

# Statewide Harm Reduction Coalition (SHaRC)

*A Case Against Jail Expansion*  
Second Edition - January, 2005

Developed by SHaRC  
in collaboration with

Harvard Progressive Advocates Group (HPAG)

## 1. SHaRC is building a social justice movement that is dedicated to working with individuals and communities:

- To reduce drug and drug-related harms, through means such as: syringe access, healthcare for HIV and hepatitis, overdose prevention; and,
- For drug law changes, moving away from punitive criminal justice policies, in support of non-coercive, community-based public health models

## 2. We are individuals, groups, organizations and agencies against all jail/prison expansion!

For more information about SHaRC  
Call: 413.348.8234 or, go to: [www.stopchicopeejail.org](http://www.stopchicopeejail.org)

## Statewide Harm Reduction Coalition (SHaRC): Do we REALLY need new jails?

- Currently 139 women are incarcerated at Hampden County Correctional Center (HCCC) in Ludlow
- 51 women at HCCC are awaiting trial, having not yet been convicted of a crime (pre-trial)
- Of the 88 women who are sentenced, approximately 78% are sentenced for nonviolent offenses

Because of the nonviolent nature of these offenses, 49.9% of these women are eligible for alternative sentencing / intermediate sanctions (*Susan Curran, MA DYS and Kate DeCou, Hampden County Sheriff's Dept. & others, 1998*)

### **According to the Massachusetts Public Health Association:**

- 85% of the incarcerated women at HCCC are mothers with an average of 3 children under 12 years
- 90% are addicted to substances
- 80% of their crimes are related to their addictions
- One-third have no stable home to return to upon their release
- Two-thirds have not worked for more than three years in their lives
- 60% demonstrate moderate, but serious, mental health issues such as PTSD, depression, anxiety, and eating disorders
- 37% have made one or more efforts to commit suicide

**\*\*If diversions were available for all women who are pre-trial, and intermediate sanction options existed for all eligible women (49.9%), only 44 women would need to be incarcerated in a locked down county facility such as HCCC. This hardly justifies the construction and operation of a 240-250 bed jail for women.**

## Statewide Harm Reduction Coalition

### ***Economic Impact~***

- The total cost for the new women's jail is **\$27 million** (including \$19,342,392 for construction as well as monies already provided to Chicopee, such as \$1.25 million in mitigation funds; \$1.6 million for acquisition of land; and \$1.5 million for infrastructure improvement)
- The \$27 million will be borrowed from a general obligation bond which all Massachusetts taxpayers will re-pay, with interest
- It will take \$1.2 million to service the bond debt (AFSC)
- HCSD officials estimate that the new jail will incur \$11-12 million annually in operating costs



The  
proposed  
Chicopee  
women's jail

- Based on these figures, it will cost **\$51,000 – 58,000 per year** to incarcerate women at the new facility, excluding initial capital expenditure costs, cost overruns, inflationary costs, increased payroll expenses, etc.

*This is significantly higher than the MA average annual cost of \$36,131 – \$41,000 per person (as calculated by the MA DOC and House Representative Pat Jehlen's office, respectively)*

- The total cost of arresting, trying, and incarcerating a woman for one year averages \$65,000, including: costs incurred from time of arrest to imprisonment; operating costs of the prison; capital costs for the prison; and a 1 in 10 chance of paying for non-kin foster care at a cost of \$25,000 per year (*Real Cost of Prison Project Fact Sheet, 2003*)

**In August 2004, Governor Romney approved a second new jail for Western MA, in Greenfield. The new jail will replace the current Franklin County jail and will cost \$32 million to build. The 288 bed county jail for men will purportedly be used to house a large number of federal immigration detainees.**

***\*\*These millions of dollars could be reallocated to our communities to restore services that have recently been reduced or eliminated; and put toward the development and implementation of intermediate sanctions as recommended by the MA Sentencing Commission.***

## NO NEW JAILS

### ***Treatment of addictions as an alternative to incarceration~***

According to The Correctional Association, the RAND Corporation's Drug Policy Research Center found that:

