

**State Court Administrative Office  
Field Services Division  
Problem-Solving Courts**



# Michigan's Problem-Solving Courts

**House Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Judiciary**

**March 15, 2023**

# Michigan Problem-Solving Courts



Michigan problem-solving courts provide eligible, non-violent, justice-involved offenders the opportunity to participate in a highly structured, court supervised, treatment-based program to address underlying issues that cause these individuals to return to crime.



# Team Based Approach



Judge

Prosecutor

Defense  
Attorney

Treatment  
Provider

Case  
Manager

Probation  
Officer

Law  
Enforcement

Community  
Mental  
Health

Veterans  
Justice  
Outreach

Mentor/Peer  
Support

Coordinator

Evaluator

“It has been an awesome experience to see law enforcement, the judiciary, and providers all work together to stay informed and collectively develop solutions to address issues that impact the quality of life in our communities.”

– Honorable Shannon Holmes, 36th District Court Drug Court

# Why Problem-Solving Courts Work



- More than just an alternative
- Unite public health and public safety
- Meet accountability with compassion
- Ensure evidence-based treatment and recovery solutions instead of incarceration
- Transform courtrooms into places of hope, safety, and health.





“Treatment courts are the single most successful intervention in our nation’s history for leading people living with substance use and mental health disorders out of the justice system and into lives of recovery and stability.

Instead of viewing addiction as a moral failing, they view it as a disease. Instead of punishment, they offer treatment. Instead of indifference, they show compassion.”

-National Association of Drug Court Professionals

# Michigan's Problem-Solving Court Types



## Drug Courts

Includes adult drug courts, DWI sobriety courts, hybrid DWI/drug courts, family dependency courts, tribal healing-to-wellness courts, and juvenile drug courts

## Mental Health Courts

Includes adult circuit courts, adult district courts, and juvenile mental health courts

## Veterans Treatment Courts

Includes circuit and district courts

# Drug Courts



- 10 Key Components
- Substance use disorder
- Restricted driver's license for repeat drunk drivers who install an ignition interlock device
- Common charges
  - Controlled substance use or possession
  - DWI
  - Controlled substance manufacturing or distribution
  - Property offenses



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“I am truly grateful for the rigorous program offered in sobriety court because it saved me years of pain and suffering and led me to the solution.”

-Past Graduate, 52-1 District Court DWI Sobriety Court

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# Mental Health Courts



- Serious mental illness, serious emotional disturbance, or a developmental disability (as defined by mental health code)
  - Schizophrenia
  - Bipolar disorder
  - Psychotic disorder
- 10 Essential Elements
- Partnership with Community Mental Health
- Focus on medication and treatment compliance



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“The love that Judge Skocelas and his team showed for me had a huge impact on my life. They truly cared, and you could see it in the way that they looked at you, in the way that they talked to you, and in the resources they informed you about. They really wanted people to succeed.”

-Past Graduate, 57th District Mental Health Court

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# Veterans Treatment Court



- 10 Key Components
- Veterans treatment court uses a hybrid integration of drug court and mental health court principles
- Coordinate with Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare networks, Veterans Benefits Administration, state Departments of Veterans Affairs, volunteer mentors, and organizations that support veterans and veterans' families
- Serve veterans struggling with addiction, serious mental illness, and co-occurring disorders



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“Veterans treatment court has made me a much better person. And getting me out to the VA for everything I needed, like PTSD groups—I know for a fact that it saved my life.”

-First Graduate and Marine Veteran, West Michigan Regional Veterans Treatment Court

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# Michigan's Problem-Solving Courts



## Drug/Sobriety Courts

Hybrid DWI/Drug	DWI	Juvenile	Adult Drug Court	Family Dependency	Tribal	Total
58	38	11	13	8	9	137

