House (Q-House) resident, Clear Creek County maintains a Community Review Board (CRB) that ensures youth are appropriate for this placement from a community perspective. The key characteristics for referral are a lack of appropriate community support and youth who are targeted to be living independently from family or friends while on parole and after discharge.

Q-House students work full time, attend college classes online, perform community service, and participate in the recreational activities Clear Creek County has to offer. Each day ROP staff accompanies students to the workplace or to participate in community service activities. For successful community transitions, Q-House student goals include earning money to repay restitution, saving for independent living and providing meaningful public service.

Comparing Ridge View Youth with Other DYC Males

The cohort of Ridge View youth studied in this section is a sub-set of the entire discharge population studied in Section One: “DYC Recidivism Rates for Youth Discharged.” Youth were selected to the Ridge View cohort if they were discharged from DYC during the State FY 2007-08 and had at least a 90-day length of service (LOS) at Ridge View Youth Services Center during their commitment. The RVYSC group consists of 356 males discharged from the Division of Youth Corrections during FY 2007-08.

Youth in the Ridge View sample committed more property offenses, and have more prior juvenile justice system involvement than other DYC males discharged in FY 2007-08.

This section compares youth in the Ridge View discharge cohort with all of the other males discharged from DYC during the same fiscal year that did not attend RVYSC or spent less than 90 days at the facility (n=464). These two groups are compared on a myriad of demographic characteristics as well as on some risk factors for re-offending.

Ethnicity

Table 32 shows differences in the ethnic distribution of youth discharged from the Division during FY 2007-08 who were served by the Ridge View program and all other males discharged during the same time period.

Table 32: Ethnic Differences between Ridge View and Other NYC Males

Ethnicity**	Ridge View Youth Percent	NYC Males Percent	TOTAL
African-American	21.9%	15.1%	148
Hispanic	44.7%	30.6%	301
White	31.5%	50.4%	346
Other ⁶⁴	2.0%	3.9%	25
Total	N=356	N=464	820

**Chi-Square=35.644, p<0.01

There were higher rates of minority populations in the Ridge View group when compared with other NYC males. Although these results are statistically significant, there were no differences in pre-discharge or post-discharge recidivism rates attributed to ethnicity in the larger census of all youth discharged in FY 2007-08. Therefore this finding is not expected to influence the comparison of recidivism rates between the Ridge View group and other NYC males⁶⁵.

Age at Commitment

The average age at the time of commitment for youth placed at Ridge View was 16.5 years. This is slightly older (but not a statistically significant difference) than the average age at commitment for other NYC males (16.4 years).

The majority of youth were 16 (29.5%) or 17 (40.7%) years of age at the time of first placement in Ridge View Youth Services Center. Table 33 shows the distribution of these youth by age at time of placement.

⁶⁴ This category includes Native American and Asian American youth as well as those officially identified as "other." These categories are not combined because of commonalities among them, but because the numbers of youth in each category are too small when taken alone to make valid statistical comparisons.

⁶⁵ There were no significant recidivism rate differences by ethnic group for either sub-sample of youth.

Table 33: Age at Placement in Ridge View⁶⁶

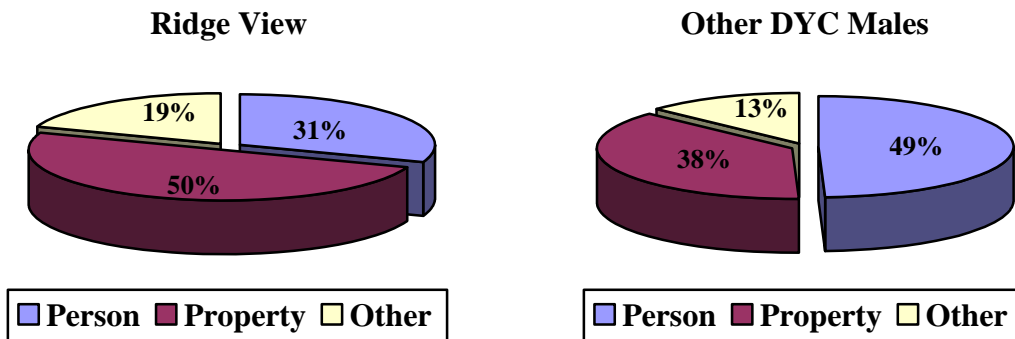
Age	Number Placed	Percent
13	1	0.3%
14	23	6.5%
15	53	14.9%
16	105	29.5%
17	145	40.7%
18	25	7.0%
19	4	1.1%
Total	356	100%

Offense Types

Eligibility restrictions based on type of offense, mental health needs, and other factors related to youths’ risk and need levels could potentially lead to some differences between youth placed in the Ridge View facility and the overall DYC male population.

As Figure 18 indicates, half of the Ridge View sample (50.0%) was committed for property offenses, compared with 37.5% of other DYC males. Similarly only 30.6% of males placed at Ridge View were committed for person offenses compared with 49.6% of other DYC males.

Figure 18: Type of Offense



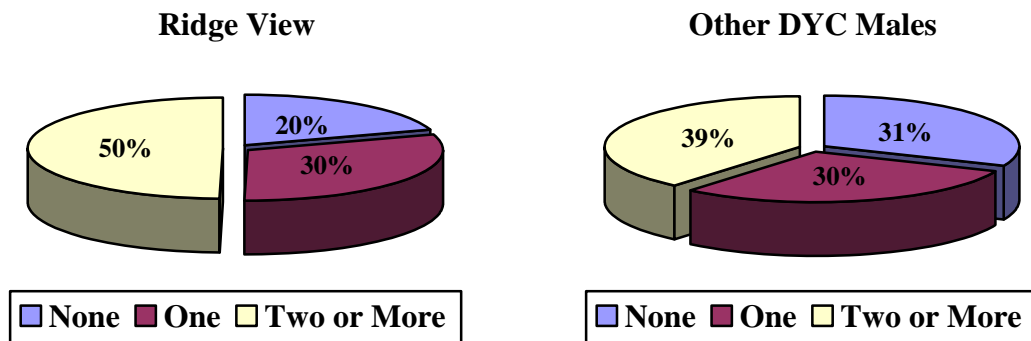
⁶⁶ Represents age at time of placement in Ridge View, rather than age at the time of commitment. Because of the delay between commitment and placement, no comparison can be made with age at commitment for other DYC males.

The differences in types of offenses were statistically significant⁶⁷. Since property offenders tend to recidivate at higher rates than other offenders it would be assumed, given these results, that youth in the Ridge View sample might have a higher risk for re-offending than other DYC males.

Prior “System” Involvement

Another estimation of risk of recidivism is prior involvement in the juvenile justice system. Figure 19 shows a significantly higher proportion of youth in the Ridge View cohort with two or more prior adjudications than the remaining DYC male population⁶⁸, indicating an elevated risk for recidivism.

Figure 19: Number of Prior Adjudications



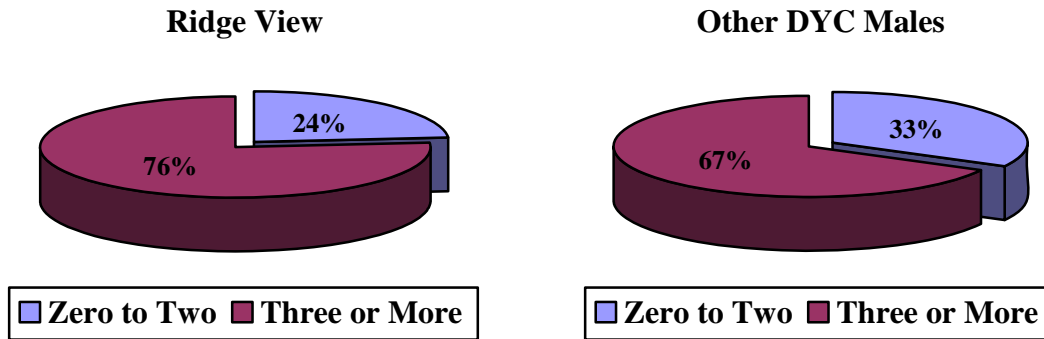
Similarly, a comparison of the number of prior detention admissions between groups (see Figure 20) shows a statistically significant difference in the percentage of Ridge View males with three or more prior detention admissions (76.4%), when compared to other DYC males (67.2%)⁶⁹.

