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Executive Summary

Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) Program: Report on Participant Outcomes

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For
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The Wisconsin Department of Corrections
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INTRODUCTION AND METHOD

This report provides an initial examination of the individual outcomes of offenders discharged from the seven **Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD)** programs in Wisconsin from program start in 2007 through August 31, 2008. Collaboration among the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance (OJA), the Department of Corrections (DOC), and the Department of Health Services (DHS) established the TAD grant program, and supports evaluation services provided by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (PHI).

Data collection for the current effort included review of program materials (i.e., quarterly reports, applications for funding, etc.), participant-level admission, service, and discharge data provided by TAD sites, and individually identifiable electronic outcomes data from state data systems. With extensive cooperation from state agencies, PHI received individually identifiable outcomes data on 710 TAD discharges from the following state data sources in October 2008:

- the Circuit Court Automated Program (CCAP) through OJA,
- the Crime Information Bureau (CIB) database through DOJ,
- DOC's administrative Corrections Integrated Program Information System (CIPIS), and
- DHS's Human Services Reporting System AODA Module (HSRS).

These data were summarized using simple descriptive statistics, chi-square, one-way analysis of variance and ordinary least squares regression for continuous measures, and logistic regression analysis for categorical measures. Regression models were estimated to predict charges for new offenses, program completion, sentence based on CCAP disposition data, and days to first new offense. Models were calculated for the entire sample utilizing the predictor measures best correlated with the outcomes measures, and separately for Milwaukee TAD and for non-Milwaukee TAD sites as a group due to differences in program model and design.

Many analyses examine the results for all 710 offenders who exited TAD programs for any reason ("discharges"), while some compare results for those who were successfully discharged from the programs ("completers" or "graduates") with those who either dropped out or were terminated from the program ("terminations").

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF TAD PROGRAMS

The seven TAD program sites in Wisconsin utilize a variety of program models to divert offenders from incarceration and provide treatment services (Table 1). All of the programs were fully operational by July 2007 after a January 1, 2007 funding start.

	Burnett	Washburn	Dane	Milwaukee	Rock	Washington	Wood
Model	Drug Court	Drug Court	Multiple Approach	Pre-Trial Diversion	Multiple Approach	Diversion and ATR	Drug Court
Date of First Admission	January 2007	February 2007	July 2007	March 2007	April 2007	March 2007	January 2007
Program Fee	\$750	\$750	\$150	\$50	\$100 + \$10/week	WI Uniform Fee System	\$300
Annual Capacity	8-10	8-10	20-25	800	110	40	40-50
# Admissions	18	10	45	753	119	138	45