## Mental Health Courts

Adult	Juvenile	Total
35	7	42

## Veterans Treatment Courts

Total
28

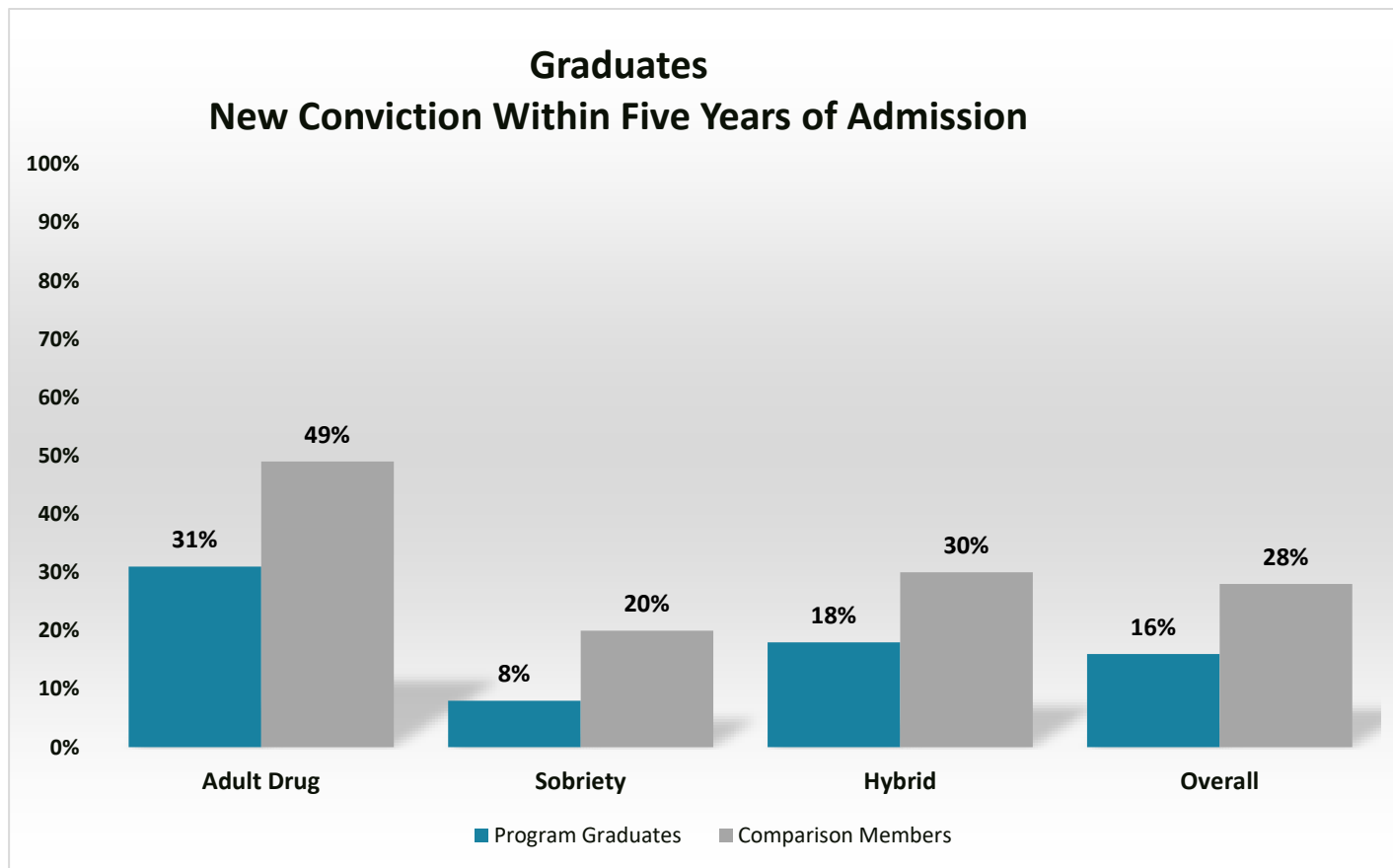
# Counties with Problem-Solving Courts





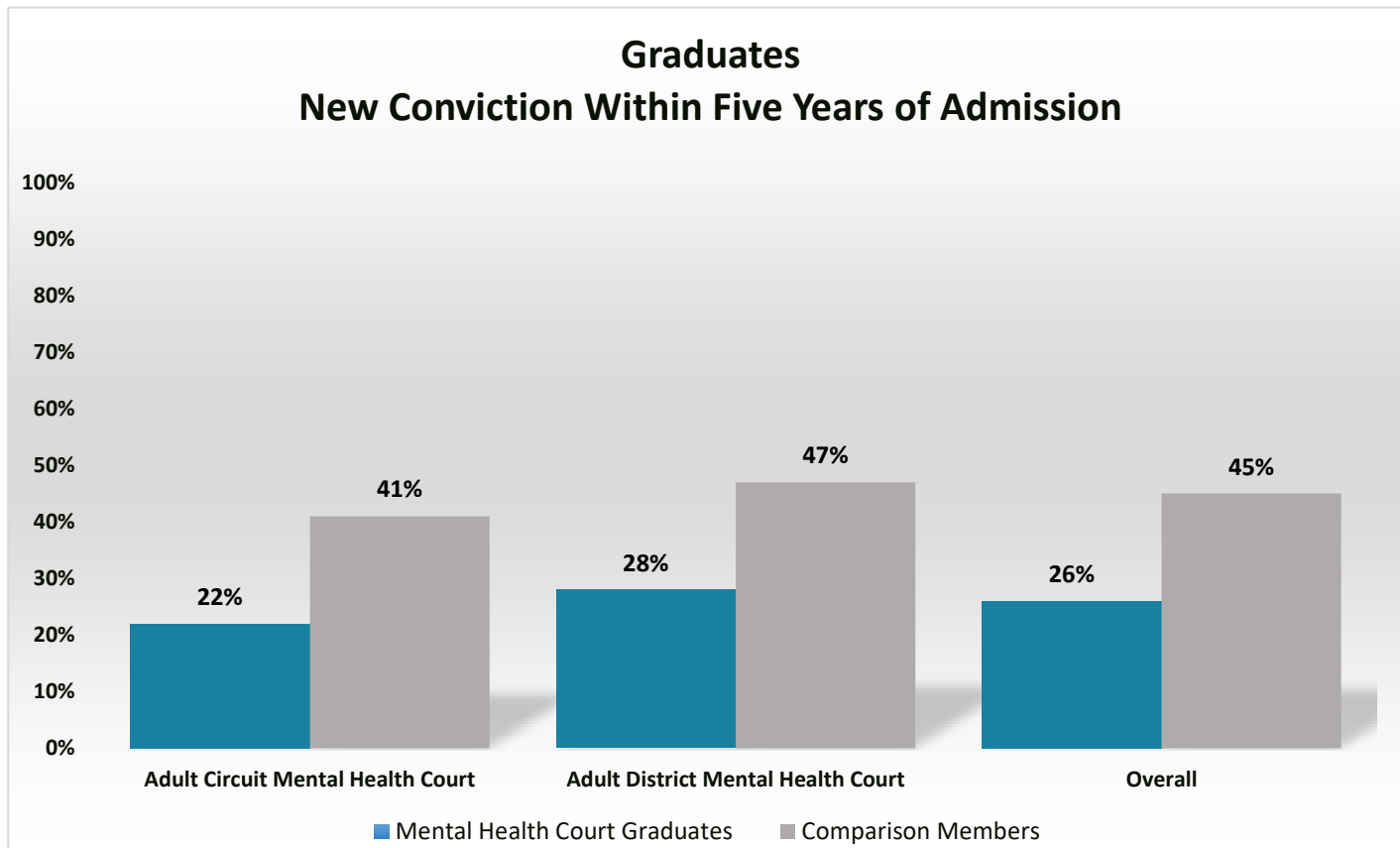
# Problem-Solving Court Recidivism and Outcomes

