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## HPIO brief explores connection between criminal justice and health

**(COLUMBUS, Ohio)** – A new policy brief from the Health Policy Institute of Ohio summarizes research on the complex connections between criminal justice and health.

According to the brief, titled [Connections between Criminal Justice and Health](#), “The research evidence is clear that poor mental health and addiction are risk factors for criminal justice involvement and that incarceration is detrimental to health.”

The brief highlights the many factors that impact both criminal justice and health outcomes, finding that:

- **There is a two-way relationship between criminal justice and health.** Mental health and addiction challenges can lead to arrest and incarceration, and incarceration contributes to poor behavioral and physical health for many Ohioans.
- **Racism and community conditions contribute to criminal justice involvement and poor health.** Racist and discriminatory policies and practices and community conditions, such as poverty, housing instability and exposure to trauma, lead to increased criminal justice involvement and drive poor health outcomes.
- **Improvement is possible.** There are evidence-informed policy solutions to combat the drivers of criminal justice involvement and poor health outcomes.

“Policymakers and other leaders have evidence-informed policy options that can prevent criminal justice involvement, increase community safety and improve health and well-being,” said Hailey Akah, Senior Health Policy Analyst at HPIO and primary author of the brief.

The brief includes 15 specific evidence-informed policy options focused on:

- **Supporting mental well-being and improving crisis response for people at higher risk of criminal justice involvement**
- **Reducing the number of people incarcerated in Ohio**
- **Improving health for people who are currently or formerly incarcerated**
- **Improving community conditions for people who are at higher risk of criminal justice involvement**

For questions about the brief, or if you would like to talk with the authors of the report, please call or text Nick Wiselogel at 614.530.9918 or email [nwiselogel@hpio.net](mailto:nwiselogel@hpio.net).