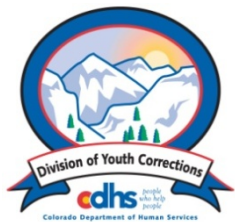


Recidivism Evaluation of Committed Youth Discharged in Fiscal Year 2010-11



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, 2013

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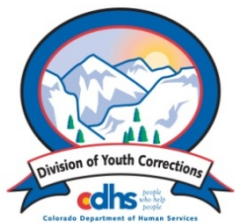
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

- 1) Department of Human Services, Division of Youth Corrections, FY 2012-13, Request for Information (RFI) #8; pursuant to the request for information submitted to the Governor by the Colorado Joint Budget Committee on April 25, 2012.
- 2) Section 19-2-411.5, C.R.S., the legislation authorizing the design, construction, and operation of the Ridge View Youth Services Center

The responses to these two separate Legislative mandates are combined into one report due to the similar nature of the requested information.

The Recidivism Measure

This is the first year that DYC will report recidivism rates using a new definition. The Department has decided to change the way juvenile recidivism is defined in Colorado to be more readily comparable to other states' juvenile justice systems. In previous years, the Division utilized "new filing" as the event which determined the recidivist act. The new definition of recidivism is "new adjudication" or "new conviction". More information explaining the decision to move to this new definition can be found in the report introduction.

NEW DEFINITION: Recidivism is defined as an adjudication or conviction for a new felony or misdemeanor offense.

The findings contained in this year's report are based on an evaluation of seven hundred ninety-three (793) youth discharged during FY 2010-11 (between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011). The term "pre-discharge" is used to identify new offenses a youth is adjudicated or convicted on during the period of time a youth is supervised by DYC in residential commitment or on parole.

“Post-discharge” recidivism refers to new adjudications/convictions for new felony or misdemeanor offenses that occurred up to one year following discharge from NYC supervision. The analysis includes an examination of pre- and post-discharge recidivism rates as they relate to a number of demographic and risk factors that predict the likelihood of re-offending.

Pre-Discharge Recidivism:

An adjudication or conviction 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:

An adjudication or conviction for a new felony or misdemeanor offense that occurred within one year following discharge from the Division of Youth Corrections.

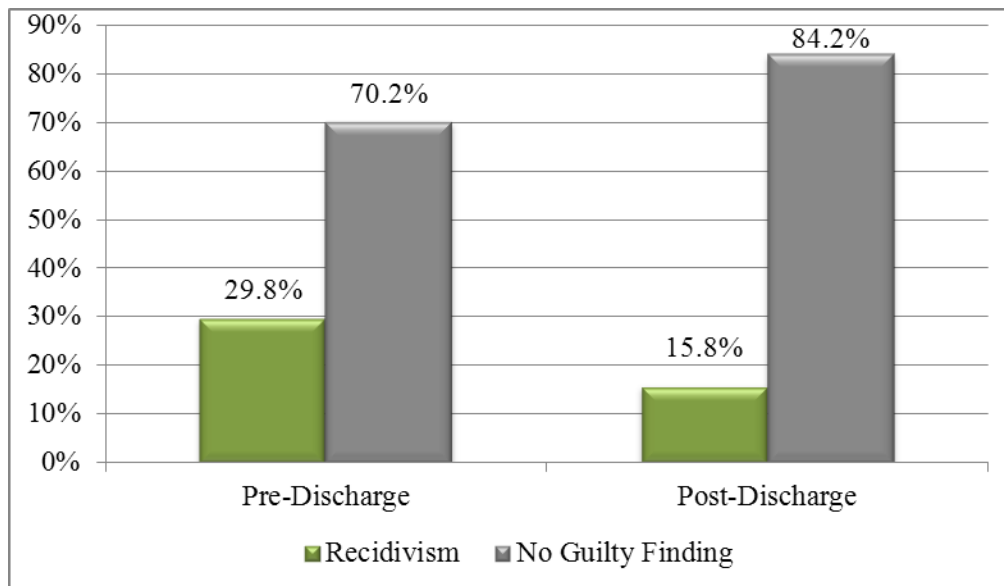
Section One (1) of this report examines the entire discharge census (n=793) of youth, while Section Two (2) pertains to a specific sub-group of clients who were placed at the Ridge View Youth Services Center during their commitment stay (n=198).

Section One Results: Division of Youth Corrections Recidivism

Overall Results

- Thirty percent (29.8%) of youth discharged in FY 2010-11 received a new felony or misdemeanor adjudication prior to discharge (pre-discharge recidivism). This means that seventy percent (70.2%) of youth completed DYC commitment successfully, with no new adjudications.
- Sixteen percent (15.8%) of youth discharged in FY 2010-11 received a new felony or misdemeanor adjudication within one year following discharge from the Division (post-discharge recidivism). Eighty-four percent (84.2%) of youth successfully went a full year following discharge without receiving any new adjudications, which dramatically reduces their likelihood of re-offending as time goes on.

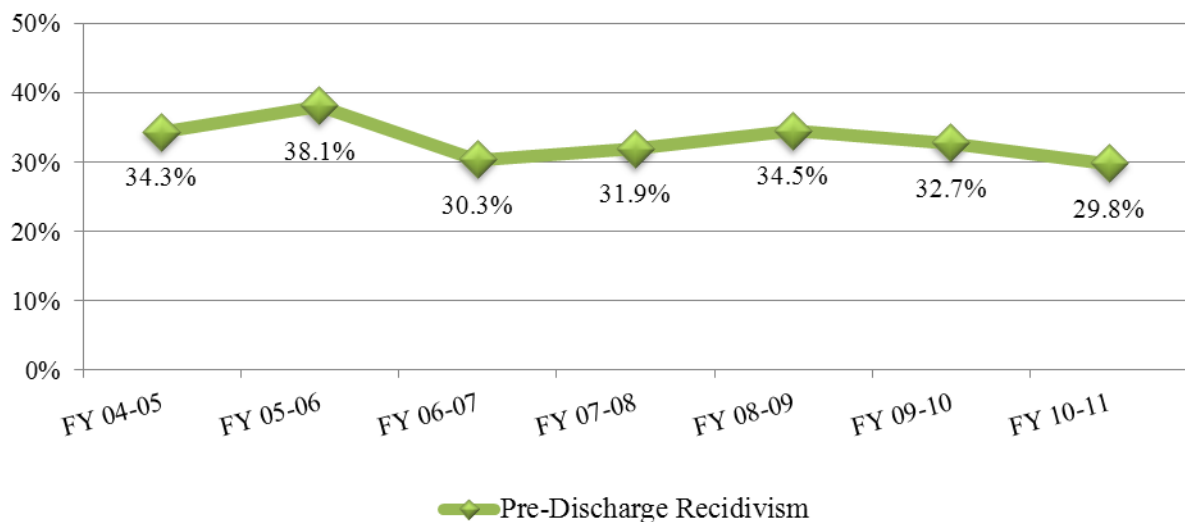
Recidivism Rates



Recidivism Trends

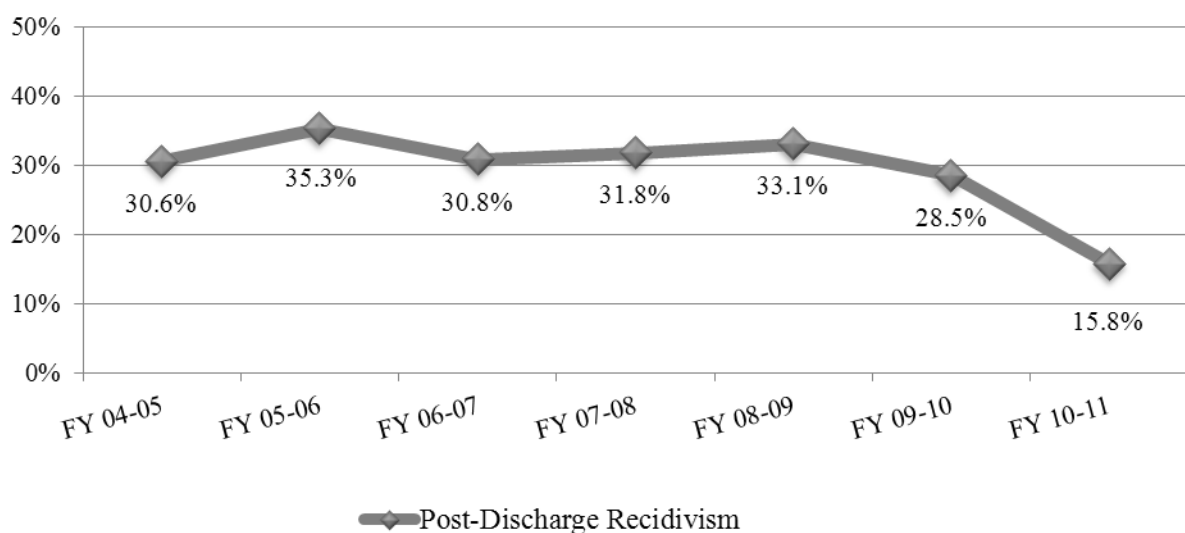
- Pre-discharge rates have not fluctuated dramatically over the past seven years, but have remained fairly stable.

**Figure 4:
Pre-Discharge Recidivism Rates FY 2004-05 through FY 2010-11**



- Post-discharge recidivism rates have decreased significantly for the last two consecutive years. In fact, 15.8% is the lowest rate in seven years. This is approximately half of the recidivism rate four years ago (31.8%).

**Figure 5:
Post-Discharge Recidivism Rates FY 2004-05 through FY 2010-11**



Offense Risk Levels

- Analysis of offense type indicates a reduction in offense risk level (either no recidivism or less serious criminal activity) for 94% of youth in the discharge cohort. This statistic is calculated by comparing each youth’s initial commitment offense to any recidivist act that occurred in the year following discharge (post-discharge). So, when looking at risk level, the vast majority of youth discharged are showing a reduced risk to public safety.

Adult Convictions vs. Juvenile Adjudications

- Sixty percent (60.2%¹) of pre-discharge recidivists received at least one criminal (adult) charge during their commitment, and 54.2%² received delinquency (juvenile) charges.
- Eighty-three percent (83.2%³) of post-discharge convictions were for criminal (adult) offenses. Adult offenders are likely receive an adult probation, community corrections, or Department of Corrections sentence.

Type of Charge	Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Criminal (Adult)	108	45.8%	103	82.4%
Delinquency (Juvenile)	94	39.8%	21	16.8%
Both Adult and Juvenile Charges	34	14.4%	1	0.8%
Total	236	100.0%	125	100.0%

How Does Colorado Compare?

- In a nationwide comparison, Colorado and Missouri appear to have the lowest recidivism rates in the country, both with 16%, when examining states with similar measurements of recidivism. North Dakota and Louisiana are shown to be close behind with 17% each. These results, however, need to be interpreted cautiously, as definitions of recidivism may not be 100% compatible.

¹Combining the first and third categories in the table shown: 60.2%= 45.8%+14.4%

² Combining the second and third categories in the table shown: 54.2%=39.8%+14.4%

³ 83.2%=82.4%+0.8%

Gender

- Female offenders discharged in FY 2010-11 received fewer pre-discharge (25.2%) and post-discharge (6.5%) adjudications than males discharged in that same year (30.5% and 17.2%, respectively). While in residential placement, the genders re-offend at similar rates, however, on parole, females have a much lower rate of recidivism (8.4% Female vs. 19.4% Male). These findings, as it relates to gender, are consistent with the juvenile justice literature.

Ethnicity

- No differences, related to youth ethnicity, were discovered when looking at any of the four types of recidivism (pre-discharge, residential, parole and post-discharge) with this discharge cohort. This is a positive finding for the Division, as it relates to reducing disproportionate minority contact (DMC) and minority over-representation (MOR) issues.

DYC Management Region

- Overall, no differences were found in recidivism rates by DYC Management Region (Central, Northeast, Southern, and Western Colorado).

Risk Assessment (CJRA)

- The overall Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment (CJRA) risk level *at time of commitment* was directionally correlated with pre-discharge recidivism, although not statistically significant. Only thirteen youth (13) were assessed as being low risk to re-offend, and two of these youth recidivated, which equates to a 15.4% pre-discharge recidivism rate. Sixty-six youth (66) were assessed as being moderate risk to re-offend, and these youth had a 24.2% recidivism rate. Lastly, 580 youth were assessed as being high risk to re-offend, and these youth had a 24.7% recidivism rate⁴.

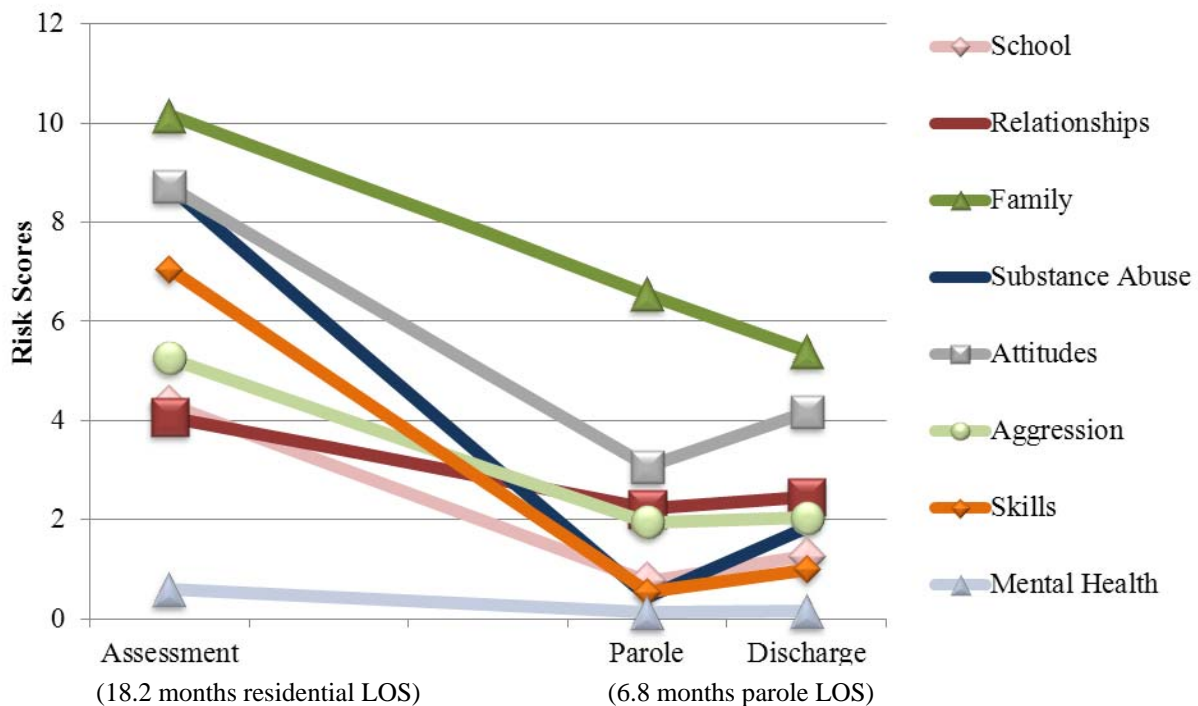
⁴ 747 of 793 (95%) had a valid initial CJRA. Valid means within 90 days following commitment date.

- No specific CJRA *dynamic* (current) domain risk scales *at time of commitment* were significantly predictive of pre-discharge recidivism with this cohort. One *static* (historic) scale was predictive of pre-discharge recidivism, the Family scale.
- Interestingly, *at time of commitment*, low and moderate risk youth are more apt to offend in residential placement, than are high risk youth.
- One CJRA domain, the Skills domain (which measures social proficiency), was predictive of re-offending while on parole. *At the time of parole reassessment*, those youth that scored low risk on the Skills domain recidivated at a rate of 16.8% on parole. In comparison, those who scored high risk in the skills domain recidivated at a rate of 28.1% on parole (moderate risk=26.1%).
- Most of the youth in this discharge cohort received a CJRA reassessment within 90 days of their discharge date (n=716, 90.3%)⁵. CJRA risk assessments conducted *at the time of discharge* from DYC accurately predicted future (post-discharge) criminal behavior. The overall risk level at discharge and the associated post-discharge recidivism rates are as follows: youth assessed as low risk to re-offend (n=55) had a recidivism rate of 10.9%, moderate risk youth (n=206) had a recidivism rate of 12.6%, and high risk youth (n=455) had a recidivism rate of 19.1%.
- Looking at overall risk another way, grouping low risk and moderate risk together and making comparisons to high risk youth (not high risk vs. high risk), produced statistically significant results. Youth assessed as not high risk to re-offend (i.e., low and moderate risk) had a recidivism rate of 12.3%, while high risk youth had a recidivism rate of 19.1%. The ability to accurately estimate which youth are more likely to re-offend highlights the importance of transition planning, and developing sustainable support linkages, for these high risk youth in the community.
- In addition to overall risk level, post-discharge recidivism rates varied significantly with six of the thirteen risk scales analyzed—all six of them were dynamic scales (scales amenable to change). Higher scores on these scales predicted higher instances of post-discharge re-offending: School, Family, Mental Health, Attitudes and Behaviors, Aggression, and Skills.

⁵ Some reasons why a discharge CJRA could not be completed on a youth include youth who were under adult corrections supervision, youth institutionalized for a mental health condition, or deported youth.

- The Family domain was “doubly” predictive of recidivism with the larger cohort, as the dynamic (current) family scales predicted post-discharge recidivism, and the static (historic) scales are predictive of pre-discharge recidivism. Multi-Systemic Treatment (MST) and Functional Family Therapy (FFT)—which the Division utilizes when appropriate—focuses on the family (not the individual youth) as the unit of analysis. Emphasizing family-based interventions appear to be an effective way to ameliorate this risk apparent in the Family domain of the CJRA.
- The following chart shows marked decreases in risk scores from assessment to discharge. These decreases in risk provide probable evidence that without the provision of treatment services, recidivism rates for this discharge cohort would have likely been much higher.

Change in Domain Risk Scores: Assessment to Discharge



- A positive finding relates to the “Family” domain (green line with triangles) risk reductions shown above: **no increase** in risk score, from parole to discharge. This is a solid indication that services provided to DYC youth and to their families is not only

reducing risk, but the risk reduction is wholly maintained as the youth transition back into the community. Generally, it is anticipated that *some* portion of the gains achieved, from time of assessment to time of parole, are not maintained when youth leave the structured setting of residential commitment and return to their community on parole; but, in this instance, all gains were maintained, and additional gains (in reducing risk) were made during the period from parole to discharge.

- Overall CJRA risk levels were directionally correlated with recidivism rates (both pre- and post-discharge), which affirms the validity of the instrument. NYC has committed to assessing, to a greater degree, the tool's reliability and validity in the coming years.
- CJRA risk levels (overall and domain-specific) were the only statistically significant predictors of post-discharge recidivism. No other factors analyzed (such as prior system involvement) were able to accurately predict re-offending within a year of discharging from NYC custody.
- Interestingly, the CJRA "Criminal History" domain, which is normally the **most** predictive domain on the instrument, was not predictive of post-discharge recidivism.

Prior System Involvement

- Youth who recidivated while in NYC custody had a higher number of prior detention admissions (5.1 admissions) than youth who did not recidivate (4.5 admissions).
- Having more prior out-of-home placements (prior to NYC commitment) was predictive of youth receiving a new pre-discharge adjudication for a felony or misdemeanor offense. The same results proved true for residential recidivism.
- Youth who received a new adjudication during their commitment were younger at the time of their first adjudication (14.2 years old) than youth who did not re-offend prior to discharge (14.5 years old).

Special Populations

Sex Offenses

- Youth requiring sex offense specific treatment re-offended at similar rates as youth not requiring this specific treatment type. Zero percent of these youth re-offended

post-discharge with an “actual” sex offense. One third (33.3%) of sex offenders who recidivated were adjudicated or convicted on “failure to register as a sex offender” offenses. One alarming finding comes to light when looking at offense-specific data for this sub-group of youth: many considered to be “recidivators” were only guilty of failing to DE-register as sex offenders (not register, but DE-register). In other words, these youth were found guilty of failing to remove themselves from the sex offender registry.

Substance Abuse Needs

- Substance abuse need levels were found to be un-correlated with all types of recidivism.

Mental Health Needs

- Using the CCAR⁶ instrument, youth entering DYC’s care are assessed as either “requiring professional mental health intervention” or “*not* requiring professional mental health intervention.” Those youth with mental health intervention requirements had a pre-discharge recidivism rate of 33.7%; this is substantially higher than youth with *no* mental health intervention requirements (25.7%).
- Similar findings result when looking at residential recidivism. Youth requiring professional intervention recidivate at a rate of 22.8%, while only 11.6% of youth not requiring intervention recidivate in residential placement.
- Mental health needs, as identified using the CCAR, were not predictive of post-discharge recidivism. However, the CJRA Mental Health dynamic domain was predictive of post-discharge recidivism.

Co-Occurring (Substance Abuse & Mental Health) Needs

- Youth with co-occurring issues (22.4%) were much more likely to recidivate while in residential placement, when compared to youth without co-occurring substance abuse and mental health issues (13.1%).

⁶ Colorado Client Assessment Record.

History of Running Away

- Youth with more extensive histories of running away (prior to NYC commitment) were much more likely to re-offend during commitment (32.4%) than youth with little to no runaway history (24.2%).

Length of Service (LOS)

- Pre-discharge recidivists had longer lengths of service in total (all of commitment), in residential placement, and on parole.

Place of Re-offense

- Nearly two-thirds of clients (64%) who re-offended in residential placements committed their new offenses in contract placements. Contract placements are less secure than State-operated secure facilities and often community-based, therefore, youth have more opportunity for criminal and/or delinquent activity in these types of programs.
- In this year's discharge cohort, slightly more youth re-offended on parole (n=142) than in residential placement (n=130). Forty-three youth (n=43) had adjudications in both areas, and another seven youth received a new adjudication while on escape from residential placement.

Time to First Post-Discharge Offense

- The results of this cohort indicate that if youth can remain adjudication-free in the first four months following discharge, they have a good chance of remaining offense-free for the entire year. In the first four months post-discharge, an average of 20 youth re-offended each month; however, months five through twelve had an average of 6 youth re-offending each month.

Section Two Results: Ridge View Youth Services Center Recidivism

This year's Ridge View sample included 198 males from the larger cohort (n=793) discharged from the Division of Youth Corrections in FY 2010-11. These males spent at least 90 days at the Ridge View Youth Services Center (RVYSC) during their residential commitment and spent at least 66% of their total residential commitment at RVYSC. Ridge View recidivism rates were compared with the recidivism rates of males in State and Contract Placements (n=394), as well as a "Shared" group of males (n=94). This "Shared" group of youth spent 90 (or more) days at RVYSC, however, did not spend at least 66% of their residential length of service at RVYSC. The cohort composition described above is the same method used last year. In prior years, the cohort composition was notably different.

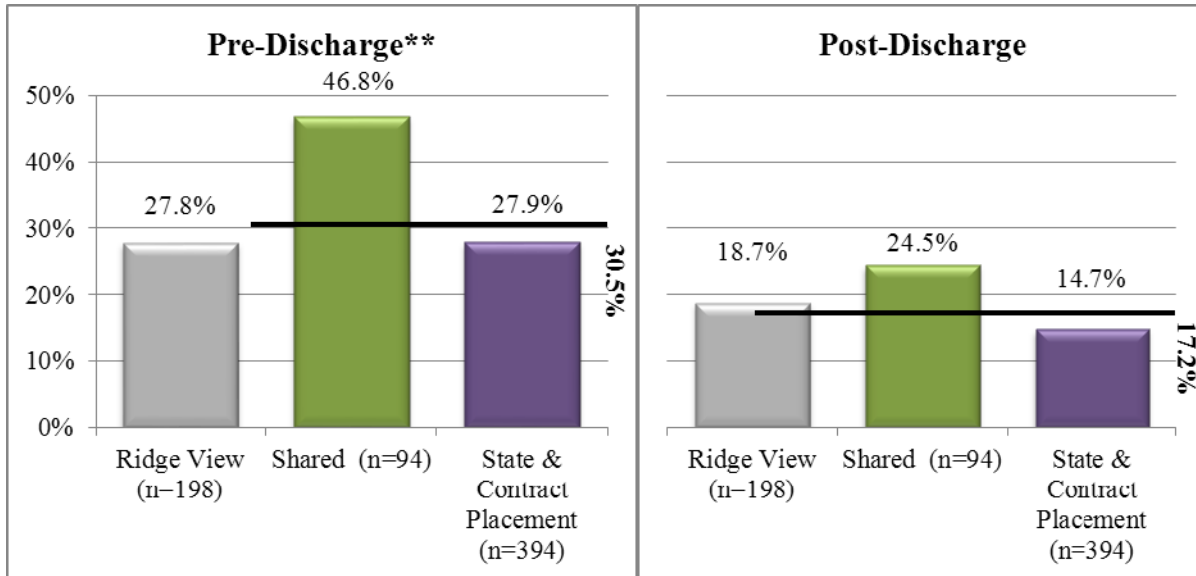
Cohort Comparisons: How Do Youth in the Three Groups Differ?

- The three cohorts vary significantly on a multitude of different factors related to recidivism risk.
- The Shared cohort, overall, represents the group with the most risk factors for re-offense. This group's high risk composition makes them more prone to recidivate both during and after commitment.
- When comparing the RVYSC group to the State and Other Placement group, it is difficult to synthesize all the factors, and combination of factors, to estimate which of these two group poses the highest risk to recidivate. Many factors relate to treatment complexity (mostly seen in the State & Contract Placement cohort, as well as in the Shared cohort), while many relate to traditional risk to re-offend (seen with Ridge View youth), and many relate to both.

Overall Results

- The pre-discharge recidivism rate for Ridge View youth was 27.8%.
- The post-discharge recidivism rate for Ridge View youth was 18.7%.
- Youth in the RVYSC sample had statistically similar rates of pre-discharge recidivism (27.8%) as the State and Contract Placement males (27.9%). The "Shared"

group had a significantly higher rate of pre-discharge recidivism (46.8%) than the other two cohorts.



**Significant differences in rates

- For post-discharge recidivism, RVYSC’s rate was 18.7% and State and Contract Placement rate was 14.7%. Once again, the “Shared” group had the highest rate of post-discharge recidivism (24.5%). The differing post-discharge rates between the three groups was not statistically significant.
- Interestingly, **none** of the CJRA dynamic or static domains (which were predictive of post-discharge recidivism in the larger study) proved to be significant when it came to Ridge View youth and post-discharge recidivism. In fact, no CJRA factors at all, including overall risk levels or domain-specific risk levels, were correlated with any type of recidivism for Ridge View youth (pre-discharge, residential, parole, or post-discharge).

QUICK REFERENCE TABLES

Pre-Discharge Recidivism: Significant Findings

		Pre-Discharge Recidivism Rates
Overall Pre-Discharge Recidivism Rate (Figure 1)		29.8%
Number of Prior Out-of-Home Placements (Figure 20)	No Prior Placements: One Prior Placement: Two or More Prior Placements:	22.5% 31.1% 34.6%
Runaway	No Runaways: One or More Runaways:	24.2% 32.4%
Mental Health Issues (Figure 24)	Professional Intervention Required: Professional Intervention NOT Required:	33.7% 25.7%
CJRA Family Domain Static (History)	Low/Moderate Risk (Not High): High Risk:	22.5% 30.5%

Other Significant Predictors of Pre-Discharge Recidivism

Prior Detention Admissions

Age at First Adjudication

Age at Commitment

Length of Service

Post-Discharge Recidivism: Significant Findings

		Post-Discharge Recidivism Rates
Overall Post-Discharge Recidivism Rate (Figure 2)		15.8%
Gender (Figure 9)	Male: Female:	17.2% 6.5%
Overall CJRA Risk Level at Discharge (Table 10)	Low/Moderate Risk (Not High): High Risk:	12.3% 19.1%
CJRA School Domain Dynamic (Table 10.1)	Low/Moderate Risk (Not High): High Risk:	15.1% 33.9%
CJRA Family Domain Dynamic (Table 10.1)	Low/Moderate Risk (Not High): High Risk:	14.5% 22.1%
CJRA Mental Health Domain Dynamic (Table 10.1)	Low/Moderate Risk (Not High): High Risk:	16.0% 33.3%
CJRA Attitudes & Behaviors Domain (Table 10.1)	Low/Moderate Risk (Not High): High Risk:	14.4% 19.1%
CJRA Aggression Domain (Table 10.1)	Low/Moderate Risk (Not High): High Risk:	14.0% 21.7%
CJRA Skills Domain (Table 10.1)	Low/Moderate Risk (Not High): High Risk:	15.5% 23.5%

New Adjudication Types and Dispositions⁷

Pre-Discharge		Percent
Most Serious Felony Adjudication Type (Table 1)	Person:	14.4%
	Property:	20.8%
	Drug:	3.8%
	Weapon:	0.8%
	Escape:	14.8%
	Identity:	3.0%
	Sex Registration:	0.7%
	Protection Order:	0.4%
	Other:	1.3%
Most Serious Misdemeanor Adjudication Type (Table 1)	Person:	16.5%
	Property:	7.6%
	Drug:	1.7%
	Weapon:	0.8%
	Escape:	4.7%
	Identity:	1.3%
	Sex Registration:	0.4%
	DWI/DUI:	0.0%
	Obstruction:	1.7%
	Protection Order:	3.0%
Other:	3.0%	
Type of Adjudication (Any Charge) (Table 3)	Criminal (only):	45.8%
	Delinquency(only):	39.8%
	Both:	14.4%
Disposition On Any Felony or Misdemeanor Adjudication (Table 4)	Guilty:	94.1%
	Deferred:	5.9%
Post-Discharge		Percent
Most Serious Felony Adjudication Type (Table 1)	Person:	10.4%
	Property:	23.2%
	Drug:	6.4%
	Weapon:	3.2%
	Escape:	1.6%
	Identity:	0.8%
	Sex Registration:	0.8%
	Other:	2.4%

⁷ The rates presented in this table are not recidivism rates. The rates sum to 100% and depict pre- and post-discharge adjudication breakdowns in each area.

New Adjudication Types and Dispositions (continued)

Post-Discharge		Percent
Most Serious Misdemeanor Adjudication Type (Table 1)	Person:	11.2%
	Property:	18.4%
	Drug:	2.4%
	Weapon:	1.6%
	Escape:	0.0%
	Identity:	0.8%
	Sex Registration:	2.4%
	DWI/DUI:	3.2%
	Obstruction:	1.6%
	Protection Order:	4.0%
	Other:	5.6%
Type of Adjudication (Any Charge) (Table 3)	Criminal (only):	82.4%
	Delinquency (only):	16.8%
	Both:	0.8%
Disposition On Any Felony or Misdemeanor Adjudication (Table 4)	Guilty:	85.6%
	Deferred:	14.4%

Ridge View Section: Results

		Ridge View	Shared Youth	State and Contract Placement
Pre-Discharge Recidivism (Figure 37)		27.8%	46.8%	27.9%
Post-Discharge Recidivism (Figure 38)		18.7%	24.5%	14.7%
Residential Recidivism (Table 18)		8.6%	27.7%	17.5%
Parole Recidivism (Table 18)		21.2%	29.8%	16.0%
SIGNIFICANT COHORT DIFFERENCES⁸				
CJRA Domains	Average Number of High Risk Domains (per Youth)	9.4	9.1	8.8
Ethnicity (Table 12)	African-American:	18.2%	24.5%	17.1%
	Hispanic:	46.5%	35.1%	31.7%
	White:	32.3%	38.3%	48.7%
	Other:	3.0%	2.1%	2.5%
Number of Prior Placements (Table 13)	Prior Placements:	1.2	1.8	2.2
Number of Placements During Commitment (Table 13)	Commitment Placements	4.6	6.9	4.6
Number of Detention Admissions (Figure 32)	Zero to Two:	17.7%	9.6%	22.3%
	Three or More:	82.3%	90.4%	77.7%
Number of Prior Adjudications (Figure 33)	None:	22.7%	13.8%	27.9%
	One:	22.2%	36.2%	31.7%
	Two or more:	55.1%	50.0%	40.4%
Age at Commitment	Years:	16.7	16.4	16.8
Commitment Offense (Figure 34)	Person:	33.3%	39.4%	48.5%
	Property:	51.5%	54.3%	40.4%
	Drug:	7.1%	2.1%	4.8%
	Weapon:	3.5%	1.1%	2.0%
	Other:	4.5%	3.2%	4.3%
Mental Health Need Levels (Figure 35)	Prof. Intervention Required:	32%	50%	55%
	Prof. Intervention NOT Required:	68%	50%	45%
Co-Occurring Issues (Table 15.1)	Co-Occurring Issues:	29.8%	45.7%	46.4%
Length of Service (Figure 36)	Months:	17.1	25.0	17.1

⁸ The rates presented in this section of the table are not recidivism rates. The rates sum to 100% and depict cohort descriptives.