# Reduced Recidivism – Drug Court

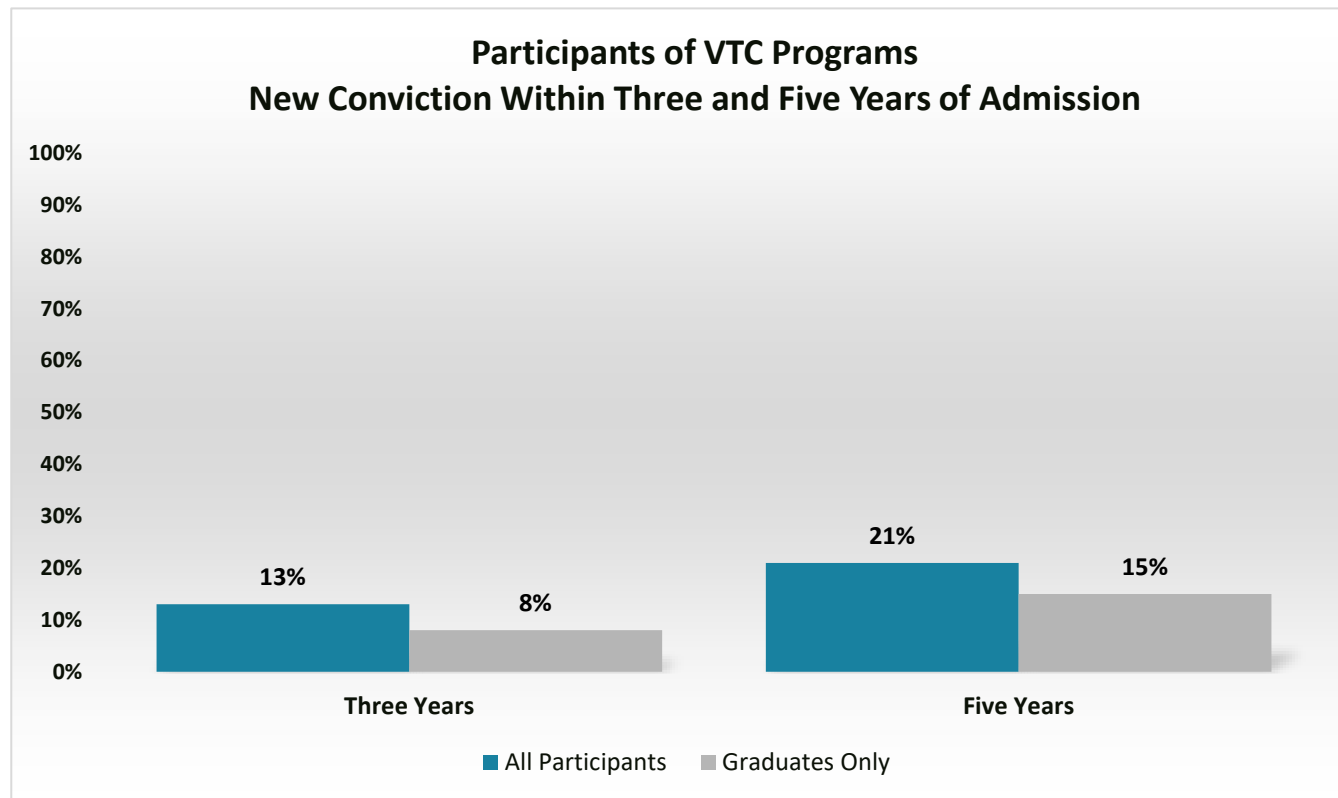




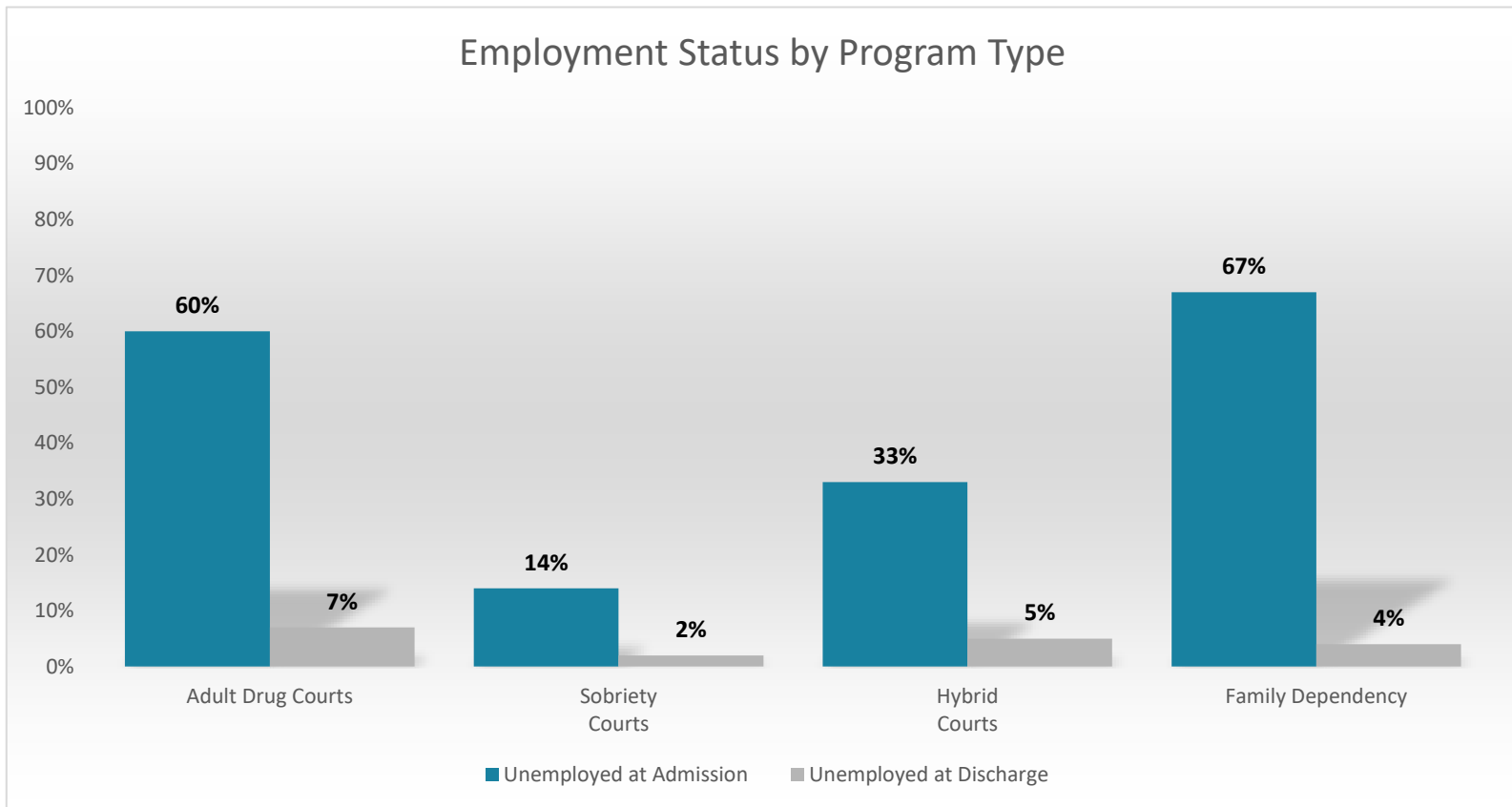