⁶⁷ Chi-Square=30.161, p<0.01

⁶⁸ Chi-Square=15.309, p<0.01

⁶⁹ Chi-Square=8.252, p<0.01.

Figure 20: Number of Prior Detention Admissions



Length of Service (LOS)

Youth in this discharge cohort, placed at RVYSC, had a slightly longer average total commitment LOS (25.9 months) than other NYC males (25.1 months). Total commitment length of service includes time spent in a residential placement and time spent under parole supervision. Differences in total commitment length of service were not statistically significant.

Although LOS differences were not found to be significant there were differences between groups in the types of commitment sentences received. Other NYC males had a higher percentage of youth with non-mandatory commitment sentences and none of the youth in the Ridge View cohort were sentenced as aggravated offenders. In addition, an analysis of LOS by sentence type found that youth who attended the Ridge View Youth Services Center (RVYSC) who also had a non-mandatory sentence had longer residential lengths of service than other NYC youth with non-mandatory sentences (2.2 months longer on average).

All youth in these groups were subject to the mandatory parole statutes and would have been required to spend a minimum of 6 months on parole status, in the community, prior to discharge from the Division. Time spent under parole supervision was found to be similar for the Ridge View sample (6.6 months) when compared with other NYC males (6.8 months).

Ridge View Recidivism Results

This section reports recidivism and other outcome information for the 356 youth discharged from the Division of Youth Corrections between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008, who were placed at Ridge View Youth Services Center (RVYSC) for more than 90 days during their commitment to the Division.

Ridge View Recidivism

Pre-Discharge: 34.0%

Post-Discharge: 44.7%

The Ridge View cohort is compared with all other males discharged from NYC during this same time period who did not spend time at RVYSC (n=464). The term “pre-discharge” is used to identify offenses filed during residential placement and/or parole. The term “post-discharge” refers to offenses filed within one year after the youth was discharged from NYC.

Pre-Discharge Recidivism: A filing for a new felony or misdemeanor offense that occurred prior to discharge (while the youth is under NYC supervision) from the Division of Youth Corrections.

Post-Discharge Recidivism: A filing for a new felony or misdemeanor offense that occurred within one year following discharge from the Division of Youth Corrections.

The comparison of groups, Ridge View youth and all other NYC males discharged in FY 2007-08, suggests that recidivism rates will be higher for the Ridge View sample. Ridge View youth scored higher on almost all of the risk of recidivism factors (offense type, risk scores, and prior involvement in the juvenile justice system) than the comparison group. Table 34 shows the pre-discharge and post-discharge recidivism rates for the Ridge View sample and other NYC males discharged in FY 2007-08.

Table 34: Recidivism Rates RVYSC and RV Comparison Group

	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Ridge View	235	66.0%	121	34.0%	356	43.4%
Other DYC Males	290	62.5%	174	37.5%	464	56.6%
Total	525	64.0%	295	36.0%	820	100%

	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Ridge View	197	55.3%	159	44.7%	356	43.4%
Other DYC Males	283	61.0%	181	39.0%	464	56.6%
Total	480	58.5%	340	41.5%	820	100%

Ridge View youth had slightly lower rates of recidivism before discharge and somewhat higher rates of recidivism within one year following discharge; however, there were no statistically significant differences in recidivism rates by group. Of the 356 youth in the RVYSC group, 34.0% had a new misdemeanor or felony offense filed prior to discharge. In comparison, 37.5% of other DYC males discharged in FY 2007-08 received a new filing during their commitment. Youth in the Ridge View sample had a slightly higher rate of post-discharge recidivism (44.7%), compared with other males discharged during the same fiscal year (39.0%).

The lack of a statistically significant difference is an interesting finding in and of itself. As observed in the comparison of risk factors for these two samples, Ridge View youth were more often committed for property offenses and had more prior juvenile justice system involvement when compared to the other DYC males discharged in FY 2007-08. The current finding of no difference in rates implies that the treatment received by this cohort was at least slightly responsible for mitigating the differences assessed in risk of recidivism at the time of commitment.

The following sub-sections will show analyses of the Ridge View cohort's recidivism rates by specific demographic and risk factors. Throughout this report a finding followed by "***" indicates a statistically significant difference between groups.

DYC Management Region

DYC has a regionally based management structure, operating from four management regions in the State (see Figure 7, pg. 19) The Central Region consists of four judicial districts and includes the major counties of Denver, Jefferson, Arapahoe, and Douglas. The Northeast Region consists of five judicial districts and includes the major counties of Adams, Boulder, Larimer, and Weld. The Southern Region consists of seven judicial districts and includes the major counties of El Paso and Pueblo. The Western Region consists of the six judicial districts on the western slope including the county of Mesa. Unlike most DYC placements, which are generally contracted separately for each management region, Ridge View Youth Services Center treats clients from all four regions. Table 35 shows a breakdown of new offenses during and after commitment by DYC management region.

Table 35: Ridge View Recidivism Rates by DYC Management Region

Region	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Central	121	71.2%	49	28.8%	170	47.8%
Northeast	56	60.2%	37	39.8%	93	26.1%
Southern	43	68.3%	20	31.7%	63	17.7%
Western	15	50.0%	15	50.0%	30	8.4%
Total	235	66.0%	121	34.0%	356	100%

Region	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Central	102	60.0%	68	40.0%	170	47.8%
Northeast	48	51.6%	45	48.4%	93	26.1%
Southern	36	57.1%	27	42.9%	63	17.7%
Western	11	36.7%	19	63.3%	30	8.4%
Total	197	55.3%	159	44.7%	356	100%

There were no statistically meaningful differences found for Ridge View recidivism rates by DYC Management Region. The lowest levels of pre-discharge and post-discharge recidivism rates for the Ridge View sample are found in the Central Region (28.8% and 40.0%, respectively). The highest rates are in the Western Region, (50.0% and 63.3%); however, it is important to note the small number of youth from the Western Region

placed at the Ridge View Facility. Statistical significance between groups is a calculation that is based on the number of cases in each group as well as the differences between groups; therefore, it takes a larger relative difference to be a significant finding (not due to chance) when group sizes are small.

Number of Escapes

The CDHS TRAILS database tracks the number of times a youth escapes from residential placement. NYC policy defines an escape as a juvenile who has left a facility’s custody without proper authorization or a juvenile who has not returned to a facility within four hours of the prescribed time from any authorized leave. Ridge View youth with more escapes received more new filings for felony or misdemeanor offenses prior to discharge from NYC⁷⁰ and within one year following discharge⁷¹.

Table 36: Ridge View Recidivism Rates by NYC Escape

Any NYC Escape**	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
No	159	80.3%	39	19.7%	198	55.6%
Yes	76	48.1%	82	51.9%	158	44.4%
Total	235	66.0%	121	34.0%	356	100%

**Chi-Square=40.614, p<0.01

Any NYC Escape**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
No	122	61.6%	76	38.4%	198	55.6%
Yes	75	47.5%	83	52.5%	158	44.4%
Total	197	55.3%	159	44.7%	356	100%

**Chi-Square=7.117, p<0.01

It is important to note that the District Attorney’s Office in Arapahoe County, where Ridge View is located, has a policy of always filing charges on escapes. This could inflate the pre-discharge recidivism rates for youth who escape from RYVSC when compared with other NYC males who might have escapes in other jurisdictions.

⁷⁰ F=36.054, p<0.01

⁷¹ F=6.286, p<0.05

Number of Re-Commitments

The CDHS TRAILS data system also tracks the number of times a committed youth receives an additional commitment sentence while they are still fulfilling a sentence to DYC. Since all re-commitments are the product of another charge being filed against the youth, either before⁷² or during their commitment, it is assumed that re-committed youth will have higher rates of pre-discharge recidivism than youth that have no re-commitments. Table 37 displays the rate of recidivism by the number of re-commitments.