LEGISLATIVE (Request For Information--RFI) DETAILS

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 two separate Legislative mandates:

- 1) Department of Human Services, Division of Youth Corrections, FY 2012-13, Request for Information (RFI) #8; pursuant to the request for information submitted to the Governor by the Colorado Joint Budget Committee on April 25, 2012.
- 2) Section 19-2-411.5, C.R.S., the legislation authorizing the construction and operation of the Ridge View Youth Services Center

The first section of this report, “DYC Recidivism Rates for Youth Discharged,” is submitted in partial⁹ response to RFI #8. Section One provides recidivism outcomes based on new adjudications for felony or misdemeanor offenses that occurred prior to discharge from DYC (pre-discharge recidivism) as well as recidivism results based on new adjudications for felony or misdemeanor offenses that occurred within one year following discharge from a DYC commitment sentence (post-discharge recidivism). This is the first year that DYC will be reporting recidivism rates using the new definition stated above. In previous years, the Division utilized “new filing” as the recidivist event, rather than “new adjudication”. More information explaining the decision to move to this new definition can be found in the report introduction.

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 stay, and recidivism data per placement.

⁹ A response to the length of stay and juveniles served components of the RFI were provided in a separate attachment (pages a-e) to this report. These attached pages were pulled directly from the Division’s annual Management Reference Manual.

Section Two, “Ridge View Recidivism,” serves as DYC’s annual response to the legislation authorizing the construction and operation of the RVYSC facility¹⁰. This legislation specifies that:

On an annual basis, the department of human services shall calculate the recidivism rate for committed juveniles in the custody of the department of human services who complete the program offered by the facility. In calculating the recidivism rate, the department of human services 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 department of human services shall report the recidivism rate to the general assembly.

The Division does not typically report recidivism rates by placement, as youth committed to DYC experience multiple residential placements throughout their commitment that may influence future behavior. However, the Ridge View Youth Services Center (RVYSC) is an exception because it was designed as a unique treatment option for eligible youth and was intended as the primary placement option for many clients. Since youth who are placed at Ridge View tend to have fewer subsequent placements that could influence re-offending behaviors, it is more appropriate to report outcome measures for RVYSC that may not be as meaningful if the analysis were conducted for other DYC treatment programs or facilities¹¹.

The Ridge View recidivism analysis examines recidivism rates for youth in the overall discharge cohort who were eligible for, and placed at, RVYSC 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 Section One.

¹⁰ Section 19-2-411.5, C.R.S.

¹¹ 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.

Helpful Tips on how to Read this Report

Summary boxes have been inserted into the report to highlight pertinent information or to highlight important or interesting findings. Informational boxes have a gray background, while boxes presenting findings have a tan background (see examples below).

Informational Summary Box

Finding Summary Box

In addition, throughout this report a finding followed by “***” indicates a statistically significant finding. Differences identified between groups of youth may be the result of some noteworthy impact, or differences could have occurred randomly, by chance. Throughout this study, findings are indicated if they are statistically significant. 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. See Appendix A for a more in-depth explanation of statistical significance.

INTRODUCTION

Recidivism is an amorphous concept. In the absence of a standardized definition of juvenile recidivism, meaningful nationwide and statewide¹² comparisons are not possible. Recidivism rates cannot be compared unless the outcome measures are equivalent. This is why the Department has decided to change the way in which juvenile recidivism is defined in Colorado—to be more comparable to other states’ juvenile justice systems.

NEW DEFINITION: Recidivism is defined as an adjudication or conviction for a new felony or misdemeanor offense.

Pre-Discharge and Post-Discharge Recidivism

Recidivism is used as an over-arching outcome measure for the DYC commitment continuum of care. For this reason, Colorado considers it important to track recidivism for two distinct time-periods:

- 1) Pre-discharge: for the duration that youth are in DYC custody (including the periods of residential care and parole); and
- 2) Post-discharge: twelve months after youth discharge from DYC.

Most states only track what Colorado calls “post-discharge” recidivism, or recidivist events that occur *after* a youth is released from the agency. In fact, the Council of Juvenile Correction Administrators (CJCA) states that “‘recidivism rates’, which no matter how defined, look only at failure – repeating negative behavior once custody ends –...”.¹³ Colorado’s Division of Youth Corrections is unique for closely monitoring youth re-offending behaviors while in custody, as well as once discharged from custody.

¹² See Appendix A for a discussion on Colorado’s attempt to standardize the recidivism definition within the state.

¹³ CJCA Yearbook 2012: A National Perspective of Juvenile Corrections. Part 2: Current Issues, RECIDIVISM. Page 39.

Again, this is the first Colorado DYC recidivism report to apply the new definitions of recidivism to committed youth served by the Division. The definitions used in this report are as follows:

Pre-Discharge Recidivism: An adjudication or conviction 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: An adjudication or conviction for a new felony or misdemeanor offense that occurred within one year following discharge from the Division of Youth Corrections.

The previous thirteen reports used the term “new filing” as the event indicating a youth had recidivated. For historical reference only, new filing rates for this study are shown in Appendix B.¹⁴

Colorado’s decision to implement a new definition follows a national initiative to better measure effectiveness and move states toward standardization and uniform reporting of recidivism rates for more accurate comparisons. This initiative is championed by the CJCA, with support from and coordination with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

“CJCA’s goal is to work with states to implement common definitions and data elements and, over time, increase the states’ capabilities to collect and analyze the highest level of information to measure recidivism.”¹⁵

In an effort to adopt and subscribe to the recommendations set forth by CJCA and OJJDP, the Colorado Division of Youth Corrections outlines its definition of recidivism in the three-tiered approach.

¹⁴ Colorado’s previous definition of recidivism (new court filing) was shared by only one other state in the nation, Maryland’s Department of Juvenile Services (DJS). Maryland uses “re-referral” (along with arrest and re-conviction) to define recidivism¹⁴, which is technically comparable to Colorado’s (old definition) “new filing”. With only one state to accurately compare rates with, the Division opted to re-define recidivism as a new adjudication.

¹⁵ CJCA Yearbook 2012: A National Perspective of Juvenile Corrections. Part 2: Current Issues, RECIDIVISM. Page 30 and 40.

The Tiered Approach for Measuring and Reporting Recidivism

- 1) Defining the Youth Population:
 - a. Population: All committed youth discharged from NYC in fiscal year (FY) 2010-11 (n=793)
 - b. Individual characteristics: these will be described in detail in Section One of the report
- 2) Defining the Recidivism Event or Act: Adjudication (Found Guilty of a new Juvenile Charge—misdemeanor or felony) or Conviction (Found Guilty of a new Adult Charge—misdemeanor or felony)
- 3) Tracking or Follow Up Time Period:
 - a. Post-discharge recidivism: twelve (12) months following discharge from agency
 - b. Pre-discharge recidivism: for the duration of time youth is in custody, includes both the duration of residential care and the duration of parole

Defining the Youth Population

For the current study, the census includes all 793 youth who discharged from a commitment sentence to the Division of Youth Corrections in Fiscal Year 2010-2011. This is the ninth report to include both pre-discharge and post-discharge recidivism rates from the same client census¹⁶. CJCA indicates that “*half of the 38 agencies that provided responses....indicated that they track all youths released from agency care.*”¹⁷

Defining the Recidivism Event or Act

The defining recidivism event is a new adjudication (i.e., a guilty finding) on a misdemeanor or felony juvenile offense. Similarly, NYC also includes a new conviction (i.e., a guilty finding) on a misdemeanor or felony adult (criminal) offense. According to the results of the 2012 supplemental recidivism survey conducted by the CJCA Recidivism subcommittee, most jurisdictions typically define recidivism as a new adjudication and/or recommitment. For the purposes of this report, the term “adjudication” will be used generally, as an all-encompassing

¹⁶ Eight 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.

¹⁷ CJCA Yearbook 2012: A National Perspective of Juvenile Corrections. Part 2: Current Issues, RECIDIVISM. Page 41.

term that includes both *delinquency or juvenile* charges associated with a guilty finding, as well as *criminal or adult* charges with a guilty finding (technically referred to as a conviction). As a clarifying note, this method would not include technical violations of parole, unless those violations resulted in a guilty finding for a new juvenile or adult charge.

Tracking or Follow Up Time Period

Like all recidivism studies, NYC's evaluation is retrospective in nature. 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 prior to the report date. This delay in data reporting allows for the twelve month follow-up period (for post-discharge recidivism) to pass before recidivism data is collected. Youth who discharge near the end of the fiscal year under evaluation (June 30, 2011) receive the same follow-up time as youth discharged earlier in the year; therefore data collection can occur no earlier than June 30, 2012.

The tracking period for pre-discharge recidivism is the entire duration of a youth's commitment to the Division, which includes time spent in residential programs and time spent on parole. To more technically describe it, this time frame spans from each youth's commitment date to their discharge date. So, any new offenses for which a youth is found guilty, while under the custody of NYC, will count as recidivist events.

Study Methodology

Understanding the study methodology is critical for accurate interpretation of recidivism rates. Since recidivism is defined for both the pre-discharge and post-discharge analyses as "an adjudication or conviction for a new felony or misdemeanor offense," the Division relied upon the Judicial Branch's Management Information System¹⁸ for determining whether a recidivist act had occurred. Only those charges associated with a guilty finding (felony and misdemeanor) in the Judicial data system are included in these recidivism measures¹⁹. Traffic, municipal, status, and petty offenses are excluded from this recidivism evaluation altogether.

¹⁸ The case data received from the Judicial Branch comes from the Integrated Colorado Online Network (ICON) database.

¹⁹ 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 convictions processed by Denver County Court

At NYC's request, the Colorado Judicial Department prepared data containing all filings (including all adjudications and convictions—filings with a guilty finding) that occurred between July 1, 2005 and June 30, 2012, for all persons under 25 years of age. Case data is requested as early as July 1, 2005 (five years prior to the first possible discharges) to allow for the detection of each youth's commitment charge. By capturing the committing offense, a higher level of confidence is achieved in appropriately matching NYC commitment records and the Judicial Department's filing records.

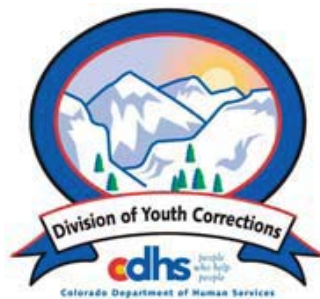
The data received from Judicial was matched with NYC records using a high-level match of youths' last names, first initial, and two of three birth date elements. These matches were further examined for evidence of accuracy by a manual review of the full name, gender, and birth date listed by both agencies, plus further checks against the Colorado State Courts – Data Access²⁰ system for aliases, hyphenated names, 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.

are not included in total in this study. Denver County felony convictions 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 adjudications.

²⁰ In prior years the Lexis Nexus Courtlink database was used in the data verification and matching process. In FY 2009-10, the Colorado Judicial Department transferred data access to their own system.

SECTION ONE:

Division of Youth Corrections (DYC) Recidivism



SECTION ONE: **DYC Recidivism Rates for Youth Discharged**

The findings contained in this report are based on an evaluation of seven hundred ninety-three (793) youth discharged from the Division of Youth Corrections (DYC) between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011. Two types of recidivism are reported in these analyses: pre-discharge recidivism and post-discharge recidivism. The term “pre-discharge” is used to identify guilty findings on new felony or misdemeanor offenses that occurred during the period of time a youth is supervised by DYC in residential commitment or on parole. “Post-discharge” recidivism refers to guilty findings for new offenses that occurred up to one year following discharge from DYC supervision.

Pre-Discharge Recidivism:

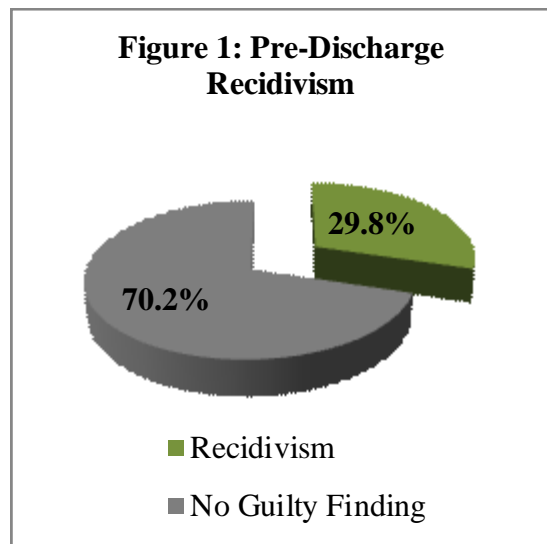
An adjudication or conviction for a new felony or misdemeanor offense that occurred prior to discharge (while the youth is under DYC supervision) from the Division of Youth Corrections.

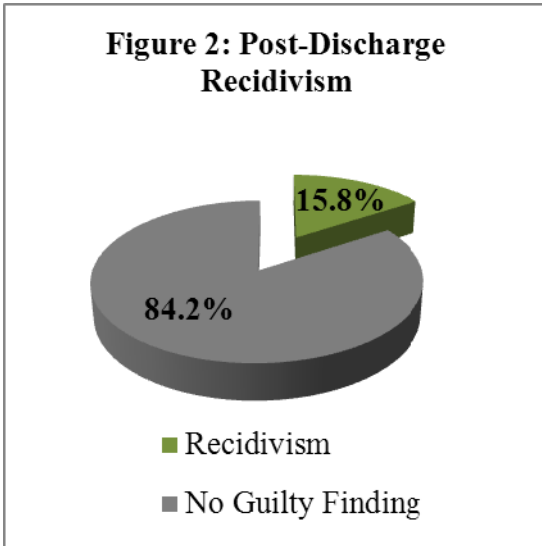
Post-Discharge Recidivism:

An adjudication or conviction 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 2010-2011

As indicated in Figure 1, of the 793 youth discharged during the fiscal year, 236 (29.8%) had an adjudication or conviction for a new felony or misdemeanor offense filed prior to leaving DYC’s supervision. Seventy percent (70.2%; n=557) of the discharge cohort did not receive an adjudication or conviction.

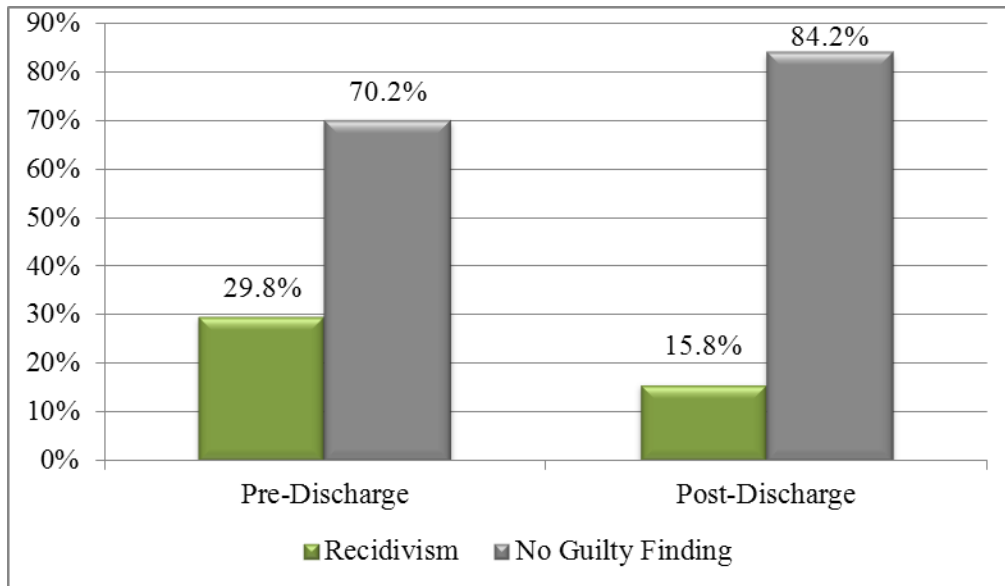




Information on new felony or misdemeanor adjudications or convictions on offenses committed within one year of discharge from the Division was also collected on all youth in the discharge cohort. Figure 2 shows the post-discharge recidivism rate. Sixteen percent of the youth discharged in FY 2010-11 (n=125) received a new adjudication within one year. Eighty-four percent (84.2%) of youth successfully went a full year following discharge without any new adjudications.

It is possible for youth to be represented in both the pre-discharge and post-discharge recidivism categories, meaning that the same youth could have been guilty of committing an offense before being discharged from NYC as well as after their discharge date.

Figure 3: Recidivism Rates



Trends in Recidivism

The following charts outline trends in recidivism rates for the past seven NYC recidivism studies²¹. Trend data should be cautiously interpreted, as 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.

Figure 4 shows the pre-discharge recidivism rates since FY 2004-2005. The pre-discharge recidivism rate reported in the current report (29.8%) shows a slight decrease over the previous discharge cohort. This decline is not statistically significant.

**Figure 4:
Pre-Discharge Recidivism Rates FY 2004-05 through FY 2010-11**

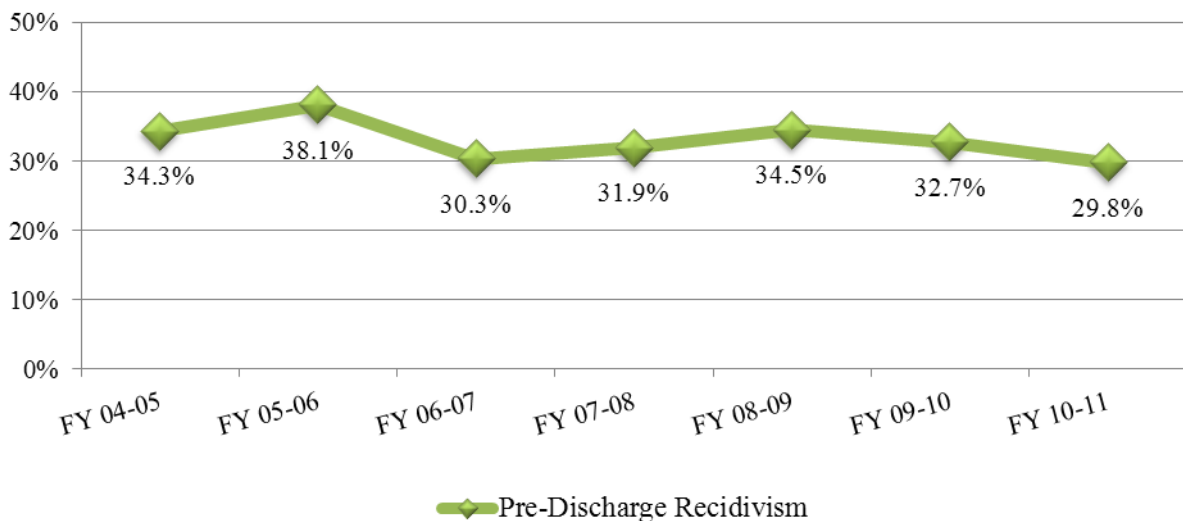
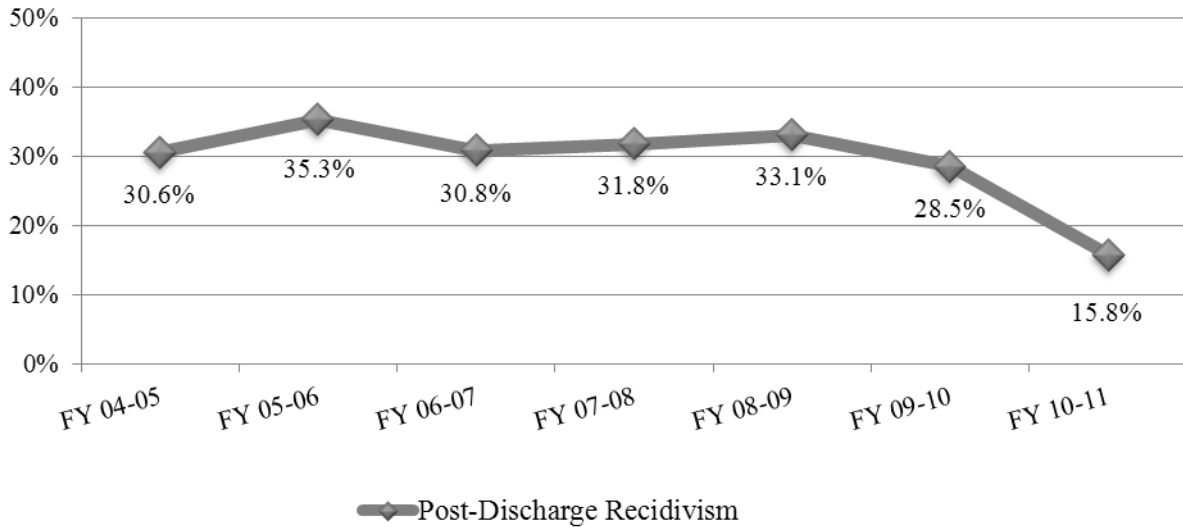


Figure 5 depicts post-discharge recidivism trends for the past seven years. The FY 2010-11 cohort is the lowest rate in seven years, and the past two cohorts have both shown substantial rate decreases. In both years, the declines have been statistically significant from the previous year. At a rate of 15.8%, this is approximately half of the recidivism rate four years ago (31.8%).

²¹ Due to the change in definition, the Division was only confident in the accuracy of six historical data points.

**Figure 5:
Post-Discharge Recidivism Rates FY 2004-05 through FY 2010-11**



Recidivism rates for both pre-discharge and post-discharge have shown a downward outcome for the most recent study. The decline in the post-discharge rate is significantly less than the previous fiscal year²². However, the decline in the pre-discharge rate is not. Due to the change in recidivism definition, it was not possible to statistically test whether or not rates were substantially different across all seven years of data.

Regardless of the definition change, the Division witnessed a year of decline in recidivism rates, for both pre- and post-discharge.

Recidivist Acts or Events

The following table shows the breakdown of recidivist events, both prior to discharge and within one year following discharge from the Division of Youth Corrections. Youth often receive multiple charges (even for one incident) when charges are filed. The data presented in Table 1 identifies the *most serious* offense each youth was found guilty of (adjudicated/conviction) as a measure of the overall severity of recidivist acts that occurred with this cohort.

²² F=38.570, df=1614, p<0.01.

Table 1: Most Serious Adjudication (Offense Type)

Offense	Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Person Felony	34	14.4%	13	10.4%
Property Felony	49	20.8%	29	23.2%
Drug Felony	9	3.8%	8	6.4%
Weapon Felony	2	0.8%	4	3.2%
Escape Felony ²³	35	14.8%	2	1.6%
Identity Felony	7	3.0%	1	0.8%
Sex Registration Felony	1	0.4%	1	0.8%
Other ²⁴ Felony	3	1.3%	3	2.4%
Total Felony Adjudications	140	59.3%	61	48.8%
Offense	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Person Misdemeanor	39	16.5%	14	11.2%
Property Misdemeanor	18	7.6%	23	18.4%
Drug Misdemeanor	4	1.7%	3	2.4%
Weapon Misdemeanor	2	0.8%	2	1.6%
Escape Misdemeanor	11	4.7%	0	0.0%
Identity Misdemeanor	3	1.3%	1	0.8%
Sex Registration Misdemeanor	1	0.4%	3	2.4%
DWI/DUI Misdemeanor	0	0.0%	4	3.2%
Obstruction Misdemeanor	4	1.7%	2	1.6%
Protection Order Misdemeanor	7	3.0%	5	4.0%
Other Misdemeanor	7	3.0%	7	5.6%
Total Misdemeanor Adjudications	96	40.7%	64	51.2%
Total Adjudications	236	100%	125	100%

The majority of pre-discharge (59.3%) offenses were for felony offenses. However, the majority of post-discharge offenses (51.2%) were for misdemeanors. 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

²³ Youth can receive a new commitment from a pre-discharge offense if the adjudication and sentencing occurs following discharge.

²⁴ Other offenses include misdemeanor traffic offenses, underage alcohol citations, and other miscellaneous offenses.

versus a misdemeanor adjudication for similar crimes committed by persons *without* previous criminal histories²⁵.

In addition to examining felony versus misdemeanor offenses, the preceding table also highlights the “types” of charges for which clients received new adjudications (i.e., person, property, drug, etc.). Over the past several years there has been a noticeable increase in the percentage of youth filed on for offenses that were traditionally considered to be “other” offenses²⁶. 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 several years ago²⁷. 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.

The new categories that were introduced include escape charges, adjudications for identity theft or fraud, DWI/DUI, obstruction of justice, resisting arrest, and violations of protection orders issued by the court. Increases in these types of charges may result in both an increase in recidivism, as well as increases in the number of miscellaneous other offenses.

Table 2 shows the same breakdown of offense type, but divides pre-discharge recidivism into two categories: residential and parole. The breakdown reveals that Parole recidivists and Residential recidivists were each more likely to have misdemeanors as their most serious guilty charge (59.9% parole, 59.9% residential).

It is important to point out that youth can be labeled a pre-discharge recidivist by re-offending in residential placement only, re-offending on parole only, or re-offending in both places. For this reason, the residential total (n=137) and the parole total (n=142) does not sum to the pre-discharge total (n=236) shown previously in Table 1.

²⁵ Gottfredson, Michael R., & Gottfredson, Don M., 1987. *Decision Making in Criminal Justice: Toward the Rational Exercise of Discretion*. Law, Society, and Policy, Volume 3.

²⁶ Prior to 2009 the DYC recidivism study reported charge types in five main offense categories: *Person, Property, Drug, Weapon, and Other*.

²⁷ Section 18-3-412.5, Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.)

**Table 2: Most Serious Adjudication
(Pre-Discharge: Residential & Parole)**

Offense	Pre-Discharge Recidivism			
	Residential		Parole	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Person Felony	23	16.8%	20	14.1%
Property Felony	15	10.9%	44	31.0%
Drug Felony	4	2.9%	8	5.6%
Weapon Felony	0	0.0%	2	1.4%
Escape Felony ²⁸	35	25.5%	1	0.7%
Identity Felony	3	2.2%	6	4.2%
Sex Registration Felony	1	0.7%	2	1.4%
Protection Order Violation	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Other ²⁹ Felony	1	0.7%	2	1.4%
Total Felony Adjudications	82	59.9%	85	59.9%
Person Misdemeanor	29	21.2%	14	9.9%
Property Misdemeanor	9	6.6%	15	10.6%
Drug Misdemeanor	0	0.0%	4	2.8%
Weapon Misdemeanor	0	0.0%	2	1.4%
Escape Misdemeanor	11	8.0%	2	1.4%
Identity Misdemeanor	1	0.7%	3	2.1%
Sex Registration Misdemeanor	0	0.0%	1	0.7%
DWI/DUI Misdemeanor	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Obstruction Misdemeanor	1	0.7%	4	2.8%
Protection Order Misdemeanor	0	0.0%	8	5.6%
Other Misdemeanor	4	2.9%	4	2.8%
Total Misdemeanor Adjudications	55	40.1%	57	40.1%
Total Adjudications	137	100%	142	100%

Positive Youth Outcomes: Risk Reduction to the Community (Level of Offense Severity)

It is important to note that not all re-offending behaviors are alike. Although all of the offense types shown in Tables 1 and 2 are, by definition, recidivist acts, when compared side-by-side, some offenses are more serious than others. For example, a few youth in this study are defined as

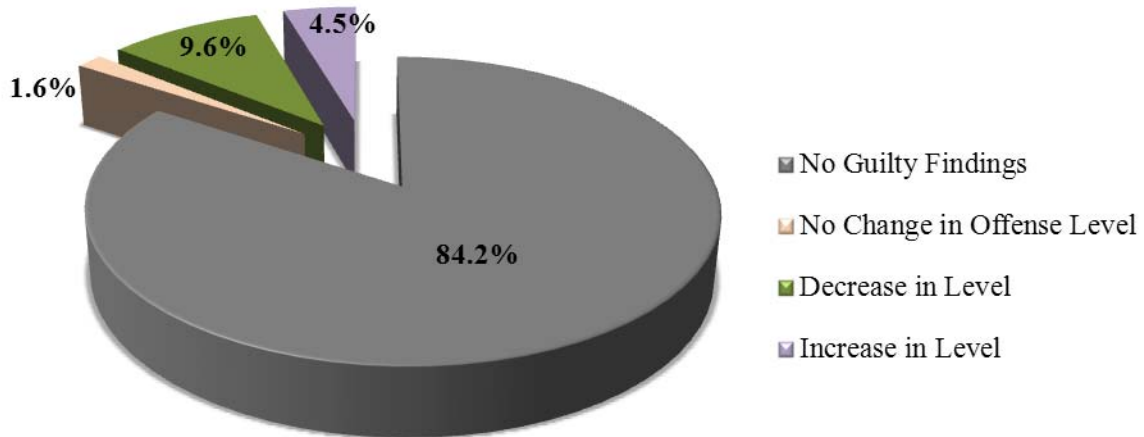
²⁸ Youth can receive a new commitment from a pre-discharge offense if the adjudication and sentencing occurs following discharge.

²⁹ Other offenses include misdemeanor traffic offenses, underage alcohol citations, and other miscellaneous offenses.

re-offenders for seemingly trivial offenses. The most serious offense for one youth in this study (identified as a post-discharge recidivist) was a misdemeanor “*limited gaming – minor violation*” offense. While the definition of recidivism does not differentiate between lower-level and higher-level offenses, a youth whose most serious recidivist act is a misdemeanor “*limited gaming – minor violation*” offense is a much different concern than a youth with multiple aggravated robbery offenses.

Reducing the overall rates of recidivism are important outcome measures for the Division of Youth Corrections. Youth committed to DYC have treatment plans developed that specifically address their individual criminogenic needs, in an effort to reduce their likelihood of re-offending in the future. However, it is also important to consider intermediate outcome measures when evaluating the effectiveness of the Division’s treatment programs. The following analysis, depicted in Figure 6, examines the most serious offense type reported at commitment and compares it to the most serious guilty offense committed within one year following discharge.

Figure 6: Post-Discharge Offense Level Risk Reduction



All of the 793 clients discharged from the Division of Youth Corrections were originally sentenced to DYC for treatment following a felony or misdemeanor adjudication. Figure 6 examines how these same youth, all of whom committed a serious delinquent act prior to

commitment, responded to treatment in the year following discharge from the Division³⁰. As previously noted, 84.2% were not found guilty of any offenses in the twelve months following discharge. Another 9.6% of youth re-offended with a lower risk offense than the offense they were originally committed on. So, in total, the Division was successful in reducing the level of criminal behavior for 94% of youth discharged in FY 2010-11³¹.

Ironically, 6% of the cohort had an increase in offense seriousness (4.5%), or had no change in offense level (1.6%). This is ironic, because there is a large collection of juvenile justice literature that talks about “**the chronic 6 percent.**” This group of chronic juvenile offenders get their name from a longitudinal study of nearly ten thousand boys, who were followed from birth to age eighteen, back in 1945³². The study’s most significant discovery was that 6% of the sample were persistent and chronic juvenile offenders, who had an “early onset” of offending³³, and were responsible for 52% of all known offenses. This “chronic 6%” is not to be confused with the average repeat juvenile offender or one-time juvenile offender.

Chronic Recidivists: “Youths who have been arrested five or more times and perpetuate a striking majority of serious criminal acts; this small group, known as the ‘chronic 6 percent,’ is believed to engage in a significant portion of all delinquent behavior.”³⁴

While it is not assumed that all six percent of the youth in this current analysis (where level of criminal behavior was not reduced) fit into this group labeled “chronic juvenile offenders,” but it’s likely that a portion of this group *could* fit the description. An overwhelming amount of literature states that there is little that can be done to change, “treat,” or disrupt the pattern of offending, for this small subset of serious juvenile delinquents.

³⁰ Offense level change is measured by comparing each youth’s committing offense with their most serious post-discharge recidivist act. For example if a youth is committed for a felony person offense and re-offends with a misdemeanor property offense, they are considered to have decreased the severity of their criminal behavior.

³¹ The remaining six percent (6%) either had no change in offense severity (1.6%) or exhibited more serious criminal behaviors following discharge (4.5%).

³² Wolfgang, Marvin, Robert Figlio, and Thorsten Sellin, 1972. “Delinquency in a Birth Cohort.” Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

³³ Began delinquent careers at a young age, under 10 years old.

³⁴ Siegel and Senna, 2000. Juvenile Delinquency: Theory, Practice, and Law. 7th Edition. Page 60.