- Drug treatment is 15 times more effective at reducing serious crime than incarceration
- Mandatory minimums are not justifiable on the basis of cost-effectiveness at reducing drug consumption or crime
- Drug treatment programs increase an individual's ability to hold a job
- For every dollar allocated for drug treatment, taxpayers save \$7.41 in social costs (a 700% return on investment)



*Because of the MA budget crisis, 36,000 of our state's poorest residents lost health coverage on April 1, 2003. Before the budget cuts took effect, the state subsidized 997 detox beds at detox facilities throughout MA, which last fiscal year helped 45,000 people get sober. Now only 420 beds remain. According to Elizabeth Funk, president of the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Corporations of MA, we can expect to see an increase in deaths, arrests, domestic violence, child abuse, and emergency room visits (The Boston Globe, April 28, 2003).*

- The cost for comprehensive outpatient or inpatient residential treatment in Springfield could achieve significant savings:
  - Treatment at an innovative outpatient detox program in Springfield is \$500 per cycle, which includes 10 medical visits, medications, screenings, and counseling
  - Treatment at one residential program in Springfield costs \$364.40 per person per day. Even if someone were to enter this program and stay for 30 days, the total cost would be: \$10,932. Currently folks stay no more than 7 days.
- Many other states are achieving significant cost savings (\$18,000-30,000 per person per year) by using mandatory drug treatment instead of incarceration (MA hasn't conducted a cost/benefit analysis to assess potential savings)

***\*\*Massachusetts now provides only \$37 million for substance abuse services. Meanwhile, the DOC and HCSD plan to spend \$27 million on a new jail facility—monies that will be subsidized one way or another by all Massachusetts residents and taxpayers.***

## Statewide Harm Reduction Coalition

### Education~

- In the year 2004, the Massachusetts Department of Corrections budget surpassed the Massachusetts higher education budget: \$816 million for education v. \$830 million for the DoC
- Local cities and towns have slashed education budgets—for example, Springfield has laid off 126 teachers while Chicopee is planning to reduce their spending by approximately \$5 million
- Children of incarcerated parents are at increased risk of truancy and poor scholastic performance (*National Institute of Justice*)

### Child Welfare~

- Over 500 children have been needlessly taken away from their mothers who are incarcerated at the HCCC, and given over to the poorly financed foster care system
- The Federal Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1996 requires permanent placement for children who spend 15 out of 22 months in foster care. Therefore an incarcerated mother can literally lose her child in the foster care system (*Mothers in Prison/Children In Crisis, Documentary site*)
- Although 60% of imprisoned mothers maintain weekly contact with their children, only 46% report a personal visit with their children since their incarceration (*Bureau of Justice Statistics, Incarcerated Parents and Their Children*)
- One in five children of incarcerated mothers witnessed their mothers' arrest (*Child Welfare League of America, Children with Incarcerated Parents: An Overview of the Statistics*)
- Children of incarcerated parents are not treated as victims of trauma (*National Institute of Justice, Marilyn Moses*)
- Children of incarcerated parents are at increased risk of anxiety, depression, aggression, and attention disorders (*National Institute of Justice*)
- Local children experience great risks due to criminal justice policies, as reported by Susan Curran (of Springfield DYS)

**Kate DeCou (Asst Deputy Superintendent of HCCC), and others in a study commissioned by the National Institute of Corrections reported:**

"Time periods for adoption of children in MA DSS were shortened in the early 1990's. When women are incarcerated, the cost to the taxpayer is not only the criminal justice cost, but also expenditures for foster care for their children. When this placement of children further results in permanent adoption, families are broken forever.

Many times this financial and social cost can be minimized by maintaining female offenders in the community to serve consequences for their illegal activities and at the same time sustaining the family unit intact."