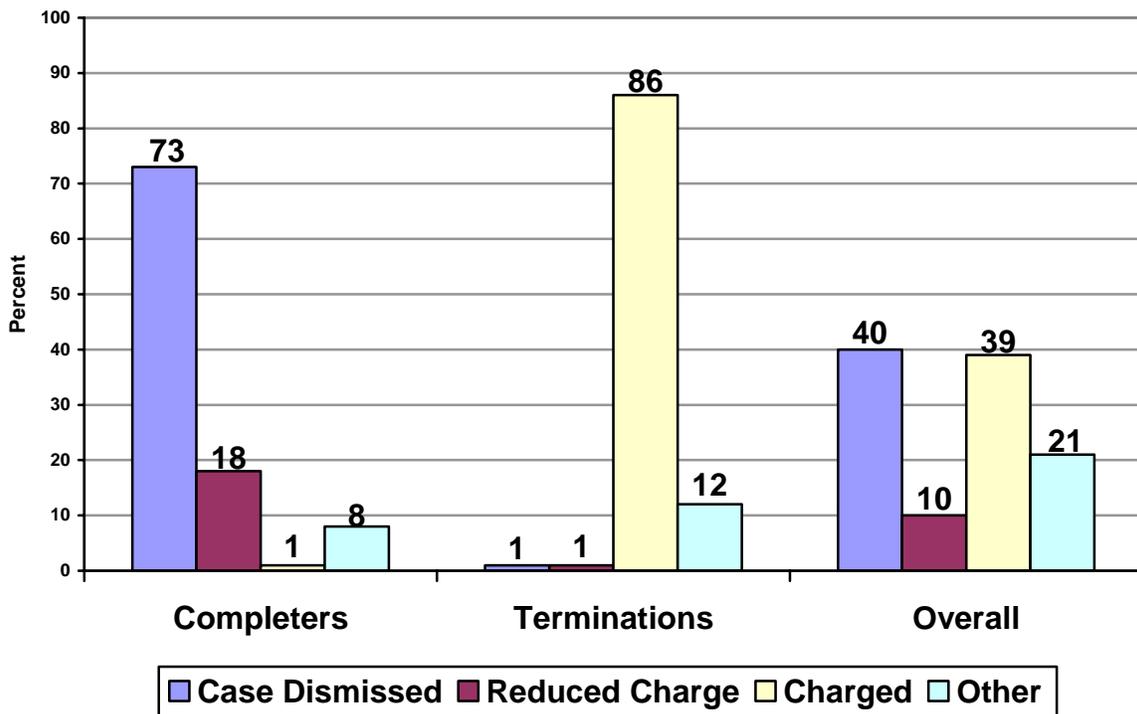
SUMMARY OF RESULTS

This examination of the outcomes of offenders discharged from the seven Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) Programs in Wisconsin suggests that **the programs provide an alternative to prosecution and incarceration for non-violent criminal offenders who abuse alcohol or other drugs. The legislature should continue to fund TAD programs at current or enhanced levels to allow counties to continue to develop and improve the effectiveness of these programs.**

The results indicated that **56 percent of offenders discharged from TAD completed the program**, having an average length of stay of 161 days (5.3 months). The offenders most likely to complete TAD programs were older, white, female, had a high school diploma or GED/HSED, or were employed at the time of admission. Program completion rates varied by program site, ranging from about one-third in Dane and Rock Counties to 100 percent in Burnett County.

Forty percent of those discharged had their charges dismissed and an additional ten percent had their charges reduced. Thirty-nine percent were charged with the offense that brought them into TAD, and the remaining 21 percent included those who completed alternatives to revocation (ATR), continued their probation, absconded, or had not yet resolved their case. Figure 1 illustrates significant differences in case outcomes (reported by TAD sites) between program completers and terminations. **Offenders who complete TAD are significantly more likely to have their cases dismissed** than those who are terminated from TAD. Seventy-three percent of the completers had their cases dismissed, compared to one percent of the program terminations. Only one percent of the completers were charged, in contrast to 86 percent of the terminations.