Type of Adjudication/Conviction

The type of guilty charge (juvenile delinquency adjudications versus adult criminal convictions) received by youth who re-offended is presented in Table 3. The term *adjudication* (juvenile) is reserved for offenses committed by youth under the age of 18, while *conviction* (adult/criminal) is used to describe offenses 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 that resulted in a guilty finding were included in this analysis³⁵.

Table 3: Type of Adjudication (Any Guilty Charge)

Type of Adjudication	Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Criminal (Adult)	108	45.8%	103	82.4%
Delinquency (Juvenile)	94	39.8%	21	16.8%
Both Adult and Juvenile	34	14.4%	1	0.8%
Total	236	100.0%	125	100.0%

Sixty percent (60.2%) of pre-discharge recidivists were found guilty of at least one adult charge during their commitment (combining the first and third categories in Table 3). An even greater percentage of post discharge offenses (83.2%) were adult criminal charges. Whether or not a youth is charged as an adult or as a juvenile is primarily dependent on his or her age. 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 found guilty.

³⁵ If a youth is found guilty of multiple new charges either during commitment or during the follow-up time period after discharge, he or she could receive both a new adjudication (juvenile) and a new conviction (adult) depending upon the youth's age at the time the offense occurred.

The Guilty Finding

It is common practice to include deferred sentences in the guilty category, as the defendant pleads guilty to the crime in these instances. Deferred cases happen when a defendant agrees to plead guilty to an offense, and the prosecution agrees to delay (or defer) judgment and sentence, for a proscribed period of time, under a proscribed set of conditions. As long as the conditions are met by the defendant, the guilty plea is eventually retracted and the District Attorney dismisses the case. If the conditions are not met, the defendant has already plead guilty, which allows for the original case and sentence to be imposed.

Looking at pre-discharge recidivism, ninety-four percent (94.1%) of youth were found guilty of the charge, and the remaining 5.9% had a deferred sentence. Similarly, eighty-six percent (85.6%) of the post-discharge cohort were found guilty of the most serious charge, while 14.4% received a deferred sentence.

Table 4: Disposition on *Most Serious* Adjudication

Finding	Pre-Discharge Recidivism		Post-Discharge Recidivism	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Guilty ³⁶	222	94.1%	107	85.6%
Deferred	14	5.9%	18	14.4%
Total	236	100.0%	125	100.0%

Table 5 shows pre-discharge recidivism findings, broken down by where the recidivist act occurred (residential vs. parole). The disposition outcomes are very similar when comparing residential dispositions to parole dispositions. It is important to point out that youth can be labeled a pre-discharge recidivist by re-offending in residential placement only, re-offending on parole only, or re-offending in both places. For this reason, the residential total (n=137) and the parole total (n=142) do not sum to the pre-discharge total (n=236) shown above.

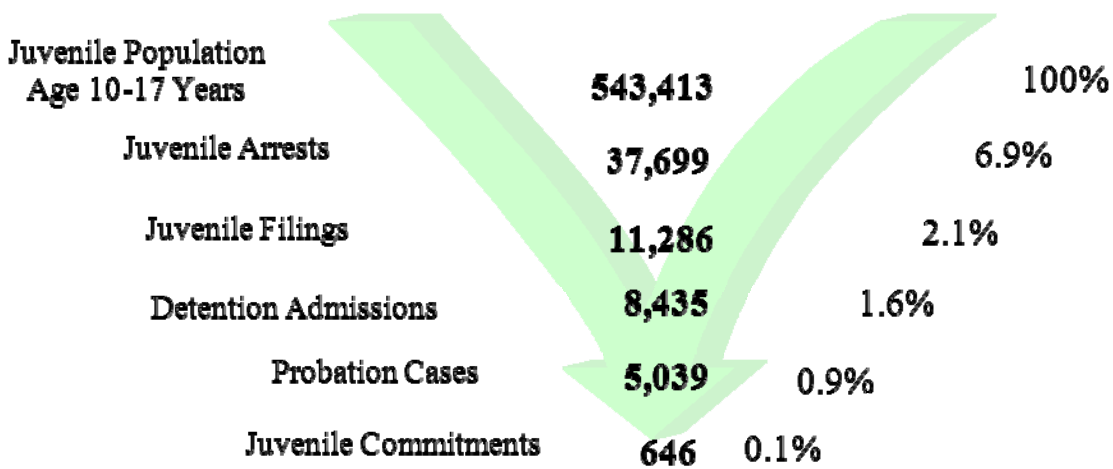
³⁶ Guilty includes guilty and guilty of a lesser charge.

**Table 5: Disposition on *Most Serious* Adjudication
(Pre-Discharge: Residential & Parole)**

Finding	Pre-Discharge Residential		Pre-Discharge Parole	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Guilty ³⁷	134	97.8%	129	90.8%
Deferred	3	2.2%	13	9.2%
Total	137	100.0%	142	100.0%

Figure 7 helps to illustrate why recidivism rates vary, based on the definition of recidivism, and why differing rates cannot be easily compared. This figure depicts Colorado’s juvenile justice filtering process, or the steps that take place when a youth’s offending behavior is brought to the attention of the justice system. Those states or agencies that use re-arrests to represent recidivism will have higher recidivism rates than Colorado, which uses adjudication or conviction on a new felony or misdemeanor offense as the recidivism event. Each stage of the juvenile justice system filters out more and more youth; therefore, states with similar levels of criminal activity that use re-adjudication, reconviction, re-incarceration, or re-commitment will have lower recidivism rates than those that utilize re-arrest, new filing, or re-referral. For these reasons, it is imperative that definitions be the same when recidivism rates are compared.

Figure 7: Juvenile Justice Filtering Process to Commitment FY 2010-11



³⁷ Guilty includes guilty and guilty of a lesser charge.

How Does Colorado Compare?

A cursory review of measures used by other states' juvenile justice system³⁸ has found that there are eleven states considered comparable to Colorado's "new" definition. While performing this review, contact was initiated with each state's juvenile corrections administration office and/or website to understand how recidivism was measured in their state. If contact was unsuccessful, the most recent Annie E. Casey Foundation review on nationwide recidivism measures was used as the default for the recidivism findings³⁹.

Figure 8: Recidivism Rates for States with Comparable Juvenile Recidivism Definitions

State¹	Recidivism Rate
Colorado	16%
Missouri	16%
North Dakota	17%
Louisiana	17%
Maryland	20%
Rhode Island	21%
Maine	23%
Idaho	28%
District of Columbia	35%
Virginia	37%
Montana	38%
Florida	41%

¹States listed may have slight nuances in measurement

It is important to acknowledge that this review did not delve into pure definitions of recidivism for each state; juvenile corrections populations are not necessarily the same as Colorado's, and even if definitions seem similar, there may still be some nuances that do not make for an exact

³⁸ Utilizing the recent work of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, CJCA, and OJJDP

³⁹ <http://www.aecf.org/OurWork/JuvenileJustice/~media/Pubs/Topics/Juvenile%20Justice/Detention%20Reform/NoPlaceForKids/StateRecidivismStudiesTable.pdf>

match. Figure 8 illustrates which states had comparable measures to Colorado’s “new adjudication” definition, and includes those that are close, with the footnote cautioning that nuances may still exist.

Of the twelve states listed, Colorado’s rate of 16 % (15.8%) appears to be tied with Missouri for the lowest recidivism rate in the nation. Following close behind are North Dakota and Louisiana, with recidivism rates of 17%. Several other states with similar definitions were also examined, like Alaska, Michigan, and Oregon; however, specific definitional differences were found that prevented a true rate comparison. For instance, Alaska, Michigan and Oregon all measure new adjudications, but Alaska and Michigan employ a 24-month follow up period (rather than 12 months); and Oregon only counts felony new adjudications. For these reasons and more, the recidivism rate comparisons shown in Figure 8 should be interpreted with caution, as recidivism definitions may not be an exact match.

Demographics

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

Males discharged in FY 2010-11 had significantly higher rates of post-discharge recidivism, compared with females.

Pre-discharge recidivism while on Parole was significantly higher for males, as well, when compared to females.

Gender

Historically, males discharged from the Division of Youth Corrections have been more likely than females to receive a new adjudication for an offense. Figure 9 shows a breakdown of recidivism results by gender. Gender is a commonly known risk factor for delinquency; males are significantly more likely than females⁴⁰ to be involved in delinquent activities.

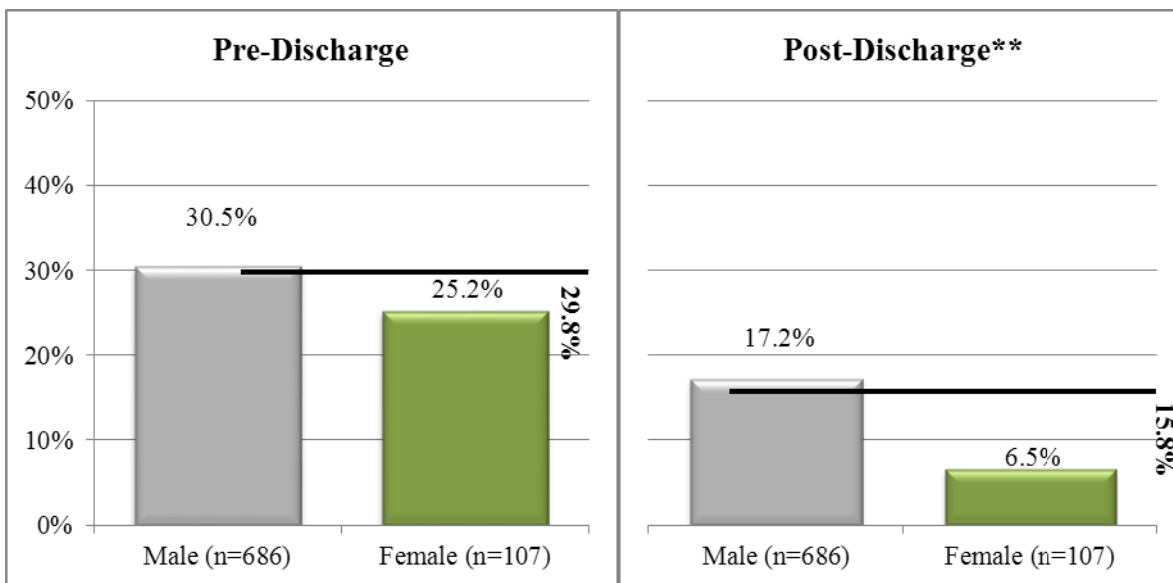
⁴⁰ Liu, X. & H.B. Kaplan (1999). *Explaining the Gender Differences in Adolescent Delinquent Behavior: A Longitudinal Test of Mediating Mechanisms*. *Criminology* 37:195-215.

As shown in Figure 9, the pre-discharge and post-discharge rates for males are only slightly higher than the average recidivism rate for the entire cohort, while recidivism rates for females is significantly below the line. This helps to illustrate how a larger group will have more effect on the average recidivism rate than a smaller group due to the larger number of subjects in the study.

Eighty-six percent (n=686) of the FY 2010-11-discharge cohort was male and 14% (n=107) was female. Of the 686 males, 118 males (17.2%) recidivated within a year of discharging from DYC. Of the 107 females, only seven (6.5%) recidivated within the same time-frame. Males (17.2%) had significantly higher rates of guilty offenses for felony or misdemeanor offenses following discharge than females (6.5%).

The black line running through these charts represents the average recidivism rate for the entire FY 2010-11 discharge cohort.

Figure 9: Recidivism Rates by Gender

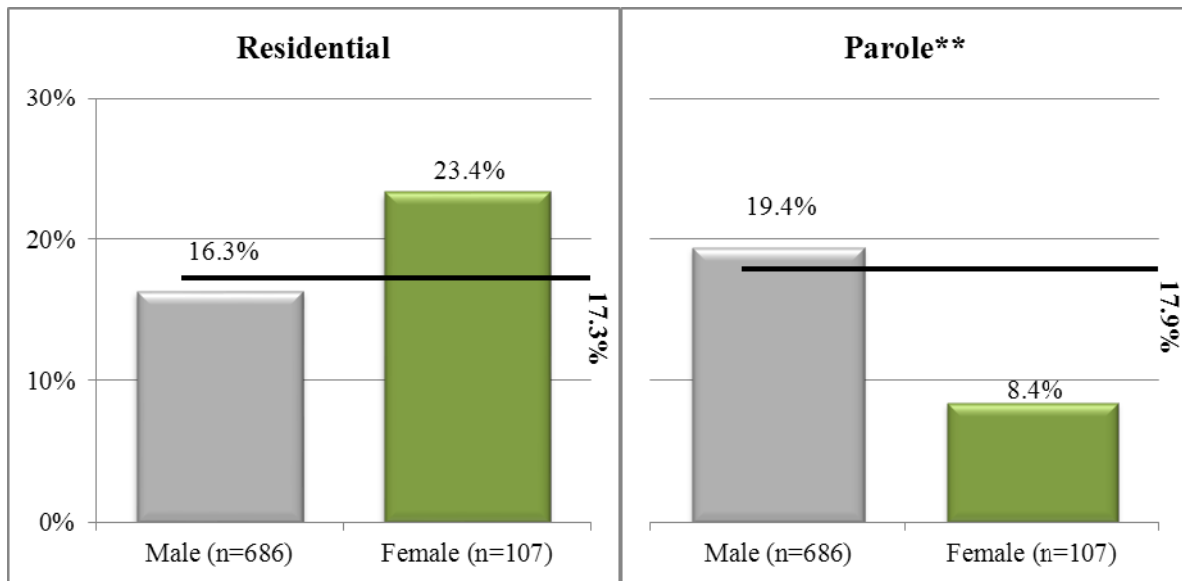


**X²=15.961, df=1, p<0.01

Figure 10 helps to illustrate that males and females differ significantly regarding re-offending while on parole. Females recidivate on parole at a rate of 8.4%, while males recidivate on parole at a much higher rate (19.4%). There are no statistical differences, by gender, when

looking at recidivism rates in **residential placement**, even though females have the higher recidivism rate in residential placement.

Figure 10: Recidivism Rates by Gender (Pre-discharge: Residential and Parole)**



** $X^2=7.587$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$

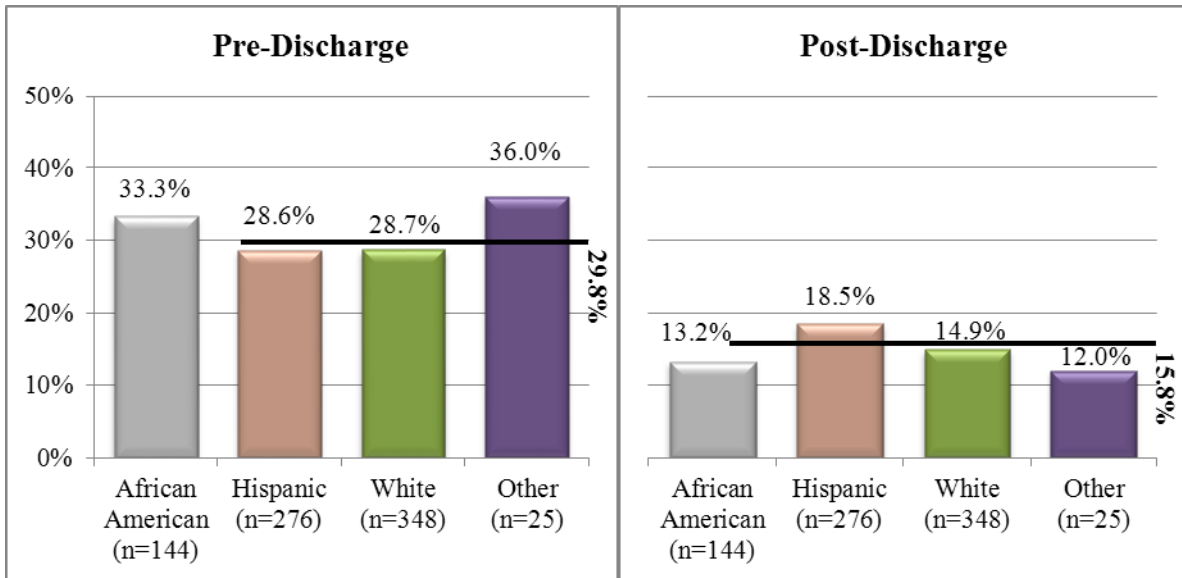
Primary Ethnicity

Figure 11 shows differences in recidivism rates by primary ethnicity. The “other” category includes Native-American, Asian-American youth, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander youth, as well as multi-racial youth and those identified as “unable to be determined.” These categories are collapsed simply because of the small numbers of youth in each category. When examined independently, these small “n” sizes do not allow for valid statistical comparisons⁴¹.

Of the 793 youth in the discharge cohort, 144 were African American. Of the 144 African American youth, 33.3% recidivated while in DYC custody (pre-discharge). Of the 793 youth in the discharge cohort, 276 were Hispanic. Of the 276 Hispanic youth, 28.6% recidivated while in DYC custody. The remaining ethnic group recidivism rates are shown in Figure 11, both for pre-discharge and for post-discharge.

⁴¹ 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.

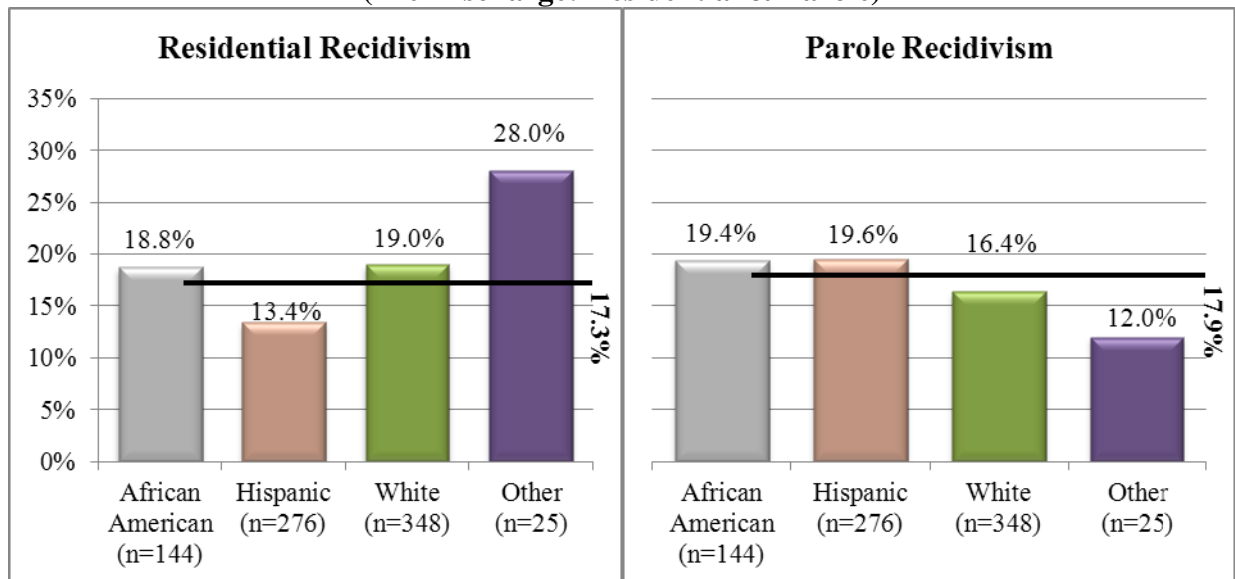
Figure 11: Recidivism Rates by Primary Ethnicity



This year's cohort revealed **no** statistically significant re-offending differences between ethnic groups. Pre-discharge, post-discharge, residential and parole recidivism analyses show only **insignificant** differences.

Results for the youth in the "other" category should be interpreted cautiously because of the small census size (n=25).

Figure 12: Recidivism by Primary Ethnicity (Pre-Discharge: Residential & Parole)



Further analysis grouped the minority ethnicity groups into one large group, and compared recidivism rates with the “White” or non-minority group. Again, no significant differences were found. This is a positive finding for the Division, as it relates to reducing disproportionate minority contact (DMC) and minority over-representation (MOR) issues.

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 13. The Central Region consists of four judicial districts and includes 11 counties (major counties: Denver, Jefferson, Arapahoe, and Douglas). The Northeast Region consists of five judicial districts and 13 counties (major counties: Adams, Boulder, Larimer, and Weld). The Southern Region consists of seven judicial districts and 22 counties (major counties: El Paso and Pueblo). The Western Region consists of the six judicial districts on the western slope, and 18 counties (major county: Mesa).

Figure 13: DYC Region Structure

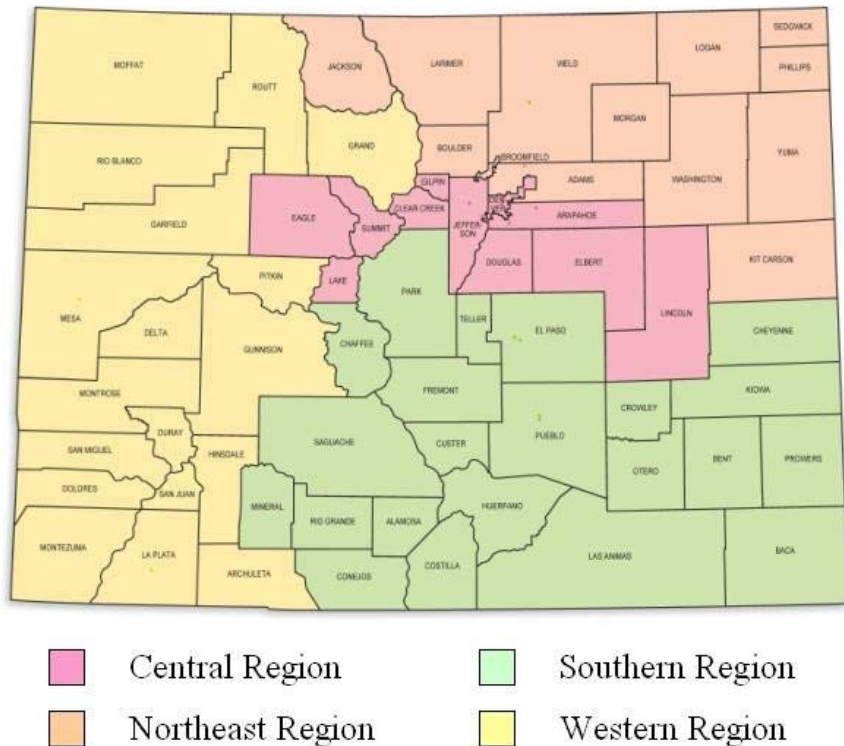
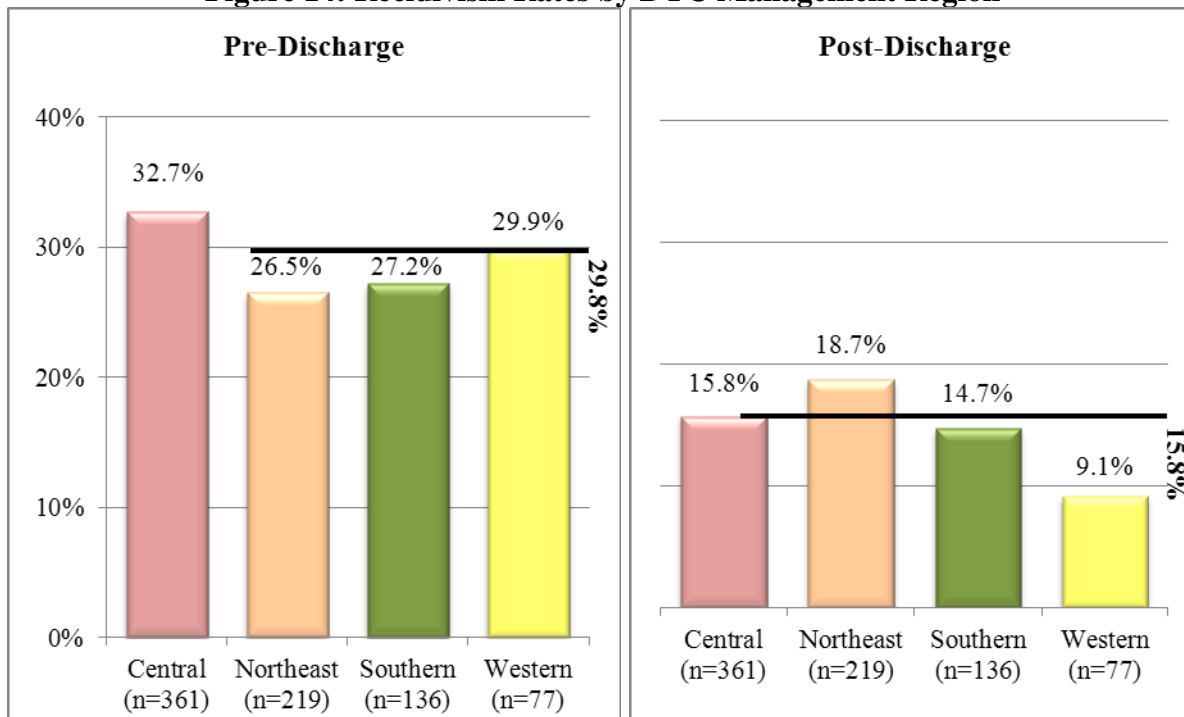


Figure 14 shows a breakdown of recidivism rates by DYC Management Region. There were no statistically meaningful differences noted in pre- or post-discharge recidivism rates by DYC Management Region. The same is true for residential and parole recidivism rates by region—no significant differences were identified.

Figure 14: Recidivism Rates by DYC Management Region

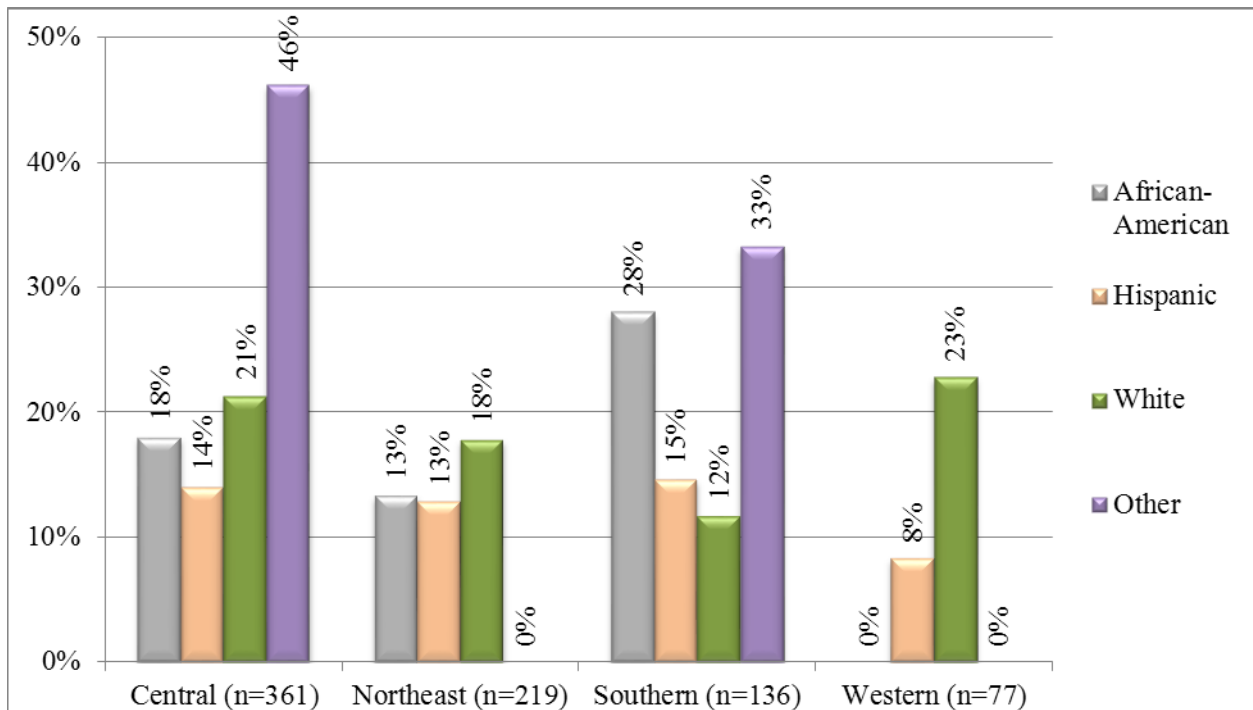


Although no differences were found between regions, there was a disparity found within one region, when looking specifically at residential recidivism rates by youth ethnicity. Figure 15 helps to illustrate this finding⁴². In the Central Region, youth in the “Other” ethnicity group are more likely (46.2%) to be found guilty of an offense while in residential care, when compared to other youth (White-21.3%, African-American-18.0%, Hispanic-14.0%)⁴³. The finding, however, should be interpreted cautiously, because of the very small “n” size (n=13). No other regions had significant differences in this area.

⁴² Parole recidivism rates by Region and by Ethnicity are not shown. These rates were not significantly different.

⁴³ $X^2=8.452$, $df=3$, $p<.05$.

Figure 15: Residential Recidivism Rates by Region by Ethnicity



Risk of Re-Offending

During the first thirty days of commitment to DYJ, youth undergo a battery of assessments to determine criminogenic risk areas, 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).

Juvenile justice organizations often depend on risk assessment instruments to assess the likelihood of recidivism and to aid in the case planning process. The Division of Youth Corrections is continuing 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. As part of that project, the Division introduced the Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment Instrument (CJRA), a fourth generation risk assessment instrument, in June 2006. This recidivism study analyzes CJRA risk scores and assesses how well they predict future criminal behavior (i.e. recidivism) and also examines 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.

Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment

Starting Fiscal Year 2006-07, every youth committed to the Division of Youth Corrections is assessed for criminogenic risk, needs, and protective factors both from a static⁴⁴ and dynamic⁴⁵ perspective. The CJRA replaced the Colorado Young Offender - Level of Service Inventory (CYO-LSI), which DYC had used for over a decade.

CJRA overall risk levels, identified at initial assessment, accurately correlated with the likelihood of re-offending *prior to DYC discharge*.

CJRA overall risk levels, identified at time of discharge, accurately predicted the likelihood of re-offending *within a year of discharge*.

The CJRA is used to initially assess, and periodically reassess risk of recidivism at specified points in time during commitment. Initial assessment and reassessment of risk and protective factors at critical junctures during a youth's commitment sentence allows assessment staff, client managers, and Multi-Disciplinary Teams to accurately assess risk of recidivism and base treatment decisions on the youth's current needs. Figure 16 graphically depicts the mandated initial and reassessment points required by DYC policy⁴⁶.

Not all youth will be subject to the five (5) assessment and reassessment points shown in Figure 16.

The number of CJRA reassessments required for each youth is dependent upon their individual treatment path, case plan, and needs.

Each youth's path along the commitment continuum of care is different. Therefore, not all youth will be subject to the five assessment and reassessment points shown in Figure 16. All youth are given their initial CJRA during the assessment period, and then move on to some type of residential treatment care. There are youth who go directly from assessment to community residential treatment care, skipping secure and/or staff-supervised care altogether. Similarly,

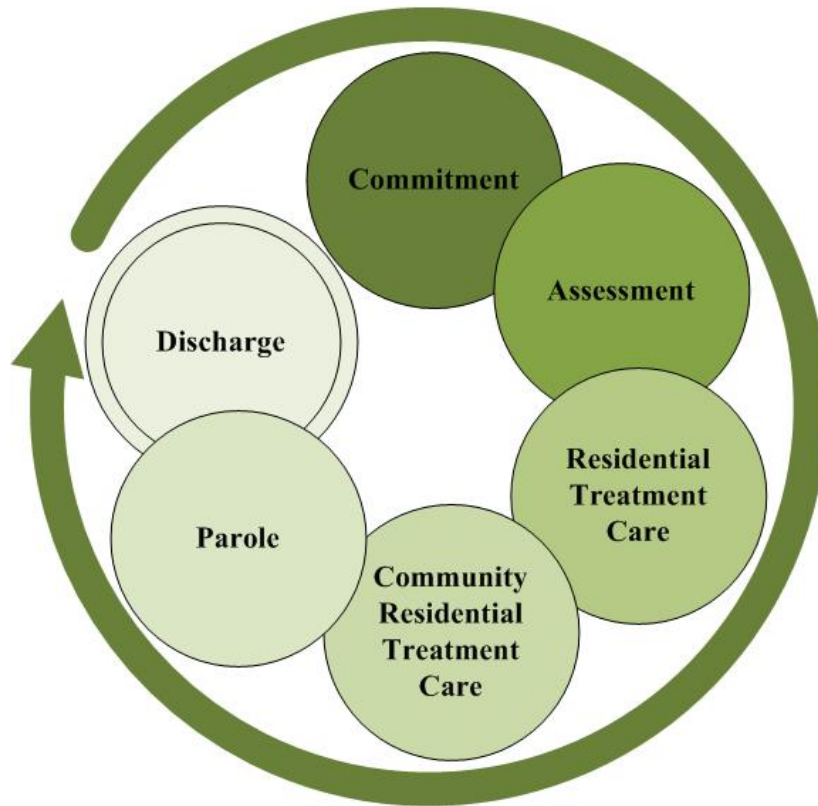
⁴⁴ Static risk is based on historical data and cannot be improved with treatment.

