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## **CJCC REPORTS CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT TO LOCAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. Today the Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, or CJCC, released their Annual Report summarizing key milestones within the local criminal justice system through the end of calendar year 2019. The report underscores the importance of intentional, data-guided policies and practices in justice reform.

Key findings noted in the report include:

- Bookings, individuals booked, and charges all fell roughly 50%;
- General Sessions court cases, rather than municipal and magistrate cases, are now the most frequent reason for jail use;
- Law enforcement's use of diversion and deflection options within the Charleston Dorchester Mental Health Center grew significantly;
- Pretrial outcome analysis demonstrated most defendants release at some point in the pretrial period and when they do:
  - Most stay out of trouble; new arrest rates remain low.
  - Pretrial service reports do a good job of predicting risk of pretrial failure.
  - Financial bond releases have more new arrests than releases on personal recognizance.
  - New arrests happen more often than appearance violations and new arrests happen most often in the first six months of release.
  - Releases that have a new arrest often have more than one in the pretrial period.
- Early case processing efficiencies such as assignment of defense counsel and prosecution as well as the transfer of evidence improved; however, time to disposition remains longer than desired.
- While the number of familiar faces cycling through the jail has reduced, more needs to be done to focus resources on those that most need them to stay out of trouble, arrive at court, and limit returns to jail.
- A comprehensive community engagement strategy in 2019 gathered feedback from over 1,000 community members, identifying community priorities for use in development of the CJCC's next strategic plan.

“By 2019, jail use in Charleston County was markedly different than it was in 2014. Thankfully, we had this foundation in place prior to COVID-19. Moving forward, we will continue to take a collaborative, data-guided approach to improve our local criminal justice system,” stated Stan Gragg, CJCC Chairman and Deputy Chief of the Mount Pleasant Police Department.

Prior to COVID-19, there was a sustained 20% reduction in the local jail population (pretrial and sentenced) from 1,111 in 2014 to 888 in 2019. Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, there have been further declines in the local jail population. As of April 28, 2020, the local jail population was 648, a 42% reduction from 2014.

The CJCC plans to launch its next strategic plan over the summer of 2020 that takes into account the impacts of COVID-19 and all of the community engagement and collaboration to-date. “Together, we can recover from COVID-19, learn from past progress and more strategically address criminal justice system challenges, particularly matters of pretrial justice, racial equity and recidivism”, stated the Honorable Ellen Steinberg, CJCC Vice-Chairwoman and Charleston County Magistrate.

To read the complete 2019 Annual Report or for more information about the CJCC, visit [cjcc.charlestoncounty.org](http://cjcc.charlestoncounty.org).

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### ***About the CJCC***

*The CJCC is a collaboration of elected and senior officials, law enforcement leaders, judicial and court leadership, behavioral health professionals, victim and legal advocates, and various community leaders working in service of the Charleston community. The mission of the CJCC is to assist in making sustainable, data-driven improvements to Charleston County’s criminal justice system and thereby improve public safety and community well-being. The CJCC is currently funded by a Safety + Justice Challenge grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. For more information, visit [www.cjcc.charlestoncounty.org](http://www.cjcc.charlestoncounty.org).*

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