Evaluation and Research
Using the National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP)

A Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice Data Collection

November 1, 2016
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This work was supported by Grant No. 2015-R2-CX-K135 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice to Abt Associates.

Points of view in this presentation are those of the authors and do not represent the official position of the U.S. Department of Justice.
Presentation Overview

- NCRP brief overview
- Evaluation and research applications
  - Alternative definitions of recidivism that were developed using NCRP
  - Evaluation of the impact of the Affordable Care Act on recidivism
  - A quasi-experimental evaluation of the impact of welfare benefits on prisoner recidivism
NCRP Collects Movement- and Offender-Level Data

- Bureau of Justice Statistics Data Collection
- State prison system movements
  - Admissions
  - Releases
- Prison custody at year end
- Post-confinement community supervision movements (PCCS)
  - Admissions
  - Releases
Key NCRP Data Elements

- **Offender ID #s**
  - Unique Offender ID, State ID, FBI #, SSN

- **Offender characteristics**
  - Name, DOB, Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Education, Veteran Status, Last Known Address

- **Sentence characteristics**
  - County where sentence imposed, Offenses, Sentence Length

- **Admission date and type** — new commitment, revocation

- **Release date and type** — community supervision, full term
States Prison and PCCS Terms Are Integrated

Annual Prison and PCCS Files

1/1/2000

Prison Term

PCCS Term

12/31/2015

Prison Term

PCCS Term

Prison Term

PCCS Term
Alternative Measures of Recidivism
Event- and Offender-Based Recidivism

- Event-Based
  - Most Common Approach Used in Criminal Justice Applications
  - Start with a cohort of prison releasees
  - Observe if and when they return to prison

- Offender-based
  - Observe the individual offender pattern of returning to prison over time
  - Reweight a release cohort to look like a cohort of offenders admitted and released over a period of time -- requires longitudinal data such as the NCRP
Event-Based Recidivism: 2000 release cohort (16 states)

Based on NCRP Term Records from 16 states: AZ, CA, CO, FL, GA, KY, MN, MO, NY, NC, OK, SC, TN, UT, WA, WI
Event- and Offender-Based Recidivism Estimates -- 2000 release cohort (16 states)

Based on NCRP Term Records from 16 states: AZ, CA, CO, FL, GA, KY, MN, MO, NY, NC, OK, SC, TN, UT, WA, WI
Offender-based approach: Few offenders return to prison more than once

Based on NCRP Term Records from 16 states: AZ, CA, CO, FL, GA, KY, MN, MO, NY, NC, OK, SC, TN, UT, WA, WI
Use Event and Offender-Based Recidivism to Answer Different Policy Question

- **Event-based**
  - Focus on the risk posed by members of a release cohort
  - Used to allocate rehabilitation and supervision resources for a release cohort
  - Allocate more resources to the high rather than low risk releasees

- **Offender-based**
  - Focus on persistence/desistance of offenders’ recidivism
  - Leads to better understanding of the trajectory of individual level offending and recidivism and potentially factors that can modify that trajectory
Early Evidence on the Impact of the Affordable Care Act on Recidivism

Sharmini Radakrishnan
Lauren Olsho
Holly Swan
Offender Populations

- About ~600K released from state prisons annually
- High prevalence of health conditions needing ongoing management
  - HIV
  - hepatitis C
  - mental health
  - substance abuse
- Lack of access on release may cause lapses in treatment
- Mental health and substance use disorders in particular are correlated with criminal behavior
Medicaid Basics

- Pre-ACA, mandatory eligibility of Medicaid primarily limited to:
  - low-income individuals & families (with specific income limits set at the state level)
  - only if disabled, elderly, pregnant, or with dependent children

→ relatively few ex-offenders eligible unless their state had expanded eligibility beyond federal minimums
ACA Medicaid Expansion

- Before the ACA Medicaid expansions
  - majority of offenders ineligible for Medicaid
  - few states pursued Medicaid reimbursement
- After ACA Medicaid expansions
  - great majority of offenders now eligible
Analytic Approach

- 33 states included in analysis
- Nearly 1 million prison terms in 2013-2015 analytic file
- Compare short-term trends in recidivism in NCRP data
  - before & after implementation of ACA Medicaid expansion
  - in expansion states vs. non-expansion states
  - difference in differences design
- Validity hinges on there being no other changes/trends correlated with both state participation in ACA expansions and recidivism
Return Rates in Sample

**Non-Expansion States**

**Expansion States**
ACA Expansion Results

- Estimate of ACA impact on recidivism was not statistically significant
Discussion

- ACA Medicaid expansions have not yet had a significant effect on recidivism in expansion states vs non-expansion states
  - May need more years of post-ACA data to detect effect
  - Or maybe expanded eligibility alone is insufficient to impact recidivism

Jeremy Luallen
Motivation

Why should welfare benefits matter?

- Improved economic circumstances → reduced need for criminal behavior

- Scholars argue “public assistance [eligibility] is critical to successful reintegration” (Petersilia, 2003).

The opportunity to test public assistance impact occurred as a result of the application and subsequent removal of a ban on public assistance for drug felons.
Drug Felony Ban

- **Section 115 of the 1996 Welfare Reform Act** (Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act -- PRWORA)
  - Bans food stamps (SNAP) and welfare assistance (TANF) to convicted drug felons
  - Applies to drug felons *convicted after August 22, 1996*
  - However, PRWORA allows for states to opt-out or modify bans.
Drug Felony Ban

- Within 18 months, 4 states had opted-out of the ban entirely ("No Ban")
  - Today that number has grown to 14
- 10 states have not altered their use of the ban at all ("Full Ban")
Drug Felony Ban

- 26 states have modified the ban ("Modified Ban")
  - subject to additional requirements imposed on drug felons such as:
    1. participation in or completion of drug treatment
    2. allowances for less serious drug offenders
    3. allowances for benefits after a probationary period
  - SNAP & TANF not always modified simultaneously
Drug Felony Ban

- These policy changes can be characterized with three types of transitions:
  - Full Ban $\rightarrow$ Modified Ban
  - Modified Ban $\rightarrow$ No Ban
  - Full Ban $\rightarrow$ No Ban

- Estimate 19 impacts of ban changes between 1996 and 2013 across 18 states.

- The remaining states had no ban transitions or there was insufficient data.
### Timelines in Analysis of 18 States

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Methods

- Compare trends in recidivism prior to and after a ban change
- Analyze these changes in trends separately for
  - Drug offenders
  - Nondrug offenders
- Compare differences in impacts – difference in differences design
An illustration: **Full Ban → Partial Ban**

**Weekly Returns: Females**

### Non-Drug Offenders

- **Total Returns to Prison**
- **Weeks to Ban**

### Drug Offenders

- **Total Returns to Prison**
- **Weeks to Ban**
Results

- Restricting benefits has no impact on the rate of returns (recidivism) and therefore the size of drug offender populations in state prisons.

- Results hold for both men and for women.
Summary: Utility of NCRP Administrative Records

- Presentation demonstrated the utility of NCRP with three applications
  - Analysis of offender- and event-based recidivism
  - Potential impact of health policy changes (ACA) on recidivism
  - Potential impact of welfare policy changes on recidivism
- NCRP data collection is highly automated, flexible, and economical
- Every year the NCRP’s observation window gets wider enhancing its utility – currently 2000 – 2015, and even wider for selected states
- Linking NCRP with other administrative records as well as survey data will have a multiplier effect on its utility for program and policy evaluation – a goal BJS is already supporting