⁴⁵ Dynamic risk is based on a youth's current living and social factors and can be targeted by treatment goals during commitment to reduce risk.

⁴⁶ DYC Policy 21.4.

there are also youth who are never granted parole, and may go straight from secure NYC residential care and discharge into the adult corrections system. The number of CJRA reassessments required for each youth is dependent upon their individual treatment path, case plan, and needs⁴⁷.

Figure 16: CJRA Assessment & Reassessment Points



Mandated CJRA Assessment & Re-Assessment Points

- 1) Initial Assessment
- 2) In Preparation for the Community Review Board (CRB) Hearing
- 3) Prior to Transition MDT/Parole
- 4) 30-90 days after Parole begins
- 5) At Discharge

⁴⁷ In addition to these 5 points in time, CJRA reassessments are also appropriate upon transitioning to a different level of care, and at staff discretion.

Research has established and reaffirmed that there are a number of factors that strongly correlate with persistent and/or chronic delinquent behaviors. These criminogenic risk factors consist of a host of social, environmental, ecological, psychological and gender-based influences. 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, Attitudes and Behaviors, etc.). Dynamic risk scores are changeable through a targeted treatment plan and include scales where risk scores can be mitigated through treatment that directly addresses a youth's criminogenic needs. Dynamic risk factors, when targeted and treated appropriately, should be followed by a corresponding reduction in delinquent behaviors. 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 (Family)
8. Substance Abuse
9. Mental Health
10. Attitudes and Behaviors
11. Aggression
12. Skills

The CJRA analysis included in this report focuses on CJRA risk scores at three main points in time: initial assessment, at time of parole, and at time of discharge.

The CJRA and Pre-Discharge Recidivism

Directly following DYC commitment, each youth goes through an assessment period where DYC staff conduct an initial CJRA to determine the youth's level of criminogenic need and risk for re-offense, amongst other assessments. These assessments are used to guide the decision making process for treatment plans and level of security needed to ensure community safety during commitment.

The CJRA provides DYC staff with an overall risk level for re-offense, as well as separate domain-specific risk levels for re-offense. There are three levels of risk to recidivate: 1) low risk, 2) moderate risk, and 3) high risk. It is extremely important to understand that the CJRA only assesses *risk to re-offend*. The instrument was not developed or intended to predict any other type of risk. This is true for the overall risk level, and all the individual domain risk levels.

For example, if a youth scores out as “moderate risk” in the Mental Health domain, this means he or she has a moderate risk for re-offense, based on mental health indicators. This youth may have very serious and severe mental health treatment issues and needs—but this particular CJRA domain is not intended to identify overall mental health needs. The CJRA Mental Health domain only measures how a select few mental health factors relate to the likelihood of recidivism. In other words, to what extent does this youth’s mental health issues relate to his or her criminality, delinquency, and re-offending behaviors?

It is extremely important to understand that the CJRA only assesses *risk to re-offend*. The CJRA does not assess dangerousness, lethality, or help determine youth placement needs.

Overall, the CJRA risk level determined at assessment is correlated with a youth’s likelihood to recidivate during commitment (although not statistically significant). As shown in Table 6, low risk youth (low risk to re-offend) recidivated at a rate of 15.4% (n=13), moderate risk youth had a pre-discharge recidivism rate of 24.2% (n=66), and high risk youth had a rate of 24.7% (n=580).

Table 6: CJRA Risk Level and Pre-Discharge Recidivism⁴⁸

CJRA Risk Level (Initial)	Pre-Discharge Recidivism		
Level	Total N	Recidivate N	Percent
Low Risk to Recidivate	13	2	15.4%
Moderate Risk to Recidivate	66	16	24.2%
High Risk to Recidivate	580	143	24.7%
Total	659	161	24.4%

⁴⁸ At time of assessment, nearly 95% of the cohort had a valid initial CJRA (n=747 of 793). However, not all valid CJRAs are fully complete. Specific CJRA items must be fully complete to have a risk level calculated (n=659).

Post-discharge findings related to the CJRA are discussed in-depth later in the report. But to provide a brief “preview” summary, CJRA risk levels at discharge are also directionally correlated with post-discharge recidivism—but were only statistically significant when risk levels were analyzed in two groups (high-risk, not high-risk), as opposed to three (low, moderate, high risk). Knowing that CJRA risk levels directionally correlate with recidivism rates (both pre- and post-discharge) is a positive finding. This lends initial support for the instrument’s predictive validity.

In addition to the overall risk level, there are also nine of the twelve domains previously listed that have risk scales associated with them⁴⁹. Many of the scales have both a *static* risk score (based on historical risk factors which are not changeable) and a *dynamic* risk score (based on current factors which are changeable). No specific CJRA dynamic domains were significantly correlated with pre-discharge recidivism for this cohort. One static (historical) domain was found to be predictive, and this is the Family domain. This means that historical issues related to Family is strongly associated with re-offending while in DYC custody. No other domains, dynamic or static, are strongly associated with pre-discharge recidivism.

The CJRA and Residential Recidivism (Pre-Discharge)

Consistent with the overall pre-discharge recidivism results, the only domain shown to accurately predict **residential** recidivism is the Family history domain. No dynamic domains were significantly correlated with residential recidivism. However, an interesting finding (though **not** statistically significant) did appear when comparing initial CJRA risk levels and **residential** offending—low risk (15.4%) and moderate risk (12.1%) youth tend to offend more often in residential placement, when compared to high risk youth (11.7%). This is opposite of what would be expected. In theory, high risk youth would be more apt to re-offend in placement, not low or moderate risk youth. Although interesting, this finding should be cautiously interpreted due to the small “n” sizes; but may prompt the need to further investigate why these low and moderate risk youth are more apt to re-offend in residential placement.

⁴⁹ The Gender, Use of Free Time, and Employment scales are not scored because there is little variance in scores. For example, the Employment Domain Risk score has a maximum of two (2) points with little variability in risk. Gender risk is scored (male=1, female=0), and Use of Free Time has no risk score calculated at all.

Table 7: CJRA Risk Level and Residential Recidivism

CJRA Risk Level (Initial)	Residential Recidivism Rate
Level	Percent
Low Risk to Recidivate	15.4%
Moderate Risk to Recidivate	12.1%
High Risk to Recidivate	11.7%

The CJRA and Parole Recidivism (Pre-Discharge)

As youth prepare to transition onto parole, preparations are made and put into action using a parole plan. Currently, youth are also reassessed, and these subsequent CJRA scores are presented to both the parole board and the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) for review and consideration. In this cohort, 86% of the youth had a valid “Parole” CJRA⁵⁰. While the Parole CJRA (overall risk level) was **not** significantly predictive of recidivism while on parole status, the directionality of the results was on-target. The vast majority of youth (88.9%) who scored low risk to re-offend did not recidivate on parole (n=40 out of 45). Youth who scored moderate or high risk re-offended at very similar rates, 17.9% and 19.8%, respectively (See Table 8).

Table 8: CJRA Risk Level and Parole Recidivism

CJRA Risk Level (at time of Parole)	Parole Recidivism Rate
Level	Percent
Low Risk to Recidivate	11.1%
Moderate Risk to Recidivate	17.9%
High Risk to Recidivate	19.8%

One dynamic domain, the Skills domain, was predictive of re-offending while on parole. At the time of parole reassessment, those youth that scored low risk on the skills domain recidivated at a rate of 16.8% on parole. In comparison, those who scored high risk in the skills domain recidivated at a rate of 28.1% on parole (moderate risk=26.1%).⁵¹ The Skills domain assesses a youth’s overall social proficiency and “life skills” (or lack thereof).

⁵⁰ A Parole CJRA was selected as valid if it occurred within 60 days of parole date.

⁵¹ $\chi^2=7.056$, $df=2$, $p<0.05$.

The CJRA and Post-Discharge Recidivism

When youth are discharged from parole (and therefore NYC custody) following a commitment sentence they are reassessed one last time. While CJRAs administered during commitment are used to modify treatment plans and monitor readiness for a youth to step-down to lower-security treatment programs, the discharge CJRA is used by the Division to measure risk reduction and treatment gains that were achieved during the youth's commitment.

Most of the youth in this discharge cohort received a CJRA reassessment, as appropriate, within 90 days of their discharge date (n=716, 90.3%)⁵². CJRA risk assessments conducted *at the time of discharge* from NYC accurately predicted future (post-discharge) criminal behavior. The overall risk level at discharge and the associated post-discharge recidivism rates are shown in Table 9: youth assessed as low risk to re-offend (n=55) had a recidivism rate of 10.9%; moderate risk youth (n=206) had a recidivism rate of 12.6%, and high risk youth (n=455) had a recidivism rate of 19.1%.

Table 9: CJRA Risk Level and Post-Discharge Recidivism

CJRA Risk Level (Discharge)	Post-Discharge Recidivism		
Level	Total N	Recidivate N	Percent
Low Risk to Recidivate	55	6	10.9%
Moderate Risk to Recidivate	206	26	12.6%
High Risk to Recidivate	455	87	19.1%
Total	716	119	16.6%

Looking at overall risk another way, grouping low risk and moderate risk together and making comparisons to high risk youth (not high risk vs. high risk), produced statistically significant results. Youth assessed as not high risk to re-offend (i.e., low and moderate risk) had a recidivism rate of 12.3%, while high risk youth had a recidivism rate of 19.1%. The ability to accurately estimate which youth are more likely to re-offend highlights the importance of

⁵² Some reasons why a discharge CJRA could not be completed on a youth include youth who were under adult corrections supervision, youth institutionalized for a mental health condition, or deported youth.

transition planning, and developing sustainable support linkages, for these high risk youth, in the community.

Table 10: CJRA Risk Level (2-Level) and Post-Discharge Recidivism**

CJRA Risk Level (Discharge)	Post-Discharge Recidivism		
	Total N	Recidivate N	Percent
Level			
Not High Risk (low & moderate risk)	261	32	12.3%
High Risk to Recidivate	455	87	19.1%
Total	716	119	16.6%

** $X^2=5.633$, $df=1$, $p<0.05$

In addition to overall risk level, post-discharge recidivism rates varied significantly with six of the thirteen risk scales analyzed, and all six are dynamic scales (see Table 10.1). In other words, elevated scores in these six domains accurately predicted a higher likelihood of post-discharge recidivism.

Table 10.1: CJRA Domain Risk Levels and Post-Discharge Recidivism**

CJRA Domains*	High Risk (Recidivism Rate)	Not High Risk (Recidivism Rate)
School	33.9%	15.1%
Family	22.1%	14.5%
Mental Health	33.3%	16.0%
Attitudes & Behaviors	19.1%	14.4%
Aggression	21.7%	14.0%
Skills	23.5%	15.5%

**All domain rate differences were statistically significant

The six dynamic risk scales that were correlated with post-discharge recidivism rates were: School, Family, Mental Health, Attitudes and Behaviors, Aggression, and Skills. Higher scores on these scales predicted higher instances of post-discharge re-offending. Overall, the predictive nature of these dynamic risk factors is an encouraging sign for DYC treatment providers. As providers target a youth's individual criminogenic needs during treatment they are hopefully reducing a youth's risk in these specific areas. If, through treatment, providers are able to reduce

a youth's risk level on the Aggression scale, for instance, that youth will be significantly less likely to re-offend after being discharged from their commitment sentence.

The CJRA “Family” Domain

The Family domain was “doubly” predictive of recidivism with this cohort of discharges, as the dynamic (current) family scales predicted post-discharge recidivism, and the static (historic) scales are predictive of pre-discharge recidivism. Multi-Systemic Treatment (MST) and Functional Family Therapy (FFT)—which the Division utilizes when appropriate—focuses on the family (not the individual youth) as the unit of analysis. Emphasizing family-based interventions appear to be an effective way to ameliorate this risk apparent in the Family domain of the CJRA.

Odds Analysis: CJRA and Post-Discharge⁵³ Recidivism

By utilizing “Odds Ratio” analyses, scientific predictions can be made as to which youth are more likely to recidivate post-discharge—and at what greater chance. As anticipated, youth who scored *high risk* (overall) had greater odds of recidivating than those who did not score high risk (overall). Specifically, youth who scored *high risk* on the discharge CJRA reassessment (all domains accounted for) were 1.69 times as likely to recidivate compared to counterparts who did not score high risk on the reassessment (Odds Ratio 1.69; 95% Confidence Interval 1.01-2.79). And, to re-affirm a long-known fact, males in this discharge cohort were found to have a 3.5-fold increased risk of recidivating than females in this discharge cohort.⁵⁴

It is extremely important to understand that the CJRA only assesses risk to re-offend. The CJRA does not assess dangerousness, lethality, or help determine youth placement needs.

While the CJRA cumulatively predicted recidivism for those who scored high risk at the time of discharge, specific domains within the CJRA were also predictive of recidivism. As shown in

⁵³ An odds analysis was not conducted on CJRA domains and Pre-Discharge recidivism because no domains were significantly predictive of pre-discharge recidivism.

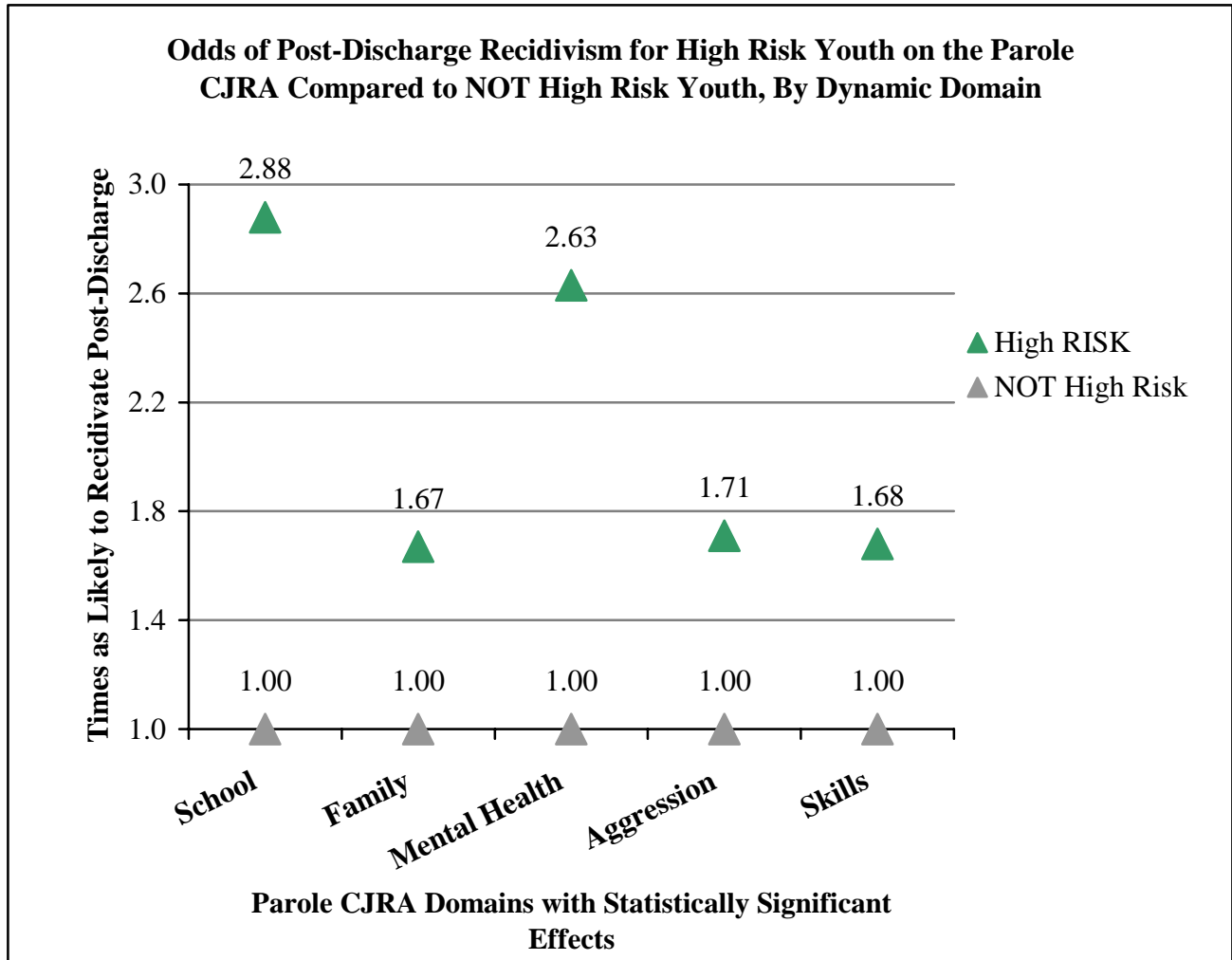
⁵⁴ Odds Ratio 3.48; 95% Confidence Interval 1.49-8.13

Figure 17, youth who scored *high risk* on the discharge CJRA on the dynamic domains of School, Family, Substance Abuse, Mental Health, Aggression, or Skills were found to be more likely to recidivate post-discharge than youth who did not score high risk in each of these areas.

- Youth who were *high risk* on the discharge CJRA in the School domain were almost **three (2.88)** times as likely to re-offend than youth who were not high risk in this domain (Odds Ratio 2.88; 95% Confidence Interval 1.60-5.20).
- Youth who were *high risk* on the discharge CJRA in the Family domain were **1.67** times as likely to re-offend than youth who were not high risk in this domain (Odds Ratio 1.67; 95% Confidence Interval 1.11-2.53).
- Youth who were *high risk* on the discharge CJRA in the Mental Health domain were **2.63** times as likely to re-offend than youth who were not high risk in this domain (Odds Ratio 2.63; 95% Confidence Interval 1.15-6.01).
- Youth who were *high risk* on the discharge CJRA in the Aggression domain were **1.71** times as likely to re-offend than youth who were not high risk in this domain (Odds Ratio 1.71; 95% Confidence Interval 1.14-2.55).
- Youth who were *high risk* on the discharge CJRA in the Skills domain were almost **1.68** times as likely to re-offend than youth who were not high risk in this domain (Odds Ratio 1.68; 95% Confidence Interval 1.01-2.79).

To explain Figure 17 further, the gray triangles depict the youth that are **NOT** high risk in these domains, and the green triangles depict youth that **ARE** *high risk* youth in these domains. Looking specifically at the School domain, for example, low risk youth are positioned at 1.00, as they are the “base-line” for the analysis. When comparing the post-discharge recidivism ratios of these two groups of youth (those scoring *medium/low risk* on this domain vs. those scoring *high risk* on this domain), the results indicate that, on average, high risk youth are 2.88 times (nearly three times) as likely to recidivate when specifically compared to their low/medium risk counterparts on the School domain.

Figure 17: Post-Discharge Recidivism Risk Odds Ratios



Odds ratios, as explained and depicted above, are estimates. When odds ratios are found to be statically significant, it means that there is less than a 5% chance that the results are due to chance alone. In other words, if the study is replicated 100 times, the same or similar results would be expected 95 out of 100 times – the findings are not just random, or due to chance. Furthermore, since odds ratios are estimates, a confidence interval is provided as the true range.

It is estimated that youth who scored high risk on the Mental Health domain are **2.63** times as likely to recidivate, however the true odds could fall anywhere between 1.15 times to 6.01 times as likely as likely to recidivate. The figure 2.63 is simply the best estimate available, but the true likelihood could fall anywhere in the range specified.

Overall, odds ratio analyses helps to reaffirm important areas to target for youth treatment, as identified throughout this report: 1) School, 2) Family, 3) Mental Health, 4) Aggression, and 5) Skills. When youth assess as high risk in these five domains at the time of discharge, targeted treatment could mitigate some of the dynamic risk presented, help youth progress, and give youth a better chance at success⁵⁵.

***Positive Youth Outcomes:
Gains Made in Reducing Risk Factors and Increasing Protective Factors***

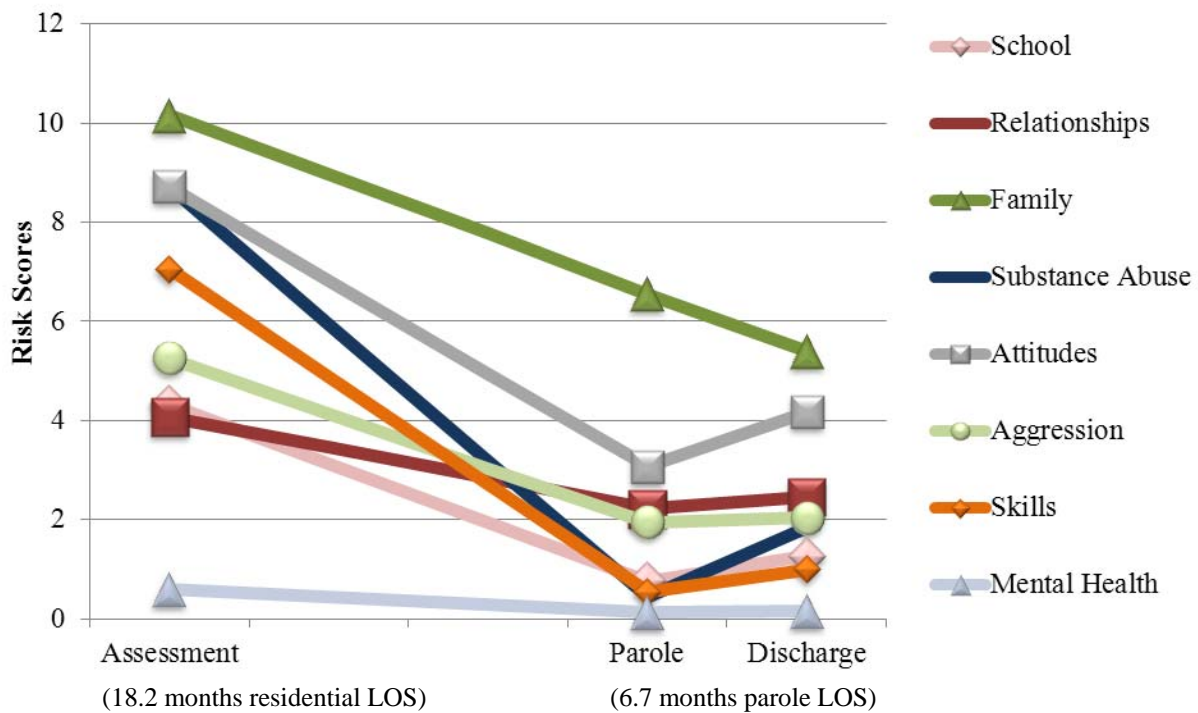
To assess change in criminogenic risk, only youth who were discharged in FY 2010-11 and had CJRA assessments at initial commitment, at the time of their parole hearing, and at discharge, were included in the analysis. Change in scores, for the CJRA dynamic domains, were calculated between the CJRA conducted at initial assessment and those done at parole and discharge, using raw domain scores. *Increases* in dynamic *protective* factors and *decreases* in dynamic *risk* factors would both be indications of positive youth change.

Figure 18 shows the reduction in dynamic risk scores for this discharge cohort by domain. The first point on the graph is the risk score at the time of assessment. The second data point is the average CJRA domain score when clients are released from residential treatment and begin parole. The third data point is the time in which youth are discharged from DYC.#

The most dramatic gains are seen between youths' initial assessment and the CJRA administered at the time of parole. When reassessed at discharge, the magnitude of change from initial assessment is slightly less. This is not surprising given that when youth leave the structured and predictable setting of residential commitment and return to their community, some portion of the gains achieved is not maintained. The discharge CJRA scores, however, still show a significant reduction in risk factors and an increase in protective factors (Figure 19) from those measured at time of commitment.

⁵⁵ Important to note is that the CJRA domains were examined individually, but youth were not examined individually. In other words, a youth may have scored high risk on multiple domains. If, for example, that youth recidivated, then an increased risk of recidivism would be seen for all of the domains in which he or she scored high. To parse out the effect of cross domain high risk scoring, further analysis should look at the CJRA domains interdependently, in addition to independently.

Figure 18: Change in Domain Risk Scores: Assessment to Discharge



The reduction in the eight domain risk scores shown above are all statistically **significant** changes. This means that the changes illustrated in Figure 18 are, in fact, meaningful changes in risk. If the provision of appropriate treatment services had not reduced this discharge cohort’s average risk levels as notably as is seen, the previous analysis suggests that these youth may have experienced much higher levels of post-discharge recidivism.

One concern, visible on Figure 18, is the “Attitudes & Behaviors” domain (the gray line with square data points in Figure 18) risk score increase, from the time of parole to the time of discharge. As aforementioned, it is anticipated that *some* portion of the domain risk reductions achieved, from time of assessment to time of parole, are not maintained when youth leave the structured setting of residential commitment and return to their community on parole. But the increased risk score on this particular domain is not proportionate to the other domains. The Attitudes/Behaviors domain assesses youth risk in four primary areas: 1) primary emotion when committing crime, 2) attitude toward law-abiding behavior, 3) accepting responsibility, and 4) belief in success. The risk increases experienced during the parole period, for this cohort of

youth, could possibly be attributed to a “new-found” lack of structure from a residential setting to the community. While in residential placement, youth schedules are highly structured, and an emphasis is placed on understanding and complying with rules—as well as accepting responsibility for any rule violations. These are some of the factors measured in this domain, which a youth may struggle with in the community.

On a positive note, the “Family” domain (the green line with triangle data points in Figure 18) shows **no increase** in risk score, during the parole period. This is a good indication that services provided to DYC youth and to their families is not only reducing risk, but the risk reduction is wholly maintained as the youth transition back into the community.

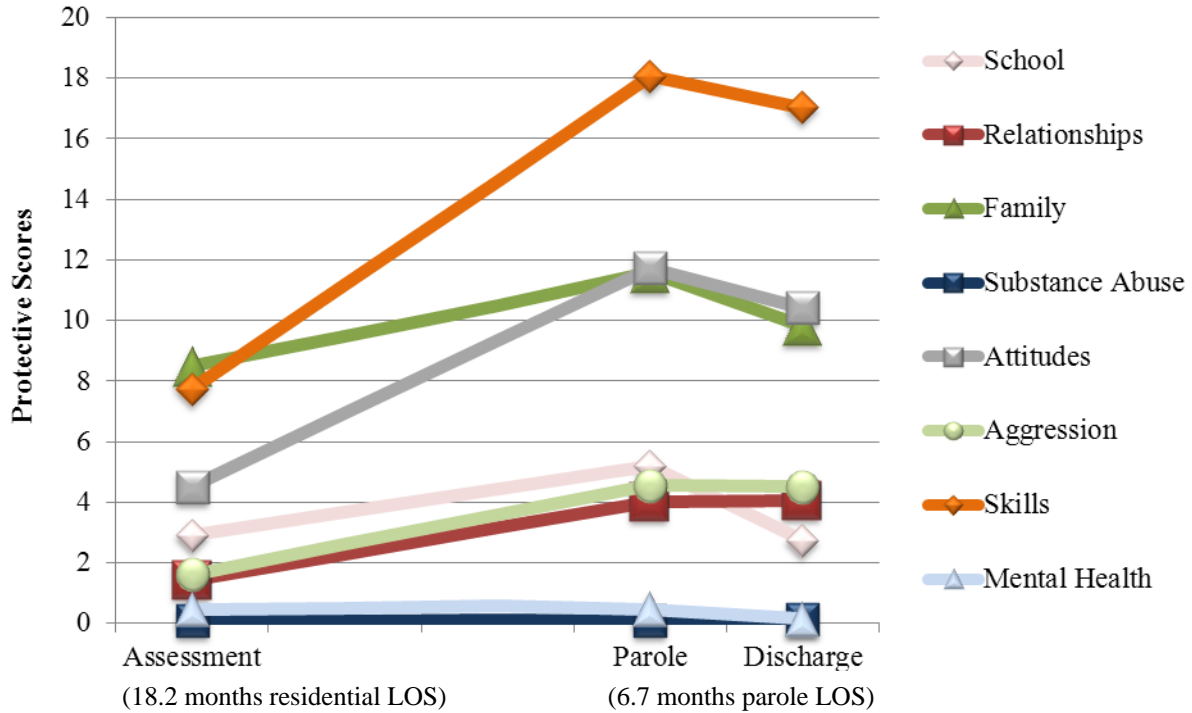
Overall Risk Level vs. Domain Risk Level

It is very important to mention that the domain-specific risk reduction analyses, shown in Figure 18 of this section, **should not** be compared to the overall risk reduction analyses, shown in Figures 41 and 42 of section two. Domain risk levels and Overall risk level are calculated very differently. For example, a youth could show significant *domain* improvements (risk reduction) on four of the twelve CJRA domains and **not necessarily** evidence a significant reduction in *overall risk level*. A more comprehensive discussion of this topic is found in Section Two of this report, on page 93.

Not only is a reduction in risk scores important, but an increase in protective scores also reduces a youth’s likelihood to re-offend. Figure 19, shows the increase in the dynamic protective scores, from assessment to parole to discharge, for this cohort. **With one exception (the school domain), all of the increases shown are statistically significant.**

CJRA scores at discharge show a significant reduction in risk factors and an increase in protective factors from those measured at time of commitment.

Figure 19: Change in Domain Protective Scores: Assessment to Discharge



Traditional Risk Factors: Prior Juvenile Justice and Other System Involvement

Although the CJRA’s Criminal History scale covers several different measures of “prior system involvement,” a number of individual indicators have been found to be highly predictive of pre-discharge and post-discharge (prior studies) recidivism in prior reports. Therefore, recidivism rates are compared for the following measures of prior system involvement:

- 1) number of prior detention admissions,
- 2) number of prior out-of-home placements,
- 3) number of prior adjudications,
- 4) age at first adjudication, and
- 5) number of prior commitments.

Pre-Discharge Summary: Traditional Risk Factors

It is anticipated that youth with more prior system involvement will have higher rates of re-offending while in residential placement and on parole. Juvenile justice research supports this hypothesis, stating that youth with a history of delinquent activity show an elevated risk of future offending⁵⁶.

Prior Detention Admissions for this discharge cohort ranged from zero (0) up to seventeen (17) for a single youth. On average, all committed youth discharged in FY 2010-11 had 4.6 detention admissions prior to their commitment. On average, those who had a new adjudication while under Division custody had 5.1 prior admissions, whereas youth who did not reoffend had 4.5 prior admissions⁵⁷. This is a statistically **significant** difference in prior admissions.

Individual indicators of prior system involvement were not as predictive as they had been in prior studies.

In fact, no indicators of prior system involvement were predictive of post-discharge recidivism.

Prior placements, detention admissions, and age at first adjudication were correlated with pre-discharge recidivism.

Breaking the data down into categories of youth with 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 not** show significant differences in pre-discharge recidivism rates.

Prior Out-of-Home Placements can include inpatient mental health or substance abuse treatment facilities, Child Welfare (Social Service) placements, as well as any prior DYC placements. Pre-discharge recidivism rates **were different**, depending on the number of prior out-of-home placements. On average, those who had a new adjudication while under Division custody had 2.6 prior placements, whereas youth who did not reoffend had 1.9 prior placements⁵⁸.

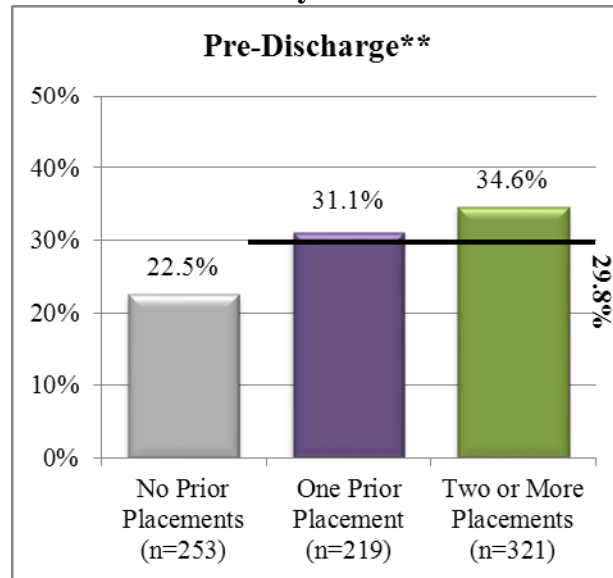
⁵⁶ Andrews, D.A., and Bonta, J. (1994). *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*. Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing, p.165.