# Reduced Recidivism - MHC



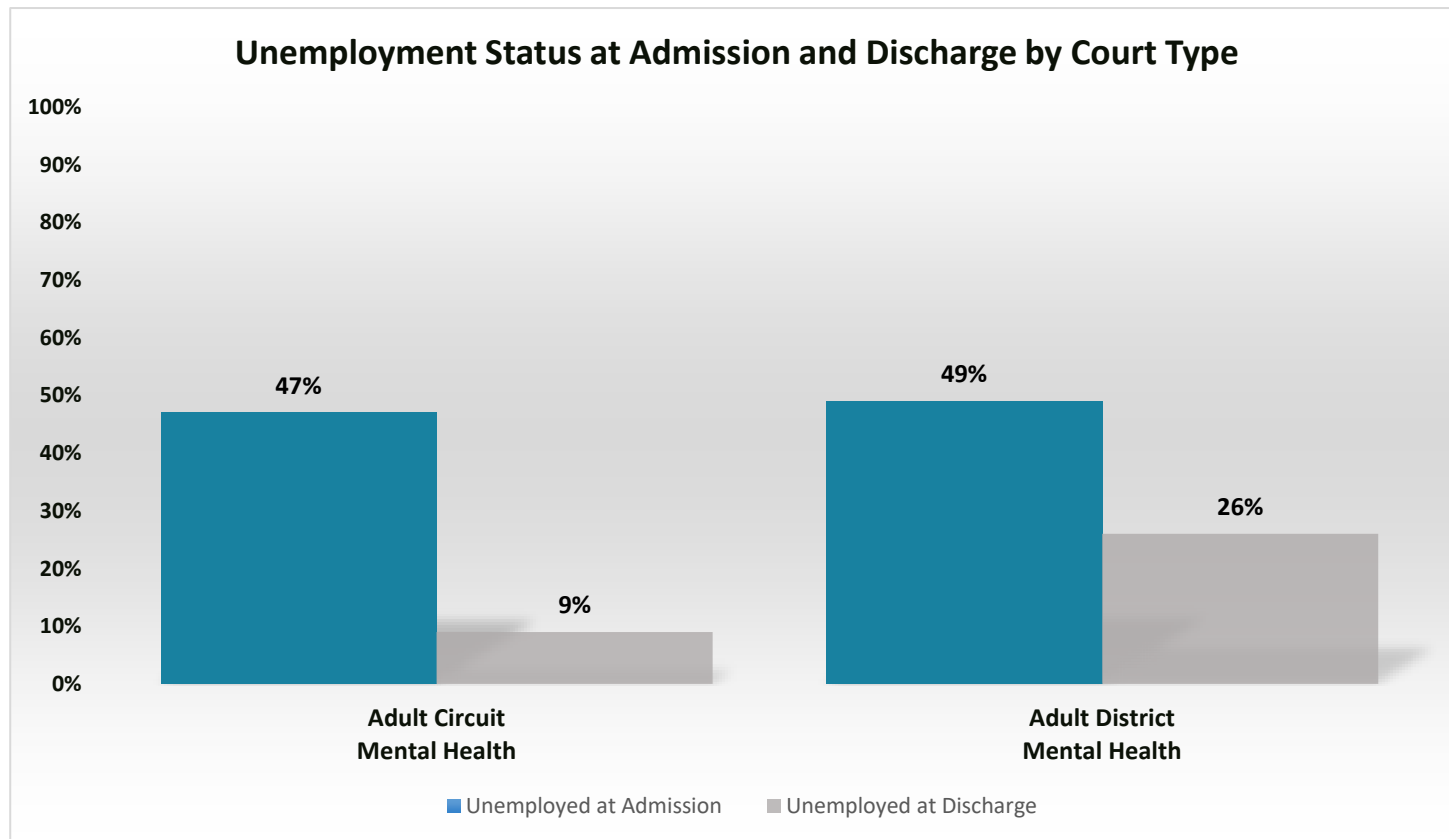
# Reduced Recidivism – VTC



# Improved Employment – Drug