

Maryland Crime Research & Innovation Center

MCRIC

Letter From The Director

MCRIC aims to provide research and data analysis to support public safety efforts across Maryland communities and beyond. We are proud to share a recent effort to develop the [strategic plan](#) for Maryland's new [Behavioral Health and Public Safety Center of Excellence](#). The plan outlines important steps to meet the needs of individuals in crisis and those responding to crisis, and provides a roadmap that will position Maryland as a leader in the effort to address behavioral health and public safety challenges that face the nation.

Also, check out research highlights from MCRIC affiliated faculty engaged in work to understand police-community dynamics in Baltimore. If you are interested in learning more about these projects, or want to discuss partnership opportunities to help address your public safety needs, you can find us at: MCRIC-contact@umd.edu.

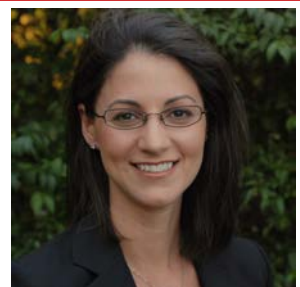
Wishing you a Happy and Safe New Year,
Bianca Bersani, PhD

Director, Maryland Crime Research and Innovation Center

Project Spotlight: Innovations in Behavioral Health & Public Safety

People with behavioral health needs are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system and have a high rate of repeat interaction with public safety and health systems. In response, a new Behavioral Health and Public Safety Center of Excellence was established by the Maryland General Assembly and launched by the Governor's Office. An MCRIC team led by Drs. Bersani and Porter bolsters Maryland's efforts to address the intersection of behavioral health and public safety by developing the center's inaugural [strategic plan](#).

The center will serve as a hub for the state to more efficiently and effectively promote access to behavioral health care and reduce engagement with the criminal justice system. Leveraging expertise from UMD's Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice (CCJS) and the Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR), the MCRIC team crafted a multi-year, state-wide strategic plan outlining seven priority areas with goals and action steps that provide a roadmap to carry out the mission of the Center of Excellence.



Dr. Bianca Bersani
MCRIC Director



Dr. Lauren Porter
CCJS

Project Spotlight: Behavioral Health (continued)



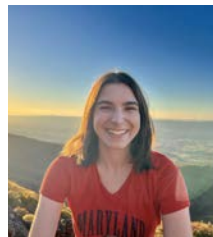
Meghan Kozerra
CCJS



Erin Artigiani
CESAR



Lydia Becker
CCJS



Serena Bujtor
CCJS

The new Center of Excellence will address a critical need in Maryland. Nationally, nearly half of incarcerated individuals have a history of a behavioral health disorder. This is true in Maryland: a 2016 report found that nearly 40% of people in jail had a mental health disorder with 25% meeting the criteria for serious mental illness, and more than two thirds (69%) had a substance use disorder. This is a conservative estimate as it does not represent individuals with intellectual and developmental disorders.

People with behavioral health needs are a particularly vulnerable population who often have recurrent and frequent interaction with public safety and healthcare systems and are more likely to experience police aggression during encounters with law enforcement. The launch of the new Center aims to address this challenge head on by focusing efforts on the intersection of behavioral health and public safety.

The strategic plan developed by MCRIC incorporates insights from myriad interviews with Maryland-based public safety and behavioral health stakeholders, local and national research scholars, and experts from similarly motivated Centers across the U.S., as well as recommendations from the 2020 and 2022 Annual State Sequential Intercept Model Summits. The strategic plan equips the Center of Excellence to carry out three critical roles: technical assistance and training, centralized communication, and data, research, and evaluation.

To access the full article visit: <https://umdrighnow.umd.edu/umd-researchers-bolster-state-center-for-behavioral-health-and-public-safety>

Baltimore Policing Project



Dr. Brooklynn
Hitchens
CCJS



Dr. Lauren Porter
CCJS

New findings from the improving police-community relationships in Baltimore project yield several important findings and pathways for improving safety and community relations.

MCRIC affiliate faculty, Drs Hitchens and Porter, recently completed interviews and focus groups with 93 Black residents in Baltimore City about their experiences with the Baltimore Police Department. The research yielded several important findings, including experiences and observations of racialized policing, first-hand experiences with misuse of force, and a general perception of police ineffectiveness. Participants were largely reluctant to call the police as well, even for serious matters, for fear that police would escalate the situation or that they would be labeled a snitch in their community. Participants pointed to several potential pathways to improving safety and enhancing police-community relations, including more training for police officers that emphasizes "people skills" and more investment in youth-centered programming such as education and recreation centers.

More News, Opportunities, & Announcements

- **MCRIC Research Examines How Pretrial Outcomes Vary Across Maryland's 24 Jurisdictions:** Using data from the Client Legal Utility Engine (CLUE), the research team led by Drs. Jelveh and Glazener offers rare insight into case processing and outcomes across Maryland's 24 jurisdictions. This research involved the creation and validation of a longitudinal dataset of Maryland court records that will serve as an important resource for understanding the impact of court policies across Maryland. Findings from the study revealed that pretrial risk for violent rearrest can be accurately predicted in Maryland. An off-the-shelf risk tool correctly flagged 65% of high-risk defendants who were later arrested for a violent crime. A machine learning model using the new court data further improved accuracy, correctly flagging 75% of defendants at high-risk for violent rearrest can be accurately predicted in Maryland.
- **Body Worn Camera (BWC) Data Analytics:** A collaboration between MCRIC, the Baltimore Police Department, and the University of Maryland Police Department leverages insight from an innovative BWC pilot project using video data analytics to automatically detect escalation and de-escalation patterns in police-involved interactions through the analysis of BWC footage data. Researchers previously tested the capacity to automatically redact sensitive information from the video (e.g., civilian faces). Findings will aid in identifying escalation and de-escalation patterns that can be used to enhance the safety and well-being of both officers and the public.
- **MCRIC Embedded Analyst Program Grows:** Since 2019, the Maryland Crime Research and Innovation Center has supported an embedded data analyst in partnership with the Baltimore Police Department. The University of Maryland, Criminology and Criminal Justice program has long held the recognition of being the top program in the country, graduating high caliber students with important skillsets. This partnership provides an opportunity for students to engage with practitioners in real-world, real-time translational research. The success of the program has resulted in its continued and expanded presence in BPD and a new collaborative partnership with the Prince George's Police Department.

If you have funding opportunities, news, and/or events that you'd like to share with the MCRIC community, please send them to mcric-contact@umd.edu.

MCRIC Website: bsos.umd.edu/MCRIC