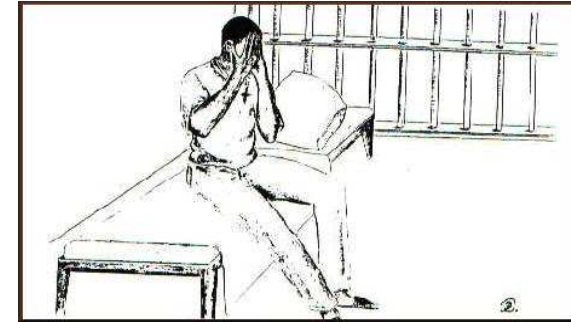
## NO NEW JAILS

### Social Costs~

- The Sentencing Commission on Sentencing Practices in MA indicates that mandatory minimum policies for drug offenses has a disproportionate effect on offenders who are persons of color

*For example, 81% of persons convicted of mandatory minimums in FY99 were persons of color while 19% were White; Hispanics were committed to state prisons for drug offenses at a rate 81 times higher than non-Hispanic Whites*

- The city of Springfield has a slight majority of persons of color, while Hampden County has one of the highest percentages of Hispanic persons in MA, leading to a disproportionate negative impact of current sentencing practices on our community and the children in our community



### Employment~

- Incarceration creates additional barriers for marketability in the labor force: mothers who have a felony conviction, but were sentenced to probation, fare better in the job market than those who served a prison sentence (*Bruce Western and Catherine Beckett, American J Sociology, 1999*)
- Women convicted of a drug felony acquire a negative CORI, which prevents them from receiving housing subsidies and from receiving federal student loans for higher education
- A negative CORI limits employment since it prohibits being hired by social, health and human service agencies—and, since more women than men apply for and work in social and human services, they are disproportionately affected by these policies and face added burdens when trying to find employment
- Although 150 new jobs would be created at the Chicopee facility, as many or more jobs could be created at new alternative-to-incarceration sites/programs (without the administrative overhead associated with the DOC)
- Of the 150 new jobs, it's likely that most will not be local hires (reflecting national trends)

## Statewide Harm Reduction Coalition

### Public Opinion~

- Over 1600 people from Western MA have signed a petition indicating their opposition to the construction of the Chicopee women's jail
- 145 people have been surveyed about the new jail and an overwhelming majority prefers intermediate sanctions over new jail construction
- After the Governor announced in August '04 that the Chicopee jail construction was going forward, SHaRC sent 1500 signatures to his office urging him to spend dollars on alternatives to incarceration, not jails

### Environmental Impact~

- George Atwater willed the marshy, forested area known as "Indian Look-out" to the inhabitants of Chicopee and Springfield to be left in perpetuity. He intended the land to remain protected, undeveloped and reserved for public space. However, over the years the government has circumvented the deed and now ALL that remains has been set aside for the construction of the new women's jail (MASSPIRG)

### Public Safety~

- What makes a community truly safe? Building vital and healthy communities, not building more jails.



**\*\*Many states currently experiencing fiscal crises are reducing DOC costs. Massachusetts is out of step with this common sense approach.**

**Lawmakers in no fewer than 24 states have recommended or implemented sentencing reforms, including early release, in order to use the savings to address their budget crises. For example, Governor Kulongoski of Oregon, along with the Oregon DOC, have declared a moratorium on new jail construction through fiscal year 2005. This is estimated to save \$38 million in Oregon's general fund – the amount that would have been spent on construction debt payments.**

**In contrast, Massachusetts moves forward with its plan to build a new women's jail, regardless of local public opinion, regardless of the budget crisis, regardless of far less expensive, far more effective alternative sanction options.**

I am the woman  
offering two flowers  
whose roots are twin

Justice and Hope  
Hope and Justice

Let us begin.

-Alice Walker



[www.stopchicopeejail.org](http://www.stopchicopeejail.org)

**SHaRC includes:** Arise, Out Now, AFSC, Paloma House, Western MA A.N.S.W.E.R., Prison Book Project, Holyoke Girls Inc., Tom Mooney Local Socialist Party USA, STEPServices, Stonewall Center/UMASS, Citizens for Participation in Political Action, Community Church of Boston, Root 9 Collective, Center for Popular Economics, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Drug Policy Forum of MA, Freedom Center, Connecticut Valley Green-Rainbow Party, UAW Local 2322, Prison Book Program

**No New Jails**

Call 413.348.8234 to help