Court



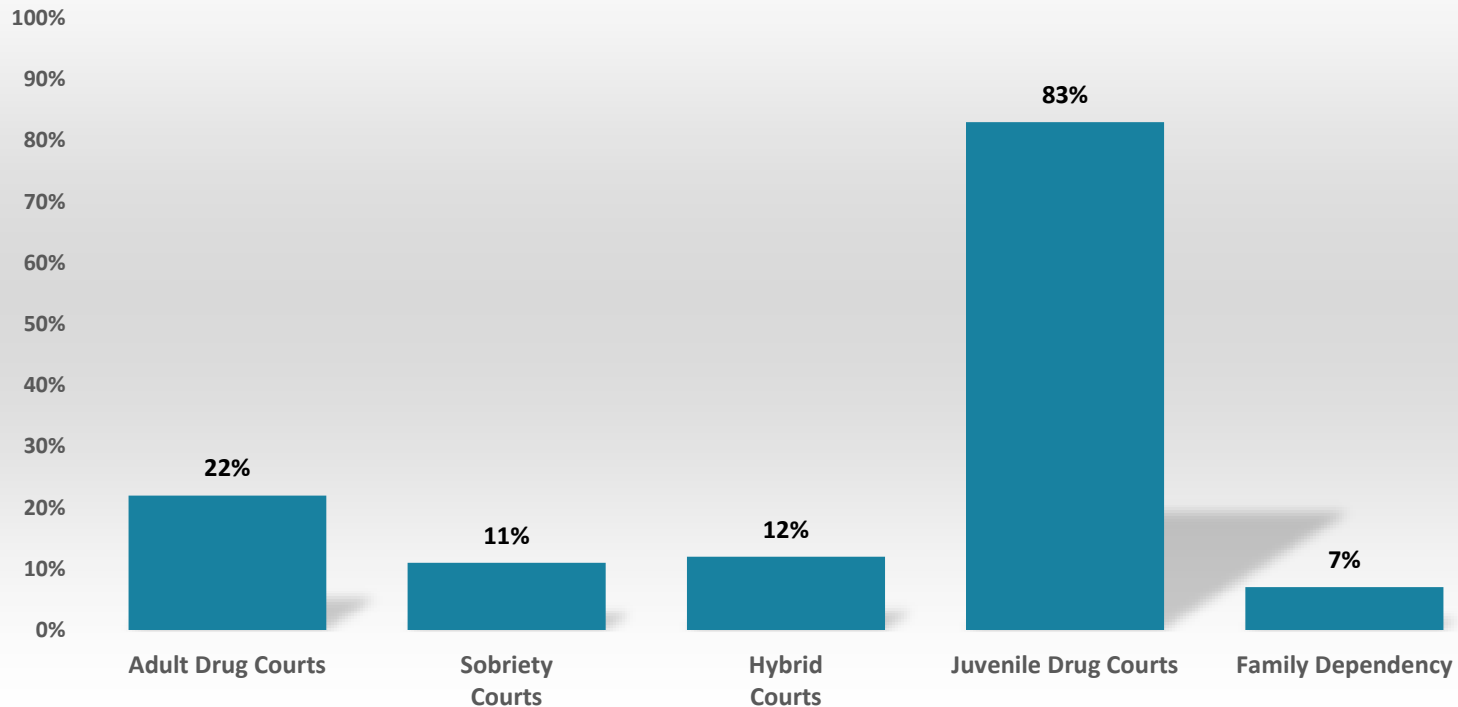
# Improved Employment - MHC



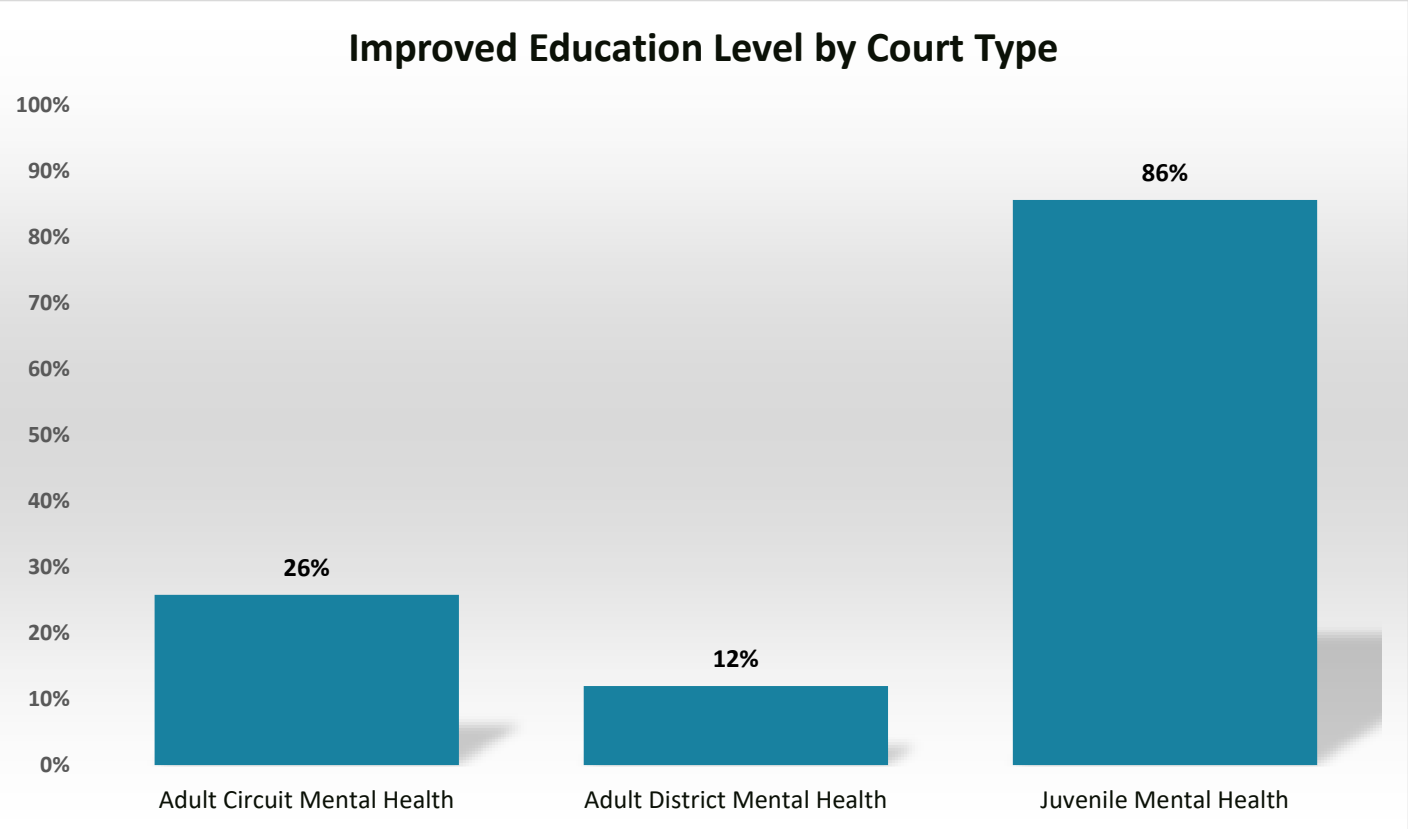
