

# Outcomes of a Law Enforcement/Behavioral Health Approach to Combat Opioid Misuse

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July 18, 2022, MAPIC



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- **Acknowledgement**: The authors thank the Tucson Police Department and CODAC Health, Recovery & Wellness for their contributions to the evaluation of the Deflection Program. We also thank the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) and Arnold Ventures for their generous support, without which this project would not have been possible. The collection of the data was supported by SAMHSA (H79TI081559) and by Arnold Ventures. The data analysis and creation of this poster was supported by Arnold Ventures.
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# Opioid Epidemic

- The most fatal drug crisis in U.S. history (National Safety Council, 2018)
- According to the CDC, in April 2021, drug overdose deaths in the U.S. exceeded 100,000 for the prior 12-month period. This is a 28.5% increase from the preceding 12-month period. ([https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs\\_press\\_releases/2021/20211117.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs_press_releases/2021/20211117.htm))
- Arizona is among the states with the highest and fastest increasing rates of primary treatment admissions for heroin and opioids per capita (TEDS) and experienced a 32% increase in reported drug overdose deaths between January of 2020 and January 2021 (CDC, 2022).
- Pima County continues to experience increasing rates of opioid misuse and overdose with 498 drug overdose deaths in 2021 (Pima County Health Department, 2022). This is a 12% increase from 2020 and a 48% increase from 2019.
  - 71% of these drug overdose deaths involved an opiate compound with fentanyl-related deaths having increased 133% from 2019 to 2020.

# The Deflection Program Overview:

**Goal 1:**

**Enhance and Expand Access to Medication-assisted Treatment (MAT)**

**Goal 2:**

**Improve well-being, decrease opioid misuse and related risk behavior**



# Overview of Research Design (study is ongoing)

## **Outputs:**

1. Patrol officers surveyed about deflection and substance-related offense incidents.
2. Deflections reported in TPD's incident tracking system supplemented with data collected in the officer survey as well as CODAC's member tracking system.
3. Outreach co-responders surveyed about outreach activities

## **Outcomes:**

1. Deflected individuals invited to participate in a longitudinal study with survey data collected via researcher-led interviews at point of deflection and 3 and 6 months later.

# Goal 1: Enhancing and Expanding Access to MAT

## Results of Deflection Incidents

### TPD Deflection Program – 1<sup>st</sup> 35 months (Nov 1 2018 - Sept 30, 2021)

	Interactions involving encouragement to engage in treatment
Deflections	1,969
Outreach	853*
"Angel" Program	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,884</b>

42% Officer transported (or called for transport of) individual immediately to treatment provider.

22% Individuals agreed to seek treatment, but wanted to do so on their own.

