



Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

Issue 15-115

April 15, 2015

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Processing and Treatment of Mentally Ill Persons in the Criminal Justice System.

By KiDeuk Kim, et al. Urban Institute. Mar. 2015. 58 p.

<http://www.urban.org/research/publication/processing-and-treatment-mentally-ill-persons-criminal-justice-system>

"Mentally ill offenders possess a unique set of circumstances and needs. However, all too often, they cycle through the criminal justice system without appropriate care to address their mental health. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, individuals with mental health needs make up a large proportion of the US correctional population. An estimated 56% of state prisoners, 45% of federal prisoners, and 64% of jail inmates have a mental health problem. These individuals often receive inadequate care, with only one in three state prisoners and one in six jail inmates having received mental health treatment since their admission.... This report focuses on the societal and economic costs of

holding mentally ill offenders in jails and prisons.... Further, it discusses several promising criminal justice interventions and policies for mentally ill offenders.”

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

U.S. Smartphone Use in 2015. By Aaron Smith. Pew Research Center. Apr. 1, 2015. 60 p.
http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2015/03/PI_Smartphones_0401151.pdf

“Today nearly two-thirds of Americans own a smartphone, and 19% of Americans rely to some degree on a smartphone for accessing online services and information and for staying connected to the world around them—either because they lack broadband at home, or because they have few options for online access other than their cell phone. Indeed, 7% of Americans own a smartphone but have neither traditional broadband service at home, nor easily available alternatives for going online other than their cell phone. This report documents the unique circumstances of this ‘smartphone-dependent’ population, and also explores the ways in which smartphone owners use their phones to engage in a wide range of activities.”

EDUCATION

Contribution of Two-Year Institutions to Four-Year Completions. National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Spring 2015. 3 p.
<http://nscresearchcenter.org/snapshotreport-twoyearcontributionfouryearcompletions17/>

Sixty-two percent of the California students awarded a Bachelor's degree in 2013 had attended community college during the previous ten years compared to 46% nationwide. Although 21% of these students attended only a single term at community college, 65% spent three or more terms, indicating that community college was a significant contribution to their education.

“Differing Cognitive Trajectories of Mexican American Toddlers: The Role of Class, Nativity and Maternal Practices.” By Bruce Fuller, et al. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 37, no. 2 (Feb. 20, 2015) pp. 139-169.
<http://hjb.sagepub.com/content/early/2015/01/06/0739986315571113.full.pdf>
(Available at the California State Library)

A study of language development in 4,550 white and Latino children at nine months of age and later at 2 to 3 years of age finds that there is a gap in advancement at the 2 to 3 year mark. Latino children were found to be lagging behind their white peers by 3 to 4 months. “Just one fifth of Mexican American toddlers kept pace with the cognitive growth of White toddlers at or above their mean rate of growth through 24 months of age, matched on their 9-month cognitive status.... Growth was stronger among toddlers whose family did not live beneath the poverty line, and whose mothers reported higher school attainment, more frequent learning activities, and exhibited steadier praise during a videotaped interaction task.”

ENERGY

Direct Measurements Show Decreasing Methane Emissions from Natural Gas Local Distribution Systems In the United States. By Brian K. Lamb, et al. *Environmental Science & Technology*. Mar. 31, 2015. 9 p.

<http://pubs.acs.org/doi/pdf/10.1021/es505116p>

This article reports on a national sampling program to measure methane emissions from 13 urban natural gas distribution systems across the United States. “[T]he total estimate is 393 Gg/yr [Giga-grams per year] with a 95% upper confidence limit of 854 Gg/yr (0.10% to 0.22% of the methane delivered nationwide)... This emission estimate is 36% to 70% less than the 2011 EPA inventory ... and reflects significant upgrades at metering and regulating stations, [and] improvements in leak detection and maintenance activities” as well as some potential differences due to changed methodologies.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Managing Volatile Tax Collections in State Revenue Forecasts. Pew Charitable Trusts, et al. Mar. 2015. 20 p.

<http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/Assets/2015/03/StateRevenueForecastingReportARTFINALv4web.pdf>

“To better understand how volatile state tax revenues designated for deposit into the general fund affects the accuracy of projections,” this report by the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Rockefeller Institute examines personal income, sale, and corporate income tax data. From 2000 to 2013, the size of fluctuations in tax revenue rose in 42 states. Forecasting errors cause ripple effects: overly optimistic projections may result in spending cuts, tax increases or borrowing when collections fall short, while overly cautious projections may result in a one-time surplus that leads some to implement actions that are unsustainable over the long run, such as cut taxes or increase spending.

HEALTH

“Smoking and Mortality—Beyond Natural Causes.” By Brian D. Carter, et al. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, vol. 372, no. 7 (Feb. 12, 2015) pp. 631-640. (Available at the California State Library)

This large-scale study, funded by the American Cancer Society, combined data from five U.S. cohort studies of nearly 900,000 participants 55 years and older. “Analyzing deaths among the participants from 2000 to 2011, the researchers found that, compared with people who had never smoked, smokers were about twice as likely to die from infections, kidney disease, respiratory ailments not previously linked to tobacco, and hypertensive heart disease, in which high blood pressure leads to heart failure. Smokers were also six times more likely to die from a rare illness caused by insufficient blood flow to the intestines.” The research concludes that there is an association between smoking and causes of death that had not previously been linked to smoking. (*New York Times*, Feb. 11, 2015).

HUMAN SERVICES

The Cost of Asset Testing for the CalWORKs Program. By LaTanya Brown-Robertson, et al. Howard University Center on Race and Wealth, et al. Jan. 2015. 28 p.

https://gallery.mailchimp.com/731e5188a2fdf37339343d51a/files/CalWORKs_2015_Final.pdf

“The CalWORKs asset test component places eligibility restrictions on cash savings and assessed vehicle values.... After assessing the administrative cost of the CalWORKs asset test verification process, we found that the State of California spent roughly \$6.4 million between April 2012 and March 2013 to discover violations of only .001% among vehicle asset test applications, 2% among cash asset test applications.... The additional savings in administrative cost and overall cost savings of the elimination of asset testing (\$169.7 million) could be reallocated to enhance applicant and recipient oversight and provide assistance in promoting economic mobility and self-sufficiency among CalWORKs recipients and other disadvantaged California residents.”

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

How Much Water Californians Use. By Haeyoun Park, et al. *The New York Times*. Apr. 1, 2015.

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/04/01/us/water-use-in-california.html>

Governor Brown recently ordered new restriction on water use in the state. Although many areas have reduced consumption in response to earlier drought warnings, water use remains high in many areas of the state. This interactive map shows per capita residential water use across the state.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Drug-Impaired Driving: Additional Support Needed for Public Awareness Initiatives.

By Susan A. Fleming. U.S. Government Accountability Office. GAO-15-293. Feb. 2015. 44 p.

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/670/668622.pdf>

“[P]ublic awareness of the dangers of drug -impaired driving is an area in which state officials told us that NHTSA [National Highway Transportation Safety Administration] could do more to support their efforts. As part of its mission to support state safety efforts, NHTSA has provided media and other materials to states for impaired-driving awareness programs, but these materials are focused on alcohol-impaired driving. While NHTSA plans to improve public awareness through initiatives to conduct surveys on drug-impaired-driving behaviors and attitudes as well as training for medical professionals, these plans could take several years to implement. Additional efforts, such as general messaging reminding the public about the impairing effects of drugs, could help improve public awareness in the near term.”

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