# Improved Education – Drug Court



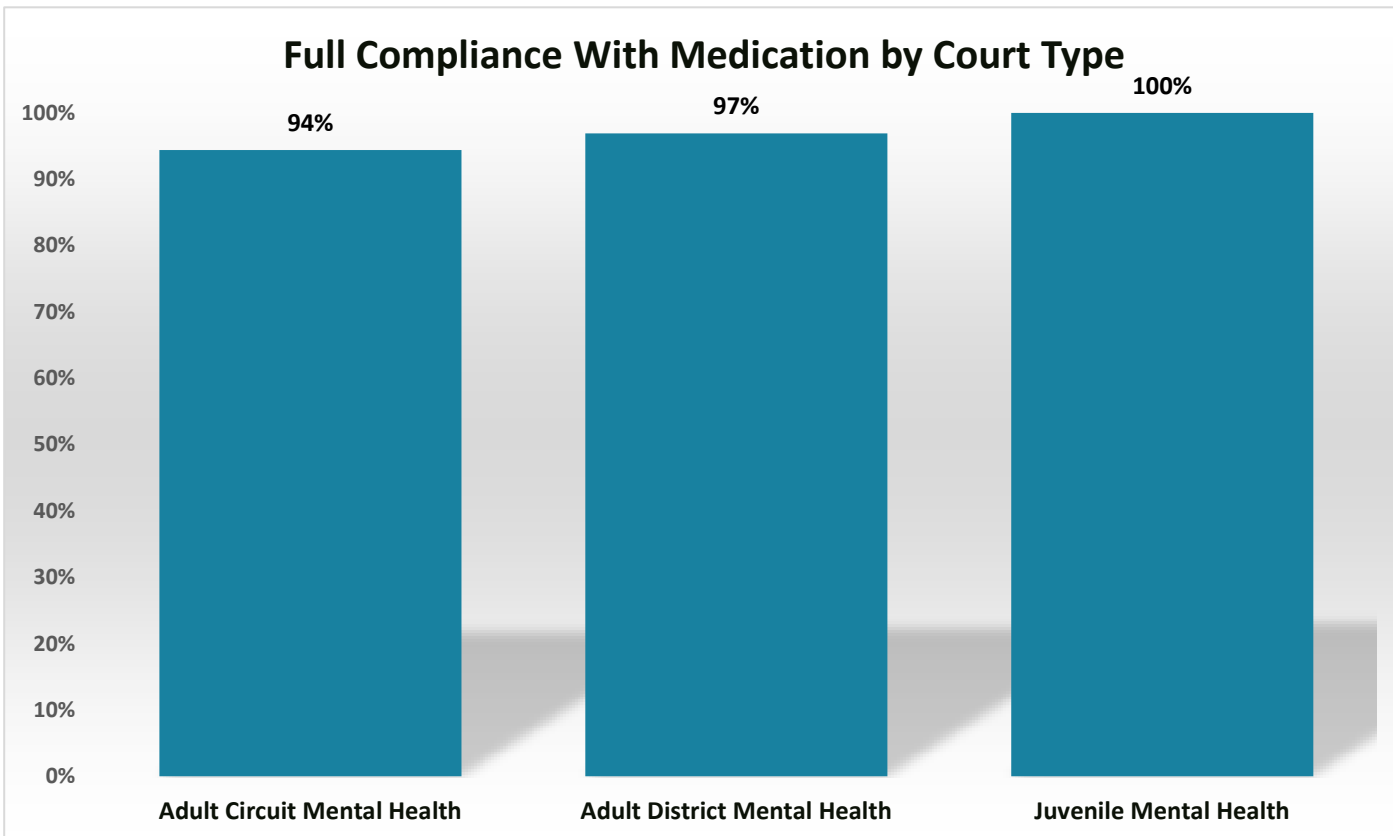
### Improved Education Level by Program Type