Table 37: Ridge View Recidivism Rates by Number of Re-commitments

Number of Re-commitments**	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
None	201	73.6%	72	26.4%	273	76.7%
One	31	48.4%	33	51.6%	64	18.0%
Two or More	3	15.8%	16	84.2%	19	5.3%
Total	235	66.0%	121	34.0%	356	100%
**Chi-Square=37.225 p<0.01						
Number of Re-commitments	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
None	155	56.8%	118	43.2%	273	76.7%
One	30	46.9%	34	53.1%	64	18.0%
Two or More	12	63.2%	7	36.8%	19	5.3%
Total	197	55.3%	159	44.7%	356	100%

The majority of youth in the Ridge View sample never receive a re-commitment sentence (76.7%). Nonetheless, the pre-discharge recidivism rate is much higher for re-committed youth than the rate for youth that do not have any re-commitments. Most of the youth with multiple re-commitments (84.2%) and over half of the youth with exactly one re-commitment (51.6%) received a new filing during their commitment, compared with only 26.4% of those who did not receive any re-commitment sentences. Post-discharge recidivism results were not statistically significant.

⁷² A youth could receive a re-commitment for an offense that occurred prior to their current commitment date. A re-commitment occurs whenever a youth currently serving a commitment sentence is committed to DYC for another offense, regardless of the date of the offense.

Risk of Recidivism – Prior “System” Involvement

Prior Out-of-Home Placements - During the first thirty days of commitment to DYC, youth undergo a battery of assessments to determine placement needs, treatment needs, and to evaluate the risk the youth poses to himself (i.e. suicide risk) and the community (i.e. public safety). This recidivism study examined a number of factors that have traditionally been predictive of the risk to re-offend.

Prior out-of-home placements can include inpatient mental health or substance abuse treatment facilities, Child Welfare placements, as well as any prior DYC placements. Table 38 shows Ridge View recidivism rates by number of prior out-of-home placements.

Table 38: Ridge View Recidivism by Prior Out-Of-Home Placements

Number of Prior Out-Of-Home Placements	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
None	94	70.1%	40	29.9%	134	37.6%
One	68	68.0%	32	32.0%	100	28.1%
Two or More	73	59.8%	49	40.2%	122	34.3%
Total	235	66.0%	121	34.0%	356	100%

Number of Prior Out-Of-Home Placements**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
None	80	59.7%	54	40.3%	134	37.6%
One	62	62.0%	38	38.0%	100	28.1%
Two or More	55	45.1%	67	54.9%	122	34.3%
Total	197	55.3%	159	44.7%	356	100%

**Chi-Square=8.020, p<0.05

Pre-discharge recidivism differences were not statistically significant; however, post discharge results show that Ridge View youth with two or more out-of-home placements prior to this commitment (54.7%) re-offended at higher rates than youth with no prior out-of-home placements (40.3%) or youth with only one prior placement (38.0%).

Prior Adjudications - Table 39 shows post-discharge recidivism rates by the number of prior adjudications a youth had before their commitment sentence.

Table 39: Ridge View Recidivism by Prior Adjudications

Number of Prior Adjudications	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
None	51	71.8%	20	28.2%	71	19.9%
One	74	68.5%	34	31.5%	108	30.3%
Two or More	110	62.1%	67	37.9%	177	49.7%
Total	235	66.0%	121	34.0%	356	100%

Number of Prior Adjudications**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
None	50	70.4%	21	29.6%	71	19.9%
One	61	56.5%	47	43.5%	108	30.3%
Two or More	86	48.6%	91	51.4%	177	49.7%
Total	197	55.3%	159	44.7%	356	100%

**Chi-Square=9.857, p<0.01

It is anticipated that youth with more prior adjudications would have higher recidivism rates, and as projected, post-discharge recidivism rates are significantly lower for youth with no prior adjudications (29.6%) than for youth with either one (43.5%) or multiple (51.4%) prior adjudications. Although the pattern is similar for pre-discharge recidivism rates, the differences were not statistically meaningful.

Prior Detention Admissions - Breaking the data down into categories of youth with a relatively low level of prior involvement with the Division of Youth Corrections (zero to two prior detention admissions) and youth with more of a history with DYC (three or more prior detention admissions) did show significant differences in post-discharge recidivism rates for the Ridge View discharge cohort (see Table 40).

Table 40: Ridge View Recidivism by Prior Detention Admissions

Number of Prior Detention Admissions	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Zero to Two	62	73.8%	22	26.2%	84	23.6%
Three or More	173	63.6%	99	36.4%	272	76.4%
Total	235	66.0%	121	34.0%	356	100%

Number of Prior Detention Admissions**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Zero to Two	61	72.6%	23	27.4%	84	23.6%
Three or More	136	50.0%	136	50.0%	272	76.4%
Total	197	55.3%	159	44.7%	356	100%

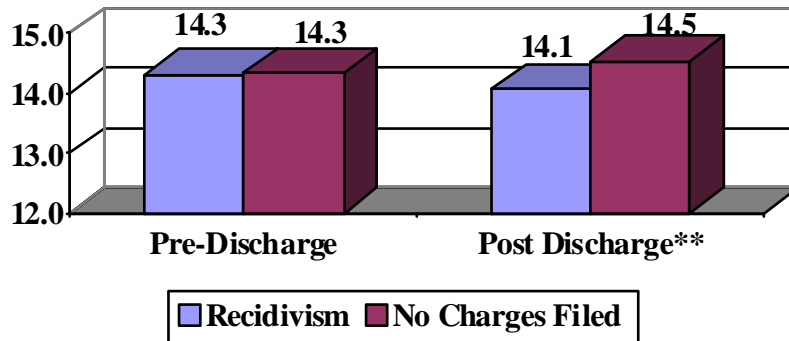
**Chi-Square=13.286, p<0.01

One half of the Ridge View sample with three or more detention admissions received a new filing for a felony or misdemeanor offense within one year following discharge (n=136). Comparatively, only 27.4% of youth who had less than three prior detention admissions re-offended during the post-discharge follow-up time period. Similar to the analysis on prior adjudications, the pre-discharge recidivism rate differences by group were directionally as expected (rates were higher for youth with more detention admissions), however they were not statistically meaningful.

Age at First Adjudication - Juvenile justice research has shown that youth who become involved with the criminal justice system at younger ages are more likely to recidivate than youth who are older at the time of their first contact with the system⁷³. The average client age at first adjudication coupled with recidivism outcomes are shown in Figure 21.

⁷³ Andrews, D.A., and Bonta, J. (1994). *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*. Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing.

Figure 21: Ridge View Recidivism and Age at First Adjudication



**Post-Discharge; $F=8.168$, $p<0.01$

Surprisingly there was no difference in age at first adjudication for youth who received a new pre-discharge filing. Although the age differences for youth who received a new post-discharge filing and those who did not were small, they were statistically significant.

Prior Commitment Sentences - One last indicator of prior juvenile justice involvement analyzed for this recidivism evaluation was the number of prior commitment sentences to DYC. A commitment to DYC represents the furthest potential penetration into the juvenile justice system that youth in this study might have encountered prior to their current commitment. Table 41 shows the breakdown of pre-discharge and post-discharge recidivism rates for the Ridge View youth who had previously been committed to the Division of Youth Corrections.

Only 21 youth in this Ridge View discharge cohort were committed to the Division of Youth Corrections prior to the commitment that resulted in their inclusion in this study. Notwithstanding the small numbers,⁷⁴ youth who were committed to DYC previously had higher rates of post-discharge recidivism (71.4%) when compared with those youth who were not committed previously (43.0%).

⁷⁴ Statistical significance between groups is a calculation that is based on the number of cases in each group as well as the differences between groups; therefore it takes a larger relative difference to be a significant finding (not due to chance) when group sizes are small.

Table 41: Recidivism Rates by Prior Commitments

Number of Prior Commitments	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
None	222	66.3%	113	33.7%	335	94.1%
One	13	61.9%	8	38.1%	21	5.9%
Total	235	66.0%	121	34.0%	356	100%

Number of Prior Commitments**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
None	191	57.0%	144	43.0%	335	94.1%
One	6	28.6%	15	71.4%	21	5.9%
Total	197	55.3%	159	44.7%	356	100%

**Chi-Square=6.469, p<0.05

Community Reintegration (Post-Discharge Only)

When a youth is discharged from DYC, the Division records whether the youth was successful on parole and whether the youth has a job or is enrolled in school at the time of discharge. This year’s Ridge View discharge cohort did not report any differences in recidivism rate by successful parole adjustment, employment or school enrollment.

Ridge View Graduation

In order for this cohort of youth to officially graduate from the Ridge View program, each of the components of the VALIDATE model (see Figure 17, pg. 62) must be completed, and the youth’s peer group and staff must formally agree that the youth has fulfilled all of the graduation requirements.