⁵⁷ F=8.168, df=792, p<.01.

⁵⁸ F=5.786, df=792, p<.05.

Breaking the data down into categories of youth with zero, one, or two or more prior out-of-home placements, the results did show significant differences in pre-discharge recidivism rates (see Figure 20).

Figure 20: Recidivism Rates by Prior Out-of-Home Placements

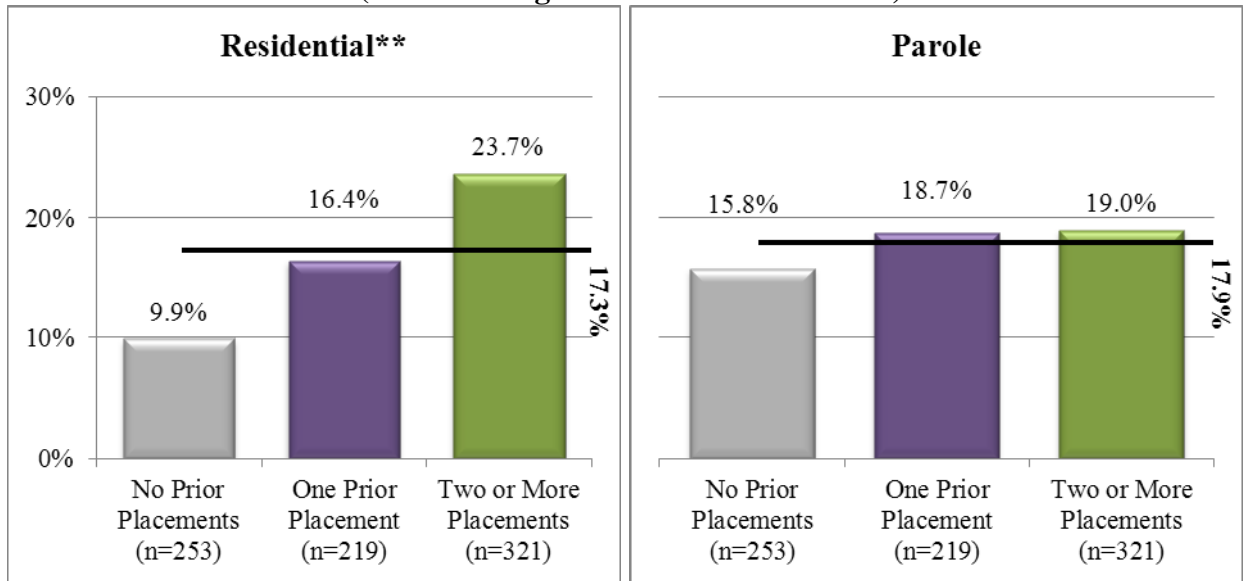


** $X^2=10.069$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$

When pre-discharge recidivism is separated into residential and parole, significant differences remain intact for residential recidivism (see Figure 21 below). The black line running through these charts represents the average recidivism rate for the entire FY 2010-11 discharge cohort, as they relate to residential and parole recidivism. The average residential recidivism rate for youth in cohort is 17.3%. The average parole recidivism rate for this cohort is 17.9%.

Of the 793 youth in the FY 2010-11 discharge cohort, two hundred fifty-three (n=253) had no prior placements. Of these 253, ten percent (9.9%) had a new adjudication during residential placement. Conversely, of the 793 youth in the discharge cohort, three hundred twenty-one (n=321) had two or more prior placements. Of these 321, twenty-four percent (23.7%) had a new adjudication during residential placement. Youth with two or more out-of-home placements were more likely to re-offend in a residential setting. Significant differences were not seen with youth on parole.

**Figure 21: Recidivism Rates by Prior Out-of-Home Placements
(Pre-Discharge: Residential and Parole)**



** $X^2=18.987$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$

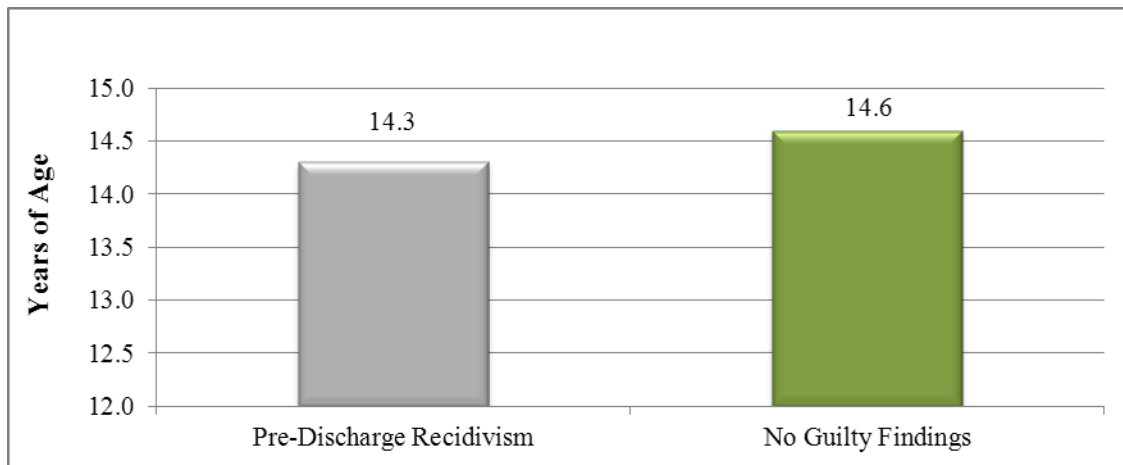
Prior Adjudications is also a measure of prior involvement in the juvenile justice system, and as such, it is predicted that youth with more prior adjudications would have higher recidivism rates.

An examination of pre-discharge recidivism rates found prior adjudications were **not** predictive of recidivism for this cohort.

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 recidivate than youth who are older at the time of their first contact with the system⁵⁹. The average client age at first adjudication coupled with recidivism outcomes are shown in Figure 22. Although the age differences for youth who received a new adjudication pre-discharge and those who did not were small, they were statistically significant.

⁵⁹ Andrews, D.A., and Bonta, J. (1994). *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*. Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing.

Figure 22: Age at First Adjudication



**F=14.34, p<0.05

Prior Commitments, one last indicator of prior juvenile justice involvement was also analyzed for this recidivism evaluation. A commitment to DYJ represents the furthest potential penetration into the juvenile justice system that youth in this study might have encountered prior to their current commitment. Very few (n=38, or 5%) of the youth in this discharge cohort were committed to the Division of Youth Corrections prior to the commitment examined for this study, and there were **no** significant differences in recidivism rates by prior commitments.

From a treatment perspective, these measures of prior system involvement 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 (i.e., as youth acquire additional offenses, penetrate deeper into the system, etc.). Therefore, it is imperative that the Division continues to move in the direction of targeting dynamic risk factors, or those that can be positively affected, when making treatment decisions for youth. Additionally, protective factors may be targeted through treatment services in an attempt to mitigate the risk factors. The Division's Continuum of Care helps focus treatment, specifically transitional services, towards these particular goals. This approach may be partially to credit for the continued drop in post-discharge recidivism rates seen in the past couple years.

Post-Discharge Summary: Traditional Risk Factors

In research, the phrase “a non-finding is just as important as a finding” is referenced a lot. This happens to be the case with this cohort of youth, when examining post-discharge recidivism, using the new definition of new adjudication/conviction. In fact, this year’s study takes the well-known phrase to a new level, as **not one single factor** related to “prior system involvement” was significantly correlated with post-discharge recidivism. This is also true of the CJRA “Criminal History” domain, which is normally the most-predictive domain on the instrument! Equally surprising is the fact that no other factors (outside of the realm of previous system involvement) correlated either. A total of 16 “prior system involvement” variables were analyzed in relation to offending behavior post-discharge, and not one registered as being a significant predictor. In addition, another 23 variables were tested, and none of those supplied significant results as it related to recidivating within one year of DYC discharge.

However, as explained in the previous section, many domains on the discharge CJRA, as well as CJRA overall risk level, did predict post-discharge recidivism with significant confidence. This finding (or mass of non-findings!) prompts a recommendation that the Division continue to base youth treatment decisions heavily on the results of this fourth generation actuarial risk assessment—as it validly predicts re-offense, whereas all other individual variables available do not, for this particular cohort of youth.

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. Recidivism analyses was completed on each of these subpopulations.

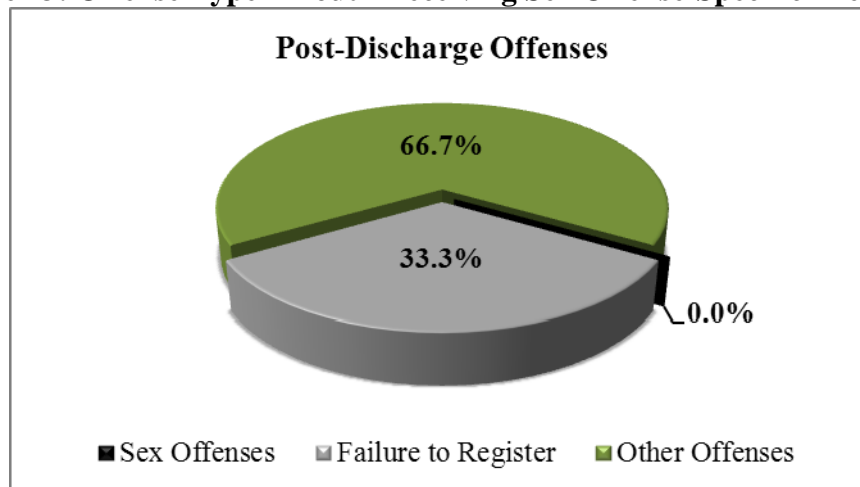
Youth Receiving Sex Offense-Specific Treatment

The Division of Youth Corrections discharged 82 clients who received sex offense-specific treatment during commitment. Clients can receive treatment from DYC if they were adjudicated for a sexual offense, adjudicated for an offense that is non-sexual in nature, but was committed at the same time as a sex offense, or with the intention to commit a sex offense, or if the client or

client’s guardian request sex offense specific treatment services be provided. When comparing the rates of recidivism for youth receiving sex offense-specific treatment, and those not in this sub-group, no group differences were seen. In other words, both groups of youth had similar recidivism rates. Additional analysis conducted, breaking out residential and parole rates, had the same result—no rate differences.

Because of the heinous nature of sex offenses, one primary concern with this population is not only a matter of overall rates of re-offense, but whether these youth recidivate with sexual offenses. Figure 23 shows that the majority of youth who do re-offend do not commit another sex offense (5% pre-discharge and 0% post-discharge). These percentages exclude “failure to register” charges. With “failure to register” charges included, the percentages would be 15.0% and 33.3%, respectively. This equates to ten percent (10%) of these youth receiving a failure to register as a sex offender guilty finding prior to discharge, and a third of these youth within a year following discharge.

Figure 23: Offense Type – Youth Receiving Sex Offense-Specific Treatment



Although the laws regarding sex offender registration are intended to inform and protect the community, they may also have the unintended consequence of increasing recidivism rates among a specific subset of juveniles. There are also offenses for sex offenders failing to **DE-register**. In other words, these youth are found guilty of failing to remove themselves from the sex offender registry. These youth, considered recidivators for failing to **DE-register**, are

included in the “failure to register” category in Figure 23, along with youth found guilty of “sex offender reg: move/name change” offenses.

Substance Abuse Needs

When youth are assessed at time of commitment, two screens/assessments are used to determine substance abuse treatment need levels (ASAP: Adolescent Self Assessment Profile, and the SUS: Substance Use Survey). These tools help staff determine whether a youth has a need for “prevention” services only, has a moderate need indicating “intervention” is needed, or if the youth has a high need for drug and alcohol use “treatment”. The P-I-T levels were shown to be **un-correlated** with all types of recidivism (pre-discharge, residential, parole, and post-discharge) for this discharge cohort.

Mental Health Needs

One of the instruments used by the Division to assesses a youth’s need for mental health treatment is the Colorado Client Assessment Record (CCAR) instrument. The Division also uses several other assessment and screening tools, including clinical and neuropsychological referrals and consultations as needed. The most complete and readily available data, used in this study, comes from the CCAR tool and is presented below.

Although a valuable tool in a number of ways, the CCAR alone is not an adequate instrument for measuring DYC youth mental health need levels. The mental health need levels of the youth that DYC serves often constitute a complex amalgamation of behavioral, emotional, and relational disruptions. The CCAR is configured to provide a disconnected appraisal of individual domains related to mental health disruption, and does not offer a measurement of how multiple mental health factors converge to represent the youth's level or degree of need. For this reason, the Division encourages readers to interpret CCAR recidivism results with caution.

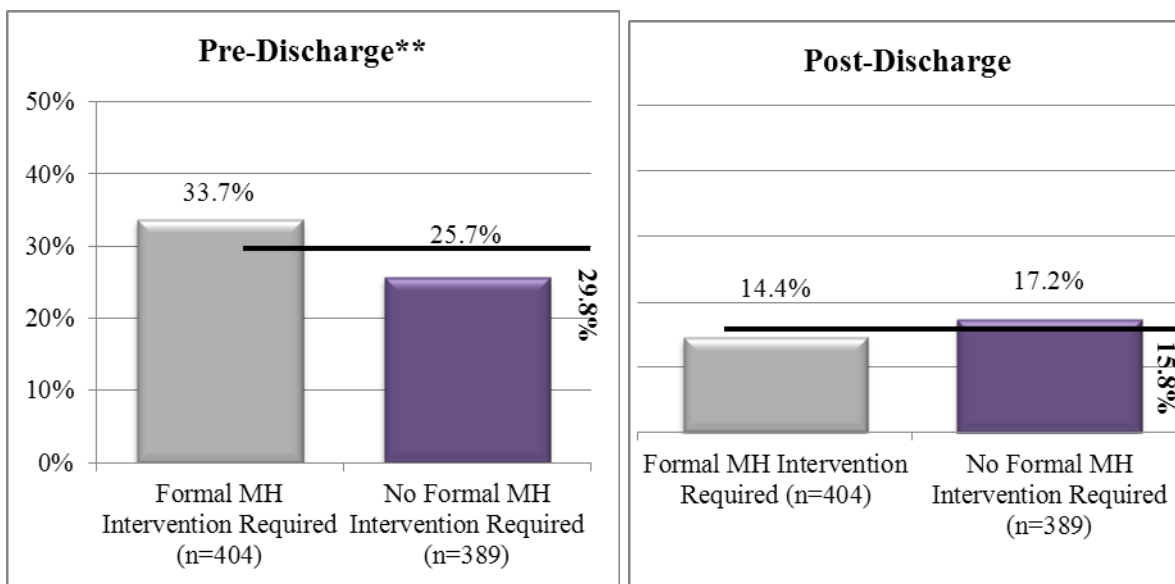
Although a valuable tool in a number of ways, the CCAR alone is not an adequate instrument for measuring DYC youth mental health need levels.

Youth are assessed as requiring professional mental health intervention by using a scale on the tool called “overall symptom severity”. If a youth is assessed at a five or higher on this scale, it indicates that “symptoms are present which require formal professional mental health

intervention.” Using this method, 51% of discharges were assessed as requiring formal mental health intervention.

Looking at recidivism rates, these youth requiring mental health intervention were much more likely to recidivate pre-discharge (33.7%) than youth not requiring intervention (25.7%) in this area. Mental health needs on this scale, however, were not predictive of post-discharge recidivism (see Figure 24).

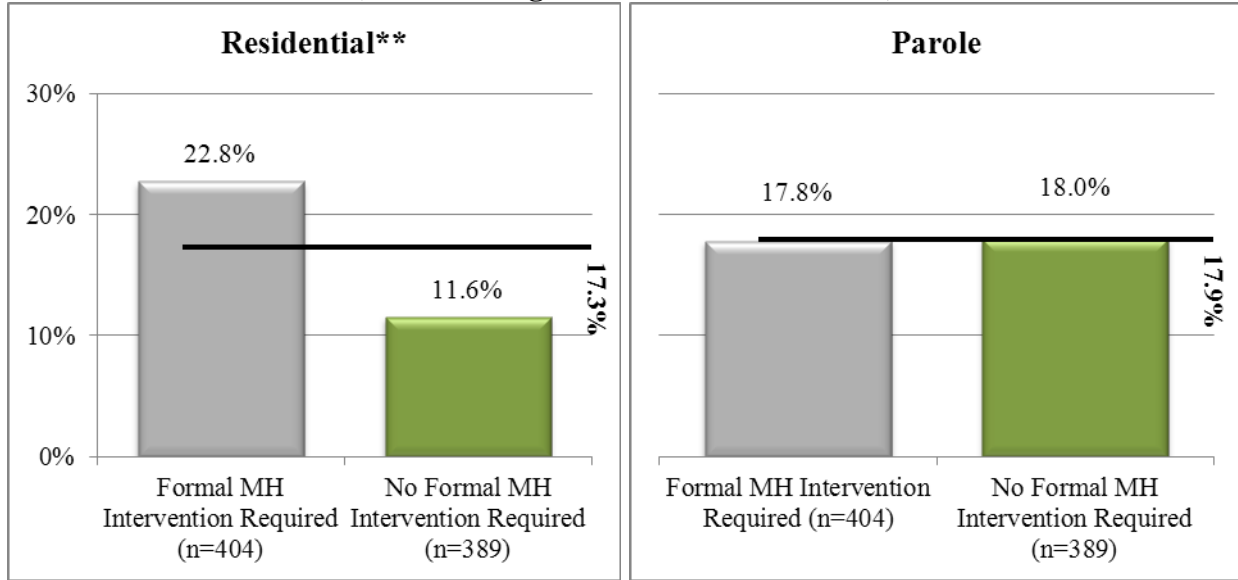
Figure 24: Recidivism by Mental Health Needs



**X²= 6.002, df=1, p<0.05

A closer examination of the pre-discharge rates reveal that youth requiring formal MH intervention recidivate at higher rates in **residential placement** than youth not requiring any formal treatment in this area. In fact, the re-offense rate difference is substantial. Youth with mental health needs re-offend 22.8% of the time in residential settings, compared to only 11.6% of youth without notable mental health problems. **Parole** recidivism rates **do not** vary by need for mental health treatment (see Figure 25).

**Figure 25: Recidivism by Mental Health Needs
(Pre-Discharge: Residential and Parole)**



** $X^2=17.408$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$

Research has shown that a large percentage of youth enter the juvenile justice system with undiagnosed mental health issues⁶⁰. Clinical services provided to NYC youth during commitment strive to provide youth with individualized and effective treatment, as well as accurate diagnosis. The provision of these services focuses on mitigating mental health problems, and the results indicate success in this area, as both CCAR measures were not significantly associated with parole or post-discharge recidivism rates.

Co-Occurring Substance Abuse and Mental Health Issues

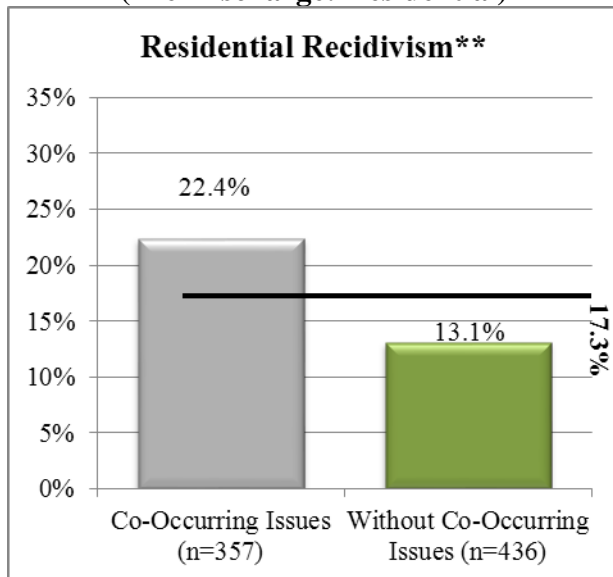
When looking at youth that have co-occurring substance abuse and mental health issues, results look similar to the previous mental health issue analysis. However, the only significant results for youth with co-occurring issues relates to residential recidivism. Youth with co-occurring issues visibly struggle in residential placement, with twenty-two percent (22.4%) receiving a new adjudication in placement. Conversely, youth who do not exhibit both types of treatment issues have a residential recidivism rate of thirteen percent (13.1%)⁶¹. Youth with both types of

⁶⁰ Shufelt, J.S. & Cocozza, J.C. (2006) Youth with Mental Health Disorders in the Juvenile Justice System: Results from a Multi-State, Multi-System Prevalence Study. Delmar, New York: National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice.

⁶¹ $X^2=11.970$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$

treatment issues (substance abuse and mental health) present a high level of complexity as it relates to residential conduct and creating appropriate and effective treatment plans.

Figure 25.1: Co-Occurring Treatment Issues
(Pre-Discharge: Residential)**



Other Youth Characteristics (Not Traditional Risk Factors)

In prior sections, a number of risk factors traditionally shown to increase a youth’s likelihood to recidivate were examined. These traditional risk factors include mostly prior system involvement and prior criminal behavior. In this section, other youth characteristics are presented, along with the differences in recidivism rates by these various indicators.

Prior History of Running Away

A youth’s history of running away (prior to DYC commitment), **is correlated with pre-discharge recidivism.** Youth with a more extensive history of running away are much more likely to be found guilty of a new offense during commitment (32.4%) than youth with little to no runaway history (24.2%).⁶² As summarized above, no factors were significantly associated with post-discharge recidivism.

⁶² $X^2=5.554, df=1, p<0.05$

Type of Commitment Sentence

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 to Juvenile Parole Board for consideration of parole prior to serving their maximum sentence length. Seventy-one percent (70.5%) of the youth discharged in FY 2010-11 were committed under non-mandatory sentences (n=558). Conversely, there were 234 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 (n=8). There were no significant differences in rates of pre-discharge or post-discharge recidivism by sentence type for this discharge cohort.

Length of Service

The majority of a youth's treatment plan is carried out in State-operated secure or contract residential placements. Length of service (LOS) for the entire discharge cohort, broken down by residential, parole and total⁶³, is shown in Figure 26.

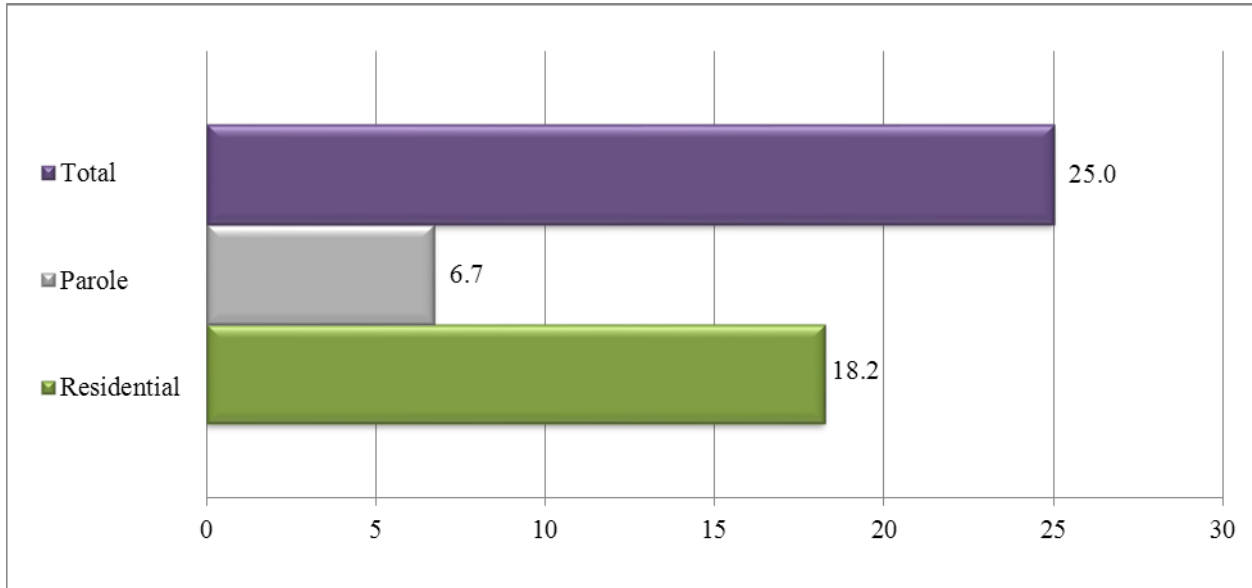
For youth discharged in FY 2010-11, pre-discharge recidivism was correlated with longer lengths of service in residential placements, on parole, and total LOS. Youth who received a new adjudication during their commitment (pre-discharge recidivism) had an average of twenty-three (22.8) months in residential placement, compared with 16.3 months for youth who did not recidivate⁶⁴. The same proved true for parole LOS. Pre-discharge recidivists remained on parole longer (7.2 months) than those with no new adjudications pre-discharge (6.5 months).

Pre-discharge recidivism was correlated with longer lengths of service in residential placements, on parole, and total commitment period.

⁶³ Total LOS will not equal the sum of residential and parole LOS because there are a small number of paroled youth who are regressed back to a residential treatment placement for violations of the terms of parole or for committing a new felony or misdemeanor delinquent act.

⁶⁴ F=94.872, df=792, p<0.01(res); F=7.193, df=792, p<0.01(par); F=125.626, df=792, p<0.01(com)

Figure 26: Length of Service (in Months)



When examining residential LOS and residential (pre-discharge) recidivism, it was found that longer residential LOS was associated with youth who were more likely to commit offenses while in residential placement. Residential recidivists had a 26.4 month average residential LOS, while non-recidivists had, on average, a 16.5 month residential LOS.⁶⁵

The same was true for recidivism while on parole. Longer parole LOS was associated with youth who were more likely to commit offenses on parole. Parole recidivists had a 8.5 month average parole LOS, while non-recidivists had, on average, a 6.3 month parole LOS.⁶⁶

It is difficult to infer causality between any type of pre-discharge recidivism and length of service. Because a new adjudication on residential status or on parole could result in a youth having their parole status revoked or result in a re-commitment, this adjudication in and of itself is likely to result in a longer residential LOS. This makes it difficult to know whether pre-discharge offenses prolong LOS, or whether prolonged LOS gives youth greater opportunity to receive a new offense while committed to the Division. There were no significant differences when looking at various types of LOS coupled with post-discharge recidivism rates.

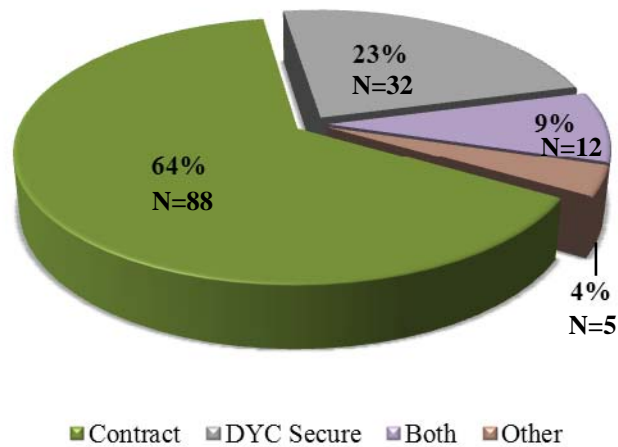
⁶⁵ F=164.893, df=792, p<0.01.

⁶⁶ F=18.987, df=792, p<0.01.

Recidivism in Residential Placement vs. On Parole

Of the 236 youth who re-offended during their commitment to NYC, fifty-eight percent (58.1%; $n=137^{67}$) committed at least one offense while in a residential placement⁶⁸. The majority of these residential offenses (73.0% = 64% + 9%) occurred in contract placements (see Figure 28).

Figure 27: Pre-Discharge Recidivism in Residential Placements
($n=137$)



With few exceptions, contract placements are less secure than state-operated secure placements and have fewer physical security devices, relying on 24-hour supervision by facility staff to maintain compliance with treatment program regulations, including retaining custody of the youth. Therefore, clients have more opportunity to commit a new delinquent or criminal act while in a contract treatment facility than in a more secure environment. Thirty-two percent (32% = 23% + 9%) re-offended within a state secure facility.

Of the 236 youth who re-offended during their commitment to NYC, sixty percent (60.2%; $n=142^{69}$) committed at least one offense while on parole⁷⁰. Fifty-eight percent (58.1%)

⁶⁷ $137=87 + 43 +7$ in Figure 28.

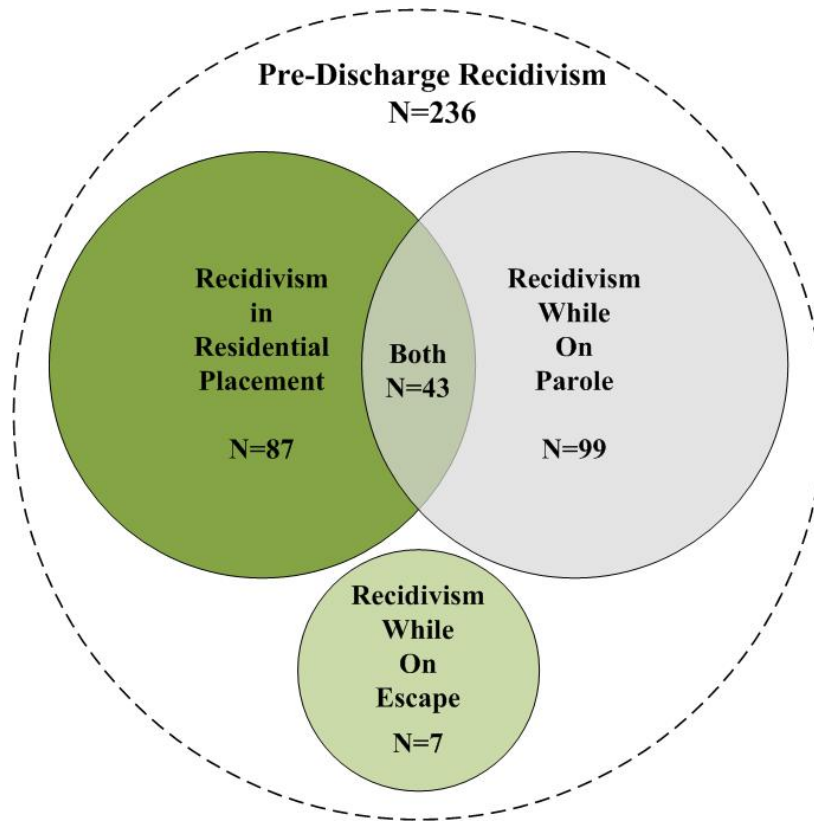
⁶⁸ Other placements primarily include adult correctional facilities or County Jail. If a youth committed an offense while on escape status from a NYC placement, the type of facility the youth escaped from is captured in this chart.

⁶⁹ $142=99 + 43$ in Figure 28.

⁷⁰ Parole absconsions are included in the 99 parole offenses, parole absconsions equaled 18 of those 99.

committed at least one offense in residential placement (n=137⁷¹). Forty-three youth committed offenses **both** while on parole and in residential placement. The remainder of the pre-discharge recidivists (n=7) committed an offense while on escape from residential placement.

Figure 28: Pre-Discharge Recidivism: Where did the Offense Occur?



Parole: Transitioning Back to the Community

All 793 youth in this discharge cohort were required to serve at least six months of parole under mandatory parole statutes. As seen in Figure 26, clients in this discharge cohort spent an average of 6.7 months on parole status. As

Youth who re-offended on parole had a longer average parole LOS (7.2 months) than youth who did not re-offend on parole (6.5 months).

mentioned earlier, youth who received a new adjudication for a pre-discharge offense had a longer parole length of service (7.2 months) than youth who did not re-offend (6.5 months)⁷².

⁷¹ 137=87 + 43 + 7 in Figure 28.

⁷² F=8.351, p<0.01

Although youth spent a shorter amount of time on parole (6.7 months) than in residential treatment (18.2 months), a slightly higher percentage (60.2%) of youth re-offended while on parole, in comparison to in residential placement (58.1%)⁷³. During parole, youth are often living independently or with family and have varying level of contact with their DYC client managers. Youth have more opportunity to re-offend during parole, therefore it is not unexpected that more re-offending behaviors may occur in a relatively short period of time.

Parole Adjustment (as it relates to Post-Discharge Recidivism Only)

When a youth is discharged from DYC 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 DYC 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 adjudication for a post-discharge offense than youth who were unsuccessful while under parole supervision.

Analysis comparing post-discharge recidivism rates⁷⁴ by parole adjustment rating at the time of discharge from the Division of Youth Corrections **did not show any significant differences**. Youth with unsuccessful parole adjustments re-offended at essentially the same rate as youth who were successful on parole. There were a small number of youth who never were placed on parole status (n=58). These youth were under adult court authority, turned 21 years of age, or had their sentences terminated by the Court prior to being granted parole status.