# Improved Education - MHC



# Medication Compliance - MHC



# PSC Certification



- MCL 600.1062(5), MCL 600.1084(3), MCL 600.1201(5), MCL 600.1091(4) and MCL 600.1099c(4)
- Standards and Best Practices Manuals
- Developed measures to successfully assess whether PSCs are operating using best practices.
- Over 147 PSCs certified since 2018



# Training and Technical Assistance



- Fundamentals of PSCs
- Motivational Interviewing
- Trauma
- Networking Forums
- Judicial Leadership
- Data Collection
- Grant Management



# Swift and Sure Sanctions Probation in Michigan

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# Summary of Swift and Sure



- MCL 771A.1 to MCL 771A.8
- Different than drug court
- High-risk felony probationers
  - High risk — yes; high need — not necessarily
- Behavior modification
  - Fairness and perceived fairness
  - Certainty in sanctioning (“sure”)
    - Sanction after every violation of probation
  - Immediate sanction (“swift”)

# Probationer Eligibility



- Eligibility under MCL 771A.6:
  - Risk level other than low (based on validated assessment) and not charged with certain serious offenses

# Structure of a Swift and Sure Court

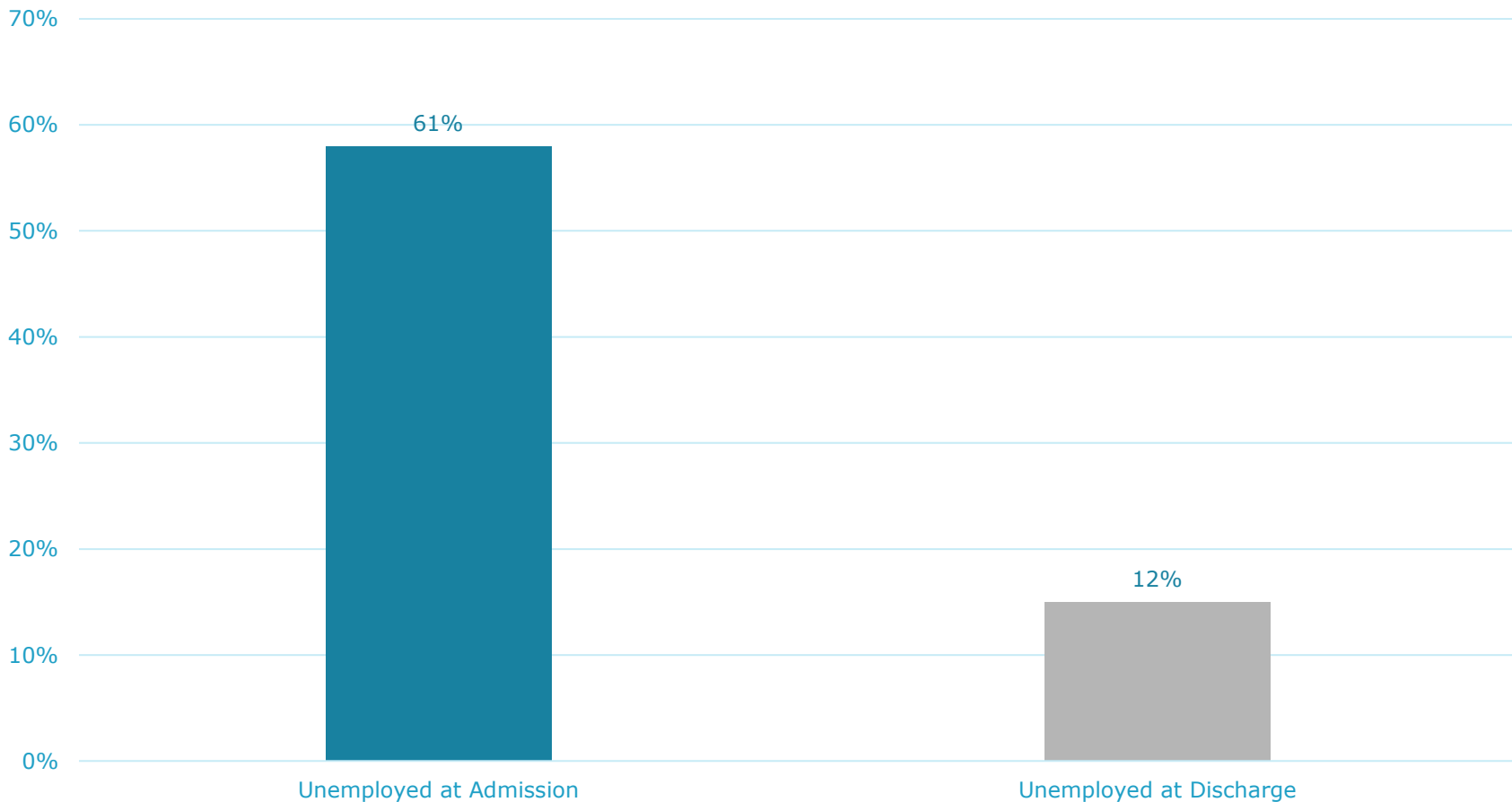


- Orientation hearing
- Violation hearing
- Probation appointments
- Random and frequent drug and alcohol testing
- Substance use and mental health treatment, if needed
- Home and employment checks
- Immediate sanction for every violation

# Improved Employment



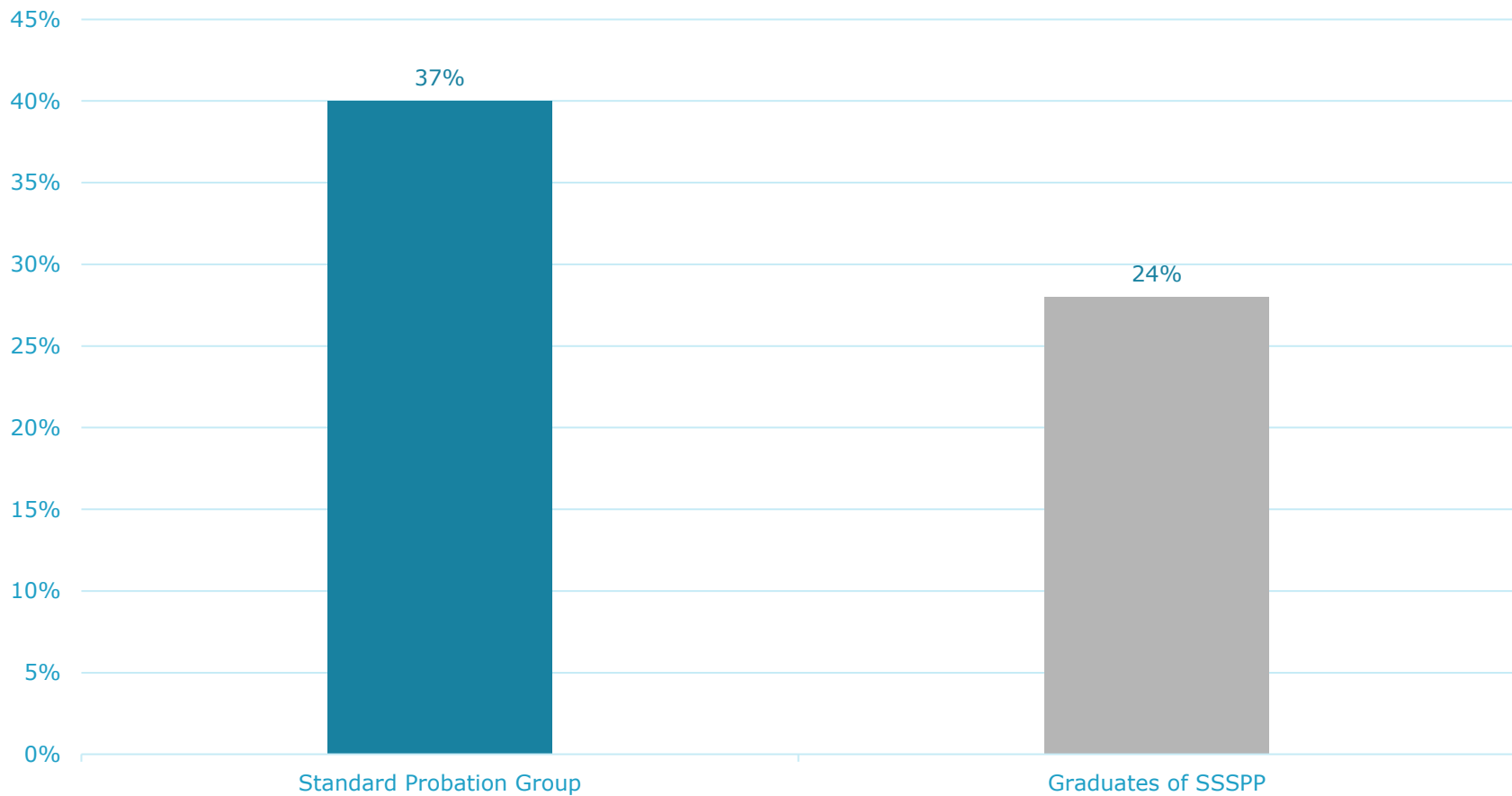
Graduate Employment Status at Admission and Discharge



# Reduced Recidivism



SSSPP Graduates New Conviction Within Three Years of Admission



# Questions



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