Table 42 shows the differences in pre-discharge and post-discharge recidivism rates for youth that successfully completed (graduated from) the Ridge View Youth Services Center program, compared with youth who left for other reasons⁷⁵.

⁷⁵ Youth who did not graduate may have completed the program, but did not fulfill all of the requirements for validation. Other types of release include medical release, escapes, client manager referrals to another program, youth paroled prior to completion of the program, or program failures. Ridge View staff views all releases that did not validate to be unsuccessful in the program.

Table 42: Ridge View Recidivism by Successful Completion of the Ridge View Program

Completion Status**	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Graduated	223	71.2%	90	28.8%	313	87.9%
Did Not Graduate	12	27.9%	31	72.1%	43	12.1%
Total	235	66.0%	121	34.0%	356	100%
**Chi-Square=31.650, p<0.01						
Completion Status	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Number	Number	Percent
Graduated	173	55.3%	140	44.7%	313	87.9%
Did Not Graduate	24	55.8%	19	44.2%	43	12.1%
Total	197	55.3%	159	44.7%	356	100%

Youth that graduated from Ridge View received more new filings for recidivist acts prior to discharge (28.8%) than youth who did not fully complete the program (72.1%). Pre-discharge differences in recidivism rates by graduation status were statistically significant. Further analysis shows that 64.5% of the Ridge View pre-discharge recidivists who did not graduate (n=20) re-offended prior to leaving the Ridge View facility. These findings indicate that recidivism may be the underlying cause of program failure, rather than the reverse.

All of the indicators for risk of recidivism analyzed for the RVYSC cohort were significant predictors of post-discharge recidivism; however, they had no influence on pre-discharge recidivism rates. These results are indicative of successful supervision and case management for Ridge View Youth during commitment. On the other hand, the fact that these same risk factors did predict post-discharge recidivism suggests that the treatment effects learned at Ridge View were not enough to maintain the desired effect after youth were discharged from DYC. It is possible that with increased transitional services the lessons and skills learned at Ridge View will be enough to sustain youth so that they can reduce post-discharge re-offending as well as pre-discharge recidivism.

SECTION FOUR: Substance Abuse Treatment and Recidivism

The juvenile justice research community has long accepted the relationship between substance abuse and delinquency. Numerous studies have evidenced a significant correlation between early onset and chronic substance abuse with an increased probability for engaging in socially deviant activities and associating with delinquent peers⁷⁶.

In an attempt to stop the cycle of continued substance use and delinquency, juvenile justice agencies have actively sought out resources to address this criminogenic need. Often, the need for substance abuse services outstrips the resources available for this effort. As a result, juvenile justice systems are required to ration this finite resource; dedicating these limited resources to those youth who evidence the highest need.

This rationing process has led some policy-makers to question the success rates for youth who undergo substance abuse treatment compared to those youth who do not receive these services. Recidivism rates are typically used as one measurement of success, which is the focus of the 2008-09 Legislative Request for Information (RFI) 41, which states:

The Department is requested to provide a report to the Joint Budget Committee on January 1, 2010 that tracks and compares recidivism rates between those juveniles receiving drug and alcohol treatment and those not receiving treatment, while sentenced to commitment

Background

Youth newly committed to the Division of Youth Corrections (DYC) are placed at one of the four DYC Assessment Centers across Colorado, and in compliance with the Colorado Children's Code (Section 19-2-922, C.R.S.), receive a comprehensive evaluation

⁷⁶ Zhang, Wiczorek, and Welte, "The Impact of Age of Onset of Substance Use on Delinquency" (Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, Vol. 34, No. 2, 253-268 (1997)).

necessary to begin initial understanding of the youth's needs regarding placement and treatment.

Screening for substance abuse is conducted on all youth as part of the overall assessment process. The Substance Use Survey (SUS)⁷⁷ provides ratings on specific scales across drug use involvement, disruption, and mental health adjustment. Particularly important are the involvement and disruption scale scores that are used to determine level of treatment. The Involvement scale measures the lifetime use pattern of 19 different drugs (including alcohol). Disruption is considered the best measure of drug abuse and dependence. These scales provide the clinician with the ability to discern the degree of severity of the individual's drug-use pattern.

The evaluator, a Certified Addiction Counselor (CAC II or CAC III) is responsible for scoring and interpreting the results and determining if the youth falls into one of three categories: **Prevention, Intervention, or Treatment level**. This is accomplished by evaluating the responses on drug use involvement, drug use disruption, and psychological problems. The overall score, completed by the clinician, indicates level of treatment. Low scores indicate *Prevention level*; medium scores indicate *Intervention level*; and higher scores are reflective of *Treatment level* needs.

The Adolescent Self-Assessment Profile (ASAP)⁷⁸ is administered to youth who meet the *Treatment level* criteria. This is a self-report, multivariate instrument that scores the major risk and problem areas caused by substance abuse in the youth's life. The scales are similar to the Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment in that they measure risks associated with family, peer involvement, school adjustment problems, attitude, anti-social behavior, psychological issues and more specific scales related to substance abuse. Treatment planning related issues can be extrapolated from this data.

⁷⁷Wanberg, K. W. (1991). *The Substance Abuse Survey IA (SUS IA)*. Arvada, CO: Center for Addictions Research and Evaluation.

⁷⁸Wanberg, K.W. (1998). *The Adolescent Self Assessment Profile II (ASAP II)*. Arvada, CO: Center for Addictions Research and Evaluation.

Prevention level services are for individuals who have not established a pattern of drug or alcohol use, or who may indicate an increased risk for developing a use or abuse pattern. Prevention strategies should be multi-faceted and include community involvement, family, peers and the individual. There is no prescribed level of intensity for prevention services. The more comprehensive the exposure is to multi-media and multi-modal curriculum, based on the holistic wellness model, the better.

The goal in serving *Prevention level* youth is to maintain and strengthen the resiliency and protective factors in the youth's life. Helpful interventions include encouraging family visits, physical exercise, sports, health classes related to healthy sexuality, and skill building classes based on the Cognitive Behavioral Treatment model. Skills taught and incorporated into all daily activities should focus on communication skills, problem solving, and decision-making.

Intervention level youth are referred to a level of service for individuals who have established some pattern of use, but who do not indicate signs and symptoms of drug/alcohol disruption. *Intervention level* treatment planning is aimed at moving the youth toward the healthy, protective factors in his/her life, and away from the perils of high-risk substance abuse behaviors and attitudes. These youth are at risk resulting from environmental factors, (i.e., family or gang) and/or genetic predisposition to abuse of substances. During individual treatment planning and family therapy, youth are encouraged to discuss feelings related to substance abuse in their own family and their choices and limitations within the family environment. Mental health, gang related issues, parenting skills, and healthy sexuality are some of the related issues addressed on an individual basis and during group treatment. Cognitive behavioral treatment and motivational groups are used for both *Intervention* and *Treatment level* youth.

Treatment level services are for individuals whose substance use pattern has begun to cause disruptive effects on life functioning. The pattern of use is clear and there are identifiable symptoms resulting from this use pattern. The goal of individualized treatment is to assist the youth in gaining skills necessary to combat substance abuse

behaviors and identify the relationship between substance abuse and criminal conduct. Youth are referred to groups that use curriculum written specifically for this population utilizing the cognitive behavioral treatment approach. Transition services focus on relapse prevention, community support systems, aftercare classes, and a specific transition plan to support the youth during parole.

Treatment Intensity: For purposes of developing analytical units for this report, the Division developed three general categories that were based on clinical practice and judgment.

Low Intensity of Treatment Services: Low level of services is defined as the client receiving up to five sessions of treatment services monthly.

Moderate Intensity of Treatment Services: This level is defined as those youth receiving from 5-10 sessions monthly.

High Intensity of Treatment Services: High Intensity of treatment is defined as those receiving more than 10 sessions monthly.

Substance abusing youth in the NYC system receive a range of services beyond the specific substance abuse data that was collected for this report. An example of this is the *Thinking for a Change* (National Institute of Corrections) cognitive behavioral curriculum, offered to all youth in the facilities. This curriculum is provided through a large number of staff including educators, line staff, and youth counselors. Other services youth receive but not collected in this data are gang awareness, psycho-education, parenting, healthy sexuality, grief and loss, economic literacy, trauma-focused treatment services, and the daily skills utilizing role-playing. Where appropriate, youth are also receiving sex offense specific services and mental health treatment. Informal individual sessions occur between line staff and youth throughout the day but are often not documented as treatment at all.