2% Deflection accepted, but individual arrested or not eligible for deflection

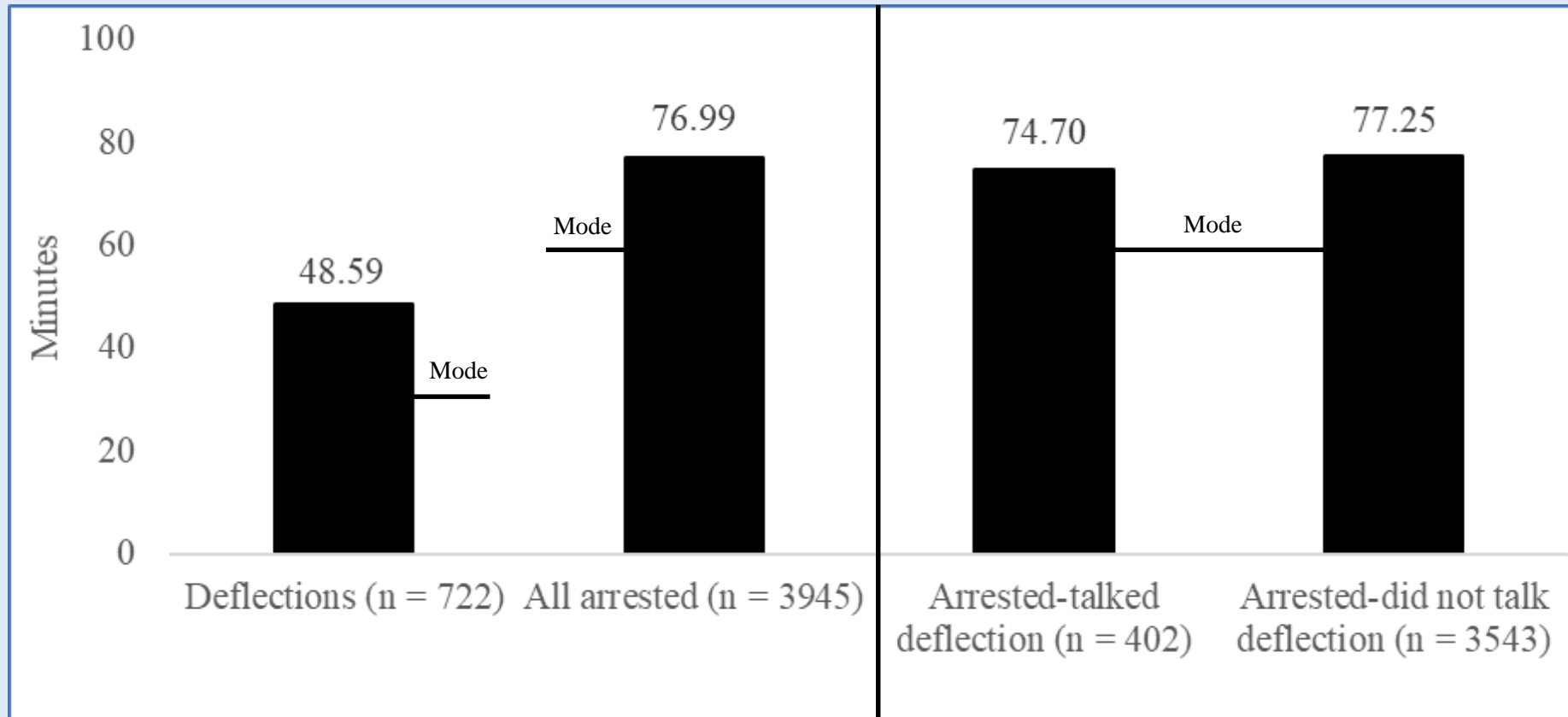
1% Deflection accepted, but result unknown

2% Officer transported individual to hospital or crisis response center

30% Individual did not agree to deflection to treatment

# Goal 1: Enhancing and Expanding Access to MAT

## Time Duration of Deflection and Arrest Incidents Related to Substance-related Charges (data from first 18 months of study)



Encouraging individuals to consider substance misuse treatment does *not* present a time burden to officers.

# Goal 1: Enhancing and Expanding Access to MAT

## Treatment at CODAC

As of Sept 30, 2021, of the **992** deflected individuals transported to CODAC (86% of those deflected by patrol or outreach):

- **668 (67%)** received services from CODAC with **410** receiving more than one type of service, such as case management, medical management or service; lab, radiology, and medical imaging; health promotion; and family support.
- **646 (65%)** completed a clinical intake assessment.
- **413 (42%)** engaged in some kind of substance abuse treatment, including medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD), at CODAC.
- **165 (17%)** received MOUD from CODAC.



# Goal 1: Enhancing and Expanding Access to MAT Recovery Support Services

In coordination with TPD Substance Use Resource Team (SURT) officers, the co-responding Outreach & Engagement Specialists provide recovery support services, such as peer support, re-engagement encouragement/support, and case management.

- **1,574** recorded attempts to provide recovery support services as of Sept 30<sup>th</sup> 2021.
- **1,055 (67%)** of these attempts resulted in the provision of at least one recovery support service.
- **2,599** recovery support services have been provided.

## Goal 2: Improving Well-Being, Reducing Opioid Misuse

In this section we review the impacts of TPD's Deflection Program on various outcomes of interest. The information used to assess these impacts is gathered from people who have been deflected.

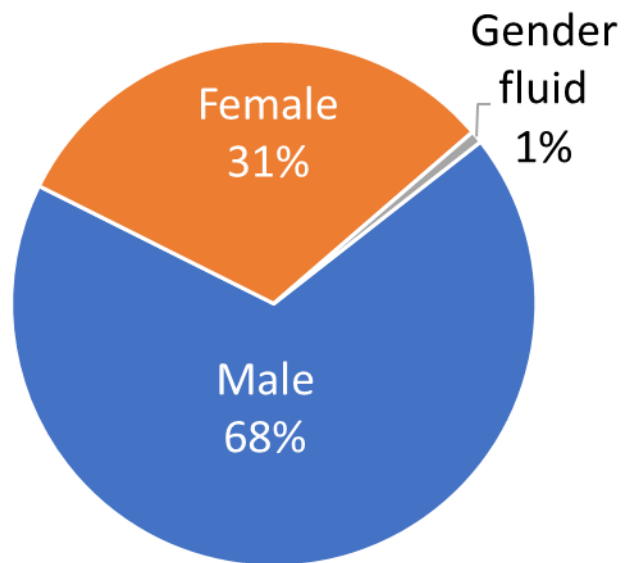
# Goal 2: Improving Well-Being, Reducing Opioid Misuse