Employment/School Status (as it relates to Post-Discharge Recidivism 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-

⁷³Due to the 46 youth who committed offenses on both residential and parole status, the sum of 60.3% and 51.0% adds up to more than 100%.

⁷⁴ Pre-discharge recidivism rates were not analyzed for this factor because parole adjustments are not available until a youth is discharged from DYC, therefore having no bearing on pre-discharge recidivism.

social lifestyle, therefore it is projected 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 rates⁷⁵, however, were not correlated with employment or school status for this cohort.

Comparison of Pre-Discharge and Post-Discharge Recidivism Rates

Each year, one of the final analyses conducted seeks to examine whether pre-discharge failure or success effects a youth's post-discharge outcomes. Youth in this FY 2010-11 discharge cohort who received a new adjudication during their commitment were not more likely to recidivate following discharge. In past years' studies, pre-discharge offenses have been predictive of post-discharge offending, however, it was not with this particular cohort.

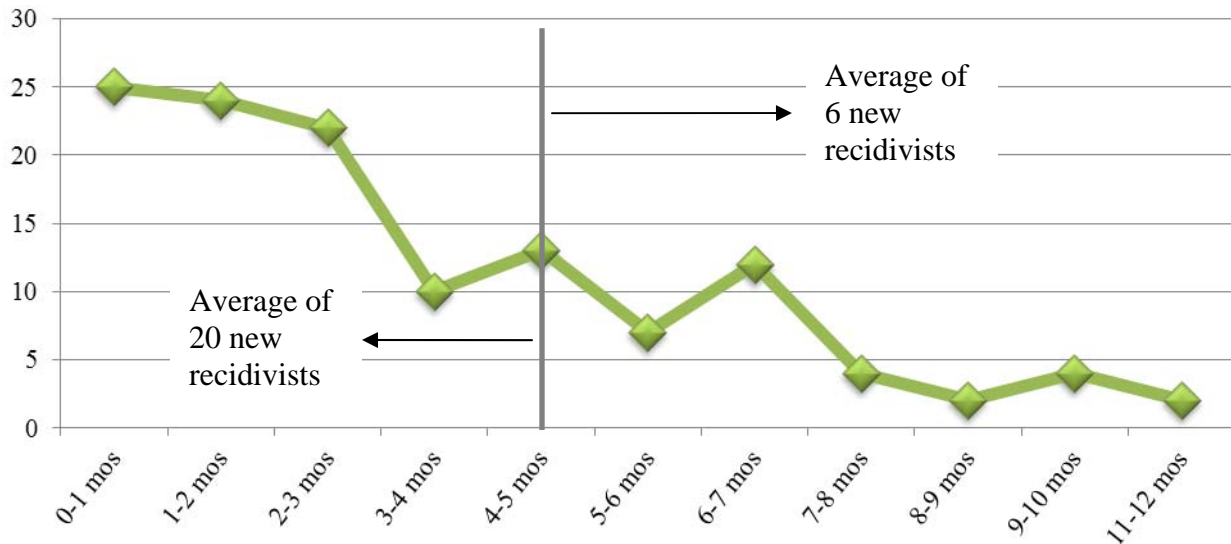
Additional analysis reveals similar news. For this cohort, a youth's success while in residential or while on parole is not linked to recidivism after discharging (post-discharge) from the Division. There were forty-six (46) youth who received a new adjudication both in residential treatment and on parole. Even these youth, with both types of pre-discharge recidivism, do not show higher post-discharge rates than those youth with just one type of pre-discharge offending.

Time to First Post-Discharge Offense

Figure 29 shows the one-year time period following a youth's discharge from the Division. More specifically, the chart depicts the actual number of youth who recidivated each month after discharge. For the first four months, an average of 20 youth re-offended each month, compared with an average of only 6 youth re-offending during the last eight months of the follow-up period. These averages indicate that if a youth can be successful during the initial months following discharge, they are more likely to succeed in the following months as well.

⁷⁵ 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.

Figure 29: Number of New Recidivists by Month



The transition back into the community can be a tumultuous time for many youth. Discharged 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 effectively transition youth and refer them to providers in the community where they are able to access and continue receiving similar services, this will help reduce the likelihood of re-offense during those first few months after discharge. The Continuum of Care program continues to target the needs of transitioning youth, and offer as much assistance and guidance as possible to these youth re-entering society.

If a youth can achieve success in the first few months following discharge, the chance of recidivism in the following months is substantially lowered.

SECTION ONE SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Division changed the way recidivism is reported, starting with this cohort of FY 2010-11 discharges. To be more comparable to other states' juvenile justice systems, DYC has started using "new adjudication" as the recidivism event, instead of "new filing". Only those youth who are filed upon and found guilty of an offense are counted as recidivists.

Regardless of the definition change, the Division witnessed a year of decline in recidivism rates, for both pre- and post-discharge. The decline in the pre-discharge recidivism rate was not statistically significant

Regardless of the definition change, the Division witnessed a year of decline in recidivism rates, for both pre- and post-discharge recidivism.

from the prior cohort of discharged youth; however, the post-discharge rate did drop dramatically enough to be statistically significant from FY 2009-10 discharges. In fact, the post-discharge recidivism rate of 15.8% is the lowest DYC has seen in seven years⁷⁶.

In a nationwide comparison, Colorado (16%) appears to be tied with Missouri (16%), for the lowest recidivism rates in the country, when states with similar definitions of recidivism were examined. Following close behind were North Dakota and Louisiana, with recidivism rates of 17% each. Twelve states across the nation were identified as having similar recidivism measurements, and therefore comparable. However, as stated in the body of the report, these rate comparisons (shown in Figure 8) may be somewhat flawed, as recidivism definitions may not be 100% compatible.

Another positive finding relates to the continued risk (to recidivate) reduction and protective factor bolstering with this cohort of youth. Six (6) CJRA domains in particular stand out when examining a youth's potential for success: 1) School, 2) Family, 3) Mental Health, 4) Attitudes & Behaviors, 5) Aggression, and 6) Skills. These six domains were most predictive of future offending behavior. If the Division can effectively target these specific areas of high risk with individual youth, it is anticipated that rates could drop further.

⁷⁶ Due to the definition change, seven years of data was the most that could be re-produced with high levels of confidence and accuracy.

A positive finding was identified when examining CJRA domain risk reductions. More specifically, the “Family” domain showed **no increase** in risk score, during the parole period. This is a solid indication that services provided to DYC youth and to their families is not only reducing risk, but the risk reduction is wholly maintained as the youth transition back into the community. Generally, it is anticipated that *some* portion of the gains achieved, from time of assessment to time of parole, are not maintained when youth leave the structured setting of residential commitment and return to their community on parole; but, in this instance, all gains were maintained, and additional gains (in reducing risk) were made during the period from parole to discharge.

An interesting finding came to light when examining youth with low and moderate risk to recidivate, as predicted by a youth’s initial CJRA. Residential recidivism rates are higher for these lower risk youth, when compared to high risk youth. The characteristics of the lower risk youth seem to pose issues as it relates to the successful completion of residential treatment. While not significant, these results were linear and not in the intended direction, making the finding thought-provoking. This finding also relates and reiterates a common theme in the juvenile justice literature—lower risk youth, if at all possible, should not be placed in a secure and/or residential setting with other high risk youth. This could result in adverse outcomes.

Lastly, an important outcome to reiterate is that CJRA overall risk level and domain risk levels were the **only** factors examined that accurately predicted post-discharge recidivism. In research, the phrase “a non-finding is just as important as a finding” is appropriate to state here. With this cohort of youth, when examining post-discharge recidivism, none of the traditional risk factors accurately predicted a youth’s likelihood to recidivate following discharge. In fact, not one single factor related to “prior system involvement” was significantly correlated with post-discharge recidivism. A total of 16 “prior system involvement” variables were analyzed in relation to offending behavior post-discharge, and not one registered as being a significant predictor. In addition, another 23 variables were tested, and none of those supplied significant results as it related to recidivating within one year of DYC discharge. **However, many domains on the discharge CJRA, as well as overall risk level, did predict post-discharge recidivism with significant confidence.** This finding (or mass of non-findings!) prompts a recommendation that the Division continue to base youth treatment decisions heavily on the results of this fourth

generation actuarial risk assessment—as it validly predicts re-offense, whereas all other individual variables available do not, for this particular cohort of youth.

SECTION TWO:

Ridge View Youth Services Center (RVYSC) Recidivism

SECTION TWO: Ridge View Recidivism

The Ridge View Sample:

This section of the report looks at recidivism rates for 198 males who were placed at the Ridge View Youth Services Center for at least a 90-day length of service, spent at least 66% of their total LOS at Ridge View, and who discharged in FY 2010-11.

Most youth committed to NYC experience multiple placements throughout their commitment sentence. Because each placement and program has the opportunity to impact each youth's future behavior, it is very difficult to associate youth recidivism outcomes with a specific program.

For this reason, the collection of recidivism outcomes, by program, is not generally useful in measuring the performance of individual programs. However, the Ridge View Youth Services Center was initially designed to be a unique treatment option for eligible youth, and therefore becomes an exception for annually responding to (Section 19-2-411.5, C.R.S.) the legislation authorizing the design, construction, and operation of the Ridge View Youth Services Center. The Division's annual recidivism report does not report on outcomes for any other individual programs or facilities.

The Ridge View program was originally intended as a primary placement option for certain youth, and those youth originally placed in Ridge View Youth Services Center (RVYSC) tended to have longer lengths of service at RVYSC, and were often paroled directly from Ridge View to the community. Since those clients placed at the Ridge View facility tended to have fewer other placements that could influence re-offending behaviors, it was more appropriate to report outcome measures for this facility at that time. Although RVYSC was originally designed to be a youth's primary placement, this has not been the case in recent years. Due to this change in program use, the methodology for this section was re-visited and modified, starting with last year's report (published January 2012). This adjusted methodology is continued for this year's report.

Methodology

In order to be considered part of the RYVSC cohort, each youth is required to have spent at least 66% (or two-thirds) of their total residential length of service at Ridge View, in addition to at least a 90-day Ridge View LOS requirement.

Newer Methodology:

Only one previous study has the same methodology used in this report. For more information concerning the change in methodology that occurred starting in last year's report, see Appendix C of this report.

On average, the youth in this year's Ridge View cohort spent two months (60.4 days) in other residential placements during their commitment, which included the approximate one-month assessment period. In total, most youth in the RYVSC cohort spent one month or less at another program. Additionally, only six percent (5.6%) of the youth in the RYVSC cohort spent more than six months receiving residential treatment services from other providers (n=11). This change in cohort selection criteria allowed for a better comparison between groups in this section, and was necessary to foster more meaningful results overall.

Figure 30, on the next page, depicts the methodology used for developing three meaningful comparison groups of males.

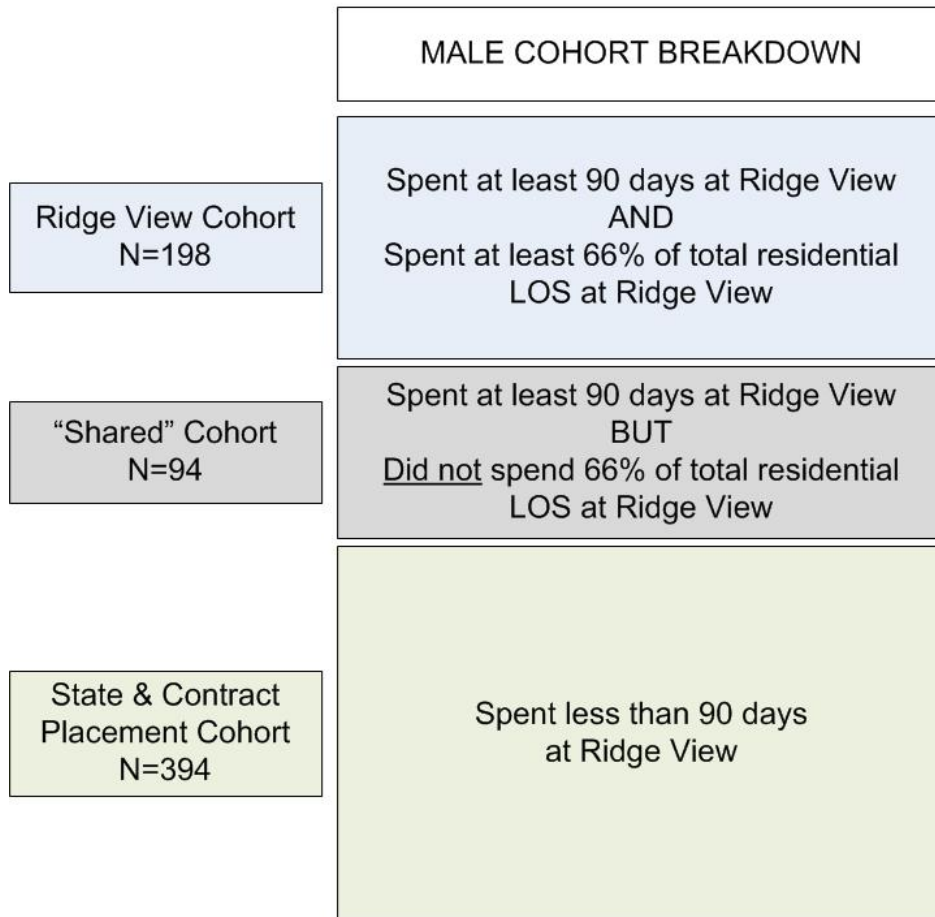
The criteria for selection into the Ridge View cohort was described above. The second cohort is constructed of youth who spent at least 90 days at RYVSC, however, they did not meet the 66% residential LOS requirement. Because these youth spent a substantial period of time at Ridge View, but less than two-thirds of their residential LOS, these males were placed in the "Shared" cohort. All other males, who spent less than three months at RYVSC (or never went to RYVSC at all), were then placed into the "State and Contract Placement" cohort. It is important to note that "State and Contract Placement" cohort is not simply all NYC State-Secure facilities. While NYC Secure facilities **were** included in this group, the cohort is also made up of **many contracted staff-supervised, community programs, and foster homes**, utilized by the Division. So, while this group is being used as a comparison group to Ridge View males, the "State and Contract Placement" cohort is far from homogenous.

In fact, of the 394 youth in the “State and Contract Placement” cohort, 209 (52.9%) spent at least 66% of their time in a state secure facility. The other 185 youth in this cohort spent a large majority of their time in other contract programs.

The State & Contract Placements Cohort:
 This cohort is comprised of two distinct groups: youth who spent the majority of their LOS in a State Secure facility, and youth who spent the majority of their LOS in a Contract Program (which could include staff-supervised, community programs, or foster homes).

Figure 30: Configuration of the Three Cohorts

FY 2010-11 Male Discharges (N=686)



All three groups were compared on a multitude of factors, followed by a recidivism rate comparison. It is important to have a solid understanding of how the youth in each of the three groups differ from each other, and to consider how differing program practices may contribute to outcome differences. Understanding that the definition of recidivism is “new adjudication” is important when reading Section Two, as programs vary in their filing practices. In order for a youth to receive a new adjudication or new conviction, he or she must first have been filed on.

Program Filing Practices: Programs have great discretion regarding when and when not to file charges against a youth. Program policy, philosophy, and practice, as it relates to filings charges on youth, may artificially skew recidivism rates, making program to program comparisons very difficult. It may be one program’s policy to file charges on any and all offenses committed by youth in their program, while another program may rarely file charges on youth.

The Ridge View Program⁷⁷

This section of the report examines the cohort of RVYSC (198) youth, provides a program description of Ridge View, and compares the Ridge View group with the other two cohorts of males discharged in FY 2010-11. In addition, recidivism outcome measures will be reported for the youth who were selected into the Ridge View Youth Services Center cohort. For an in-depth description of the Ridge View Program, please reference Appendix D.

Comparing Ridge View Youth with Shared Youth and State & Contract Placement Youth

The RVYSC group consists of 198 males discharged from the Division of Youth Corrections during FY 2010-11. This section compares youth in the Ridge View cohort with youth in the Shared cohort (N=94) and State and Contract Placement males (N=394) who participated in other state or contract programs during their commitment. All three groups are compared on demographic characteristics as well as risk factors for re-offending. It is important to establish how each of the three groups differ from each other, prior to examining and comparing recidivism rates. Recidivism results and variances between groups can often be explained by

⁷⁷ For a more historical description of the Ridge View Program, please reference Appendix D of this report.

inherent group differences. In order to accurately and fairly interpret recidivism outcomes, it is imperative that group characteristics be fully disclosed and understood.

Demographics

Gender

This section only pertains to males. Ridge View YSC only serves male offenders, and therefore, all comparisons made in this section are to other DYC males.

Ethnicity

Tables 11 and 12 show differences in the ethnic distribution of Ridge View males versus the other two cohorts of males. There were higher rates of minority populations in the Ridge View group and the Shared group, when compared with State and Contract Placement males. Recidivism analyses on ethnicity in Section One of this report showed no significant differences in recidivism rates.

Table 11: Ethnic Differences between Groups

Ethnicity**	Ridge View Percent	Shared Youth Percent	State & Contract Placement Percent	TOTAL
African-American	18.2%	24.5%	17.1%	126
Hispanic	46.5%	35.1%	31.7%	250
White	32.3%	38.3%	48.7%	292
Other ⁷⁸	3.0%	2.1%	2.5%	18
Total	N=198	N=94	N=394	686

**X²=19.239, df=6, p<0.01

Table 12: Differences in Minority Youth between Groups

Ethnicity**	Ridge View Percent	Shared Youth Percent	State & Contract Placement Percent	TOTAL
Minority	67.7%	61.7%	51.3%	394
White	32.3%	38.3%	48.7%	292
Total	N=198	N=94	N=394	686

**X²=15.323, df=2, p<0.01

⁷⁸ This category includes Native American and Asian American youth as well as those officially identified as “other.” These categories are combined due to the small numbers of youth in each category. Small “n” sizes make valid statistical comparisons impossible.

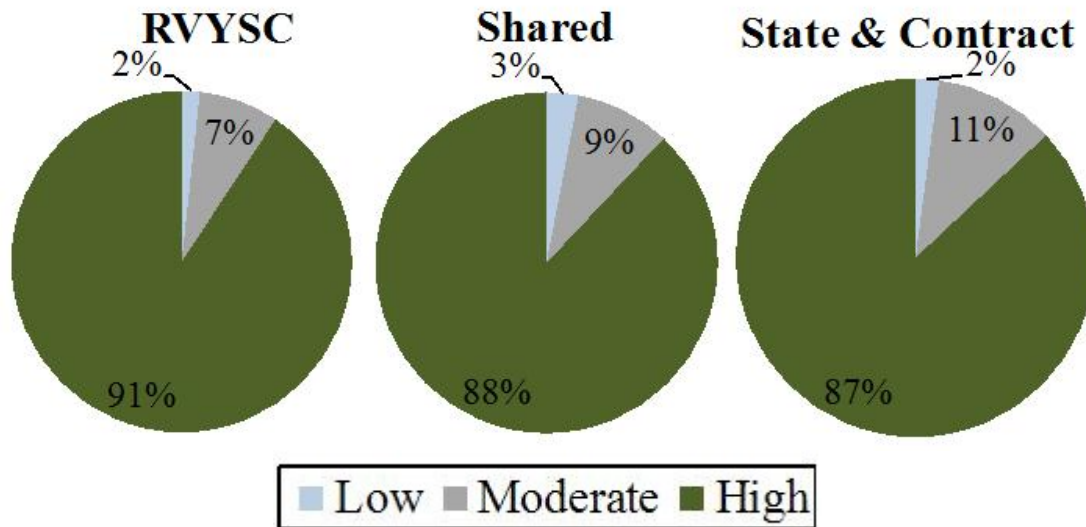
Risk of Re-Offending

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 (i.e. suicide risk) and the community (i.e. public safety). This recidivism study analyzes CJRA risk levels and assesses how well they predict future criminal behavior (i.e. recidivism) and also examines 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.

Colorado Juvenile Risk Assessment

At time of commitment, all three male cohorts had similar percentages of high, moderate and low risk (to recidivate) youth. The risk level differences depicted in Figure 31 are **not** significant across groups.

Figure 31: Risk to Recidivate Cohort Comparison



Another analysis conducted in the area of risk to recidivate, was the CJRA domain-specific analyses and comparisons. On average, youth in the Ridge View cohort were high-risk on 9.38

of the 14 CJRA domains. Youth in the Shared cohort had, on average, 9.11 elevated domains. Lastly, youth in the State and Contract Placement cohort were deemed high-risk to recidivate on 8.77 domains⁷⁹.

Family Issues (CJRA Domain)

In Section One of this study, when looking at the entire discharge cohort (n=793), an interesting finding came to light. The only CJRA domain that proves to be predictive of both pre- and post-discharge recidivism is the Family domain. As it relates to cohort comparisons, all three groups are similar when examining the *current* Family domain. However, when looking at the *historic* Family domain, the Other State and Contract Placement group, along with the Shared group, are statistically more likely to be high risk in this area. The Family domain was “doubly” predictive of recidivism with the larger cohort, as the dynamic (current) family scales predicted post-discharge recidivism, and the static (historic) scales, are predictive of pre-discharge recidivism.

Traditional Risk Factors: Prior Juvenile Justice and Other System Involvement

Although the CJRA’s Criminal History scale covers several different measures of “prior system involvement,” a number of individual indicators have been found to be highly predictive of pre-discharge and post-discharge (prior studies) recidivism in prior reports. Therefore, recidivism rates are compared for the following measures of prior system involvement:

- 1) number of prior detention admissions,
- 2) number of prior out-of-home placements,
- 3) number of prior adjudications,
- 4) age at first adjudication, and
- 5) number of prior commitments.

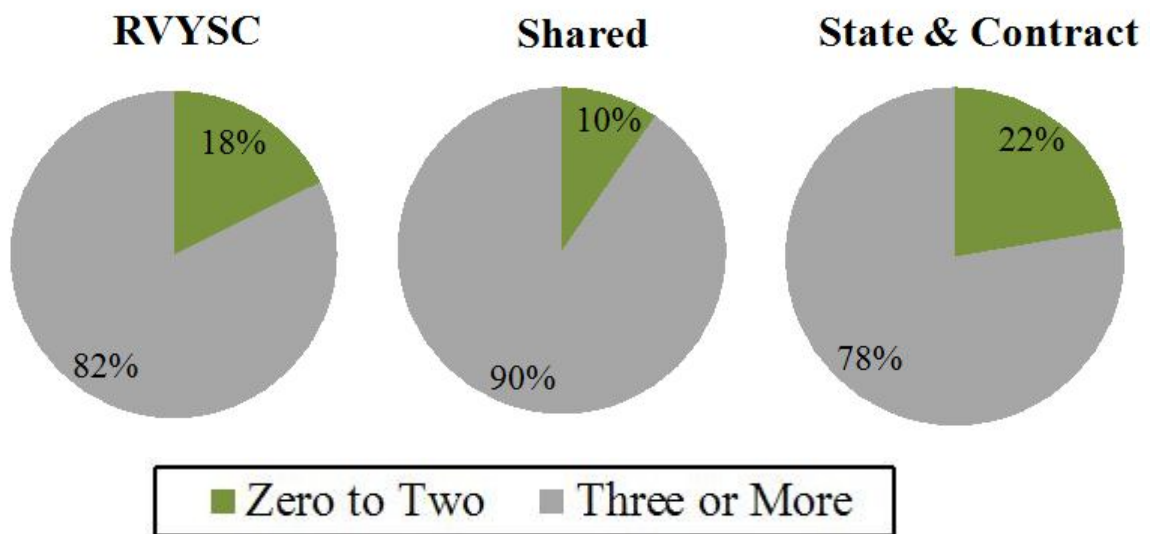
Prior Detention Admissions

When looking at prior detention admissions across the three cohorts (see Figure 32) a statistically significant difference is seen in the percentage of Shared group males with three or more prior detention admissions (90%) and the Ridge View group with three or more prior detention

⁷⁹ F=4.404, df=685, p<0.05

admissions (82%), when compared to State and Contract Placement males (78%)⁸⁰.

Figure 32: Number of Prior Detention Admissions by Cohort**



Prior out-of-home Placements

State and Contract Placement youth (2.2 placements) have significantly more out-of-home placements prior to DYC commitment, than Ridge View youth (1.2 placements) or the Shared youth cohort (1.8 placements)⁸¹. This prompted a need to look into the number of placements a youth experienced, during their commitment to DYC, as a proxy measure to gauge residential instability.

Number of Commitment Placements (Residential Instability)

Interestingly, the Shared group of youth experienced significantly more commitment placements (6.9) than State and Contract Placement youth (4.6) and Ridge View youth (4.6) while committed (shown in Table 13). This indicates that residential placement stability may play a large role in the future success of youth. Residential Instability, in the larger criminology literature, has been shown to be a main factor contributing to crime and delinquency⁸². Although

⁸⁰ $X^2=8.391$, $df=2$, $p<0.05$; $F=3.763$, $df=2$, $p<0.05$

⁸¹ $F=8.467$ $df=685$, $p<0.01$

⁸² Veysey & Messner (1999). "Further Testing of Social Disorganization Theory: An Elaboration of Sampson and Groves's 'Community Structure and Crime'. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, Vol 36 No. 2.

the research in this area points more towards neighborhood and community instability, it may have some relevance when applied to placement stability in the corrections field as well.

Table 13: Placements Experienced/Residential Instability by Cohort**

Placements Experienced/ Residential Instability	Ridge View Average	Shared Youth Average	State & Contract Placement Average	Male Average
Number of Out-of-Home Placements Prior to DYC ⁸³	1.2	1.8	2.2	1.9
Number of Placements During DYC Commitment ⁸⁴	4.6	6.9	4.6	4.9
Total	N=198	N=94	N=394	686

Prior Adjudications

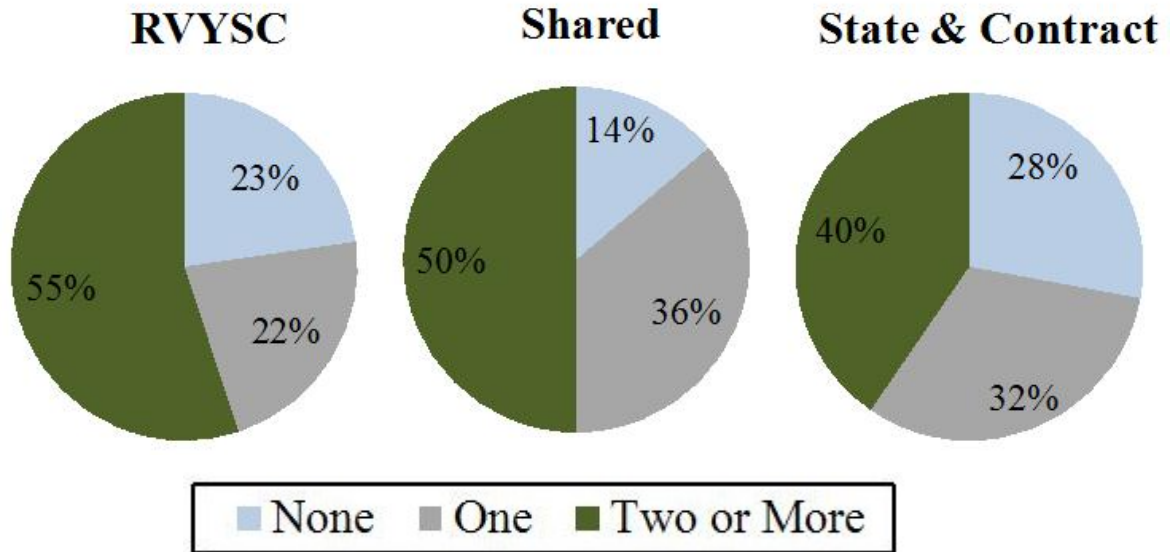
A highly predictive estimation of risk of recidivism is prior involvement in the juvenile justice system. Figure 33 shows a higher proportion of youth in the Ridge View cohort with two or more prior adjudications as compared to the other two cohorts. Conversely, the Shared cohort has substantially less youth with zero prior adjudications⁸⁵, indicating an elevated risk for recidivism. Prior adjudications were not correlated with pre- and post-discharge recidivism in the larger discharge cohort.

⁸³ F=8.380, df=685, p<0.01

⁸⁴ F=6.218, df=685, p<0.01

⁸⁵ X²=18.712, df=4, p<0.01; F=5.027, df=2, p<0.01

Figure 33: Number of Prior Adjudications by Cohort**



Age at First Adjudication & Age at Commitment

When examining age at first adjudication, the three groups proved to be very similar. Shared males were 14.3 years old at first adjudication, while RVYSC youth and State and Contract Placement youth were both 14.6 years old. A strong body of literature indicates that youth adjudicated at a younger age tend to recidivate at higher rates than those whose first adjudication was at an older age.

Age at commitment to NYC **did** result in group differences. The average age at the time of commitment for youth placed at Ridge View (16.7) and State and Contract Placement (16.8) was significantly older than the Shared cohort of males (16.4)⁸⁶.

When examining age at first placement at Ridge View, it shows that the average age was 16.8 years old. The majority of youth were 17 (33.8%) or 16 (33.3%) years of age. Table 14 shows the distribution of these youth by age at time of RVYSC placement.

⁸⁶ F=4.800, df=2, p<0.01

Table 14: Age at Placement in Ridge View⁸⁷

Age	Number Placed	Percent
14	7	3.5%
15	36	18.2%
16	66	33.3%
17	67	33.8%
18	22	11.1%
Total	198	100%

Prior Commitments

When examining prior commitments across the three cohorts, no differences were found.

Committing Offense

Eligibility restrictions, based on type of committing offense and other factors related to youths' risk and need levels, could potentially lead to differences between youth placed in the Ridge View facility, youth placed in DYC facilities, and youth placed in other contract programs. As Figure 34 indicates, over half of the Ridge View sample (51.5%) was committed for property offenses, compared with 54.3% of Shared males and 40.4% of State and Contract Placement males. Similarly, only 33.3% of males placed at Ridge View were committed for person offenses compared with 48.5% of youth in the State and Contract Placement group.

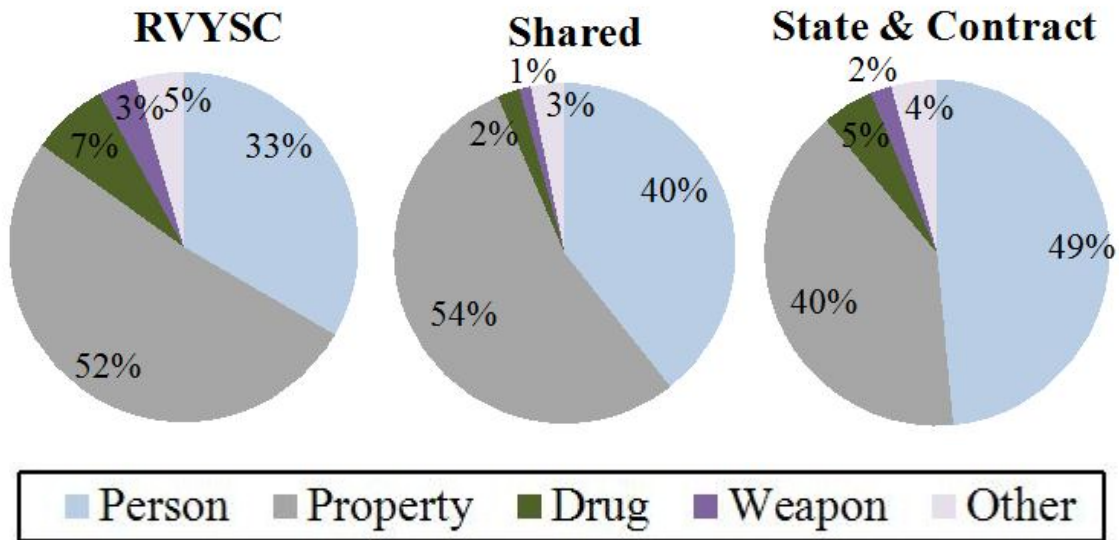
The vast differences in types of committing offenses were statistically significant⁸⁸. While the State and Contract Placement cohort contains more youth with serious, person-level offenses, the literature indicates that it's actually property offenders that tend to recidivate at higher rates than person and other offenders⁸⁹. The Shared cohort has the most property offenders (54.3%), compared to the other two cohorts (51.5% RVYSC; 40.4% State and Contract Placement).

⁸⁷ Represents age at time of placement into Ridge View, rather than age at the time of commitment. Due to the delay between commitment and placement, no comparison can be made with age at commitment for State & Contract Placement males.