Sampling Protocols

One of the significant challenges in responding to this request for information is that the Department's information management system (TRAILS) only collects substance abuse treatment data while the youth resides in one of the eleven State-operated secure facilities. The TRAILS system is currently not designed to track those substance abuse treatment services that a youth receives while residing in a contract placement. Moreover, the TRAILS system does not have a ready mechanism for tracking those community based treatment services that a youth receives while on parole.

This report tracks a cohort of youth from all of the FY 2007-08 discharges where substance abuse treatment services were provided and tracked in the TRAILS system (services offered in State-operated secure facilities). One limitation of relying on these treatment data records is that youth committed to the Division of Youth Corrections typically serve a significant proportion of their residential time in less secure contract placements. In fact it is the intent of the Continuum of Care Initiative that the Division more effectively transition youth out of State-operated secure placements into appropriate less restrictive community based settings. For purposes of this analysis, the Division has developed length of service (LOS) criteria for designating whether a youth had spent enough time in a State-operated secure placement for that placement to have had the opportunity to provide significant substance abuse treatment services to that individual.

Youth are generally not assigned to a secure treatment placement exclusively for substance abuse treatment services. Youth in a secure residential placement are there primarily because of security or safety (both community safety and youth at risk of self-harm). Therefore, if a youth is placed in a State-operated secure residential treatment bed after the initial assessment period⁷⁹ there are typically numerous treatment and criminogenic risk needs that must be addressed before a youth can be considered for a less secure residential or community placement. For these reasons most youth assigned to

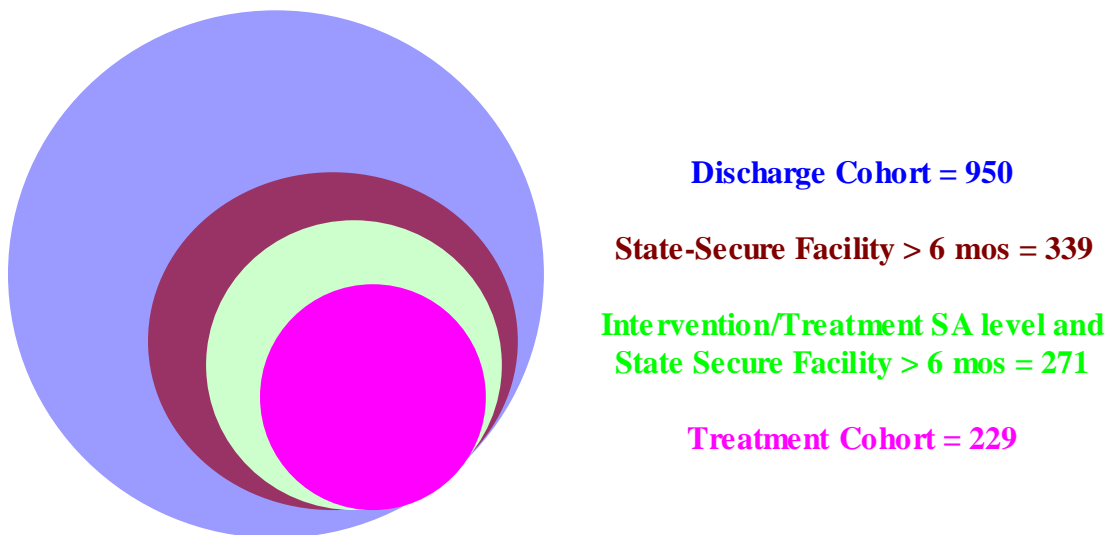
⁷⁹ All youth committed to DYC are required to be assessed in a secure residential placement to determine placement needs, treatment needs, and to evaluate the risk the youth poses to himself or herself and the community.

a State-operated secure residential placement will be there for at least six months of treatment services (including substance abuse services if needed). In order to be included in this analysis of substance abuse treatment services, youth must have spent at least six months in a State-operated secure residential bed.

Description of Substance Abuse Sample

In FY 2007-08, NYC had a total discharge cohort of 950 youth. This section looks at a sub-group of 229 youth who were assessed as needing either *Treatment* or *Intervention* level substance abuse services and who received substance abuse treatment services in a State-operated secure facility (see Figure 22).

Figure 22: Description of Substance Abuse Cohort*



*Not to Scale

Of the full discharged cohort (n=950), 796 youth were assessed as having either *Intervention* or *Treatment* level substance abuse treatment needs (83.8%) and 339 (can include youth who do not need *Intervention* or *Treatment* level substance abuse services) were identified as meeting the requirement for a LOS of at least six months in a State-operated secure facility. Narrowing the sample to only youth with *Intervention* or *Treatment* level needs, 271 youth (34.0% of all *Intervention* or *Treatment* level youth) met the aforementioned criteria of spending at least six months in a State-operated secure

placement (n=271). At the time of commitment 37.6% (n=102) of this sub-population were identified as being *Intervention* level, while 62.4% were assessed at the more intensive *Treatment* level (n=169). The *Prevention* level youth were removed from the sample so that a “pure treatment” group could be created for purposes of these analyses.

It is important to consider that youth who do not meet the six-month LOS in a State-operated secure residential placement cut-off for inclusion in this sample are not immediately placed back into the community with no treatment services. On average, the youth not included in the above sample (n=611) spent 16 months in residential treatment placements prior to being released on parole. All youth spend at least a short amount of time in a State-operated secure setting during a comprehensive clinical and risk assessment and many youth also receive some “pre-treatment” services in these placements. “Pre-treatment” can include evidence-based services such as the Stages of Change curriculum⁸⁰ and Motivational Interviewing⁸¹ to prepare youth for treatment in a less secure staff-supervised or community placement. Following assessment the vast majority of committed youth no longer require a secure residential placement and are referred to these lower security residential placements to meet the treatment needs identified during assessment.

Of the 271 youth identified for this “pure-treatment” cohort, clinical data records show that 15.5% did not receive any substance abuse treatment services while placed in State-operated secure residential placement (n=42). This is not to suggest that no substance abuse services were provided to these youth during their commitment⁸². At a minimum, all youth committed to DYCS are given a substance abuse assessment and/or evaluation. These youth may have had other safety or treatment needs that were more severe and mandated that substance abuse treatment services be relegated a lower priority than services to treat those other presenting issues. For example, the population of youth

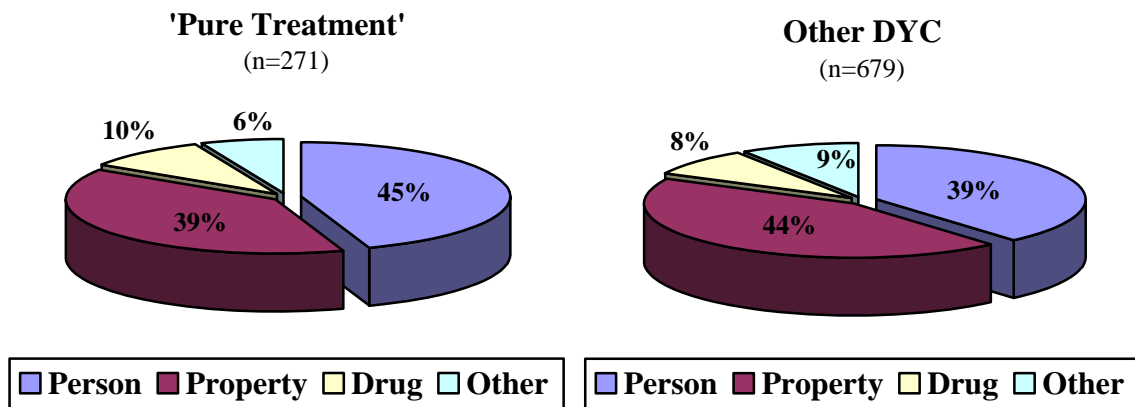
⁸⁰ DiClemente, C.C. & Prochaska, J.O. (1986). University of Rhode Island.

⁸¹ Miller, W. (1991). Guilford Press.