Figure 1: Site-Reported Case Outcome

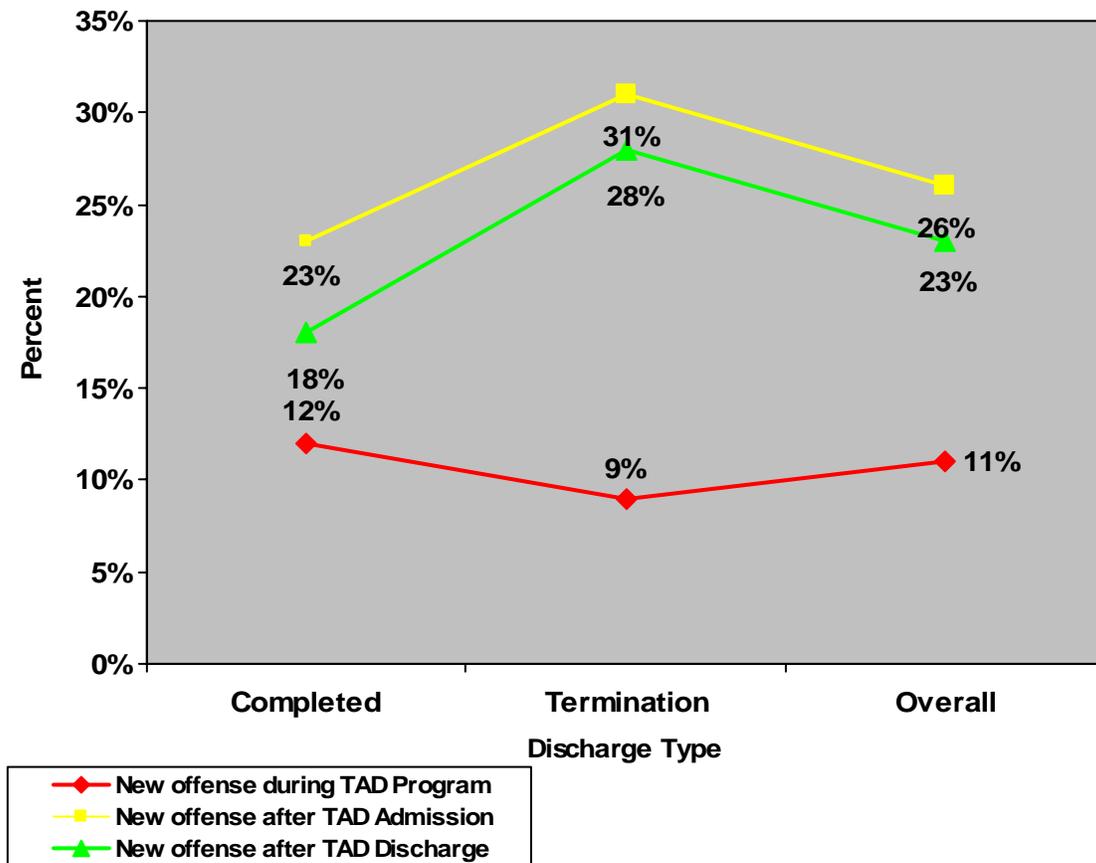


Additional analyses suggest that completers at non-Milwaukee sites (Milwaukee did not submit sentence outcome data) were significantly more likely to receive a fine, a reduced sentence, or an end to their probation supervision as a result of their graduation from TAD programming. Completers were also significantly more likely to be employed full-time at discharge, to have participated in vocational or college classes, and to be living independently. Completers were also more likely to be in compliance with probation or parole requirements, with terminations more likely to have their probation/parole supervision revoked. Graduates were more likely to be rated by TAD staff as emotionally “stable” than terminations.

According to the estimates provided by each TAD site, **an average of 95 incarceration days were avoided per discharged offender through participation in TAD**, and an average of 128 incarceration days were avoided for each offender who completed the program. The average number of days varied significantly by site ranging from 26 to 355 days per offender discharged. **An estimated 37,989 incarceration days were saved through TAD as of August 31, 2008.**

TAD programs significantly reduce the likelihood of being charged with a new offense. Overall, 11 percent were charged with a new offense while participating in TAD programs, 26 percent were charged with a new offense after program admission, and 23 percent were charged with a new offense after TAD discharge. Figure 2 summarizes the overall proportion of TAD discharges that were charged with a new offense. While there is no difference between completers and terminations in their likelihood to be charged with a new offense while involved in the TAD programs, program graduates were significantly less likely than terminations to have a new charge both after TAD admission and after TAD discharge.

Figure 2: New Offense by Program Completion



Overall, the regression results predicting new offense suggest that the **longer an offender is involved with a TAD program and the lower their criminal risk rating at program admission the less likely they are to be charged with a new offense** after their admission. In addition, outpatient treatment participation reduced the likelihood of a charge for a new offense. Once they do exit the program, completers with lower criminal risk scores are less likely than terminations to be charged with a new offense.

A separate examination of offenders who entered TAD with an offense of operating while intoxicated (OWI) revealed that **35 percent of the OWI offenders discharged from TAD were charged with a new offense after entering TAD**. In this sample of 710 TAD discharges, 69 offenders were admitted to TAD as a result of an OWI offense. Eighty percent of these 69 offenders (55 individuals) completed TAD programs and 20 percent were terminated from the program (14 individuals). TAD graduates were significantly less likely than terminations to be charged with any new offense (30 percent vs. 57 percent, respectively). Nearly two-thirds of those with a new charge (61 percent) were charged with another OWI. An additional 23 percent were charged with operating after revocation of their driver's license.