⁸⁸ $X^2=18.333$, $df=8$, $p<0.05$

⁸⁹ Howell, James C. (2003). Preventing & Reducing Juvenile Delinquency: A Comprehensive Framework; pg 61. Sage Publications.

Figure 34: Type of Committing Offense by Cohort**



Another argument to consider, however, is whether person-offenders are more difficult to manage in a residential environment than property offenders. While property offenders are more prone to recidivate in the community, person-offenders tend to have aggression issues, which make them a higher risk to youth and staff in a confined environment. All this considered, the recidivism analysis based on commitment offense type, showed **no** significant results in Section One, with the entire discharge cohort.

Special Populations

Substance Abuse Issues

No group differences resulted when examining the percentages of youth within each group with substance abuse treatment need. When youth are assessed at time of commitment, two screens/assessments are used (ASAP: Adolescent Self Assessment Profile and the SUS: Substance Use Survey) to determine whether a youth has a need for “prevention” services only, has a moderate need indicating “intervention” is needed, or if the youth has a high need for drug and alcohol use “treatment.” The P-I-T levels (Prevention-Intervention-Treatment) differ across groups (not significantly), as illustrated in Table 15 below.

Table 15: Substance Abuse Treatment Issues by Cohort

Substance Abuse Treatment Need Level	Ridge View Percent	Shared Youth Percent	State and Contract Placement Percent	TOTAL
Prevention (low)	8.6%	9.6%	14.0%	81
Intervention (moderate)	17.7%	21.3%	22.1%	142
Treatment (high)	73.7%	69.1%	64.0%	463
Total	N=198	N=94	N=394	686

Mental Health Issues

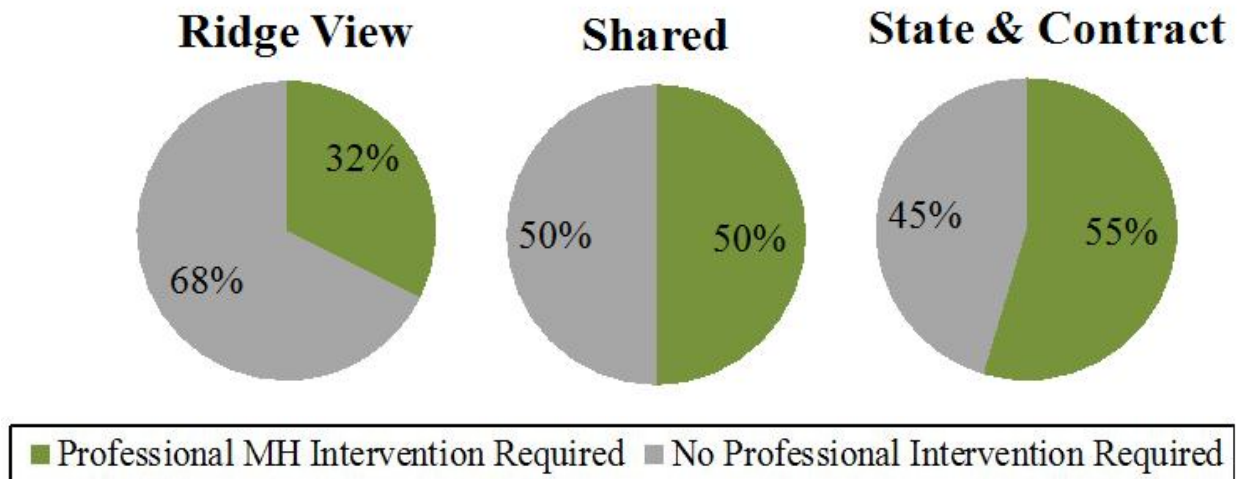
The differences between RV males and State and Contract Placement males, in the realm of mental health needs, can be explained by eligibility criteria for admission into RVYSC. Although RVYSC has the resources to serve DYC youth with substance abuse needs, the program does not currently accept youth with high-level or severe mental health treatment needs. This need level is based on each youth’s initial CCAR⁹⁰ score, specifically the overall symptom severity domain. If this domain is a five or higher, it indicates that those youth require professional mental health intervention. *“The percent of youth who met or exceeded this mental health need level at the time of their initial commitment assessment increased across the five successive cohorts between FY 2006-07 and FY 2010-11.”*⁹¹ Overall, RVYSC had significantly lower rates of youth with mental health treatment needs.

Although a valuable tool in a number of ways, the CCAR alone is not an adequate instrument for measuring DYC youth mental health need levels.

The pie charts in Figure 35 illustrate the differences in cohorts, based on the CCAR “Overall Symptom Severity” scale.

⁹⁰ Colorado Client Assessment Record.
⁹¹ Center for Research Strategies and Aurora Research Institute (2011). Evaluation of the Continuum of Care Program: Annual Report: Fiscal Year 2010-2011.

Figure 35: Mental Health Issues by Cohort**



Two additional mental health need indicators, CJRA domains 9A (mental health history) and 9B (current mental health), however, did not reproduce the same results. In terms of mental health *history*, a slightly higher percentage of Ridge View youth score high on this domain (92.4%) when compared to Shared youth (91.5%) and State and Contract Placement youth (83.2%)⁹². When looking at the *current* mental health domain, thirteen percent (13.1%) of Ridge View youth score high in this area, in comparison to 6.4% of Shared youth⁹³, and seventeen percent (17.3%) of State and Contract Placement youth. Both of these domains indicate that mental health issues may be contributing to a youth’s propensity to re-offend. Unless these issues are addressed through treatment, these males will be more prone to offend in the future, as a result of having unmet mental health issues.

Co-Occurring Substance Abuse and Mental Health Issues

When looking at youth that have co-occurring substance abuse and mental health issues, cohort differences are apparent. The State and Contract Placement cohort has the highest percentage of youth with co-occurring issues (46.4%), followed closely by the Shared cohort with 45.7%. The Ridge View cohort has substantially less of these complex youth (29.8%). In Section One of this report, results show that youth with mental health issues have much higher pre-discharge recidivism rates, as well as much higher residential recidivism rates. Though substance abuse issues were not shown to relate significantly with recidivism for this cohort, the results were in

⁹² X²=11.748, df=2, p<0.01

⁹³ X²=7.677, df=2, p<0.05

the anticipated direction with “Treatment” and “Intervention” level youth having higher rates than “Prevention” level youth. Youth exhibiting both types of treatment issues (substance abuse and mental health) present a high level of complexity as it relates to residential conduct and creating appropriate and effective treatment plans. Youth exhibiting both types of need are predicted to struggle more, especially in residential placement (see Section 1).

Table 15.1: Co-Occurring Treatment Issues by Cohort**

Co-Occurring Treatment Issues	Ridge View Percent	Shared Youth Percent	State and Contract Placement Percent	TOTAL
Percent of Youth with BOTH Substance Abuse & Mental Health Issues	29.8%	45.7%	46.4%	41.5%
Total	N=198	N=94	N=394	686

** $X^2=15.831$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$

Sex-Offense Specific Needs

The Ridge View and Shared cohorts served significantly less youth with sex offense-specific treatment needs, 0% (RVYSC) and 3.2% (Shared) of their total youth, respectively. The State and Contract Placement cohort had nearly twenty percent (18.3%) of their youth with sex offense specific needs⁹⁴. This difference, once again, can be explained by Ridge View eligibility criteria and treatment resources; Ridge View does not accept youth with these specific needs.

Other Youth Characteristics (Not Traditional Risk Factors)

Sentence Type

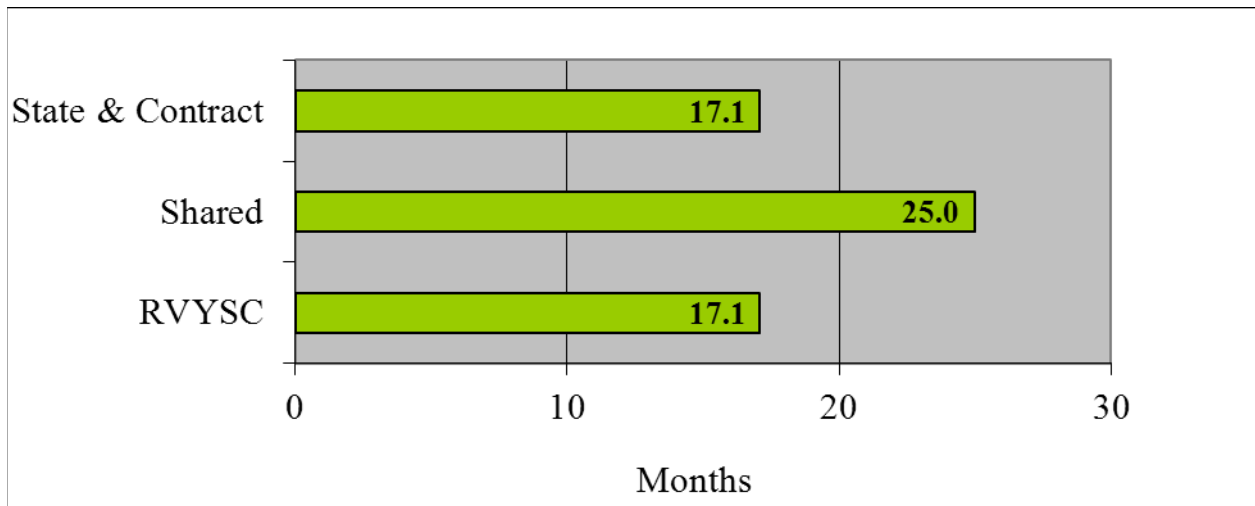
Another factor examined and compared between groups was type of commitment sentence received. Commitment sentence type was not found to be different between the three groups. Even when looking strictly at the split between mandatory and non-mandatory sentences, there were no differences between the three groups.

⁹⁴ $X^2=51.895$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$

Length of Service (LOS)

The last factor examined, looked for differences across the three groups, in terms of length of service (LOS). When looking at days and months spent committed to NYC, significant differences were found in LOS (total, residential and parole) between the three groups. Total commitment length of service includes time spent in a residential placement as well as time spent on parole status. On average, RYVSC and State and Contract Placement youth spent 24 months in total, committed to NYC, while Shared youth spent nearly 32 (31.6) months⁹⁵. The Shared males group had the longest average commitment LOS by far. When looking strictly at residential LOS, Ridge View youth and State and Contract Placement youth had very similar LOS (17.1 months), compared to 25.0 months for the Shared youth group⁹⁶. (See Figure 36)

Figure 36: Length of Service (Residential) by Cohort



Each youth, regardless of cohort, was subject to the mandatory parole period and was required to spend a minimum of six (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 (average: 6.4 months) when compared to State and Contract Placement males (average: 6.6 months). However, the Shared group had a significantly longer period of parole (average: 8.1 months)⁹⁷.

⁹⁵ F=28.767, df=685, p<0.01

⁹⁶ F=32.571, df=685, p<0.01

⁹⁷ F=8.705, df=685, p<0.01

Two contributing factors; recommitments and escapes, may have had an influence on the longer LOS for the Shared group. In terms of recommitment, the Shared cohort youth average 0.56 recommitments each, while the State and Contract Placement cohort (avg. each: 0.22) and RYVSC cohort (avg. each: 0.17) averaged significantly less⁹⁸. The same is true for number of escapes. The Shared cohort average 1.51 escapes each, while the other two cohorts were far less likely to escape (State and Contract Placement avg. each: 0.77; RYVSC avg. each: 0.66⁹⁹). Ranking high in both of these areas can certainly result in extended LOS’.

Summary of Cohort Differences

Although the recidivism outcomes of these three groups are compared side-by-side, keep in mind the many cohort differences described, and the impact those differences could potentially have on recidivism rates.

While there are factors presented that make one group more likely to recidivate (See Table 16), there are a different set of factors that another group possesses making that group higher risk to re-offend. Due to the unique mix of cohort characteristics, it is scientifically difficult to predict future recidivist behavior. For these reasons and more, the following results should be interpreted mindfully.

Table 16: Shared Cohort Differences

In what areas does the Shared Cohort rank Highest Risk?
Commitment Offense Type Age at First Adjudication Age at Commitment Prior Detention Admissions Number of Commitment Placements Length of Service

⁹⁸ F=18.001, df=685, p<0.01

⁹⁹ F=19.148, df=685, p<0.01

Ridge View Recidivism Results

This section reports recidivism and other outcome information for the 198 youth discharged from the Division of Youth Corrections between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011, who were placed at Ridge View Youth Services Center (RVYSC) for more than 90 days during their commitment to the Division, and who stayed at RVYSC for at least two-thirds (66%) of their total residential commitment period.

Ridge View Recidivism

Pre-Discharge: 27.8%
Post-Discharge: 18.7%

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=394) and to a shared group of males that spent 90 days or more at RVYSC, but did not stay at the program for at least 66% of their total residential LOS (n=94). The term “pre-discharge” is used to identify offenses that occurred during residential placement and/or parole. The term “post-discharge” refers to offenses that occurred within one year after the youth was discharged from NYC.

Pre-Discharge Recidivism: An adjudication or conviction 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: An adjudication or conviction for a new felony or misdemeanor offense that occurred within one year following discharge from the Division of Youth Corrections.

Figure 37, on the next page, shows the pre-discharge recidivism rates for the Ridge View sample, the Shared group, and the State and Contract Placement group.

Ridge View had similar rates of recidivism during commitment when compared with State and Contract Placement males. The Shared group of males, once again, had significantly higher pre-discharge recidivism rates. Of the 198 youth in the RVYSC group, 27.8% had a new adjudication for a misdemeanor or felony offense prior to discharge. In comparison, 27.9% of State and Contract Placement group, and 46.8% of the Shared group received a new adjudication during the span of their commitment. See Figure 37 for an illustration of how these rates compare across

groups¹⁰⁰. The most alarming finding is easy to identify. Of the 94 males in the Shared cohort, nearly half (44) of those youth received a new adjudication before discharging from DYC, **46.8%**.

Figure 37: Pre-Discharge Recidivism Results by Cohort**

FY 2010-11 Male Discharges (N=686)
Pre-Discharge Recidivism

	RECIDIVISTS	NON-RECIDIVISTS
Ridge View Cohort N=198	27.8% N=55	72.2% N=143
“Shared” Cohort N=94	46.8% N=44	53.2% N=50
State & Contract Placement Cohort N=394	27.9% N=110	72.1% N=284

**Statistically Significant Differences

¹⁰⁰ $\chi^2=13.733$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$

Post-discharge recidivism rates for RVYSC youth (18.7%) were statistically comparable to the post-discharge rates for State and Contract Placement males (14.7%), and the Shared group of males (24.5%). In other words, although the Shared cohort has a seemingly higher percentage of youth who re-offended post-discharge, this higher raw percentage is not meaningfully different from the other two groups' rates.

Figure 38: Post-Discharge Recidivism Results by Cohort*

FY 2010-11 Male Discharges (N=686)

Post-Discharge Recidivism

	RECIDIVISTS	NON-RECIDIVISTS
Ridge View Cohort N=198	18.7% N=37	81.3% N=161
"Shared" Cohort N=94	24.5% N=23	75.5% N=71
State & Contract Placement Cohort N=394	14.7% N=58	85.3% N=336

*No Statistically Significant Differences

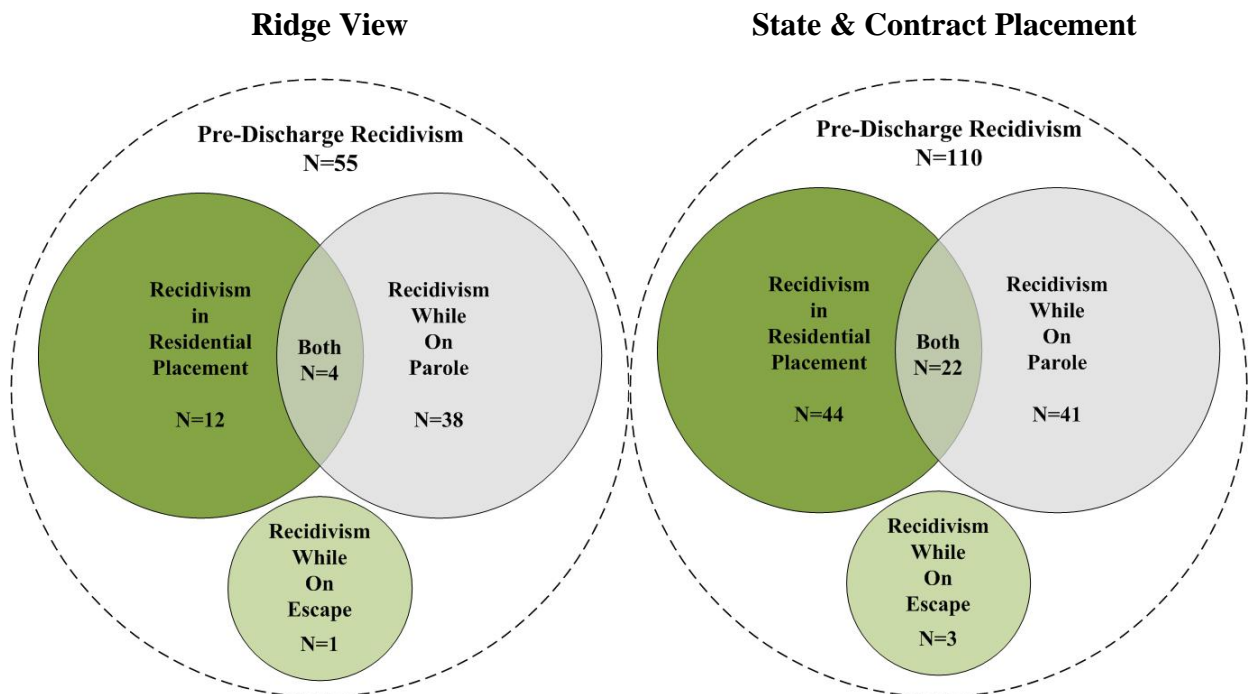
Concerns About the Shared Cohort

There is great and continued concern surrounding the outcomes of the Shared cohort of youth. The recidivism rates themselves are alarming (namely the pre-discharge rate), and a joint issue that both the Division and Ridge View need to understand and troubleshoot. It is apparent, through the higher rates of recidivism exhibited and the in-depth cohort comparisons conducted, that this Shared group of males has a unique and high-risk composition. The fact that these males are selected into the “Shared” cohort may reveal a piece of the problem—residential instability. Therefore, program failure (not just from Ridge View), resulting in multiple program placements, could have led to the poor outcomes witnessed. If “residential instability” is not to blame for the poor outcomes, there are a whole host of other factors that put this group at increased risk for recidivism (refer back to Table 16).

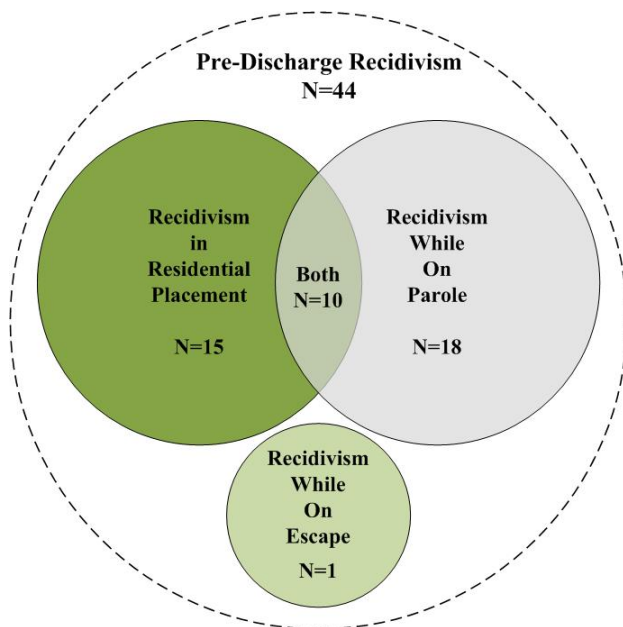
Pre-Discharge Recidivism Outcomes

An important element to consider, when comparing pre-discharge recidivism rates across groups, is where the pre-discharge offense (or offenses) occurred. Figure 39 depicts these differences.

Figure 39: Pre-Discharge Recidivism: Where did the Offense Occur?



Shared



Residential & Parole Outcomes

Table 17 presents the figures (shown also in Figure 39) and rates associated with the types of pre-discharge recidivism (i.e., where the offense occurred) by cohort. It is important to note that many youth recidivate both in residential placement and on parole, and a handful of youth commit their offenses while on escape.

Table 17: Pre-Discharge Recidivism: Where did the Offense Occur?*

Pre-Discharge Recidivism	Ridge View			Shared Youth			State & Contract Placement		
	N	%	%	N	%	%	N	%	%
None	143	72%	72.2%	50	53%	53.2%	284	72%	72.1%
Residential (only)	12	6%	27.8%	15	16%	46.8%	44	11%	37.6%
Parole (only)	38	19%		18	19%		41	10%	
Res & Parole (both)	4	2%		10	11%		22	6%	
On Escape	1	1%		1	1%		3	1%	
Total	198	100%	100%	94	100%	100%	394	100%	100%

** $\chi^2=16.488$, $df=6$, $p<0.05$

Residential

Looking specifically at the time period in which youth are undergoing residential treatment services, the three cohorts do vary significantly in “residential recidivism” rates. Ridge View youth have an 8.6% residential recidivism rate, State and Contract Placement youth have a 17.5% rate, and Shared youth have the highest rate at 27.7% (see Table 18). With these drastic differences, it is important to consider the filing practices of the programs included—as filing practices will affect adjudication and conviction rates. While differing recidivism rates could represent a true level of re-offending discrepancy between cohorts, the differing recidivism rates could also be an artifact of program-specific philosophy and filing practices. Some programs file charges on most or all offenses that occur, while other programs may choose to not file charges on youth in certain circumstances, or possibly in most circumstances.

Parole

Looking specifically at the time period in which a youth is on parole, once again the three cohorts vary significantly in regard to “parole recidivism” rates. The Shared youth cohort has the highest rate of parole recidivism (29.8%), while Ridge View youth have a rate of 21.2%, and State and Contract Placement youth have a 16.0% rate. Statistically, the Ridge View cohort and the Shared cohort are similar. The low State and Contract Placement cohort rate is what makes this comparison statistically significant.

**Table 18: Recidivism Rates by Cohort¹⁰¹
(Pre-Discharge: Residential & Parole)**

Pre-Discharge Recidivism	Ridge View		Shared Youth		State & Contract Placement		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Residential*	17	8.6%	26	27.7%	69	17.5%	112
Parole**	42	21.2%	28	29.8%	63	16.0%	133

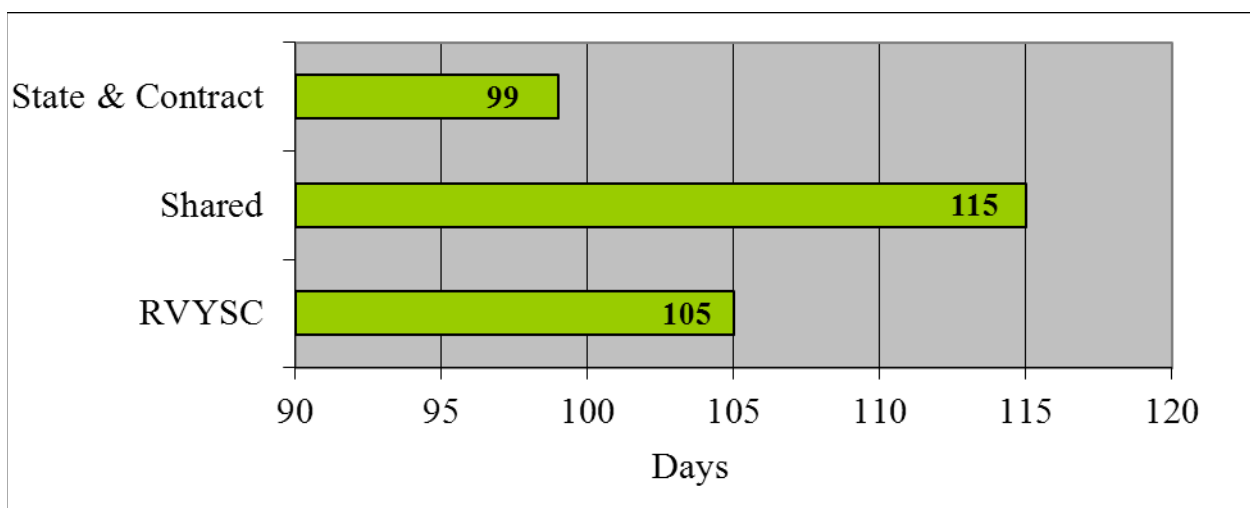
* $\chi^2=17.928$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$

** $\chi^2=9.837$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$

¹⁰¹ Recidivism rates differ from those shown in Table 17, as Table 18 adds- in youth that receive filings **both** in residential placement and on parole. For example, RV residential (8.6%) in Table 18 comes from the sum of 6% (residential-only) and 2% (Res & Parole both) in Table 17.

Interestingly, although the State and Contract Placement cohort of youth tend to recidivate at lower levels on parole, this group offends “quicker” after their parole begins, when compared to the other two groups. An analysis of *time to first parole adjudication* was conducted, and the figure below illustrates the differences across groups, although statistically insignificant. The State and Contract Placement cohort, on average, recidivate 99 days into their parole period. Ridge View youth average 105 days on parole before offending, and the Shared cohort averages 115 days (Figure 40).

Figure 40: Time to First Parole Offense by Cohort



Post-Discharge Outcomes

Time to First Post-Discharge Offense

The average time to first post-discharge offense did not vary across the three cohorts. Of the 118 males who received a post-discharge adjudication, the average amount of time that elapsed after discharge to the first offense was 3.4 months (State and Contract Placement=3.8 months; Ridge View=3.1 months; Shared=2.9 months).

Risk Reduction to the Community (Level of Offense Severity)

Reducing the overall rate of recidivism is important to all programs, facilities, and professionals who work with the youth in the Division. However, because overall recidivism rates by cohort do not usually change significantly from year to year, it is important to also consider whether or

not “level of offense severity” has been reduced, an intermediate outcome measure of recidivism. Similar to Section One, the following analysis examines each youth’s commitment offense and compares it to the most serious offense committed within one year following discharge (post-discharge). If a client is committed to NYC on a felony robbery, and re-offends after discharge with a misdemeanor property charge, this youth’s offense risk level was considered to be lowered—a positive finding—even though he still recidivated. Table 19 shows the level of offense severity changes by cohort.

Table 19: Post-Discharge Offense, Level of Risk Reduction by Cohort

Offense Severity Change	Ridge View Percent	Shared Youth Percent	State & Contract Placement Percent	TOTAL
No Adjudication	81%	76%	85%	568
Decrease in Severity	10%	19%	9%	73
POSITIVE OUTCOME	91%	95%	94%	641
No Change in Severity	2%	2%	2%	13
Increase in Severity	7%	3%	4%	32
NEGATIVE OUTCOME	9%	5%	6%	45
Total	N=198	N=94	N=394	686

All three cohorts were successful in decreasing offense severity levels. The post-discharge offenses of the youth in the Shared cohort were less severe 95% of the time; similarly, offense severity was decreased 94% of the time in the State and Contract Placement cohort, and 91% of the time in the Ridge View cohort.

Similar to the State and Contract Placement cohort, in the total discharge cohort (reference Section 1 of this report), the Division was successful in reducing the level of criminal behavior for 94% of youth discharged in FY 2010-11¹⁰².

Ironically, this leaves 6% of the total discharge cohort who had an increase in offense seriousness (4.5%), or had no change in offense level (1.6%). This is ironic because there is a large collection of juvenile justice literature that talks about “**the chronic 6 percent.**” See

¹⁰² The remaining six percent (6%) either had no change in offense severity (1.6%) or exhibited more serious criminal behaviors following discharge (4.5%).

Section One, page 18, for a more in-depth description and discussion of this sub-set of serious youth offenders.

Chronic Recidivists: *“Youths who have been arrested five or more times and perpetuate a striking majority of serious criminal acts; this small group, known as the ‘chronic 6 percent,’ is believed to engage in a significant portion of all delinquent behavior.”*¹⁰³

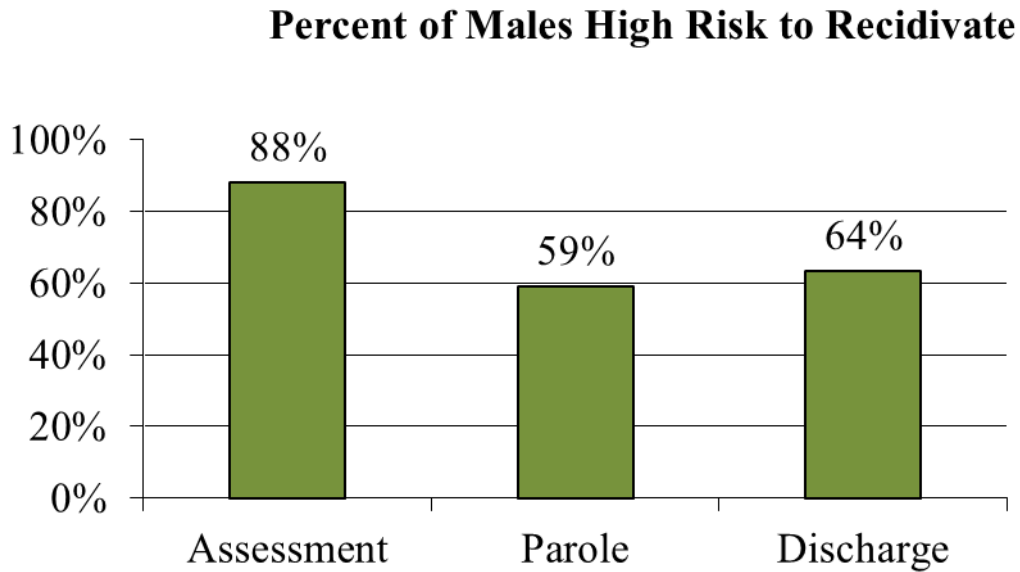
While it is not assumed that all six percent of the youth in this current analysis (where level of criminal behavior was not reduced) fit into this group labeled “chronic juvenile offenders”, but it’s likely that a portion of this group *could* fit the description. An overwhelming amount of literature states that there is little that can be done to change, “treat,” or disrupt the pattern of offending for this small subset of serious juvenile delinquents.

Risk Reduction: A Shared Success Across All Three Cohorts

A very positive finding for all three cohorts was the degree to which overall risk levels were impacted from assessment, to parole, to discharge. This outcome indicates that, overall, the goal of reducing risk to recidivate is being accomplished, regardless of cohort assignment. At initial assessment **88.2%** of males in the FY 2010-11 discharge cohort were high risk for re-offense. Approximately 18 months later, at the beginning of parole, **59.2%** were high risk. Finally, at discharge, **63.5%** were assessed as being high risk (See Figure 41).

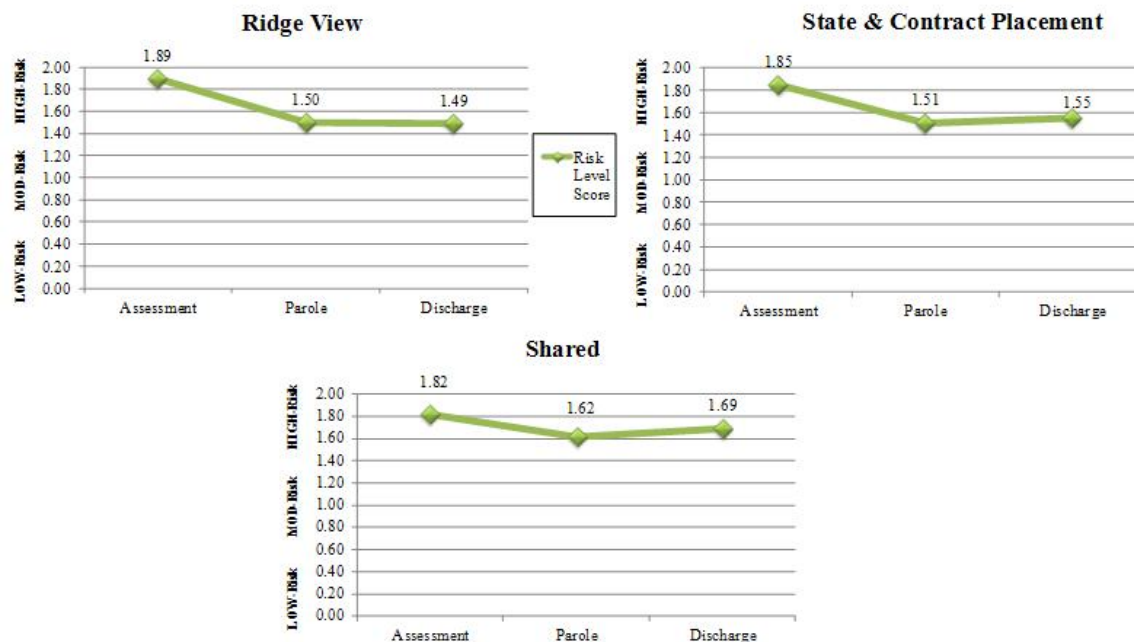
¹⁰³ Siegel and Senna, 2000. Juvenile Delinquency: Theory, Practice, and Law. 7th Edition. Pages 59-61.