⁸² Specifically, it is important to note that there were Treatment level youth who received substance abuse services, but were not included in the data set because they did not meet the standard of receiving a continuous episode of treatment for at least six months in one facility.

entering NYC may present with developmental disabilities, severe mental health issues, traumatic brain injuries or require offense specific services as priority over the substance abuse needs. In addition, youth are generally not assigned to a secure treatment placement exclusively for substance abuse treatment services. Youth in a secure residential placement are there primarily because of security or safety (both community safety and youth at risk of self-harm) needs. Figure 22 shows that only ten percent (9.6%) of the “pure treatment” cohort was committed to NYC for a substance abuse offense. Furthermore, it is possible that many of these youth received a notable amount of substance abuse services in contract placements following their residential stay in a State-operated secure placement and therefore were not able to be counted among this State-operated secure treatment cohort.

Figure 23: Type of Offense



Overall, 229 youth met the sample criteria of being assessed with *Treatment* or *Intervention* level substance abuse needs, had at least one 6 month or longer placement in a State-operated secure residential facility and received clinical substance abuse treatment while at that facility.

Challenges to the Methodology

In responding to the Request for Information (RFI), the Division had to rely on the substance abuse treatment information that was collected and made readily available through the TRAILS data system. For purposes of analysis, this restricted the sample exclusively to those youth who received substance abuse services in the eleven State-operated secure facilities.

The methodological concern that arises when relying exclusively on State-operated secure facilities is that this population necessarily represents a “deeper end” youth. Youth who reside in State-operated secure facilities are typically at this level of placement for the following reasons:

1. The youth presents a significant risk of re-offense if placed in a community-based residential program;
2. The youth has a history of escaping from placement;
3. The youth’s committing offense and/or associated commitment type (i.e., violent, aggravated, repeat, etc.) would make the youth ineligible for community placement;
4. The youth has previously committed a new offense while in a community placement;
5. There is no community placement that is willing to accept the youth based on offense, severe treatment need, or history of disruptive behavior while in placement.

Youth from State-operated secure facilities will likely have higher rates of recidivism because of having met one or more of the aforementioned reasons. In the case of Reason #4 the youth will have already offended during their period of supervision.

A youth is never referred to a State-operated secure facility simply because of their substance abuse needs. The Division traditionally refers youth with substance abuse needs that do not have other safety or security considerations to a community-based

placement. Given the Division’s rationale for placement, and the composition of youth who are in a State-operated secure facility, it would be erroneous to necessarily associate a recidivist act to unmet substance abuse treatment needs. Higher rates of recidivism for a State-operated secure population are more likely the result that youth in these facilities present a higher risk of re-offending.

Analyzing rates of recidivism from a sample population of youth who received substance abuse services while in a State-operated secure facility would not only likely overstate the relationship between substance abuse and offending, but would likely understate the effectiveness that substance abuse treatment has in reducing a youth’s criminogenic risk factors and overall likelihood of re-offending.

Treatment Intensity

Of the 229 youth in the substance abuse treatment cohort, records indicate that 43.7% received a *Low* level of treatment (n=100), 35.4% received a *Moderate* level of treatment (n=81), and 48 youth (21.0%) received the most intensive *High* level of treatment as described earlier in this section. For purposes of analysis, service intensity was analyzed according to the youths’ levels of assessed substance abuse treatment needs (see Table 43).

Table 43: Service Intensity by Treatment Level

Service Intensity**	Intervention		Treatment		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Low	64	64.0%	36	36.0%	100	100%
Moderate	11	13.6%	70	86.4%	81	100%
High	7	14.6%	41	85.4%	48	100%
Total	82	35.8%	147	64.2%	229	100%

**Chi-Square=61.395, p<0.01

The majority of youth in the substance abuse treatment cohort were *Treatment Level* youth (64.2%). Significantly more services were provided to *Treatment Level* youth in

this cohort⁸³. As expected, most of the high intensity treatment (more than 10 sessions per month) was given to *Treatment Level* youth (over 85% of all youth who received a high intensity of services). Only seven *Intervention* level youth received more than 10 sessions of treatment per month.

In FY 2006-07 State-operated facilities received State-funding to enhance clinical services and increase the number of experienced and qualified clinical treatment staff. This year, 86.0% of the *Treatment Level* youth received a moderate level of substance abuse treatment, compared with only 14.0% of *Intervention Level* youth in this year's substance abuse treatment cohort. Prior to the additional funding for clinical services in State-operated secure facilities, *Intervention Level* youth were receiving as much (or more) substance abuse services in State-operated secure placements⁸⁴. Since funding has increased the clinical staff levels and services available within these facilities it appears that services are more discriminately disseminated to the youth needing them most (*Treatment Level* youth).

Recidivism Rates for Substance Abuse Treatment Cohort

This section compares pre-discharge and post-discharge recidivism rates for *Intervention* and *Treatment* level youth who were served in a State-operated secure facility for at least six months and received substance abuse treatment in that placement to youth who spent at least six months in a secure facility and did not receive any substance abuse treatment while in a State-operated secure placement⁸⁵.

Pre-Discharge Recidivism: A filing for a new felony or misdemeanor offense that occurred prior to discharge (while the youth is under DYC supervision) from the Division of Youth Corrections.

Post-Discharge Recidivism: A filing for a new felony or misdemeanor offense that occurred within one year following discharge from the Division of Youth Corrections.

⁸³ Does not include *Treatment Level* youth with less than 6 months LOS in a State-operated secure Facility.

⁸⁴ Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Children Youth and Family Services, Division of Youth Corrections. (2008). *Recidivism Evaluation of Committed Youth Discharged in Fiscal Year 2005-06*.

⁸⁵ These youth received other treatment services as needed to address other criminogenic or safety and security requirements.

Youth who were not eligible for the treatment cohort (did not have at least six months in a State-operated secure placement) are not included in this analysis.

Table 44: State-Operated Secure Cohort Recidivism Rates

Substance Abuse (SA) Treatment	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
SA Treatment	93	40.6%	136	59.4%	229	84.5%
Other Treatment	23	54.8%	19	45.2%	42	15.5%
Total	116	42.8%	155	57.2%	271	100%

Substance Abuse (SA) Treatment**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
SA Treatment	122	53.3%	107	46.7%	229	84.5%
Other Treatment	32	76.2%	10	23.8%	42	15.5%
Total	154	56.8%	117	43.2%	271	100%

** Chi-Square=6.688, p<0.05

Table 44 shows the overall recidivism rates for the State-operated secure cohort, comparing those *Intervention* and *Prevention* level youth who received substance abuse treatment while in a State-operated secure facility, and those who did

Only ten percent (n=11) of the treatment cohort who re-offended within one year of discharge from NYC committed a new substance related offense.

not receive substance abuse treatment in a State-operated secure facility. Youth in the treatment group had significantly higher post-discharge recidivism rates than youth who received other treatment services. Forty-seven percent (46.7%) of the youth who spent more than six months in a State-operated secure facility and received substance abuse treatment re-offended following discharge compared with 23.8% who received treatment for other criminogenic needs while in a State facility. There were no differences between groups in the pre-discharge recidivism analysis. Although the treatment group had high rates of overall post-discharge recidivism, it is interesting to note that only 11 youth who

re-offended in the year following discharge (10.3%) were charged with any drug offenses.

Although these results seem to imply that substance abuse treatment is not effective it is important to keep in mind the limitations of analysis for the current sample. Data limitations stipulated that all youth in the sample spent at least six months in a State-operated secure facility. In the overall discharge cohort, youth who spent more than six months in a State-operated secure facility (53.7%) re-offended at higher rates prior to their discharge date than youth who did not spend at least six months in a facility (25.9%)⁸⁶. In addition, youth with more than six months in a State-operated secure placement spent an average of seven months longer in all residential placements combined than youth who spent less than six months in a residential placement⁸⁷. As described in Section One (pg. 36) youth in the full discharge cohort (n=950) with longer lengths of service in residential placements received more new filings following discharge from NYC than youth with shorter residential LOS.

One potential explanation for the findings shown in Table 44 is that youth residing in State-operated secure facilities are typically those youth who have been deemed either by the Courts or the Division as presenting a greater risk to public safety. State-operated secure facilities represent the “deepest-end” placement for the Division. These facilities are typically reserved for youth who have already failed in a community placement or whose determined risk would not permit a community placement. A higher pre-discharge recidivism rate may also be indicative of the cause for the youth’s secure placement. Additionally, youth who fail in a community placement are often transferred to a State-operated secure facility following the transgression. It could have been that the pre-recidivist act occurred prior to the youth placement in a secure facility⁸⁸.