## Program Participants

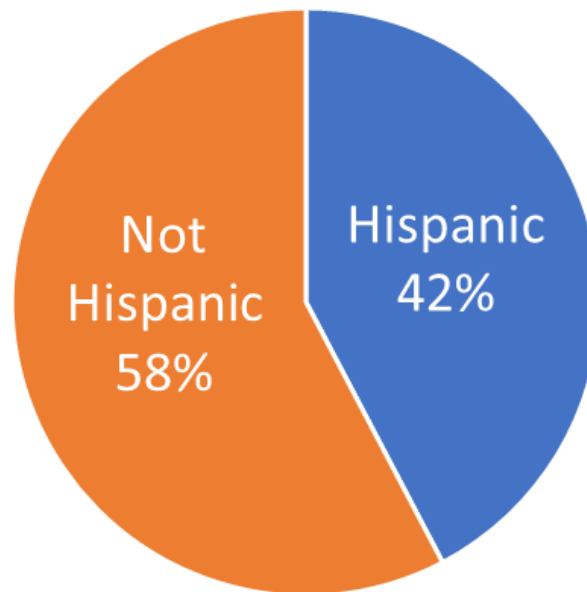
Demographics at Baseline – N = 133

Age: 18 to 59, mean = 33.5

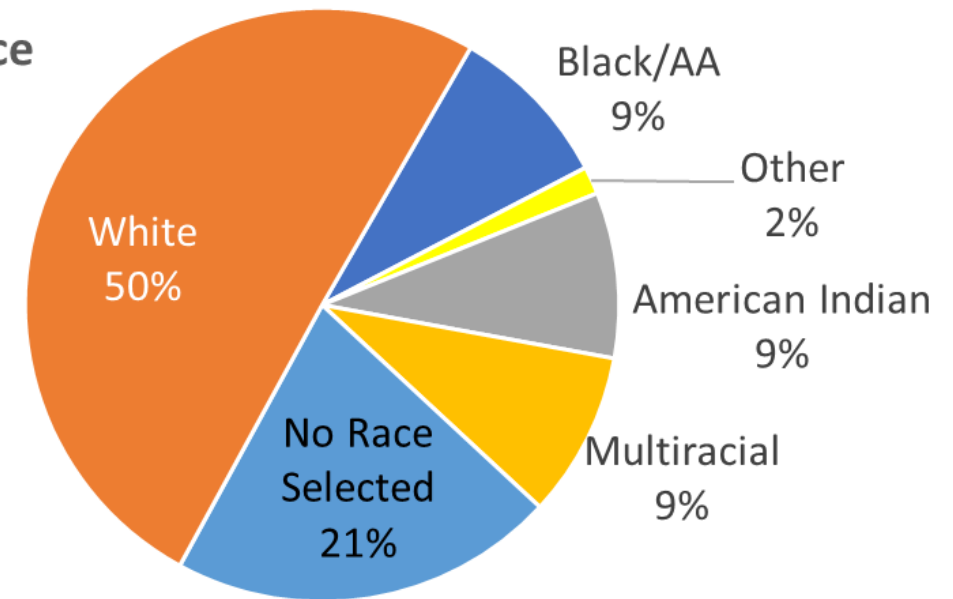