Figure 41: Risk Reduction from Assessment to Discharge (all Males)



The specific reductions in risk, by cohort, are shown in Figure 42. The average risk level scores of youth were reduced significantly in all three cohorts across time, both from Assessment to Discharge, and from Assessment to Parole. Figure 42 illustrates the average three risk level scores, at each of the three points in time, for each of the three cohorts. There were no differences between groups when looking at “how much” risk was reduced by. In other words, all three cohorts had similar rates of risk reduction across time.

Figure 42: Risk Reductions by Cohort



Overall Risk Level vs. Domain Risk Level

It is very important to mention that the overall risk reduction analyses, shown in Figures 41 and 42 in this section, **should not** be compared to the domain-specific risk reduction analyses, shown in Figure 18 of section one. Overall risk level, and domain risk levels are calculated very differently. For example, a youth could show significant *domain* improvements (risk reduction) on four of the twelve CJRA domains and **not necessarily** evidence a significant reduction in *overall risk level*.

Overall risk reduction is based on a youth’s risk level at time of assessment, as measured by a validated CJRA Pre-Screen algorithm or calculation. A youth’s overall risk level (low risk, moderate risk, or high risk) is based upon his or her answers to a very select number of CJRA questions, which specifically incorporate criminal history and social history factors. The criminal history items are all historic or static (cannot be improved through treatment or ameliorated through the provision of appropriately matched services). The social history items (contrary to it’s name) **does** contain some dynamic items; so, this area **can** be improved. Overall risk level is determined using both static and dynamic items; while domain risk levels (shown in

Section 1) are all based on dynamic items. In addition, domain risk levels only measure a youth's likelihood to recidivate based on that one specific domain.

Given how overall risk level is calculated, it's possible that a high risk youth may never achieve a lower risk status. Once certain static risk items are endorsed on the criminal history and social history domains, they can never be "un-endorsed". If a youth is adjudicated on an offense before their thirteenth birthday, that particular risk item will continue to be endorsed throughout that youth's life. Actuarially speaking, this is very appropriate as overwhelming research has shown that early onset of delinquent behavior is highly predictive of future recidivism. If a youth endorses a sufficient number of these high-risk/static risk factors, then that youth may always be considered high-risk, despite if the youth made significant gains while in treatment.

It is important to note that if a youth fails to reduce their overall risk level, the treatment gains made in the other CJRA domains are in no way negated or deemed otherwise unimportant. On the contrary, a reduction in these domains may be better in predicting whether a youth poses a greater or lesser risk to the community. The unfortunate reality of juvenile justice service providers is that despite their best efforts, some youth will eventually re-offend. Another reality is that all youth will eventually re-enter into the community. Unlike adults, youth cannot be sentenced to a lifetime of incarceration. The Division of Youth Corrections is responsible for supervising and treating a group of youth who are highly prone to re-offending (a.k.a, recidivism). Given that the probabilities of recidivism are quite high for a subset of youth, perhaps a practical approach would be to reduce the amount of harm that the youth may inflict upon society. All youth from DYC will eventually transition back into the community. Although it may not be possible to ensure that every youth will not recidivate, there should be some recognition that a youth has made significant treatment progress in areas that are highly correlated to recidivism. It may not be possible to eliminate recidivism completely, but hopefully inroads have been made to reduce the seriousness, frequency, and lethality of future offenses.

To put overall risk level into perspective, the CJRA was validated on a population of juvenile probationers. The Division's committed population has a vast majority of high risk youth, whereas the probation population has more low and moderate risk youth. The juvenile probation population, as a whole, represents a less serious population of juvenile offenders; as probation is

at the “front-end” of the justice system. The population of offenders committed to the Division of Youth Corrections contains more severe youth in terms of delinquency, as DYC committed youth have penetrated further into the juvenile justice system, which is commonly referred to as the “back-end” or “deep-end.”

Because DYC committed youth have so many risk factors, it is rare that a youth’s risk level would shift from high risk, down to moderate risk. It is much more likely that a youth’s risk level would shift from the *high-end* of high risk, to the *moderate-* or *low-end* of high risk. So, although risk has been reduced significantly, it is probable that he or she will still be high risk overall. Risk on specific domains is much more likely to show entire level changes.

Ridge View Cohort Specific Outcomes

The following sub-sections will analyze the Ridge View cohort’s recidivism rates by specific demographic and risk factors. Throughout this report a finding followed by “***” indicates a statistically significant finding.

Demographics

Primary Ethnicity

Recidivism rates by primary ethnicity were examined for the Ridge View cohort. The “other” category includes Native-American and Asian-American youth, as well as multi-racial youth and those identified as “unable to be determined.” These categories are combined simply due to the small numbers. The total number of youth in each category is too small when examined independently to make valid statistical comparisons¹⁰⁴.

The results of this analysis reveal that primary ethnicity is **not** meaningfully associated with recidivism rates, neither pre- nor post-discharge, for the Ridge View cohort.

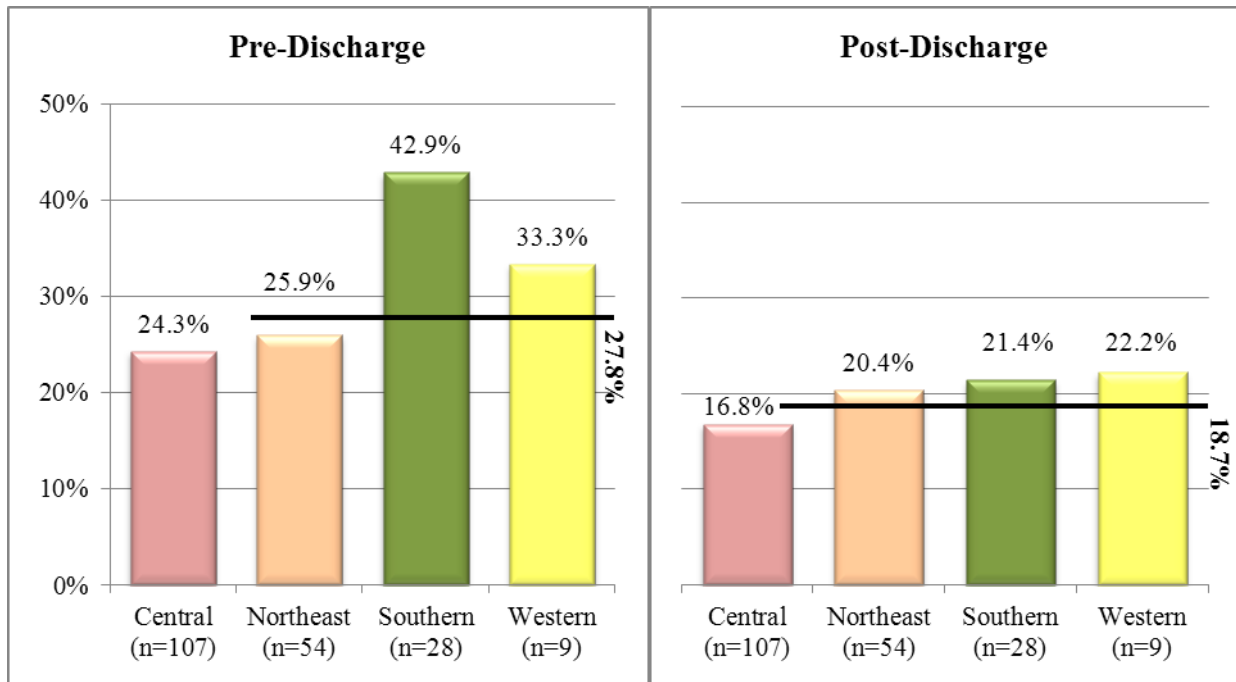
¹⁰⁴ Statistical significance between groups is a calculation that is based on the number of cases in each group as well as the differences between groups; therefore it takes a larger relative difference to be a significant finding (not because of chance) when group sizes are small.

DYC Management Region

DYC has a regionally based management structure, operating from four management regions in the State (see Figure 13) The Central Region consists of four judicial districts and includes 11 counties (major counties: Denver, Jefferson, Arapahoe, and Douglas). The Northeast Region consists of five judicial districts and 13 counties (major counties: Adams, Boulder, Larimer, and Weld). The Southern Region consists of seven judicial districts and 22 counties (major counties: El Paso and Pueblo). The Western Region consists of the six judicial districts on the western slope, and 18 counties (major county: 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. Figure 43 shows a breakdown of new offenses during and after commitment by DYC management region.

Youth placed at the Ridge View Youth Services Center had similar rates of recidivism, regardless of region.

Figure 43: Ridge View Recidivism Rates by DYC Management Region



Risk of Recidivism – Prior Juvenile Justice and System Involvement

Several measures of “system involvement” were analyzed as well; however, few of them were found to be significantly correlated with recidivism rates for the Ridge View sample. The factors that were found to be predictive of post-discharge recidivism were *prior out-of-home placements*¹⁰⁵ and *prior detention admissions*. The other factors examined were not predictive (*prior adjudications, prior commitments, age at commitment, and age at first adjudication*).

CJRA and Ridge View Outcomes

Interestingly, **none** of the CJRA dynamic or static domains, (which were predictive of post-discharge recidivism in the larger study) proved to be significant when it came to Ridge View youth and post-discharge recidivism. In fact, no CJRA factors at all, including overall risk levels or domain-specific risk levels, were correlated with any type of recidivism for Ridge View youth (pre-discharge, residential, parole, or post-discharge). The lack of findings associated with the CJRA risk instrument is concerning and warrants further investigation by both NYC and Ridge View parties, especially since six CJRA domains were predictive of post-discharge recidivism in Section One. Additionally, CJRA overall risk level at discharge (high risk vs. not high risk) was significantly correlated with post-discharge recidivism with the larger cohort of 793 discharges—but not with the RYVSC cohort.

Ridge View Completion & Graduation

In order for this cohort of youth to officially graduate from the Ridge View program, 100% of the VALIDATE¹⁰⁶ model components must be fulfilled, the youth’s peer group and staff must formally agree that the youth has fulfilled all of the graduation requirements, and the youth must earn and maintain “RAM” status for at least two months. If a youth completes 80-100% of the program requirements, but has not achieved validation by staff and his peer group or achieved and maintained RAM status for the specified period of time, that youth is considered to have completed the program, but not graduated from RYVSC.

¹⁰⁵ Prior out-of-home placements can include inpatient mental health or substance abuse treatment facilities, Child Welfare placements, as well as any prior NYC placements.

¹⁰⁶ A description of “VALIDATE” can be found in Appendix D.

Graduate/Validate:

- 1) All components (100%) of the VALIDATE model must be completed, AND
- 2) Staff and peer validation must be achieved, AND
- 3) RAM status earned and maintained for at least 2 months

Complete:

- 1) Most components (80-100%) of the VALIDATE model must be completed

Ridge View Completion

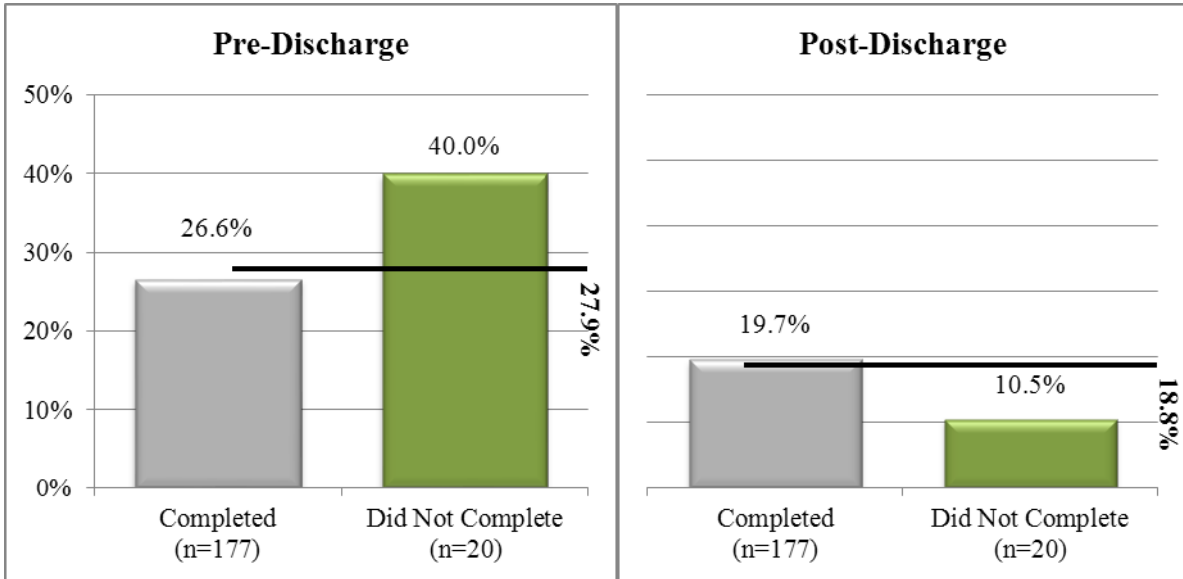
Figure 44 shows the differences in pre-discharge and post-discharge recidivism rates for youth that successfully *completed* the Ridge View Youth Services Center program, compared with youth who did not complete the program¹⁰⁷. The completed group shown in gray (n=177) includes both graduates (n=48) and completers (n=129). There are only 20 youth who did not complete the RVYSC program (shown in green)¹⁰⁸.

There were no statistically significant differences in recidivism rates for youth who completed Ridge View Youth Services Center programming when compared to those who did not complete the program. This measure, however, should be interpreted cautiously. A pre-discharge offense may very well be the reason for program incompleteness, and therefore “completion” is somewhat of a tautological measure for pre-discharge success.

¹⁰⁷ Common reasons for not completing the program are: 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 complete the program to be unsuccessful.

¹⁰⁸ One youth, out of the 198, had no information provided.

Figure 44: Ridge View Recidivism by Successful Completion of the Ridge View Program

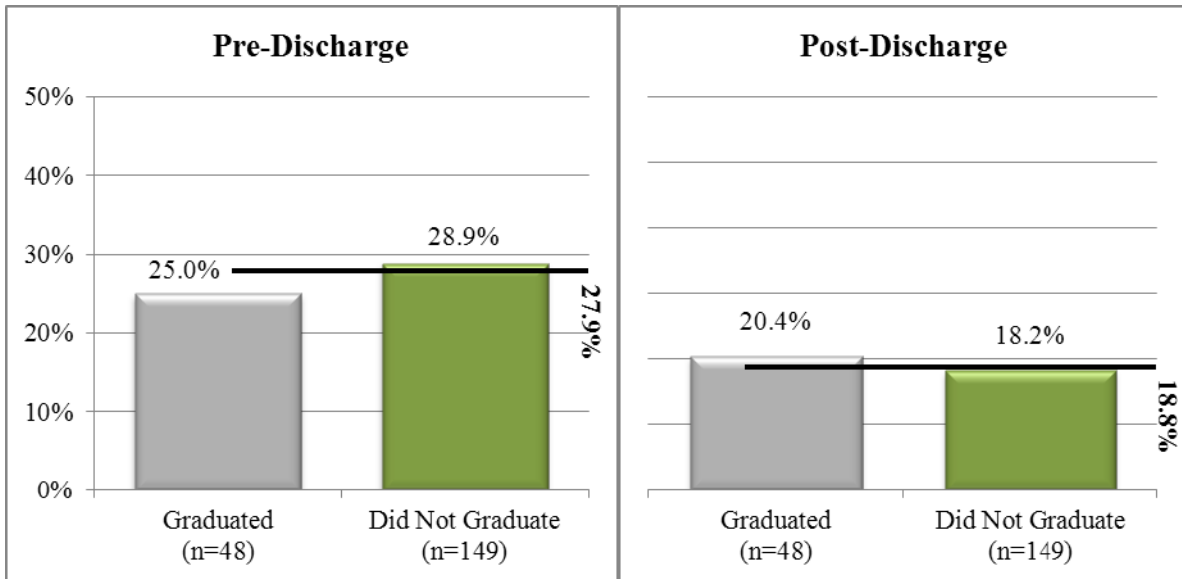


N=1 missing data

Ridge View Graduation

The Graduate/Validate status of Ridge View youth was also analyzed for this study. As explained earlier, graduation from RVYSC is much more than just program completion. In addition to program completion, graduation requires that youth are recognized by staff and peers as having fulfilled all validation/graduation requirements, and also requires that youth achieve and maintain RAM status. All types of recidivism rates (pre-discharge—including residential and parole—and post-discharge) were shown to be insignificant when comparing graduates to non-graduates. Figure 45 shows these outcomes.

Figure 45: Ridge View Recidivism by Graduation from the Ridge View Program



N=1 missing data

Diploma, GED, Post-Secondary Education Enrollment, and Employment

Ridge View staff also provided data related to GED obtainment, diploma obtainment, post-secondary education enrollment while at RYVSC. While **none** of the factors were significantly related to post-discharge recidivism, many of the results were not in the anticipated direction. The tables below display these results. Specifically curious are the results for youth who earned a diploma versus those who did not. Youth who earned diplomas re-offended at a rate of 27.3%, while youth who did not earn a diploma had a recidivism rate of 17.7% (but not statistically significant).

**Table 20: Ridge View Post-Discharge Recidivism Rates
by Diploma, GED, Post-Secondary Education, and Employment***

Diploma	Post-Discharge Recidivism Rate
Diploma attained	27.3%
Diploma NOT attained	17.7%
GED	Post-Discharge Recidivism Rate
GED attained	18.5%
GED NOT attained	19.0%
Post-Secondary Education	Post-Discharge Recidivism Rate
Post-Sec Education Enrolled	19.5%
Post-Sec Education NOT Enrolled	18.2%
Employment Status	Post-Discharge Recidivism Rate
Employed	19.4%
NOT Employed	18.4%

*Not statistically significant

Step-Down Programs

Rates of parole recidivism and post-discharge recidivism were examined according to whether RV youth went to a “step-down” community program after leaving RVYSC. The data utilized for this analysis was provided by RVYSC staff. This data was not pulled from the TRAILS database. While the analyses proved to be statistically insignificant, the directionality of the outcomes may prove to be a positive for the program.

In relation to parole recidivism and step-down programs, the results are positive for the Qualifying, or “Q” House (an ROP step-down program). Zero (0%) percent of youth who attended the ROP step-down program recidivated while on parole. This is in comparison to 23.1% of youth who recidivated on parole, but did not attend any type of step-down program. Youth who attended a non-ROP step-down program re-offended on parole at a rate of 13.0%.

With regard to post-discharge recidivism, twenty-five (25.0%) percent of youth who attended a step-down program before discharging re-offended within twelve months of discharge, compared to 17.8% of those who did not attend any type of step-down program after leaving RVYSC. Further analysis on this subject reveal that by stepping-down to an ROP program (the Q-House), 0% of youth re-offended after discharging (n=5); in comparison, 30.4% (n=23) re-offended after

attending a different community step-down program. However, these rate differences were not found to be statistically significant.

SECTION TWO SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The cohort differences in this section are important to digest first before trying to make conclusions about the recidivism rate results for each group. Most notably, is the high risk composition of the Shared cohort of youth. For the second year in a row, this group of youth proved to have the highest number of factors that would make them significantly more prone to recidivate—a high number of commitment placements, a high number of prior detention admissions, a younger age at commitment, high percentages of mental health needs and co-occurring issues, and finally, much longer lengths of services as compared to the other two cohorts. These high risk factors undoubtedly resulted in higher recidivism rates. This Shared group also had much higher rates of pre-discharge recidivism when broken down into residential and parole re-offending. It is recommended that the Division and Ridge View YSC dedicate more resources to learning about this high-risk group.

Another important fact to keep in mind is that the “State and Contract Placement” cohort is not simply all NYC State-Secure facilities. While NYC Secure facilities **are** included in this group, the cohort is also made up of **many contracted staff-supervised, community programs, and foster homes**, utilized by the Division. So, while this group is being used as a comparison group to Ridge View males, the “State and Contract Placement” cohort is far from homogenous. In fact, this cohort is *really* comprised of two distinct groups: youth who spent the majority of their LOS in a State Secure facility, and youth who spent the majority of their LOS in a Contract Program (which could include staff-supervised, community programs, or foster homes).

Some factors that set Ridge View youth apart from the other two cohorts of youth are: fewer youth with prominent mental health issues, youth with fewer prior out-of-home placements, youth with fewer person offenses (committing offenses), youth with fewer co-occurring (substance abuse and mental health) issues, higher percentages of minority youth, and youth with more prior adjudications. It is difficult to synthesize all the factors, and combination of factors,

to estimate which group poses the highest risk to recidivate. Many factors relate to treatment complexity, while many relate to traditional risk to re-offend, and many relate to both.

As witnessed in this study, mental health issues, co-occurring issues, and low/moderate risk youth pose extreme difficulty when it comes to residential success—or not re-offending in residential placement—which creates barriers to treatment success. However, these same factors do not always hold true in predicting post-discharge recidivism.

The most positive outcome witnessed in this section is the shared success across all three groups when it came to risk (to recidivate) reduction. Using CJRA data to assess youth change across three points in time, all three groups were shown to have significantly reduced a number of risk factors, overall, and across most domains.

Interestingly, **none** of the CJRA dynamic or static domains, (which were predictive of post-discharge recidivism in the larger study) proved to be significant when it came to Ridge View youth and post-discharge recidivism. In fact, no CJRA factor at all, including overall risk levels or domain-specific risk levels, were correlated with any type of recidivism for Ridge View youth (pre-discharge, residential, parole, or post-discharge). The lack of findings associated with the CJRA risk instrument is concerning and warrants further investigation by both NYC and Ridge View parties.

Overall, Ridge View YSC discharges were shown to have similar rates of pre-discharge recidivism, as compared to State and Contract Placement youth. Both of these cohorts have a pre-discharge recidivism rate of nearly 28%. However, the Shared cohort had drastically higher pre-discharge recidivism rates (46.8%) comparatively. When looking at residential recidivism, a subset of pre-discharge recidivism, the Ridge View cohort had the lowest rates of all three cohorts (8.6%). As for the period of parole, again Ridge View and State and Contract Placement youth were similar, whereas the Shared cohort exhibited much higher parole recidivism rates. Lastly, when looking at post-discharge recidivism, all three groups had similar rates (15-25%).

Appendix A – Statistical Significance (Measures & Meaning)

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. When using a Chi-Square statistic, it is important to define the number of degrees of freedom in the test statistic. Degrees of freedom are the “number of values that are free to vary when calculating a test statistic.”¹⁰⁹ This number is equal to the number of cells, minus the reduction in degrees of freedom. So, for the above example using gender, there are two cells: male and female; and only one reduction. So, the degrees of freedom would equal one (1) in this instance ($2-1=1$).

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.

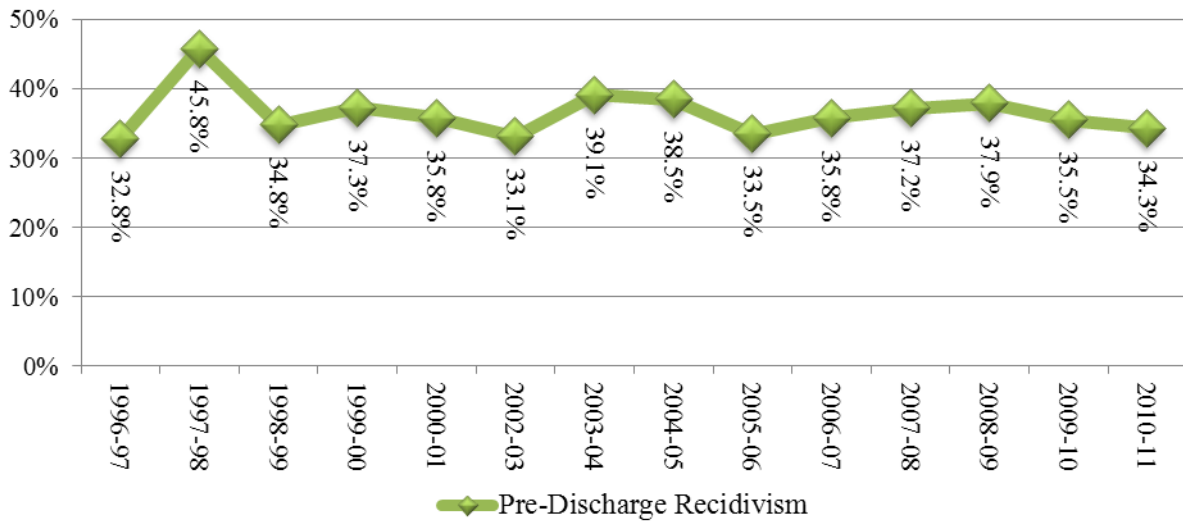
Differences identified between groups may be the result of some noteworthy impact, or they simply could have occurred because of random chance. Throughout this study, findings are included with their statistical significance. If it is highly unlikely that a finding (such as a

¹⁰⁹ Bachman and Paternoster (1997). *Statistical Methods for Criminology and Criminal Justice*.

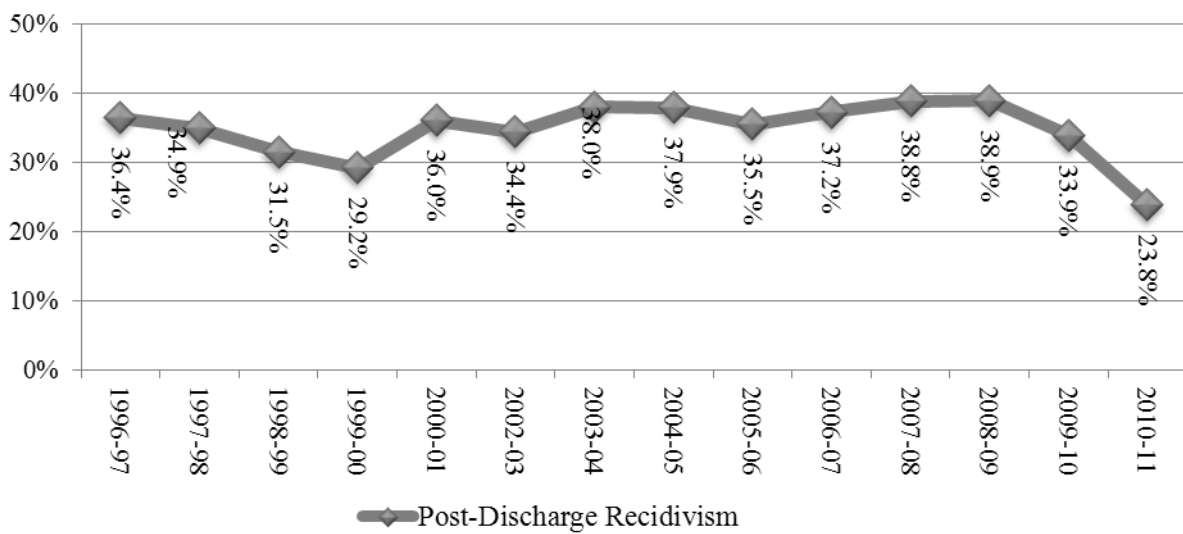
difference between two groups) happened due to chance, it is said that the finding is statistically significant. Significance is measured through interpretation of a “p” value. Two “p” values are reported here ($p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.01$). A “p” value less than 0.05 would mean there is less than a 5% 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 B – Historical Rates using “New Filing”

Pre-Discharge New Filing Rates FY 1996-97 through FY 2010-11



Post-Discharge New Filing Rates FY 1996-97 through FY 2010-11



Appendix C – Ridge View Section Methodology Changes

Only one previous study has the same methodology used in this report. Before that, all other previous studies analyzed rates of recidivism between two groups: 1) youth placed at the Ridgeview Youth Services Center (RVYSC) and 2) an “Other NYC Male” comparison cohort. Comparing rates of recidivism between these groups originally seemed reasonable and appropriate, as these groups were believed to be relatively distinct, with a high level of in-group homogeneity or commonalities. The method for determining which youth were contained in the RVYSC cohort was simply whether a youth had a Length of Service (LOS) at RVYSC greater than ninety (90) days. All other male youth, who had not met this LOS criteria, were placed in the “Other NYC Male” cohort.

For several years, the aforementioned method for determining which youth fell into the two groups appeared methodologically defensible. Particularly, when RVYSC first opened, most youth placed there spent the vast majority of their residential commitment period exclusively at this facility or at another Rite of Passage (ROP) operated facility. Additionally, RVYSC was often the first placement for the youth and subsequent placements were typically the result of a commission of a new offense. There was even a period of time in which the Division instituted a “Fast Track” program, where committed youth were immediately placed at RVYSC upon commitment. Under “Fast Track”, instead of assessing youth at one of the Regional Assessment Centers, youth were screened for appropriateness at detention facilities and sent directly to RVYSC for assessment. Under this program, RVYSC was the only committed residential program some youth ever experienced.

However, as previously mentioned, the use of RVYSC has been changing. Instead of being a youth’s primary placement, RVYSC is becoming more like other NYC contract placements in that some youth who fail in other placements are now being referred to this program. Utilizing RVYSC in this fashion seems consistent with the Division’s Key Strategy of “The Right Service at the Right Time”; as well as the Division’s continuing commitment to the Continuum of Care program. Although there still remains a number of youth whose commitment is exclusive to

RVYSC, it is those youth who do not meet this traditional standard that presents some methodical challenges for the purpose of this recidivism study.

For the recidivism study published last year (January 2012), a new methodological strategy was implemented that changed how the cohort samples are constructed. It was determined that the ninety (90) day criteria, in and of itself, was not sufficient enough to distinguish who belonged in the Ridge View cohort. This three-month period was not adequate, as a high percentage of the youth who have met this time requirement at RVYSC have also spent sizeable amounts of time in other placements and programs, which undoubtedly would have had an influence on their future behavior. In an attempt to mitigate much of this “outside” influence, more in-depth selection criteria were introduced.

Because the utilization of the RVYSC program by NYC has evolved over the years, there was also a need to evaluate how the cohorts in this section could be more meaningfully and more accurately constructed. During the prior fiscal year, the Division worked in collaboration with Rite of Passage (ROP) and other needed stakeholders to determine how research protocols would be amended to account for these operational changes.

In order to be considered part of the RVYSC cohort, each youth is required to have spent at least 66% (or two-thirds) of their total residential length of service at Ridge View, in addition to a 90-day Ridge View LOS requirement. The second cohort is constructed of youth who spent at least 90 days at RVYSC, however, they did not meet the 66% residential LOS requirement. Because these youth spent a substantial period of time at Ridge View, but not two-thirds of their residential LOS, these males are placed in the “Shared” cohort. All other males, who spent less than three months at RVYSC (or never went to RYVSC at all), are then placed into the “State and Contract Placement” cohort.

Appendix D – Ridge View Program Description (Current & Historical)

Current

The Rite of Passage organization operates the Ridge View Youth Services Center program under the terms of contract with the Division, and within the framework of a modified positive peer culture¹¹⁰. 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 staff and peer interactions, as well as 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 highly modified 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) tool. The Positive Achievement Change Tool process was fully implemented with reassessments, final assessments,

¹¹⁰ As the body of juvenile justice research supporting skill development has grown since 2001, ROP has modified the original peer culture environment.

and case plans by May of 2008, and similar to the CJRA, was based on the Washington State Juvenile Court Assessment (WSJCA) instrument.

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.

A common theme running through the CBT curricula is "Social Skill" development. In 2008, ROP began a program overhaul based on Social Learning Theory, which places more emphasis on targeted social skill acquisition, shown through research to be critical in reducing recidivism. As the body of juvenile justice research supporting skill development has grown since 2001, ROP has modified the original peer culture environment. By incorporating social learning concepts into all aspects of programming including orientation, education, student interaction and daily meetings, the Ridge View program has evolved from a positive peer culture system to a social learning model.

Family Integration

There is also a 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, and 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 of 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.

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 arranged.

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.

Historical Information

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 placement¹¹¹.

The authorizing legislation specified that DYC 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.

¹¹¹ 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.