

## MENTAL ILLNESS IS NOT A CRIME

While it is true that individuals with serious mental illness are no more likely to commit a crime than the general population, the nature of the illness makes people vulnerable to police contacts during times of crisis. There clearly is a need for meaningful collaboration between the police and DMHAS agencies. In Hartford, this collaboration began in January of 2005 with the implementation of the *Hartford Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)*. CIT supports the DMHAS goal of meeting the service needs for persons who are challenging and whose needs have traditionally not been well met in either the mental health or substance abuse programs.



### Unfortunate Facts

- ✘ 20% of 331 people hospitalized with severe mental disorders reported being arrested or picked up by police in the 4 months prior to hospitalization, most commonly for alcohol, drug or public disorder crimes (Swanson et al, 1999).
- ✘ 7% of all police contacts in U.S. cities of 100,000 or more involve people believed to have mental illness (Deane et al, 1999).

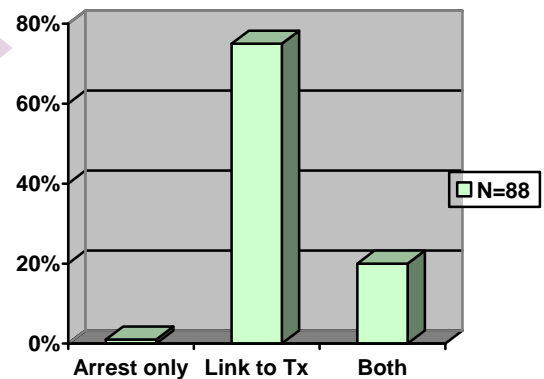
### How the Hartford CIT Works



- **59 Hartford police officers** who were trained by the Connecticut Alliance to Benefit Law Enforcement (CABLE) act as CIT officers and respond to calls which are believed to involve a person with mental illness.
- A Licensed Clinical Social Worker at the DMHAS Capitol Region Mental Health Center (CRMHC) is a **full time CIT clinician and rides along with police, responds to calls, and functions as a liaison** to the police department. He is in constant radio contact with HPD and also responds to the calls involving a person with mental illness.
- CRMHC **Mobile Crisis Team** covers when the CIT clinician is unavailable.
- The CIT clinician also functions as a **faculty member of the Hartford Police Academy**, teaching or coordinating the teaching of mental health issues to new recruits and in the ongoing officer recertification program.
- There are also **CABLE-sponsored trainings** at least annually in Connecticut and nationally for CIT programs.

CIT Clients more likely to be linked to treatment than arrested.

- Hartford CIT responded to **578 calls in the past three years**.
- **No Hartford Police Negotiation Team** calls for persons with mental illness since CIT inception.
- Most seen by the CIT officers/staff **sent to hospital ER for evaluation**.
- CIT clinician assists in **linking people with services** if they are not connected with a service provider.



- ✘ **60% of officers found CIT training helpful;**
- ✘ **29% found it moderately helpful;**
- ✘ **Only 11% found it slightly helpful.**