### Gender



### Ethnicity

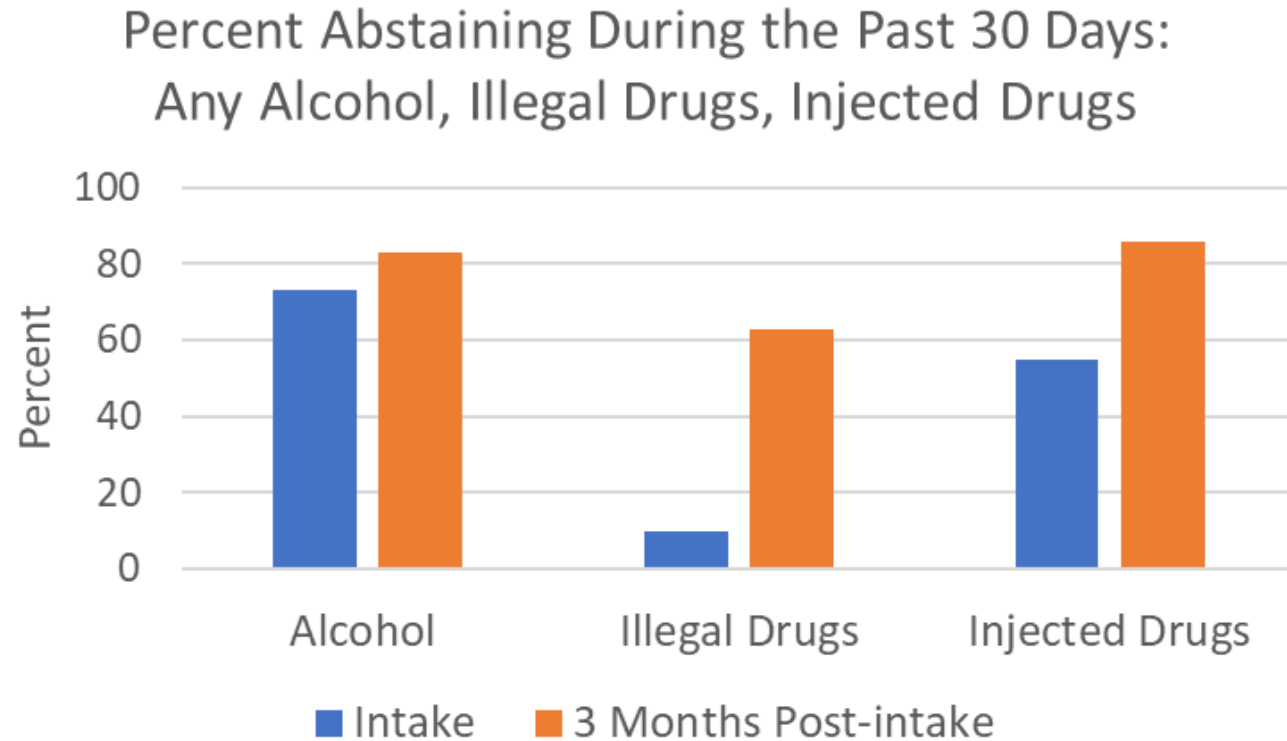


### Race



# Goal 2: Improving Well-Being, Reducing Opioid Misuse

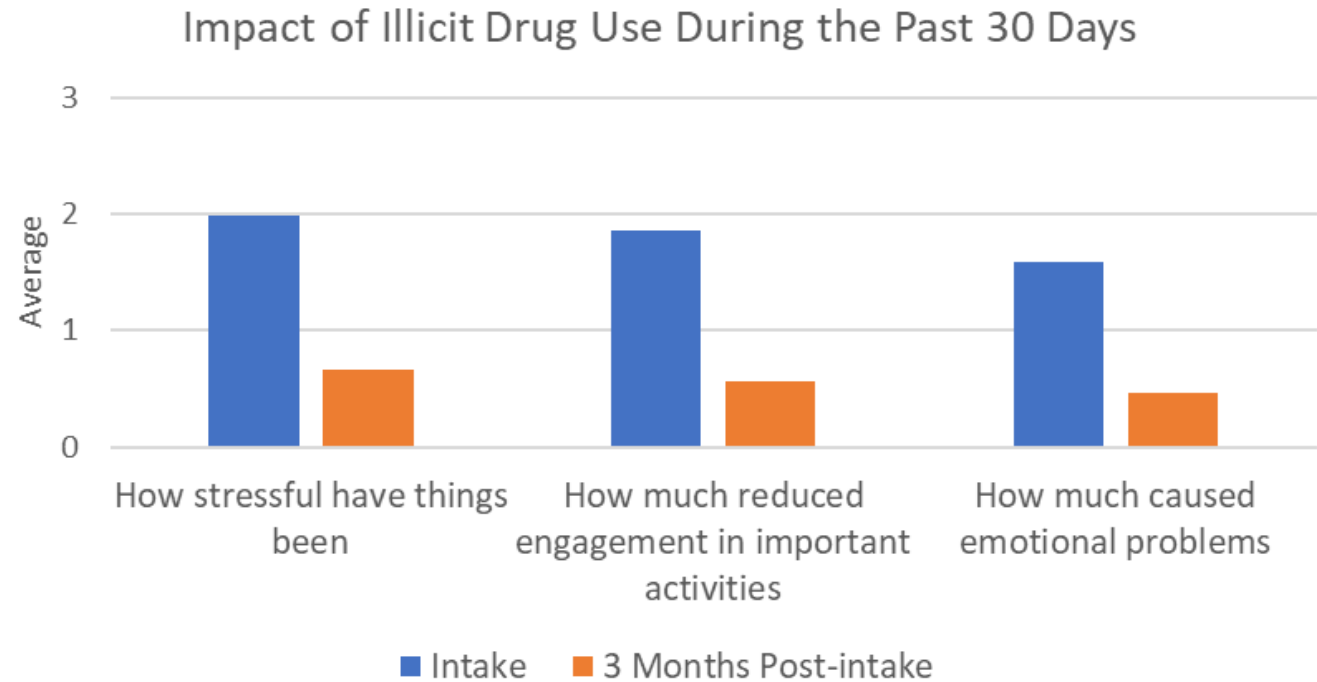
## Abstinence (N = 71)



