

Numbers Now.....

Criminal Justice in Oklahoma

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OCJS Adds Program and Welcomes New Staff to Unit

The Oklahoma Violent Death Reporting System (OK-VDRS), a federally-funded surveillance project, collects data on all unnatural deaths in the state. Oklahoma is one of 18 states currently participating in the program, which is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Oklahoma State Department of Health collaborates with the Office of Chief Medical Examiner, the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, and the Oklahoma Child Death Review Board; OSBI contributes law enforcement data to the project. The mission of the project is congruent with the overall mission and goals of OCJS.

Jennifer Powell joined the unit in November. She serves as the Liaison for the OK-VDRS project. She is responsible for collecting law enforcement data for all unnatural deaths that occur in the state. Jennifer graduated from the University of Central Oklahoma with a bachelor's degree in business administration. She previously worked at the Department of Human Services.

OSBI Creates New Forensic Science Research Group

Forensic science is an ever-changing field, with new analytical techniques being introduced every year. Before any of these new techniques can be applied to forensic casework, each must be scientifically validated in order to demonstrate that they are, in fact, appropriate for the analysis of evidence. For this reason, the OSBI lab has established a research committee, which has two primary purposes. One is to contribute to the forensic science community through the development of novel analytical techniques and the subsequent publishing of their work in the scientific literature. Secondly, the committee coordinates efforts with local universities to provide research opportunities for students of forensic science and related fields. Through this partnership, the students gain practical research experience, and the Bureau benefits through the enhancement of their analytical capabilities.

Robert Weston

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***National Teen Dating Violence Awareness &
Prevention Month***

Hot Topic: Justice Reinvestment in Oklahoma

Early last year Governor Fallin, along with other state lawmakers, expressed interest in the justice reinvestment strategy, a data-driven approach to contain corrections spending and reinvest a portion of the savings generated in strategies that will increase public safety. In May 2011, Oklahoma was selected by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and the Pew Center on the States (Pew) to receive assistance in analyzing current public safety spending. OSBI, along with other state agencies, met with and provided data to the Council for State Governments Justice Center (CSG Justice Center), the group responsible for conducting the research.

In January 2012 the Council published and presented a report of its findings, including challenges and strategies. CSG Justice Center identified three challenges: a high rate of violent crime resulting in public safety resources being stretched to their limits, inadequate supervision and treatment of offenders, and a growing prison population. To overcome the identified challenges, the Council recommended several key strategies. First, they recommended that Oklahoma fight crime and enhance public safety by increasing resources to local law enforcement communities, funding additional community-based psychiatric crisis stabilization beds throughout the state, and allocating additional funding to the DA's offices for the purpose of enhancing victim services and securing more convictions. Second, the group recommended that Oklahoma strengthen supervision efforts through requiring that every prison sentence include a period of post-release supervision, conducting presentence risk assessments at the jail level, and improving treatment for high-risk/high-need offenders. Finally, CSG Justice Center recommended that Oklahoma implement policy changes to contain prison costs; proposed solutions included providing a graduated approach to sentencing people convicted of drug offenses, requiring people convicted of the most serious and violent offenses to serve 85 percent of their sentence in prison before they can start banking good behavior credits, and permitting longer period after conviction for judges to modify sentences.

For more information, please visit <http://justicereinvestment.org/states/oklahoma/pubmaps-ok>

Information adapted from Council of State Governments Justice Center, Justice Reinvestment in Oklahoma: Analysis and Policy Framework (New York: Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2012).

Teen Dating Violence: Warning Signs

- ∞ Checking your cell phone or e-mail without permission
- ∞ Constantly putting you down
- ∞ Extreme jealousy or insecurity
- ∞ Explosive temper
- ∞ Isolating you from family and friends
- ∞ Making false accusations
- ∞ Mood swings
- ∞ Physically assault
- ∞ Possessiveness
- ∞ Telling you what to do

SIBRS Tool Available Online

A new data analysis tool was recently added to the SAC link on the OSBI Website. The State Incident-Based Reporting System (SIBRS) tool provides users online access to aggregate crime data for participating jurisdictions. SAC staff created the tool using data provided by the Field Services Unit. Originally designed to replace summary reporting, SIBRS enables participating agencies the ability to contribute detailed crime data to the records management system, which is then reported directly to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Compared to traditional summary reporting, SIBRS data provide a more complete picture of crime in Oklahoma communities.

Baker's Dozen

Angie Baker, SAC Director

February is National Teen Dating Violence and Prevention Month. Dating violence can be verbal, emotional, sexual, and/or physical. Most teens are able to recognize signs of a physically violent relationship; however, other types of abuse may be less obvious. Unless otherwise stated, the following statistics can be found on www.loveisrespect.org, which is sponsored in part by the US Department of Justice, Office of Violence against women.

1. Nationwide, nearly 1.5 million high school students experience physical abuse from a dating partner in a single year;
2. One in three adolescents in the US is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional, or verbal abuse from a dating partner;
3. Ten percent of high school students have been purposefully hit, slapped, or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend;
4. One-quarter of high school girls have been victims of physical or sexual abuse;
5. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 70% of girls and 52% of boys who are victims of dating violence report an injury from a violent relationship; of those, 8% of boys and 9% of girls have been to the emergency room for an injury received from a dating partner;
6. Violent behavior typically begins between the ages of 12 and 18;
7. Violent relationships in adolescence have serious ramifications for victims including an increased risk of developing eating disorders, risky sexual behavior, substance abuse problems, and further domestic violence;
8. Only 33% of teens who were in a violent relationship ever told anyone about the abuse;
9. Eighty-one percent of parents believe dating violence is not an issue or admit they don't know if it's an issue;
10. Lack of awareness and fear are two of the most significant barriers stopping young victims of abuse from seeking help;
11. Teens stay in abusive relationships for many reasons including fear, believing the behavior is normal, fear of being rejected by peers, embarrassment, low self-esteem, need for love;
12. Social networking sites provide abusers with another avenue to harass their victims;
13. For more information, please visit www.loveisrespect.org

Mission

To collect, analyze, and disseminate criminal justice research to educate and assist law enforcement and the public in Oklahoma.