⁸⁶ Chi-Square=73.472, p<0.01.

⁸⁷ F=173.156, p<0.01.

⁸⁸ Because of the complicated task of determining the temporal ordering of recidivism events and youth placements, this type of cause-effect analysis is not available in this report.

Recidivism by Treatment Need and Intensity of Service

Overall, this report did not generate statistically significant differences in levels of pre-discharge re-offending, relating to need for treatment, however assessed treatment need was predictive of post-discharge recidivism. Table 45 shows pre-discharge and post-discharge recidivism rates⁸⁹ by substance abuse need for treatment levels. All youth in the FY 2007-08 discharge cohort are included in this analysis (n=950).

Table 45: Recidivism by Substance Abuse Level

Need For Treatment	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Prevention	104	68.0%	49	32.0%	153	16.1%
Intervention	163	65.5%	86	34.5%	249	26.2%
Treatment	342	62.5%	205	37.5%	547	57.6%
Total	609	64.2%	340	35.8%	949	100.0%

Need For Treatment**	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Prevention	107	69.9%	46	30.1%	153	16.1%
Intervention	158	63.5%	91	36.5%	249	26.2%
Treatment	315	57.6%	232	42.4%	547	57.6%
Total	580	61.1%	369	38.9%	949	100.0%

**Chi-Square=8.446, p<0.05, (n=949, missing=1)

Thirty percent (30.1%) of youth assessed at the lowest level of substance abuse need, (*Prevention*), re-offended within one year following discharge. Comparatively, youth assessed as needing the mid-level of substance abuse treatment, (*Intervention*), recidivated at 36.5%. Finally, those youth assessed as needing the highest level of services, (*Treatment*), had a 42.4% rate of post-discharge recidivism.

Table 46 shows the recidivism rates of the Treatment cohort by levels of service intensity. A low service intensity is indicative of less than five treatment sessions per month compared with five to ten sessions for youth receiving moderate treatment service

⁸⁹ Includes the entire discharge cohort

intensity and more than ten sessions per month for the high level. There were no differences in recidivism rates when comparing the amount of treatment given to youth in State-operated secure facilities.

Table 46: Recidivism Rates by Treatment Service Intensity

Service Intensity	No Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Low	41	41.0%	59	59.0%	100	43.7%
Moderate	32	39.5%	49	60.5%	81	35.4%
High	20	41.7%	28	58.3%	48	21.0%
Total	93	40.6%	136	59.4%	229	100%

Service Intensity	No Post-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Low	58	58.0%	42	42.0%	100	43.7%
Moderate	35	43.2%	46	56.8%	81	35.4%
High	29	60.4%	19	39.6%	48	21.0%
Total	122	53.3%	107	46.7%	229	100%

Analyzing recidivism rates by level of service intensity is a confounding research endeavor. The difficulty stems from the “best practice” of directing the most intensive treatment services to the greatest at-risk population. High-risk youth found to have committed recidivist acts may not be a result of poor or inadequate treatment, but could simply be a predictable outcome given the abundant and demonstrable evidence that these youth are more likely to re-offend.

Criminogenic Risk Factors

The Division of Youth Corrections has embarked upon an initiative to redesign its assessment and classification services, with the goal of developing a comprehensive, state-of-the-art assessment, diagnostic and classification system that is founded in evidence-based theory and principles.

Effective June 2006, every youth committed to the Division of Youth Corrections was assessed for actuarial risk using the Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment Instrument

(CJRA). The CJRA is a fourth-generation risk instrument that was developed by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP). This instrument measures criminogenic risk, needs, and protective factors both from a static and dynamic perspective. The CJRA replaces the Colorado Young Offender - Level of Service Inventory (CYO-LSI) that DYC used for over a decade. Unlike the CYO-LSI, the CJRA also incorporates protective factor scales that are valuable when developing case-plans and referring youth to specific residential treatment placements.

Since the CJRA was not in place at the time most of the youth in the FY 2007-08 substance abuse treatment cohort were committed⁹⁰ risk analysis for this treatment cohort is not available for this recidivism study.

Future analyses on DYC discharge cohorts will report initial risk of recidivism at the time of commitment to the Division and compare with rates of actual rates of re-offense. The Division suspects, given the increased recidivism rates for youth with longer lengths of service, that this treatment cohort in State-operated secure facilities was at a higher level of risk for re-offending. In other words, while the data suggests that substance abuse treatment had a negative effect on recidivism for this cohort of youth, it was anticipated that these youth would re-offend at a high rate because of their overall level of criminogenic need, including, but not limited to, their current risk related to substance use.

⁹⁰ Only 11 youth in this treatment sample were committed after the implementation of the CJRA in June 2006.

APPENDIX A - Limitations of Recidivism Research

The Definition of Recidivism Varies in Colorado and Across the Nation

Throughout the United States, recidivism is a measure that is often utilized in determining the level of effectiveness of justice agencies and determining the level of public safety that can be expected as offenders are released back into the community. Because a common goal to reduce recidivism exists across justice agencies, the measure seems reasonable and is tracked closely and regularly by most justice agencies. However, due to the varying definitions of recidivism, applying and comparing the outcome measure is an imperfect science. Generally speaking, the term “recidivism” refers to the re-occurrence of delinquent or criminal behavior. However, the more specific definition of recidivism utilized by each agency can vary greatly among states and even among justice agencies within a single state. In the next few paragraphs, the history surrounding the establishment of a common definition of recidivism in Colorado, and also the varied definitions of recidivism existing across the nation will be discussed.

Efforts to Establish a Common Definition of Recidivism in Colorado

In Colorado, efforts to establish a common definition of recidivism dates back to the early 1990s. In FY 1990-91, the Office of the State Auditor reviewed various components of Colorado’s juvenile justice system. Among numerous other recommendations, the State Auditor’s Office recommended to the Legislature that a common definition of recidivism be established. This recommendation eventually resulted in a footnote to the Long Bill that mandated DYC, the Judicial Department, the Division of Criminal Justice, and the Division of Child Welfare to develop a common definition of recidivism.

In 1998 the Office of the State Auditor revisited the standardized definition of recidivism. In its review of the juvenile probation system, the Office of the State Auditor recommended that the definition of recidivism be less restrictive and incorporate juvenile, as well as adult offenders. Based on this recommendation, the Legislature approved a footnote that required the Judicial Branch to consult with the Departments of Human Services, Public Safety, and Corrections to consider a newly revised and common definition of recidivism. A multi-agency committee was formed and a collaborative

report was submitted in June, 1999. In this report, a two-tiered definition of recidivism was proposed. The first tier focuses on re-offending during supervision (pre-discharge recidivism), while the second tier looks at the rates of re-offending once an individual successfully completes the term of his or her sentence (post-discharge recidivism). The Division of Youth Corrections adopted these definitions of recidivism as outlined by the multi-agency committee.

Recidivism Definition Components

Before describing in-depth the definitional differences in recidivism across the nation, it is important to note that recidivism is a multi-faceted concept. The definition has two main components: 1) the type of system reaction to the delinquent behavior that constitutes “recidivism”, and 2) the length of the follow-up period, or how long the youth are tracked in the community after being released from the agency. The type of system reaction refers to whether recidivism is defined as re-referral, re-arrest, a new charge, a new filing, reconviction, reconviction and return to custody or supervision, re-incarceration, or re-commitment. The length of follow-up is typically 12 to 36 months, with the norm being 12 months. Other important components of the recidivism definition include the type of offense that lead up to the system reaction (delinquent, criminal, felony, misdemeanor, petty, etc.), the systems researched in the follow-up period (juvenile, adult, both), and if a cohort is followed, when that cohort was released from the agency. With the understanding that recidivism is a multi-component concept, it becomes apparent that the meaning of the measure differs from venue to venue, with each agency using varied combinations of the concept.