- Proportion of participants who abstained from recent alcohol use did not change from intake to 3 months post-intake (73% to 83%).
- Proportions of participants who abstained from recent use of illegal drugs and from recent use of injection drugs increased from intake to 3 months post-intake, 10% to 63% and 55% to 86%, respectively.

# Goal 2: Improving Well-Being, Reducing Opioid Misuse

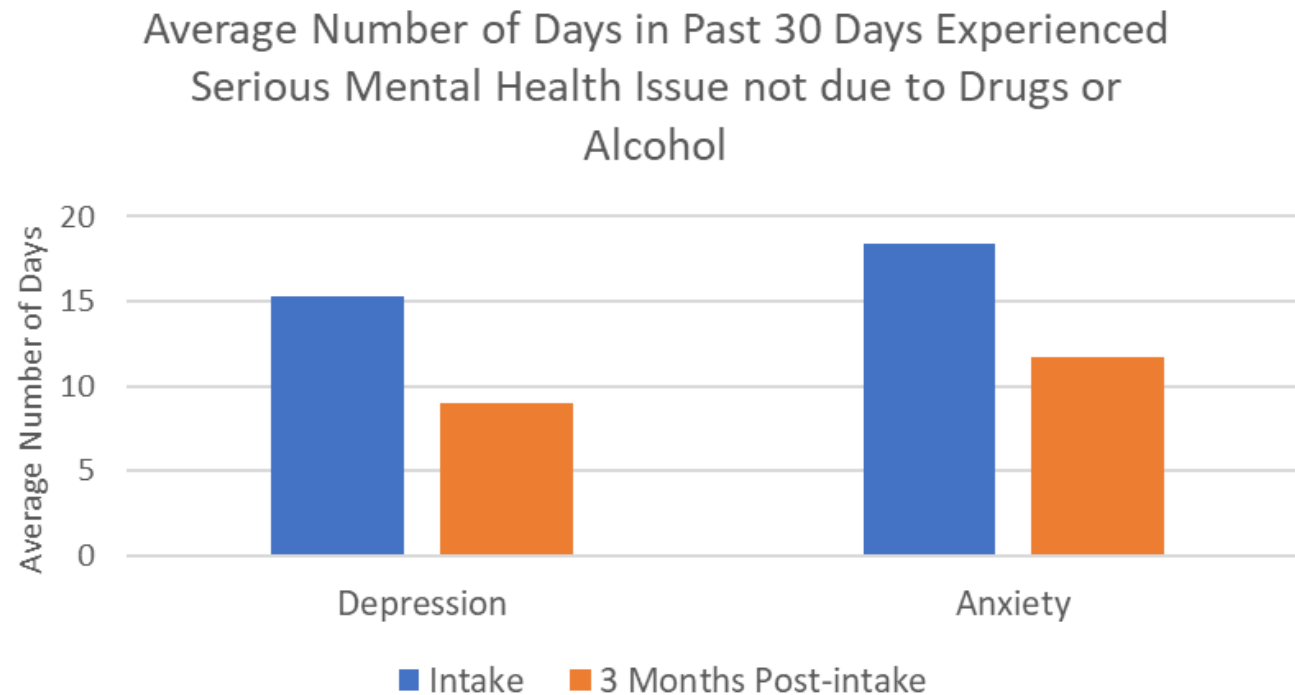
## Well-being (N = 68)