Overall, **two percent of TAD discharges were incarcerated in state prison after TAD exit**. TAD graduates were significantly less likely than terminations to be admitted to state prison after their discharge from the program within time frame of this study, with none of the TAD completers entering state prison between their discharge from TAD and August 31, 2008.

While criminal justice outcomes are the most feasible to measure and are often of greatest interest to policy makers, TAD treatment programs can have other significant impacts on the lives of offenders who participate. Some TAD staff who work closely with these participants every day submitted examples of the positive impacts of TAD program participation on individual offenders:

- One 22-year-old Wood County Drug Court graduate wrote: “Before Drug Court my life was unmanageable. I had become unable to control my drug use. It (Drug Court) has made me focus more on myself, on school, as well as building good friendships.” He is currently employed full-time and is working towards his bachelor degree. He has been sober for two years.
- One Rock County TAD participant noted, “I would probably be dead if it wasn't for this program. I am very grateful that I got into it. I am learning to enjoy life again without drugs and alcohol. I am working, and working on paying bills, pretty much learning how to be a responsible adult, and it is a wonderful thing to be me again.”
- Two Rock County RECAP participants have had drug-free babies. One of the participants noted that the program “changed me a lot by being drug free and having a drug free baby. It helped me with my anger. I don't want to raise my baby around drugs.”
- A 26-year-old Burnett TAD participant obtained her nursing assistant license, improved her parenting, and has become a strong advocate for recovery: “I guess one of the most important things was being held accountable. I had to follow through with what I said I would do. I think the length of the program helped. You get used to living a clean and sober life.”
- The following is a thank you note from a successful Dane County DART participant: “I just stopped by to say hello. Just wanted to let you know that I'm doing very well; I now have my own place and working on reuniting with my children. Things are going so good for me just had to come see you guys. I still thank you every day for helping me get my life back.”

While the overall results support the effectiveness of TAD treatment in reducing new offenses, **variation by site does exist**. Rates of successful program completion as well as the proportion of discharges that are subsequently charged with a new offense vary by site. For example, none of the graduates in Rock, Washburn, or Wood counties were charged with a new offense after program admission. However, the separate examination of OWI offenders conducted for this effort revealed that the majority of OWI offenders who were discharged from TAD programs are charged with another OWI after program admission (61 percent). Another example of variation by site can be seen in one TAD site that has both the highest rate of new charges for an offense after admission and one of lowest graduation rates. However, this site does serve a group of offenders with quite severe problems and many of their participants abscond. They have the largest proportion of property offenders across the sites, most of their discharges have a moderate criminal risk level at admission, and they have the highest proportion of opiate dependent offenders. This program may consider addressing ways to prevent participants from absconding or increase their program length in light of the current results indicating that length of stay is an important predictor in likelihood of new charges.

During 2009, **TAD programs should seek to increase the number of offenders successfully discharged from the programs to realize even greater diversion savings**. The graduation rate varies significantly across the seven sites due to differences in required program length, program model, treatment effectiveness, eligibility screening procedures, and severity of population served. In some sites, terminations had longer lengths of stay in TAD than graduates of other sites. Programs might be tempted to reduce treatment requirements or shorten the required length of stay in efforts to make it easier for participants to successfully complete the program. However, the current results suggest that merely completing the program doesn't reduce the likelihood of future criminal justice system involvement. The current results suggest that a longer length of stay in the program, rather than graduating, reduces the likelihood of subsequent charges.

In addition, level of criminal risk at program admission plays an important role in predicting a charge for a new offense after admission to the program. Program graduates with lower levels of criminal risk are less likely to be charged with a new offense which suggests that **programs should focus not only on retaining participants in longer episodes of outpatient substance abuse treatment, but also on lowering their level of criminal risk through the provision of services targeting the factors involved in criminal risk**. Programs can implement a variety of additional improvements depending upon the specific characteristics of their counties and TAD programs. Some of these enhancements could include improving the effectiveness of eligibility screening to assure admissions are appropriate for the program, focusing on factors to decrease criminal risk levels (i.e., cognitive interventions), improving the effectiveness of outpatient substance abuse treatment services, and ensuring that an appropriate length of time is spent involved in substance abuse treatment to decrease the likelihood of subsequent criminal behavior and charges.