A Glimpse Across the Nation

According to a study conducted by the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (VDJJ)⁹¹, twenty-seven states currently measure juvenile recidivism rates statewide. As expected, with the concept of recidivism open for broad interpretation, few states utilize a common definition. This being said, there are some definitional components that are utilized more frequently than others by the states. The most common definitions utilized are *reconviction*, with 13 of the 27 states (48%) using this definition component, *re-*

⁹¹ Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, DJJ Research Quarterly, Volume III, April 2005

incarceration (41%), *re-arrest* (33%), and *re-commitment* (11%). The least common definitions include *re-referral* or *new filing* (used by Maryland and Colorado), and *reconviction* and *return to custody or supervision* (used by Louisiana). Eight states do not restrict themselves to one measure of recidivism, but instead report on two or more of the measures mentioned above.

Methodological Issues

Population Shifts

In the juvenile justice system, the concept of risk is invariably connected to the probability of re-offending; as such, an “at-risk youth” is a youth who presents a greater than average chance of committing a criminal act. If a juvenile justice agency suddenly realizes a significant realignment of the risk potential of its population, then that realignment can result in differing recidivism rates when all other factors are held constant. For example, if a certain juvenile justice program or project is eliminated because of budget constraints, then youth who would have been directed to that program are then re-directed to other programs. This process, which most often directs youth deeper into the juvenile justice system, has occurred in Colorado. For example, the Community Accountability Program, as well as other programs designed to intervene with youth at earlier stages of the juvenile justice system, have been eliminated or seriously impacted because of State budget cuts. These programs were designed to provide alternatives to NYC detention and commitment sentences. The lack of capacity for delinquent youth in a community placement drives these youth into the NYC population, creating a need for increased treatment services, and overcrowding State-run commitment facilities. The process of shifting delinquent populations into other programs which may not be adequately prepared to treat these youth, or alternatively provide more treatment than is required, can both positively and negatively impact recidivism rates.

Information Technology Advances

Most juvenile and criminal justice agencies rely upon official records to determine recidivism rates. To the extent that these official records are considered accurate and complete, each agency is able to determine their respective rates of recidivism. It should be noted that the completeness and accuracy of official records have been questioned in

the past. In response to these concerns, Colorado has devoted significant resources to updating its criminal and juvenile justice information systems⁹². An unexpected consequence of updating these information systems is that recidivism rates may begin to increase in the future. These rates of recidivism are not necessarily increasing as a result of actual spikes in criminal behavior, but possibly because of the increased reliability and accuracy of matching offenders between data systems⁹³.

Technical advances and a change in the data validation process (using Lexis-Nexis in place of ICON) have allowed the Division to report on more current recidivism data and overcome limitations on the ability to track case findings over the past few studies. However, there are still some instances where youth, especially those discharged near the end of the State fiscal year, will still have open cases at the time of report publication⁹⁴. In those cases, there may not be a finding for any of the charges filed against those youth.

Policy Variations

The juvenile justice system can be viewed as an intricate network of decision points that is generally governed by statute, policy, or administrative regulation, but where key decision-makers are allowed considerable discretion. Clearly, one of the key decision-makers in the juvenile justice system is the District Attorney. The District Attorney (DA) has considerable discretion in whether a Delinquency Petition is filed with the Court. A DA may choose not to file on a case because the case is considered to be without significant merit or because appropriate alternatives exist that can otherwise effectively discharge the case (e.g., a Diversion Program). Because of this discretion, there exist significant differences in filing practices throughout the State. In some jurisdictions, the DA may choose to file upon the majority of cases and allow the judicial process to determine the relative merits of a case. In other jurisdictions, in an attempt to manage the limited resources of the DA's Office or the Court, a DA may only file on those cases where the merits of a case have undergone careful examination. In either scenario, it is

⁹² Marked improvements have been made to the Judicial Department's data system (ICON/ECLIPSE) as well as to the Department of Human Services' data system (TRAILS).

⁹³ Conversely, less than accurate information systems may net lower recidivism rates because of errors associated with data entry or software inconsistencies.

⁹⁴ Scenarios in which case findings can be delayed include high-profile cases or defendants, filings on more serious charges, or if the youth has failed to appear for his or her court date.

policy, not necessarily criminal activity that determines a filing; which in turn influences recidivism data and rates in Colorado.

Actual Change in Criminal Behavior

Lastly, changes in the recidivism rate can be the result of actual changes in criminal behavior. As research advances juvenile justice programming, it is generally believed that these advances will eventually result in better short-term and long-term outcomes. Quantitative evidence of these enhanced outcomes may require years to be realized. Until causal links can be firmly established in data, claims that actual criminal behavior patterns have changed (either positively or negatively) should be made cautiously. This is not to suggest that annual recidivism rates should be ignored. Recidivism rates provide a basic barometer in how the system is reacting. Minimally, changes in recidivism rates should prompt policy-makers to question whether actual behavioral changes have occurred or whether the fluctuation in rates is an artifact of some other change occurring elsewhere in the juvenile justice system.

APPENDIX B – Statistical Measures

Evaluation studies often reveal differences between groups. To this end this report uses two common statistical computations to identify differences in recidivism rates.

Most of the analyses in this report look at differences between categorical groups of youth. For example “Gender” is a categorical measure. Youth can be in one of two groups, either male or female. To examine differences in categorical factors statisticians use a measure called Chi-Square.

Another statistical measure used in this report is an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). ANOVA’s are used to determine differences in the means, or average amounts, of interval or ratio level data. This means that for each number in a series the scale is the same, or each number is exactly the same distance from the previous and subsequent number in the series. Age is a good example of ratio level or continuous data. From the time you are born your age continues to increase at a constant rate, and the difference between any two ages can be identified and measured to any fraction (ratio) of time. Prior adjudications is an example of interval level data. The difference between one and three prior adjudications is the same as the difference between 12 and 14 prior adjudications, but an individual could never have only a part (or fraction) of an adjudication. The numbers can only increase at regular whole intervals.

Differences identified between groups may be the result of some noteworthy impact, or they simply could have occurred because of random chance. Throughout this study, findings are included with their statistical significance. If it is highly unlikely that a finding (such as a difference between two groups) happened due to chance, it is said that the finding is statistically significant. Significance is measured through interpretation of a “p” value. Two “p” values are reported here ($p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.01$). A “p” value less than 0.05 would mean there is less than a 5% chance that the finding is random (due to chance, rather than the existence of a real relationship or cause). A “p” value less than 0.01 would mean there is less than a 1% chance that the finding is random. Social

Science research traditionally accepts findings at the $p < 0.05$ level or lower as being sufficiently significant to accept those findings as valid and true. Throughout this report, the term “significant” is used only to describe findings that are significant at the $p < 0.05$ level or lower. Results that are not statistically significant may provide some initial insight into differences between groups, but should not necessarily dictate changes in policy or decision-making processes.

APPENDIX C – Ridge View Historical Background

During the 1997 Legislative Session, the General Assembly authorized the Division of Youth Corrections to contract for the design, construction and operation of a 500-bed juvenile facility in the Denver metro area. The goal of the project was to create an academically driven program within a state-of-the art facility, to serve committed male offenders. The project was designed to use a positive peer culture for youth management and a staff-supervised environment for security, rather than a traditional fenced-in, secure structure. This was to emphasize a campus environment and to stress the overall academic mission of the program.

The original impetus for the Ridge View project was a sharp increase in the need for commitment beds, which often resulted in placement of youth in out-of-state facilities. DYC determined that the target population for such a facility would be best managed in the previously described staff-supervised environment. The primary goals stated in the original project description were “gaining control of anti-social behavior, developing new pro-social behavior, and assuring the development of academic, vocational, social and life skills in committed youth.”

The size of the facility, up to 500 beds, dictated that the program would have to serve a large proportion of the youth being committed to DYC. For this reason, the original concept of the facility called for the design of a campus and a program for male committed youth, representing a moderate level security risk, when compared to the DYC male population as a whole. As a result, it was acknowledged that the program would not be appropriate for all DYC youth; particularly those requiring treatment for sexual offenses, severe mental health needs, or those requiring a more secure placement⁹⁵.

⁹⁵ In prior years, youth with substance abuse needs were also excluded from Ridge View, however recent expansion in treatment programming allows Ridge View to accommodate certain youth with substance abuse needs.

The authorizing legislation specified that NYC use the “design, build, and operate” model so that the private contractor awarded the bid to operate this model program could participate actively in the design and construction processes. This ensured that the resulting design and construction of the facility was tailored to specific program needs. Additionally, the State gained the advantage of using private sector construction timeframes and costs. While this model did reduce the flexibility of the resulting facility to some extent, it also maximized the functionality of its intended use.

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