- 3 = extremely, 2 = considerably, 1 = somewhat, 0 = not at all
- On average, participants perceived a lessening of the negative impact of drug misuse on their well-being

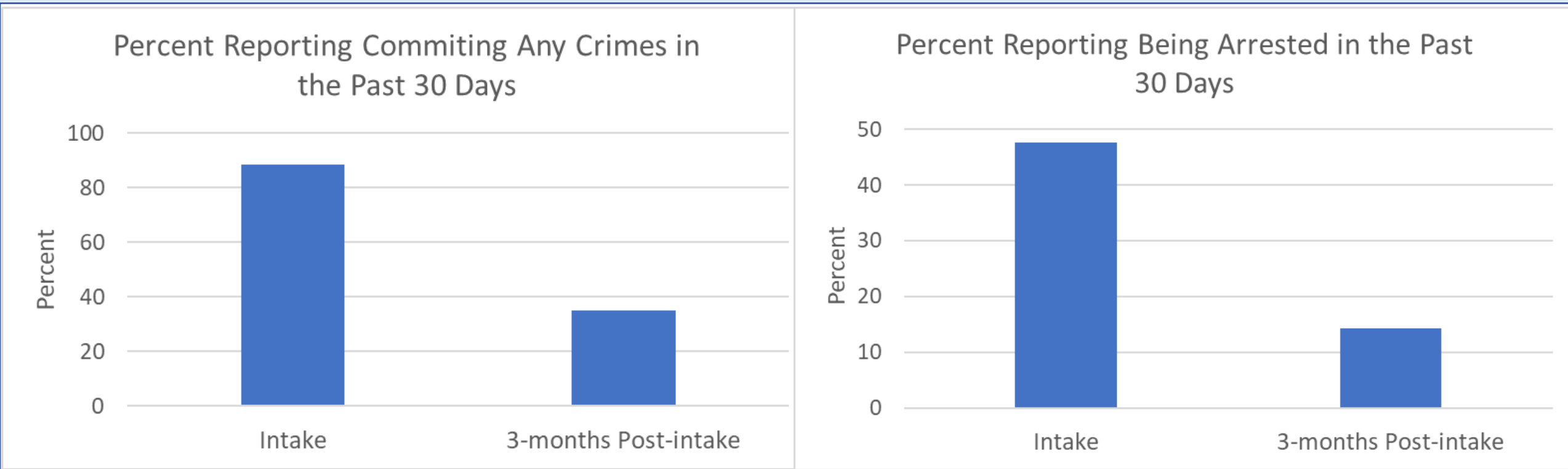
# Goal 2: Improving Well-Being, Reducing Opioid Misuse

## Mental Health (N = 69)



- The average number of recent days that participants experienced serious depression, not due to the use of drugs or alcohol, decreased on average from 15 days at intake to 9 days at 3 months post-intake.
- The average number of recent days that participants experienced serious anxiety, not due to alcohol or drugs, decreased on average from 18 days at intake to 12 days at 3 months post-intake.

# Goal 2: Improving Well-Being, Reducing Opioid Misuse Recidivism & Justice System Involvement (N = 63)



- The proportion of participants who reported committing any crimes during the past 30 days decreased from 88% at intake to 35% at 3 months post-intake.
- The proportion of participants who reported having been arrested during the past 30 days decreased from 48% at intake to 14% at 3 months post-intake.

# Discussion

- Overall TPD's Deflection Program has been successful in providing individuals with substance use issues enhanced opportunities to engage in treatment.
- In 35 months, thousands of individuals have been presented with a law enforcement provided brief intervention and referral to substance use treatment with many receiving healthcare and substance abuse treatment as a result.
- Initial findings indicate that the Deflection Program appears to have been substantially impactful in terms of reducing drug misuse and criminal activity while improving mental health among deflected individuals.



# Discussion

## Facilitators of the Deflection Program:

- Active committed collaboration between law enforcement, behavioral health providers, and researchers
- Ongoing process and outcome evaluations that inform program improvement paired with partner responsiveness to identified barriers to implementing the brief intervention as well as to treatment engagement
- Support of City and County leadership
- Community support
- Training related to affirming and respectful approaching to engaging with people who have substance use issues, such as motivational interviewing and trauma-informed practices, tailored to law enforcement

# Discussion

Key areas for future research:

- Economic analysis
- Attitudes and decision-making process of officers related to deflection programs
- Peer-response models – process and impact

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